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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session
Cent soixante-sixième session
166.º período de sesiones**

**Virtual Meeting, 26-30 April 2021
VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

**Réunion Virtuelle, 26-30 avril 2021
PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL**

**Reunión Virtual, 26-30 de abril de 2021
ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante- sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
FIRST PLENARY SESSION PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
26 April 2021

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:30 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 30
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 09.30
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I call the first meeting of the 166th Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to welcome Council Members and Observers to this Session.

Before we begin, I would like to recall some points for good conduct of the meeting in virtual setting.

First, please ensure that your Zoom name appears on the screen in the appropriate fashion. For Members of the Council, that means only the name of your Member Nation, or Member Organization, and not the names of individual delegates.

For other Members of FAO, your screen name should start with the word "Observer," followed by the name of your Member Nation or Associate Member. For all other observers, please ensure that your Zoom screen name appears with the word "Observer," followed by the name of your organisation.

Second, I would like to request all participants to follow the meeting in Mute mode, and to click the Unmute button only when you are given the floor.

Third, to request the floor, please use the Raise Hand function under the "Participants" button at the bottom of the screen. I will pass the floor to Members based on the order that appears on my screen.

Lastly, Members are requested to kindly keep their cameras on for the entire duration of the meeting. This serves to replicate as closely as possible the practice in a physical meeting, where I can ascertain the presence of the Members of Council throughout the proceedings.

I wish to bring to the attention of the Council that the European Union is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution. Furthermore, the European Union will be participating in the Drafting Committee in accordance with the aforementioned paragraphs of Article II of the FAO Constitution and, on matters within its competence, will be exercising, on an alternative basis, the membership rights of the European Union member states elected to the Drafting Committee.

The declaration made by the European Union and its Member States is contained in information document *CL 166/INF/3*.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, at this stage, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu.

The Director-General has faced new, unprecedented and unpredictable challenges in his first two years of Office, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am sure I speak for everyone when I say he has been steadfast in bringing the Organization forward to tackle both ongoing and emerging crises.

As this is my last Council Session as Independent Chairperson, I would like to thank the Director-General for his keen participation in our Council meetings and other Governing Body sessions and his efforts to increase transparency, inclusivity and efficiency in the governance process of FAO.

Without further ado, it is my honour to invite him to address the Council this morning. Director-General, you have the floor.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, Mr Khalid Mehboob, my dear brother, Independent Chair of the Council.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to address you today at the opening of the 166th Session of the Council and happy to see that all of you are well and my thoughts of empathy and solidarity go out to all those affected by the pandemic.

My intervention today will provide an update on developments in the Organization's delivery and proposals for the way forward. As I said, the new modality, I distributed the text before the Meeting. I am just going to highlight a few to save time for you, so you can discuss all the Agenda Items.

Since this is the last Session for Mr Mehboob, I do not want to say it now, it is too early to say it for me; I will express my personal appreciation, also on the behalf of FAO, during the closing Session, to say my real feeling, emotion and appreciation to him.

You will see that each decision, activity, and result I share with you today, is not an isolated exercise, but part of an interlinked chain of progress.

More than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we are witnessing the scale of the long-term effects on agri-food systems, food security and nutrition situations around the world. Even before the pandemic, the world was not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) by 2030. The pandemic has shed light on many weaknesses in the current agri-food systems, which make up the world's largest economic system when measured in terms of employment and livelihoods.

The disruptions caused by the pandemic have put at risk food supply, compromising access to safe, nutritious food at affordable prices. Food networks that span the rural-urban continuum present an opportunity to support inclusive and sustainable rural transformation.

Within the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, FAO has been intensively working on linking social protection to agricultural and rural-based livelihoods and focusing on more jobs for women and youth in agri-food systems.

FAO is providing its Members with constant support to ensure continuity of the critical food supply chain for the most vulnerable populations. Twenty-four million acutely food insecure people threatened by COVID-19 impacts have received emergency livelihood support and scaled-up cash transfers in the 34 focus countries under the Global Humanitarian Response Plan. The situation requires not only political commitment but also more financial resources, innovative solutions, and technology on the ground.

For this mandate, we launched the Food Coalition (initiated by the Government of Italy) in November 2020 together with our Members. Having Food Security and the Food Coalition included on the agenda of the G20, under the Italian Presidency, provides a unique opportunity to engage, raise awareness and mobilize support globally.

FAO will be present throughout this process as a convener, providing technical assistance and policy support.

We continue maintaining our focus on the safety and health of FAO's employees worldwide and their dependents, as well as that of the United Nations personnel operating in Italy. In my capacity as UN Designated Official for Italy, responsible for the safety and security of all UN personnel, I have been leading the dialogue with the Government of Italy, from the Prime Minister to the Ministers, the Mayor and Commissioners to ensure that the UN community in Italy be included in the Host Country's vaccination plans.

In a first phase, we managed to have 180 front-line first responders in February. During a second phase of vaccination just being concluded, an additional 1 000 UN personnel.

With the issuance on Saturday 24 April of the "Order" number 7/2021 by the Office of COVID-19 Extraordinary Commissioner, on modalities for vaccination for UN entities, International organizations and Diplomatic community, negotiations are now concluded regarding the third phase of the UN vaccination campaign. It should cover in coming two months the remaining 8 000 UN employees and eligible dependents who have expressed interest to be vaccinated. Our Crisis Management Team (CMT) lead by Mr Laurent Thomas, we are working seven days a week.

Here I would like to thank once again the Honourable Prime Minister and relevant Ministers and other people, especially Commissioners for supporting the UN operational vaccinations in Italy.

From the beginning of the pandemic, out of almost 14 000 FAO employees worldwide, 429 came down with COVID-19: 57 are currently recovering at home, and three are in hospital, sadly, seven employees have passed away since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Those seven employees passed away before July 2020.

Here again I thank all the employees worldwide who respected the discipline and the guidelines and recommendations from the CMT, Host Country agreement and also the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations. Without your collective discipline, attitude and actions, I think the situation would be much worse.

In that sense, as FAO Director-General, I try my best day and night to play my part, but also all the employees, you, are the ones who take the real action to look at your health at home and in the office, of course.

Distinguished Delegates,

Following the deepest transformative action at FAO since its creation, we now have an agile, inclusive and transparent modern Organization that is focused on better serving its Members.

A modular and flexible structure that allows for optimal cross-sectoral collaboration was established. We introduced adjustments that respond best to emerging needs and priorities: new positions, new offices and new Centres.

We did this with a strong focus on FAO's original mandate and guided by its Basic Texts 2017.

As a unique innovative setup, I created a Core Leadership Team that supports me in all areas of the Organization's mandate. Composed of the three Deputy Director-Generals, the Chief Economist, Chief Scientist and the Director of Cabinet, it exemplifies the new collaborative approach of FAO. No more silos, no more small kingdoms – One strong team to serve as One FAO that works in harmony and synergy. I really appreciated all the Core Leadership's Members and some others key Director-Level 2 (D2s) or D1s staff for really helping the global activities and operations.

With another innovative first, the dual reporting system, we ensured new levels of transparency and teamwork. In that sense, I really appreciate the Council approved that reform, layout and all those arrangements in July 2020, during the pandemic period.

The other side of the coin was our renewed position externally. We expanded our collaboration with partners across the world. We repositioned FAO as an active actor within the UN Systems and international fora. We established a globally recognized position of knowledge and expertise in international fora, from the G20 to the World Economic Forum, and beyond. We were at the forefront of providing guidance, offering expertise and support and making a difference.

We do so through our initiatives and activities, our collaborations and projects - at all levels and around the globe, but our work to become a truly world-class Organization continues.

Last Year, in January I declared 2020 the FAO Year of Efficiency; 2021 is the year of continued efficiency and increased effectiveness with a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability.

We are establishing more coherent regional and sub-regional structures and strengthening Country Office capacities to deliver impactful results as One FAO. Regional Offices are building dedicated thematic FAO Knowledge Platforms, based on regional experience, as powerful cross-continental sharing mechanisms.

The new FAO field network will set international standards of accountability with stronger fraud prevention and strict implementation of FAO policies to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and all forms of harassment.

Greater empowerment, engagement and accountability, streamlined processes and improved human resources management will strengthen FAO worldwide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We continue building a professional, safe and constructive work environment across FAO.

FAO's new medical insurance plan ensures that the Organization now has some of the lowest premiums in the entire UN system. We have significantly improved medical coverage for all employees, which is particularly important during this pandemic.

You can see an agile and fit-for-purpose Organization is so important, because during this pandemic, we really had more visibility.

I am pleased to announce my decision to extend parental leave, including leave with pay for new fathers, to bring FAO more in line with other UN agencies.

We continue to listen to our employees and work constructively with the Staff Representative Bodies.

The new Digital FAO is now a well-established reality and global digital services are available 24 hours a day and 7 days in a week to support the new working modalities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative continues to gain strength as a mechanism for bringing diverse actors together to help the least advantaged, eradicate poverty, end hunger and malnutrition, and reduce inequalities within and among nations.

I know this is a bold statement; especially in the extraordinary circumstances, the world is currently facing and yet, we see historic opportunities emerging along with these challenges and despite them.

Thirty-seven Member countries have been accepted as formal participants, and several more are benefitting from the methodologies, platforms and support, developed under the Initiative. In 12 pilot countries, we are close to concluding agreements on the nature of the programme and the core investment plan supporting it.

We are building coalitions with the private sector and with international financial institutions' (IFIs) to attract investment around these investment plans. In additional 12 Member Countries, we are completing the initial studies and are in dialogue with the government to define the parameters of the national programme. The other Member countries are in the inception stage – as they have joined recently.

Being a country-led and country-owned initiative, the entry points and the nature of the work vary according to respective national priorities and identified needs. That is what I always told you, FAO should be the promoter, facilitator or enabler. We should ask the Members to own what we are going to persuade or recommend them to do some transformation of food systems.

I mentioned here some cases of progress in Africa, especially in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, the Dry Corridor of Central America. Now, I think it is becoming 1 plus 1 plus 3 models of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in the North and Central America. In Nigeria, Ecuador, and Peru.

Also the World Bank and Rabobank.

In Lao PDR, in Nepal, in Tajikistan and in the Pacific Islands. Also how to work with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), especially IFAD.

In Syria and in Yemen. You know those two countries have conflicts, therefore how to build the humanitarian – development – nexus supporting peace, through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

The Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform now has over 38 000 users.

That is a digital FAO. You can see, it is so efficient, so effective and accessible to users. Otherwise, we used to have a lot of classical publications in the library and for years only few number of accesses and users. This is how UN is usually running, but FAO thanks to your contribution and engagement now, is a digital FAO. Therefore, you can see a lot of activities and information shared very quickly, very efficiently and more accessible.

The Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture have been reviewed by the Committees on Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, and by the Programme Committee.

Members have provided constructive feedback and recommendations.

I invite you to continue supporting this important effort by endorsing the Platform's Terms of Reference.

There is good progress in the implementation of the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement since you endorsed it in December.

Just today, my colleagues led by Ms Beth Bechdol, we launched the FAO CONNECT Portal, a 'one-stop shop' for private sector engagement aimed at leveraging private sector partnerships for agri-food system transformation. It is a transparent way, so that everyone can access that.

FAO has been very active in providing support to data collection, catalysing policy development and action to reduce food loss and waste. I made a strong announcement during the G20 Presidency in Saudi Arabia. Food loss and food waste will have the highest marginal utility to take the measure against the climate crisis, because we reduce the food loss and we establish zero food waste society. That will be substantial for us.

We are providing technical assistance and capacity development on food loss measurement to Members across Africa, Europe and Latin America.

Together with UNEP, we are developing a methodology to combine the Food Loss Index indicator and the Food Waste Index indicator into a single SDG indicator for reporting on target 12.3.

Food loss and waste cuts across all five Action Tracks of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.

We are supporting the development of game-changing solutions for agri-food systems transformation including ensuring that proposals to address food loss and waste reduction are robust, relevant and impactful.

We are also supporting the UN Food Systems Summit with a dashboard of indicators that include Food Loss and Waste.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the fight against desert locust, our resource partners stepped up quickly and generously.

Over USD 223 million have been raised in response to the revised appeal for the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

In the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen, more than 2 million hectares have been treated since January 2020.

With the efforts made in the region, about 4 million tonnes of cereal and close to 800 million liters of milk have been protected, with a value of USD 1.53 billion.

This is enough to feed more than 34 million people for one year and to protect more than 1.7 million pastoral households from livelihood loss and distress.

I am very pleased that the threat of a locust invasion in West Africa was completely averted, and the upsurge in southwest Asia was brought under control.

Since the launch of FAO's global action on Fall Armyworm control, we have made good progress in integrated control, prevention and global coordination. Never be late, if we do now. We take the tangible and deliverable actions now.

The FAO Green Cities Initiative is advancing very well.

The Initiative's Regional Programme for Africa has started implementing green and innovative, quick-win actions in Cape Verde, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Rwanda.

In 10 Member countries, we are supporting cities and municipality stakeholders to develop context-specific green city interventions.

Distinguished Delegates,

The 1 000 Digital Villages Initiative is developing well.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 58 villages in 14 countries are joining. In Asia and the Pacific, several Members including Cambodia, India and Pakistan are integrating the Digital Villages Initiative

into their national programmes of work. In Bangladesh and in China, they have a lot of experience to share. In Africa, five countries have submitted proposals to join the initiative.

The FAO Women and Youth Committees continue to be active engines for solidarity and inclusiveness among all employees and beyond.

The World Food Forum (WFF), powered by global youth, a movement initiated by FAO Youth Committee went live with its website and social media channels at the end of March, reaching 15 000 viewers, subscribers and followers during the first two weeks.

A WFF Youth Action Assembly was formally launched during the recent United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum. Youth is our future. If youth is involved and engaged, they will change the future.

The Assembly is planning several global WFF events and dialogues over the coming months, including a youth event during the UN Food System Summit (UNFSS) Pre-Summit in July, to boost youth engagement and participation.

As current chair of the One Health Tripartite of FAO, WHO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), we are working on a number of priorities including the development of a Global Plan of Action for One Health:

The Terms of Reference for the One Health High-Level Expert Panel have been finalized and a call for experts was made in March 2021.

The FAO Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Action Plan 2021-2025 was updated according to the comments and recommendations received.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

FAO continues strengthening its partnerships within the UN System.

We are active in 119 UN Joint Programmes and in 114 UN joint Business Operations Strategies.

We are joining the High-Level Task Force the UN Secretary-General called for, in light of the increasing levels of acute food insecurity together with Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and World Food Programme (WFP).

Together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), we rolled out a multidimensional poverty index in more than 30 countries; and we are supporting over 20 countries to enhance their national determined contributions.

With the International Atomic Energy Agency, we elevated our joint division to a Joint Centre for Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture.

Together with United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), we have facilitated national stakeholder consultations in Africa addressing the pandemic's impacts on young people.

FAO continues to provide full support to the preparatory process for the UN Food Systems Summit.

As the UN Anchor Organization for Action Track 1 on "Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food", we ensure that the working groups benefit from existing knowledge and experience of the UN.

The FAO Chief Scientist and Chief Economist are part of the Scientific Committee.

The UN Food Systems Summit 2021 Science Days will be facilitated and co-hosted by FAO on 8-9 July.

FAO's Chief Economist is leading a consortium of modelling platforms to assist in the assessment of proposed actions and interventions.

FAO, with funding from the European Union (EU), is undertaking rapid food systems assessments in 60 countries.

We continue building an open FAO with strong partnerships.

A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Renewable Energy Agency promotes sustainable bioenergy and the use of renewable energy in agri-food systems. That was already done earlier this year; we had a very good re- and new partnership with this organization.

Our MoU with the European Space Agency paves the way for increased exchange of relevant expertise and developing applications in which Earth observation images can be used to better monitor agri-food systems.

Our active outreach continues with a wide range of stakeholders:

At the World Economic Forum's Davos event in January, held virtually this year, I called for joint responses and global action to transform the world's agri-food systems.

My intervention at the One Planet Summit for Biodiversity in January reiterated FAO's commitment to continue supporting the mainstreaming of biodiversity across agriculture and food sectors also by the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

In a meeting in February with the Heads of State and Government of Fiji, Guyana, Palau, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, and Suriname, I presented FAO's efforts to support the Small Island Developing States in facing the pandemic.

The *Lectio Magistralis* that I delivered at the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome in February this year, on "Transformation of Agri-food Systems: from Strategy to Action" was broadcast live on Italian National TV and got all the global warming actions and reactions. It is an Academy established 700 years ago. It was the first time a FAO Director-General was invited to give a *Lectio*.

My Keynote Address at the opening of the Annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) Conference in March, established by EU, included a message of support for the primacy of science in guiding responses to global challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last Council in December 2020, even during wintertime, all my colleagues worked very hard, efficiently and effectively for all projects, programmes and activities - we tried our best. FAO mobilization of voluntary contributions has followed a relatively positive trend, you know it is very competitive also because we faced economic recession, although of course, first-quarter data is a limited sample to predict annual volumes.

As of the end of March 2021, FAO had mobilized USD 229 million, which is substantially above the five year average. It was really challenging for my colleagues to reach that level.

Over one third of these funds was received from the European Union in relation to projects dating back to 2020.

The second largest resource provider during the quarter was Canada, thanks to a generous USD 19 million contribution to FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, with other large contributions coming from Japan and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Under the Green Climate Fund (GCF), FAO is already implementing seven projects, with a value of USD 244 million, and expects at least an additional USD 120 million to be operational in 2021, and possibly up to USD 195 million. Since I think the situation is more favourable to the fight against the climate crisis, it is really international solidarity.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) and others, FAO is actively and effectively involved in all those programmes and funds.

Contributions from the World Bank are also expected to continue at a high level in 2021. We almost got the biggest single programme from the World Bank, but I will report you better later on this.

As called for in the Basic Texts, all of FAO's work is guided by a Strategic Framework, which the Director-General should propose to Conference every 10 years for endorsement. The process consisted of extensive, inclusive and transparent consultations with Members, both formal and informal, and an intensive internal process drawing on the breadth and depth of FAO's knowledge and expertise. A top-

down and bottom-up approach ensured that FAO's global mandates and normative strengths are well embedded.

Special attention was given to incorporating the needs coming from Members to allow FAO to provide maximum support in achieving the SDGs at country level and so, we are proudly presenting the Strategic Framework 2022-31, the Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23.

All three documents build on and complement the organizational structure and management changes already put in place to make FAO a more modular, flexible, fit-for-purpose and responsive organization.

The Strategic Framework seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

The four betters represent an organizing principle for how FAO intends to contribute directly to the 2030 Agenda, with the guiding lens of SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) as well as supporting the achievement of the broader SDGs agenda.

The betters reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agri-food systems. As such, they also encourage a strategic and systems-oriented approach within all of FAO's interventions.

To accelerate progress, we will be applying the four cross-cutting/cross-sectional "accelerators" in all our programmatic interventions to maximize efforts and to facilitate the management of trade-offs, according to national priorities.

These accelerators are technology, innovation, data and complements, which are governance, human capital, and institutions.

The 20 Programme Priority Areas identified are inter-disciplinary, issue-based technical themes and represent FAO's strategic contribution to specific SDG targets, as further described in the Medium-Term Plan and are framed around the four betters of our new strategic narrative.

They embed and communicate themes where FAO has a comparative advantage, track record and ability to act.

The Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 translates the strategic narrative presented in the Strategic Framework and MTP into the biennial programme of work.

It has been developed around these core principles: it maintains a flat nominal budget (USD 1 005.6 million); it covers all increased costs without negatively impacting the technical work; and it maintains the organizational structure currently in place.

Within the flat nominal budget, resources are reallocated to high priority areas including the new Programme Priority Areas, the Office of the Inspector-General, and multilingualism.

The new modular and flexible headquarters organizational structure is one of the main initiatives that I have introduced and remains in place as a key component for implementing the Strategic Framework.

We are now looking towards an efficient and modern decentralized network and are reviewing regional structures and transforming the business model for country offices. This is done to mirror the changes introduced at Headquarters and to increase quality, opportunity, and effectiveness of regional work and support to FAO Representations.

Strong cross-continental cooperation and experience sharing by the FAO Representatives (FAORs) will result in increased benefit for our Members.

To ensure a more efficient and modern FAO over the next ten years, several additional areas will also receive careful attention. Specific strategies have been developed for these areas, which include business management, human resources, digital FAO, governance, communications, multilingualism, as well as safety, security and health services.

The total budget proposal presented in the PWB 2022-23 is USD 3.26 billion of which USD 2.25 billion (accounting for 69 percent) relies on extra-budgetary resources.

We urge Members to support the Strategic Framework and the implementation of the programme of work by continuing to provide strong extra-budgetary support.

We want to ensure that how we work in the coming years represents a change for the better – for the four betters – to scale up our programmes on the ground, and harness the power of science, innovation and digital technology to leave no one behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the developments and results that I shared with you today made two things very clear: that this new, agile, efficient and effective FAO is here to serve you better; and that it bridges the differences on how to address the challenges, how to erase hunger and defeat poverty. We need efficiency and effectiveness by rule-based governance, professional approach and cooperative spirit among the Members, managers, staff and other key partners.

Our commitment to deliver was neither stifled nor impeded by the challenging times we are all facing.

Our motivation is fuelled by the fact that we bring hope to all those counting on FAO around the world.

Hope to continue producing food, herding livestock, and raising fish.

Hope shared through science, knowledge and expertise.

Hope for the most essential human dignity of not suffering from hunger.

In full dedication to our mandate and our shared noble goals!

Thank you very much!

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General.

I have no doubt that many Members would like the opportunity to offer comments or questions in response to the Director-General's intervention. However, many of the topics touched upon in the statement will be addressed under individual agenda items of this Session. In the interest of optimal time management, I urge delegates to take the floor at this stage only on issues that are not covered by this Session's agenda; or if they wish to make more general interventions. The floor is now open for delegates.

Ms Vincenza LOMONACO (Italy)

Director-General, the week ahead of us is very important as the Council is called to prepare the next Conference that will take key decisions impacting on the work of FAO in the coming years, such as the endorsement of the New Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Plan.

These will be the first years following COVID-19 pandemic and more than ever represent the opportunity to build more resilient and sustainable food systems and nutrition. You, Director-General, have strived to the structural changes within FAO that make the Organization more capable to cope with the unprecedented challenges to agri-food systems of current times.

You can continue to rely on Italy's support in making FAO more meaningful in the international arena towards the implementation of Agenda 2030. You know how much my country values its role of Host Country. We are honoured to host FAO in Italy, an Organization which mandate is at the core of our priorities.

Actually, prioritizing food security has been our immediate reaction last year as the pandemic began when we first imagined a food coalition that could help catalysing political support to intervene at global, regional and national level and bringing the work on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 back on track. Thanks to FAO and your personal engagement the Food Coalition is now a reality.

Food security and Food Coalition are, again, a priority within our G20 presidency. The Foreign Affairs and Development Joint Ministerial session to be held in Matera on 29 June and the G20 meeting of Ministers of Agriculture will focus on global food security and will provide political momentum to raise critical support for the Food Coalition as a tool, among others, that can lead humanity out from hunger, especially in critical times.

Italy is equally engaged to promote better agriculture sustainable value chains and healthy lifestyles in the framework of the preparation of the Food Systems Summit. We are keen to host the Pre-Summit in July. This event will bring together the efforts and contribution of a global engagement process to shape a vision to transform food systems.

As host of the Pre-Summit, the Italian Government will make a national food system commitment to set the tone and a high ambition ahead of the Summit. We are strongly committed to address the issue of food security within our broad international agenda, G20, Food System Summit and 26th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), which Italy will be co-hosting and in this endeavour our collaboration with FAO is of paramount importance.

I would like to conclude by thanking you, Director-General, for your personal willingness and to support for such collaboration.

Mr Hee-seog KWON (Republic of Korea)

My delegation is grateful to the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, for his overarching and insightful opening remarks. I noted with a sense of solidarity the whole of the Organization's efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19 within FAO.

We commend your commitment to the continued innovation, efficiency and transparency as core elements of the internal reform and also so many valuable projects you lead, as elaborated on in your excellent remarks this morning.

We are still suffering from the pandemic, either directly or through the cascading impacts. At the same time, the pandemic leads us to thoroughly review and assess our food systems in a broader perspective and to carefully consider that the food systems hits a direction and constructive ways for moving forward.

Needless to say, FAO is responsible for reshaping our food systems in terms of sustainability, resilience and inclusiveness as one of the main international organizations working for food and agriculture with the many Members and stakeholders.

My delegation regards this Session as crucial in two aspects. First, we have two heavy agendas before us. One is the Organization's long-term Strategic Framework and the other is Medium Term Plan and biannual Programme of Work and Budget. We believe these documents will guide FAO not only as a blueprint but as a country action plan with adequate resources and Results Framework. We appreciate the Secretariat's hard work in this regard and we work on these things in cooperation with the other Members.

Secondly, we are participating in this session at a critical juncture before the holding of the Food Systems Summit and several other important meetings, such as G7, G20, 26th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit.

My delegation also highlights the upcoming P4G Summit, which will be hosted by my government virtually from 30 to 31 May. A dedicated session under the heading of food and agriculture will cover various ways to achieve SDG 2 and we look forward to having constructive discussions with diverse stakeholders.

In closing, let us remind ourselves once again that we all are the main actors participating in one of the challenging periods in our history.

My delegation looks forward to having meaningful discussions with you all during this Session of the Council and anticipates the Session's outcome result as one of the bedrocks of various thematic discourses which require our efforts.

Mr Defu GUANG (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I thank the Director-General for his comprehensive and informative opening remarks, through which we have a complete picture of FAO's recent work and the future plan that is forward-looking, and therefore we have a whole understanding of FAO's recent work future plan and we are confident and hopeful.

We also commend FAO's key role in addressing COVID-19's impact on food security and preparing for the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), among other key areas.

I am Guang Defu, China's newly appointed Ambassador and Representative to the Organization. Although I virtually meet you for the first time, I feel like greeting all the friends, because we have a shared common cause and I am confident and hopeful regarding our future beautiful friendship and our common cause.

2021 is the year of building on achievements. The Food Systems Summit will be held soon, there is a large room for post-pandemic reconstruction. The last decade for the 2030 Agenda has started. The new ten-year Strategic Framework will be implemented soon.

At this critical juncture of challenges and hope, this Session of the Council provides important guidance. We support the strategic vision of FAO regarding transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

We welcome high alignment among forward-looking and practical strategic framework, the Medium term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). We are pleased to see the transparent and inclusive consultation before this document is issued. We endorse FAO's response to and recovery from COVID-19, Hand-in-Hand initiatives and other innovative measures to mobilize and coordinate resources and to address key challenges of food and agriculture.

Director-General, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, our times are challenging yet remain hopeful. We firmly uphold the authority of the United Nations-centred multilateral system to improve its effectiveness under the global governance system. China consistently supports the Organization. China will continue to support the Organization, realizing the vision and the three main goals of the Members in order to play its leading role in food and agriculture.

To this end, I wish to propose three recommendations. First, highlight development in the macro framework of global food and agriculture, as it is the key to solve the issues and tackle difficulties. We support FAO through Technical Cooperation (TC) projects, increasing developing countries' agricultural capacities for self-development.

We also stand ready to share our expertise, experience and technology in countryside development, poverty eradication and food security. Through South-South Cooperation and the Triangular Cooperation, we will help developing countries in improving their agri-technology. Through Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), we will work with others to revitalize the countryside.

Second, encourage FAO to focus more on agriculture. We appreciate that the Organization's emphasis on agricultural and food systems and among its business operations is the focus on addressing technical issues of agriculture. We support the Organization in its management of technology and partnership to build a vibrant agency, to better help Members in helping their agricultural development and to promote food system transformation.

Third, call upon all Members to implement the multilateral principles of openness and equality. At this precious multilateral forum of FAO, it is vital to safeguard joint consultation and bridge differences and seek common ground while putting aside the differences for cooperation.

China wishes to communicate and collaborate more closely with others towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fulfil the 17 anchor commitments made by Heads of State and to tackle current challenges to create a better future for coming generations.

Lastly, I wish the Session a complete success and look forward to communicating with other Members more actively and closely. I wish to make friends with you all. The door of our representation office remains open to all.

Ms Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Independent Chairperson, Mr Khalid Mehboob, who has guided us with such patience over these few months.

Continue en français

Je voudrais remercier le Directeur Général pour les importantes remarques. Le Canada apprécie beaucoup votre rôle dans la réponse à la pandémie de la COVID-19.

Continues in English

Thank you for noting Canada's robust contribution to FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and our efforts to proactively address the social and economic impacts of the pandemic and to ensure, of course, nutritious food for all, both during and after the pandemic.

We also join with the Director-General in thanking Italy in its capacity as President of the G20 for giving prominence to food security in their upcoming meetings of both the Foreign and Development Ministers and Heads of Government, generating a high level of coordination and synergy between the G20 meetings. I would add the G7 and the Food Systems Summit provides us with a unique opportunity to create the political momentum needed to support the game-changing proposals being developed for the Food System Summit and for reaching, of course, our Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets.

As the Director-General noted, partnerships are important to drive these efforts and Canada welcomes as well new partnerships, such as the Food Coalition that Italy has put forward, that can support our efforts to address the impact of the pandemic in meeting the SDGs.

As we continue fighting COVID-19, FAO is at a turning point. The Strategic Framework that we will be discussing will guide the work of the Organization for the rest of the Decade of Action. As established during the last informal North American Regional Conference, Canada believes that FAO will be most effective by systematically adopting gender-responsive approaches by including those that tackle underlying social norms added to its behaviours and social systems that perpetuate gender inequalities, and that they should increase the focus on engaging women, youth and indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, FAO adds most value when it is delivering on the critical functions of its core mandate, normative and standard setting work, scientific evidence-based and impartial analysis, and serving as a knowledge aggregator, including through sex and age disaggregated data. Canada appreciates as well FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and its six guiding principles that underline the importance of a country-led and country-owned nature of this initiative, and we are proud to announce that we will be providing a contribution to FAO Field Spatial Platform.

Last week, Canada was proud to join with other Heads of Government to set more ambitious targets to reach zero carbon emissions. FAO has a key role to play in these efforts and that is why Canada supports the recommendations put forward by the 130th Programme Committee, to call on FAO to better reflect climate change and mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within FAO's mandate.

Canada further supports the numerous calls consistent with the 2021 COFI Declaration to ensure fisheries and aquaculture are fully integrated into the preparations for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, and fully recognize their unique role. We will also join other calls to highlight the importance of international trade to increasing resilience of our food systems.

Finally, I am pleased with the progress being made to advance the mandate conferred by the last FAO Conference to develop a voluntary code of conduct on voting procedures. This will allow us to ensure that FAO continues to be well-positioned to meet and lead on the high standards expected of all international organizations.

Mr Nobiyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

We appreciate the very comprehensive remarks made by His Excellency, Director-General, Mr Qu. While I will try to be very brief for the sake of optimization of the time, the Director-General's remarks touch upon various important issues.

We are in a very important juncture. We have global challenges such as the COVID-19 situation, the necessity to accelerate our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) efforts, so many challenges we face and the climate challenge is also one of the most important challenges we have to tackle.

As many of my colleagues already indicated, this year is quite an important and unique year, a United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) year, the United Nations Food Systems Summit, various fora in the framework of the G20, G7, COP26, the [XX] and also the Tokyo Nutrition Summit in December, which we are going to host.

This year, as some of my colleagues already pointed out, is a very important moment and a great opportunity for us to make a political commitment to our efforts to tackle all the challenges in order to ensure the food system resilience, to fight against hunger and poverty and the environmental degradation.

Also, when it comes to the food systems overall, I believe that the sound international trait is important and also we need innovation. Innovation needs the appropriate protection of property rights, and appropriate protection of privacy.

The environmental conservation is much more needed and also the high standards of labour are also important factors. This Council meeting is of particular importance, as my colleagues already said, where we can discuss the future Strategic Framework, and in the challenges that we face, our responsibility as Council Members and Observers is very heavy. I hope that we can work together very closely in order to make this Council Session very successful.

Last but not least, I would take this opportunity to thank and express our admiration for His Excellency, Mr Khalid Mehboob, for his excellent conduct of the Chairpersonship and I hope that this last Chairpersonship will be another great success.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I would like you to give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Mr Chairperson, dear Friend Mr Khalid Mehboob, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, in this last FAO Council Session under your chairing, Mr Khalid Mehboob, we would like to compliment and thank you - on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States - for the wise and your always gracious leadership.

In the past almost four years, you have guided this Council towards a consensus on many important issues. In the difficult conditions since the pandemic, you have had a decisive role in ensuring that the Council was able to fulfil its essential oversight and governance function. You managed all this with brilliance. We are very grateful for that. We are sure that, once again, you will lead us for a smooth and effective Council Session.

On behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States, I would also like to thank the Director-General, Dr Qu, for his introduction to this Council Session and, in particular, for sharing his detailed thoughts and vision on FAO's work - both in the near and the more distant future. We listened carefully to all what was said. We look forward to addressing these issues from various angles and different perspectives in the coming days.

For now, let me highlight our strong commitment to achieve a sustainable approach on food and agriculture, based on food systems, putting the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability on an equal footing.

Let me also welcome the proposal for a zero-nominal-growth budget - this is indeed necessary and appropriate in the current situation of economic and financial uncertainty.

We would also like to stress our commitment and attachment to the FAO Constitution and the Basic Texts: any suspension of the General Rules of the Organization and special procedures are to be implemented on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent.

The EU and its 27 Member States remain fully committed to FAO's work and to working closely together with FAO's Membership in fulfilling our joint governance responsibility. Establishing a new Strategic Framework and Programme of Work is an essential part of that responsibility. We look forward to fruitful exchanges this week under your experienced and continued wise guidance - and with the essential support of the Secretariat.

Sr. Alfonso DASTIS QUECEDO (España)

En primer lugar, quiero unirme a las palabras pronunciadas sobre su excelente presidencia por parte de Portugal en nombre de la Unión Europea. Señor Director General, queridos colegas, me complace dirigirme una vez más a este Consejo. Si bien no debo ocultar que me gustaría que ésta fuese la última vez que lo hago de forma virtual, ya que este formato dificulta notablemente la comunicación y el entendimiento entre los Miembros, y entre estos y FAO.

Si queremos verdaderamente abogar por el multilateralismo, hemos de recuperar cuanto antes las herramientas que lo hacen posible. Dicho esto, quisiera subrayar algunos de los puntos de este Consejo que son de especial importancia para España.

En primer lugar, en lo referente al marco estratégico, España se felicita de que se haya desarrollado mediante un proceso de consultas con todo el apoyo de los Miembros, estableciendo una colaboración fluida particularmente en campos fundamentales como son: la innovación y la digitalización, la implementación del enfoque “Una salud” en la producción alimentaria incluyendo en ello la lucha contra las resistencias antimicrobianas.

Y todo ello sin olvidarnos del impulso dado a la colaboración público-privada o el apoyo transversal a las mujeres y los jóvenes.

Para todo ello, España pone a disposición de FAO sus capacidades y conocimientos y el compromiso de continuar trabajando estrechamente para lograr el mejor marco estratégico posible. En este contexto de unos Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) todavía lejanos, tenemos que preservar la excelencia científica y técnica de FAO como una de sus principales ventajas comparativas acompañadas por los valores de imparcialidad y transparencia.

Igualmente, la labor de la FAO ha de aplicarse desde un enfoque triplemente sostenible y equilibrado en lo ambiental, económico y social ante retos tales como el cambio climático, la COVID-19 y la consecuente crisis económica que ha afectado nuestras vidas y economías, y a nuestras producciones agroalimentarias, pesqueras y acuícolas.

Paralelamente, no quisiera dejar de destacar la especial importancia de la labor del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA) y de su Grupo de alto nivel, así como sus distintos productos para conseguir los ODS.

Pero para poder hacer frente a tan importantes retos, se debe contar con el soporte financiero necesario por lo que, incluso en estos tiempos de crisis económica global, es importante apoyar al presupuesto de la FAO para el bienio 2022-2023 manteniendo las aportaciones obligatorias y en buena medida las voluntarias como el mejor medio de garantizar todos los ámbitos de trabajo de la FAO, compaginando todo ello con una clara apuesta, desde luego en el caso de España, por aumentar simultáneamente el compromiso de colaboración técnica y científica con la FAO.

En relación con la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios en Nueva York y la precumbre en Roma, España está totalmente comprometida con la consecución de sus objetivos y confiamos en el papel principal que la FAO y el CSA deben tomar en esta iniciativa, gracias a sus competencias y capacidades.

Finalmente, no podemos obviar una cuestión como el multilingüismo por el que España aboga claramente como parte de la riqueza cultural del sistema de las Naciones Unidas y de la igualdad de oportunidades para participar en el proceso decisorio de la FAO.

Señor Director General, señor Presidente, queridos colegas, concluyo confiando una vez más que ésta sea la última edición digital de una sesión del Consejo de la FAO y animando a nuestra Organización a hacer todos los esfuerzos posibles para que así sea.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Dear colleagues, dear Director-General, we are delighted to be here in your presence once again. Being part of the FAO Council has been a significant milestone for the State of Israel, especially during these pressed times.

Being a part of this establishment the last year has given us a unique platform to be deeply engaged in the global challenge we are facing. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Italy for initiating the Food Coalition and for its leadership. During this period, we have become acquainted with the inspiring work of FAO, the Members, and the Council.

We have studied the system, collaborating in a great effort to provide solutions to the challenge the world is facing, and we have found a group of dedicated people. As we put the focus on people, as an Organization our mission is to extend equality to the global community, the states and especially societies. We carry the torch of the equal opportunity principle and we aspire to care and provide for all, but especially for those that their fundamental conditions were neglected.

Equal opportunity should not only be our outgoing mission, we should, actually must, look inwards and evaluate if we, as an employer, protect for the same equal opportunities in-house. The concept of equal opportunity in the labour market has been adopted by the majority of countries and, as an employer, FAO should align accordingly.

The Finance Committee has initiated a strategical re-thinking with emphasis on demographic and equal opportunity employment last November, and we welcome the support and support the strategic plan, but we are already behind. If we examine it quickly, for people with disability, this matter is not addressed enough during recruitment. Every applicant for employment should have the freedom to compete on a fair and level playing field and we must allow our recruitment guidance to promise the fair competition, especially for people with special needs and disabilities.

In light of all this, we suggest implementing an equal opportunity employment system and ensure a diverse and inclusive workplace, re-thinking the integration process of people with special needs and disabilities in specifically located positions and encouraging women's growth and progress. This will be challenging, but challenge is our middle name and our people are the best for it.

Dear Chairperson, I will leave our words of thanks to you to the end of the Council, since you are going to lead us and to continue to lead us during the Council meetings. I would like to thank you, Director-General, for your efforts and dedication and for your leadership.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Mr Khalid Mehboob, our Independent Chairperson, for his leadership and also his guidance through all the Council meetings, which actually is a very difficult task.

After listening to the Director-General's remarks, Thailand would like to express our appreciation for the hard work of FAO that has made great progress since the Director-General came to the office for almost two years, and also during the difficult situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Director-General presented to us, we appreciate the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, to prevent the health crisis from becoming a food crisis. We expect the Programme will help the Members have better outcomes in mitigating immediate impact, while strengthening the long-term resilience of livelihoods and building to transform the agri-food system. In particular, we need to make sure that our small-scale farmers, family farmers and vulnerable people are protected in order to reduce the inequalities.

Since the Director-General launched the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, we have seen that it is driving a rapidly evolving, integrated, dynamic and collaborative global and regional support mechanism, organized around the One FAO approach to deliver the programme support at the country level, and also it has strengthened the collaboration among the countries in the region as well. We hope that this Programme will provide support and strengthen the Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also the 2030 Agenda.

We also appreciate the hard work of FAO in developing the Strategic Framework to 2022-2031, Thailand will provide our support through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food system. We know that this year is very special, the United Nations Food Systems Summit, Pre-Summit and Summit will be organized in July and September.

After the United Nations Food System Summit, we do hope that FAO will play an important role in transforming agri-food systems to be more resilient and sustainable. We still have a lot of work to do and we need to work together.

In conclusion, we wish FAO will bring better work to all people.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Voy a tratar de ser muy sintético. En primer lugar, mi acompañamiento a los Miembros y a sus pueblos que están viviendo este momento espiritual tan importante como es el Ramadan, Ramadan Mubarak.

En segundo lugar, mi mayor solidaridad con todas las víctimas y las familias afectadas por el COVID-19, particularmente en aquellos países, que son la mayoría, que aún no han recibido el privilegio de ser vacunados.

En tercer lugar, aprecio, valoro y apoyo los principales mensajes expresados por el Director General, su liderazgo es clave en estos momentos críticos. Necesitamos que la FAO siga siendo una Organización neutral basada en conocimientos científicos, balanceada y el gran instrumento para implementar, de una vez por todas, la Agenda 2030. Multilingüismo, género, juventud e inclusividad son valores y objetivos que FAO debe seguir defendiendo y promoviendo.

Por último, Presidente, los principales acuerdos internacionales ya fueron logrados entre los miembros y están expresados en la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. El mundo en desarrollo prefiere menos discusiones teóricas y más acción, menos nuevos conceptos creativos y más resultados en el terreno.

Más transferencia de conocimientos y capacidades y más inversión en desarrollo. Más solidaridad, no vocal sino efectiva, donde en un contexto crítico para nuestros países afectados por el COVID-19, las vacunas lleguen a todas y a todos, y el acceso a los alimentos sea para todas y todos.

Esas son nuestras prioridades, querido Presidente. Y permítame solamente agradecerle por su liderazgo y por su amistad, ya tendremos tiempo de saludarlo especialmente.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his introductory, comprehensive remarks. We commend the direction in which he is taking the Organization and are heartened by his enthusiastic approach, which puts people first and centre.

Further, we commend FAO for its support to the Caribbean region on FAO's work and future plans and we look forward to achieving much during this current Session of meetings, as we work towards food security. To achieve the 2030 goals, we would like for FAO to consider the following areas, which are very important to the Caribbean nations.

Firstly, a sustainable food systems and food security. Secondly, climate, resilience, agriculture. Thirdly, rural development focussing on youth employment and smallholder income generation. Fourthly, increased use of innovation and digital technology. Fifthly, improved agricultural data collection, statistical analysis, and market information. Fifthly, increased inter-regional trade. Sixthly, improved financial mechanics for agriculture development. And, lastly, agricultural insurance.

In closing, I ask that you keep the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines in your thoughts and prayers, as you are aware that they are currently experiencing a devastating volcanic eruption.

Ms Alexandra VALKENBURG (European Union)

Good morning to everybody, Director-General, Chairperson, at your last Council and to all colleagues. I align with the statement of the Presidency of the European Union and I speak on behalf of the European Union.

We stand at the beginning of an important Council and a busy few months in our multilateral agenda for the transformation of food systems, and we are really looking forward to join forces and work together with the FAO.

As the Director-General mentioned, the European Union is the largest provider of voluntary contributions, again, in 2020, proof of our continued commitment to FAO, for instance, in the area of the locust pandemic and the global network against food crisis.

We expect FAO's future work to be firmly anchored in Agenda 2030 and focused on all those Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets for which FAO assumes a custodian role. This is where FAO's value-added lies within the wider United Nations system and we appreciate that the Programme Committee Members agreed to have a reference to agriculture and food systems in the Strategic Framework, and we support that the food systems approach looking at all three dimensions of sustainability.

We would welcome regular written reports on funding mobilized for the implementation and concrete results for the beneficiaries and FAO Members of all the initiatives that the Director-General mentioned, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, COVID-19 Response Plan, the 1 000 Digital Villages, the Food Coalition, as well as the programmes that are funded through the Global Environmental Facility and the Global Climate Fund.

Director-General, we welcome your strong commitment to the One Health approach, and this needs to be strengthened and mainstreamed within FAO and across United Nations agencies, and the Strategic Framework, of course, is important in this regard. Let me highlight the environmental and plant health aspects needing greater attention, for example, in the form of strengthened cooperation, in particular with United Nations.

COVID-19 has created global and potentially long-lasting crisis for health, exacerbating hunger and slashing economic development for rich and poor countries alike. In this regard, I would like to mention the initiatives for a pandemics treaty to build a more robust international health architecture and protecting future generations.

It would also include a recognition of a One Health approach that connects the health of humans, animals and our planet. This initiative is led by the European Union together with the World Health Organization (WHO), but there is a strong group of leaders around the world that have supported this.

On human resources policy, let me underline we really appreciate FAO's efforts to bring working conditions into line with the United Nations system and I noticed the commitment to parental leave that the Director-General mentioned. We very much encourage you to continue on this path.

Finally, let me reiterate remarks by other colleagues that we really hope this is the last virtual Council and that we can meet each other again, in Council or outside Council, in the FAO building, as I know that other United Nations Headquarters are indeed also slowly opening up.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

Je voudrais tout d'abord féliciter le Directeur général pour sa déclaration d'ouverture de la session du Conseil, qui est toujours une source d'inspiration pour les membres en ce qui concerne les défis à relever qui se posent à nous tous, en matière de sécurité alimentaire, et aussi, les solutions proposées.

Cette session, la dernière avant la Conférence, traitera des questions pertinentes comme l'a si bien souligné le Directeur général, notamment le Cadre stratégique de la FAO 2022-2031, le plan à moyen terme 2022-2025, et le Programme de travail et budget 2022-2023. Ces instruments, que nous allons

discuter les jours à venir, permettront à l'Organisation de mieux aligner ses actions, sur les défis structurels et conjoncturels relatifs à ces missions.

Dans l'attente des suites qui plaira au Conseil de donner, je souhaite exprimer le soutien de ma délégation aux réformes que le Directeur général a engagé au sein de notre Organisation, depuis sa prise de fonctions en 2019. Dans un contexte particulièrement marqué par la pandémie mondiale de COVID-19, la FAO a apporté son soutien traditionnel pour atténuer l'impact de cette pandémie sur les plans économiques, sociaux, mais aussi environnementaux.

L'initiative Main dans la Main, l'alignement du nouveau cadre stratégique sur les ODD, les préparatifs du Sommet des Nations Unies sur les systèmes alimentaires sont autant de questions qui ont retenu notre attention sur la direction que suit la FAO, pour aider les pays à faire face aux problèmes de la sécurité alimentaire, et du développement agricole, qui se posent avec plus d'acuité.

Pour terminer, je voulais saisir cette occasion, pour remercier le Directeur général et la FAO pour sa prompte réaction lors de la résurgence dans mon pays en février dernier de l'épidémie dûe au virus Ebola. Un apport qui a contribué à la maîtrise de cette crise.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

I have been honoured to make this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. I thank you, Chairperson, for chairing this Council and for giving me the floor, and I also want to thank the Director-General for his very comprehensive and important statement. We also wish to align ourselves to the G77 and China's representation.

The Africa Group welcomes the comprehensive statement that the Director-General made and the strategic vision in moving forward with our agenda in supporting Members in achieving the food and nutritional security. We are grateful on how the statement to maintain and sustain effective and efficient FAO was brought up by the Director-General quite eloquently, very insightful and focused.

The Group supports the leadership of the Director-General and the different initiatives, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which is key in helping enhance the fight against poverty and hunger. The Group looks forward to more collaboration, partnerships and solidarity with FAO, especially at this point in time when the pandemic is continuing to affect the world disproportionately. Africa looks forward to work closely with FAO in improving smart and digitalization of agriculture.

In conclusion, the Africa Regional Group wishes to express its appreciation for the work that has been carried out by FAO under the leadership of the Director-General at this very critical moment, and we look forward for a very successful deliberation.

M. Papa Abdoulaye SECK (Observateur) (Sénégal)

Je voudrais tout d'abord vous féliciter pour l'excellent travail que vous avez fait comme Président du Conseil, et remercier et féliciter aussi Monsieur le Directeur général pour son dynamisme et la clarté de sa vision.

À l'évidence, quand on est dans un monde turbulent, il faut nécessairement faire des réformes. Car faute de réforme, le futur risque de nous inventer, au lieu d'inventer le futur. C'est pourquoi, nous souscrivons à l'idée d'avoir une décentralisation assortie, où, en travaillant en interaction très forte, avec une équipe, bien soudée au niveau du siège, avec un système de vases communicant, on essaye de prendre en charge les problèmes essentiels qui se posent.

Étant donné que nous avons entamé cette réforme, il nous faut aussi commencer à réfléchir dès maintenant à l'évaluation de cette réforme, pour être sûrs d'être en phase avec les changements perpétuels que nous vivons. Dans le cadre de l'évaluation de cette réforme, il doit y avoir certainement au moins sept mots-clés qu'on devrait considérer.

Un, transparence. Deux, équité. Trois, efficience. Quatre, efficacité. Cinq, gestion de l'obligation de résultat. Six, gestion de l'obligation de rendre compte. Sept, impact réel et impact potentiel de cette réforme et la durabilité des actifs qui seront enregistrés. Je crois qu'en faisant cette évaluation, on pourrait faire les ajustements nécessaires pour être toujours à la hauteur du défi qui se pose et anticiper et faire preuve de réactivité stratégique, par rapport aux défis futurs qui vont s'opposer.

Le deuxième point que je voudrais évoquer aujourd'hui, est le suivant: Je pense qu'il nous faut vous entendre davantage, Monsieur le Directeur général, sur les risques institutionnels de la FAO. Vous avez reçu récemment le Président d'une organisation, la question a été posée, quels sont les risques institutionnels de notre Organisation? Compte tenu, de la situation que nous vivons. Il faudrait aussi vous entendre davantage sur ce que pourrait être la Stratégie de génération et de diffusion de l'innovation technologique, dans un continent tel que l'Afrique.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne le troisième point: les systèmes alimentaires, je suis totalement en phase avec le représentant de l'Argentine, peut-être que nous avons trouvé des solutions, en ce qui concerne les systèmes alimentaires, mais ce qui manque peut-être, c'est une volonté politique forte au niveau national, régional et international, assortie d'une réflexion approfondie pour que nous puissions prendre en charge les défis qui se posent à nous. Il n'existe pas au monde une agriculture qui s'est développée sans recherche.

Une recherche qui va générer des connaissances et des technologies nous permettant de produire plus et mieux, on le sait. Mais comment générer et diffuser l'innovation et technologie? On sait aussi qu'aucun pays ne s'est développé sans infrastructures de base, des routes, des pistes de productions, des marchés physiques, des industries de transformations, des aménagements structurels. Mais qui va le faire? Comment on va le faire? Ce sont les questions essentielles qui se posent. Enfin, un environnement propice à l'explosion d'initiative, c'est le crédit adapté.

C'est effectivement un soutien aux producteurs, c'est la gouvernance foncière, c'est l'État de droit, et cætera... Donc, en allant à ce sommet, peut-être que la question qui se pose ce n'est pas qu'est-ce qu'on doit faire, mais comment le faire. Parce qu'à l'évidence, on sait que la construction d'une agriculture compétitive, diversifiée ou d'un système alimentaire compétitif, diversifié et durable, passe nécessairement par le triplé: recherche - infrastructure de base - et environnement propice à l'explosion du chapitre privé.

Je crois que si nous centrons cette réflexion, comme l'a dit si bien le représentant de l'Argentine, sur des faits concrets, certainement on pourra contribuer à une transformation ou à une invention du système alimentaire pour un monde où nous allons mieux nous nourrir et plus durablement. Ce sont les quelques mots que je voudrais dire au nom de mon pays, en m'associant bien sûr à tout ce qui a été dit par la Région Afrique, et par le représentant de la Guinée.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

En premier lieu je voudrais vous remercier et féliciter le Directeur général pour le résultat des réformes et les restructurations qui sont en train d'être mises en œuvre, ainsi que pour les nouveaux programmes innovants qui n'auraient pas été développés sans une assistance technique dynamique, avec des résultats qui assureront une forte augmentation de la productivité globale, pour lutter contre la pauvreté, la faim et assurer la sécurité alimentaire et la croissance sociale et durable.

L'Angola continue à minimiser les effets du Covid-19 en renforçant les politiques et les programmes nationaux, et en accélérant les actions avec les petits investissements. L'Angola est en train aussi de renforcer ses capacités et de mettre en place des renforcements institutionnels pour intensifier des politiques actives afin d'accélérer la transformation structurelle que le monde connaît. La diversification économique, la création de petites entreprises, les petites industries pour la création d'emplois dans les secteurs productifs, tel que l'agriculture sont fondamentales.

Nous développons des foires axées sur l'agro-industrie, ce qui accélère l'augmentation des infrastructures de la chaîne de production. Nous devons même remercier la FAO pour sa contribution de changes d'expériences et aussi pour développer le programme d'agrobusiness, parce que ce programme est en effet un partenariat qui implique tous, les producteurs et les commerçants.

Nous remercions aussi l'appui que la FAO nous a donné pour les urgences. Nous traversons dans le sud du pays, une invasion de criquets. Nous sommes en train, avec la FAO et nos partenaires, de faire en sorte que les criquets ne compromettent la sécurité alimentaire dans le pays. Le gouvernement met en œuvre, avec l'appui du Projet régional d'urgence pour l'Afrique, des mesures visant à réduire les risques régionaux.

L'Angola considère que dans le cadre de la lutte contre la pauvreté et la faim, il convient d'améliorer la relation entre la production, les risques et les marchés de consommation, afin d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et la chaîne de valeur agro-industrielle, à travers lesquelles le pays peut renforcer les capacités techniques nationales.

L'Angola aussi, réaffirme le compromis avec l'Afrique. C'est un compromis qui devrait être priorisé parce qu'en Afrique, avec la Covid-19, nous commençons à sentir la crise, pas seulement une crise sanitaire, mais une crise qui affecte l'alimentation, la sécurité alimentaire, et aussi les croissances économiques et sociales.

Je vous remercie, et je remercie tous les participants pour leur contribution et pour la restructuration que maintenant le Conseil va envisager.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Members, for your comments and your input. Now, I give the floor back to the Director-General should he wish to make some remarks.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you very much to all the Council Members, from different regions and from different angles.

I always say that FAO is your Organization. We are here to offer service to you. All the managers should follow the Basic Texts. We need your endorsement and support in any initiative.

I also appreciate you walk the talk. Some Members did not talk too much, but they did a lot. I count on that.

A Chinese proverb says, "Once the mute people eat the dumpling, they always count how many dumplings they ate". I am like those mute people. I can count the dumplings you offered.

Some people are always talking. I am also listening. I really appreciated some Members pushing FAO's managers. I also push you to walk the talk.

My friend from Argentina said, "We have to offer tangible solutions, technically, innovatively and of course, enabling policy". That is the way we can have more tangible, deliverable results. Otherwise, in every meeting, every platform, you are just talking. However, you need to talk. We need to talk, because if you talk, you are listened. That is why I encourage all the Members of the Council to talk. However, within the time limit – two minutes or three minutes. I do not know what the Council Chairperson or the Secretary-General said to you. Do not waste your time. I encourage Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and the Secretary-General of the Council, Mr Rakesh Muthoo, to give each Member two minutes first and not let just a few people to keep talking. We are an international democracy. Hence, as a manager, I should listen to all the voices first.

In addition, I always expect your cooperation, compromise, consensus with compromise. That is why I say, rule-based governance, professional approach and cooperative spirit.

We have 194 Members. Each Member has a different angle. However, finally I try my best to get as inclusive as possible.

I hope you celebrate the last Chairpersonship of the ICC, my honorable brother, he is 81 years old. Do not make too much trouble for him. No one here is older than him. In Asian cultures, Chinese culture and even global cultures, we have to respect seniors, especially who is our FAO's treasure, for a long time to come.

I wish you have a good day, effective and efficient. Any meeting should be efficient and effective, otherwise it is just a waste of time. I hope you have a good, effective and efficient Council with a cooperative spirit. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General. Thank you for your kind remarks and we can now move on with our Agenda Item 1.

Before starting with Agenda Item 1, I have to inform you that Cameroon, Cuba and Sudan are considered to have resigned from the Council under the terms of Rule XXII, paragraph 7 of the General Rules of the Organization regarding arrears in payment of financial contributions. Therefore, Cameroon, Cuba and Sudan participate in this Council Session as Observers.

Now we can move on.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

Point 1. Adoption de l'ordre du jour et du calendrier

Tema 1. Aprobación del programa y el calendario

(CL 166/1; CL 166/INF/1; CL 166/INF/3; CL 166/INF/5)

CHAIRPERSON

The first Item on the Agenda is the *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable*.

As indicated in my pre-session letter of 6 April 2021, the special arrangements and procedures proposed for this virtual 166th Session of the Council, as outlined in document CL 166/INF/5, are submitted for the Council's endorsement under this Agenda Item 1.

The special procedures follow consultations at my informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups, and build on the successful virtual experiences of Governing Body Sessions held last year and earlier this year.

In this regard, the Council is invited to confirm its endorsement for the suspension of any rules incompatible with this virtual setting, specifically Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council which stipulates that each Session of the Council shall be held at the seat of the Organization.

Other relevant information for the Agenda and Timetable of the Session is set out in documents CL 166/1, CL 166/INF/1 and CL 166/INF/3.

With regard to the Provisional Timetable, I would like to draw the Council's attention to my pre-Session letter of 6 April, outlining that the following topics be deliberated in a consolidated manner under the dedicated Agenda items, and not under the Reports of the Council Committees which also considered them:

the Strategic Framework 2022-31 under Item 3;

the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 – under Item 4;

FAO's response to the Covid-19: Building to Transform - under Item 5;

the Hand-in-Hand Initiative under Item 6;

Code of Conduct for Voting under Item 14;

FAO Awards under Item 15;

Multilingualism at FAO under Item 17; and

Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies under Item 18.

For ease of reference, the relevant paragraphs in the Reports of the Committees are included in the Order of the Day under the respective items.

Furthermore, with regard to Item 11, *the Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*, and Item 14, *the Code of Conduct for Voting*, these Items were originally envisaged to be addressed through the written correspondence procedure. However, it is proposed to address these items entirely in virtual plenary.

In addition, with regard to Item 13, *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*, this Item has been addressed through the written correspondence procedure. However, I note that there are diverging views on the alternative voting procedures to be implemented on an exceptional basis at the 42nd Session of the Conference, as evidenced in the written inputs of Members under this Item, published on the Council website. Some Members have voiced support for the use of the in-person

vote by appointment while others have supported the use of the electronic voting system. This matter was also discussed at my informal meeting with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups on Friday 23 April 2021 and it was not possible to identify a consensus opinion on the preferable voting option to recommend the Conference implement at its 42nd Session.

I would therefore like to propose that deliberations on Item 13 are opened in virtual Plenary in order to see whether consensus can be reached among the Members of the Council. I propose that this Item is addressed following Item 11, *the Report of the 112th Session of the CCLM*.

To summarise, Items 11, 13 and 14 will be opened in virtual Plenary for Council discussion, in that order. Item 11 will be addressed immediately following Item 10 on Tuesday afternoon. Items 13 and 14 will then be addressed on Wednesday morning, before Item 23, *Any Other Matters*, followed by the written correspondence items. This will be reflected in the Orders of the Day.

Therefore, the following list of ten items, addressed through the written correspondence procedure, shall be opened in plenary to discuss only the draft conclusions:

Item 7 – *Technical Committees:*

Item 7.1 – *Report of the 73rd (22 January 2021) and 74th (10-12 March 2021) Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems*

Item 7.1.1 – *Report on the 31st Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oilseeds, Oils and Fats*

Item 7.2 – *Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (1-5 February 2021)*

Item 12 – *Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (8-12 February 2021)*

Item 15 – *FAO Awards*

Item 16 – *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 165th Session of the Council (30 November 4 December 2020)*

Item 18 – *Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies*

Item 19 – *Margarita Lizárraga Medal*

Item 20 – *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2021-22*

Item 21 – *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO; and*

Item 22 – *Tentative Agenda for the 167th Session of the Council*

The written correspondence procedure follows the procedure used at the 164th and 165th Sessions of the Council. Inputs from Members, and the corresponding Secretariat responses may be found on the dedicated webpage on the Council's 166th Session website.

The draft conclusions for these will be addressed in virtual plenary on Wednesday, as outlined in the Timetable of the Session.

In addition, a further time management measure for this session is outlined in document *CL 166/INF/5*, as well as my pre-session letter of 6 April. Interventions from Members will be limited to three minutes. I strongly urge Members to adhere to these time limits to ensure efficient proceedings of our 166th Session. Members may refer to the timer on the Zoom platform to ensure they do not exceed the time limit.

Secondly, Regional Group or multi-Member statements further assist us in streamlining the orderly conduct of our proceedings. Members are kindly requested not to repeat statements already made under their Regional statements and to take the floor only to provide additional comments to the Regional or multi-Member statement, where applicable.

In my capacity as Chairperson, I will call five/ten minute breaks in the middle of our morning and afternoon Sessions, to allow Members a short break from the discussions.

In addition, in order to ensure streamlining of the time management of our Session, I would like to propose the following schedule for our evening sessions. When an evening session is necessary to conclude the items on the Agenda, the Council will adjourn at 17:30 hours for fifteen minutes. Given that this Session of the Council is taking place in the month of Ramadan, we will reconvene at 17:45 hours until 19:00 hours sharp. If it is necessary to hold an additional evening session, we will convene again at 21:00 until 23:30. Discussions will not be able to continue after midnight in any case.

May I take it that the Council approves the Agenda and Timetable for the Session, with these adjustments, as well as the special procedures for this virtual session, including the suspension of any rules incompatible with the virtual setting, specifically, Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council as outlined in document *CL 166/INF/5*?

The floor is open for the Agenda. I have a request for the floor from the Congo.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Monsieur le Président, merci beaucoup une fois de plus de présider notre réunion du Conseil. Nous savons qu'avec votre conduite, votre leadership nous aboutirons à des résultats probants. Le Congo demande la parole au nom du Groupe Afrique, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais que vous donniez la parole au Kenya, qui représente et qui est le Président du Groupe Afrique.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

We are pleased to take the floor on behalf of the Africa Group. I have the honour to deliver this statement on Agenda Items 1 and 2.

The Group thanks you, Chairperson, for convening this Session of the Council and for availing the opportunity for us to make this statement. On the procedure of this Session, the Group takes this opportunity to join all in adopting the Provisional Agenda and Timetable for the 116th Session of this FAO Council.

With respect to the elections of the 166th Session, the Group wishes to inform that it has nominated the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, which is the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and on 42nd Session of the Conference, the Group wishes to inform that it has nominated the Republic of Cameroon as the Vice-Chairperson and on the Credentials Committee, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

With regard to the Chairperson of the Commission and the General Committee of 42nd Session of the Conference, the Group informs that it is consulting and will forward the names of their nominees as soon as possible.

Equally, the Group will forward the names of the nominee for the Vice-Chairperson of the 167th Session of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no other comments, so the Agenda and Timetable are approved as well as the special procedures for the virtual modality to be used on an exceptional basis for this 166th Session of the Council.

Approved

Approuvé

Aprobado

Item 2. Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee

Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents et nomination du Président et des membres du Comité de rédaction

Tema 2. Elección de los tres Vicepresidentes y designación del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción

CHAIRPERSON

Item 2, *Elections of the three Vice-Chairpersons and Designation of the Chairpersons and Members of the Drafting Committee*. Following consultations amongst the regional groups, the following proposals for the three posts of Vice-Chairperson have been received. His Excellency, Carlos Cherniak of Argentina, Mr Caka Alverdi Awal of Indonesia, and Her Excellency, Yael Rubinstein of Israel.

If there are no objections, I wish to congratulate the three Vice-Chairpersons on their elections. I see none.

I wish to inform the Members of the Council that the following nominations for the Officers of the 166th Session of the Council are outstanding.

Sorry, Members, I am just getting the up-to-date information on this. We were just collecting the latest information.

Perhaps the best is I give the floor to the Secretary-General who has got the latest information on these appointments and he will read out the names.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

With regard to the Drafting Committee, nominations have been received for Chairperson and for Members of the Drafting Committee, which are Spain, Sweden, Peru, Brazil, the United States of America and Australia. We have still outstanding nominations for the Drafting Committee on the Asia, Near East and the Africa Regions.

CHAIRPERSON

I would therefore propose that we hold this Item in obedience until we receive the nominations from all the groups.

Before we move to Item 3 on the Agenda, I wish to remind Members to submit a copy of their statements in advance, if possible, to assist the interpreters and verbatim reporters. Statements should be submitted to FAO-Interpretation@fao.org.

I would also remind Members that, in light of the amended modalities for the Session, the introductions to agenda items have been published in advance on the website of the 166th Session of the Council.

I also wish to remind Members that following the discussions on each of the Agenda items, I will draw up conclusions to facilitate the drafting of the Report of this Session.

In line with established practice, the draft conclusions will be projected on the screen through the use of the share-screen function on the Zoom platform.

This will enable Council Members to see the draft text while it is being read out and react with comments more easily. Non-English speakers of Council will be able to follow and provide comments through interpretation.

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that my conclusions will be concise and focus on decisions by the Council, with some flexibility afforded to the Drafting Committee in finalising the draft report, while not re-opening substantive discussions which remains the prerogative of the plenary meeting. So we move on to Item 3 now.

United States of America, you have asked for the floor?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, and apologies for not getting my hand up quickly. I just had a question to clarify. You referenced a suspension of rules in conjunction with the virtual modalities of the Council, and I am just clarifying for our records that is it just Rule II that is suspended? If you could please clarify.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu, may I ask you to respond to that?

Ms Donata Rugarabamu (FAO Legal Counsel)

Specifically Rule II, paragraph 3 is suspended because that specifies that meetings will be held at the seat of the Organization. Nevertheless, there may be other rules that would need to be suspended, and so the proposal going forward is that to the extent required other rules would be suspended.

At this moment in time, so much depends upon how the meeting goes forward. It is not possible to specifically identify which those rules may be. For example, much may depend upon how decisions would be taken if consensus is not achieved on certain matters where there may need to be ad hoc arrangements taken. But always, always in a manner that is adhering as closely as possible to the established rules.

Indeed, of course, where such situations should arise, the Members would be advised where the departure was from the established rules of the Organization. But at this moment in time the proposal is not just that rule, but also such other rules that are incompatible with the conduct of this meeting in this particular manner in an exceptional way.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

I just wanted to correct the information on nominations from my region just to make things right. The Chairperson of the Drafting Committee is Republic of Congo from the Africa Regional Group (ARG), and the Member of the Drafting Committee is Equatorial Guinea.

CHAIRPERSON

That will be noted there.

Item 3. Strategic Framework 2022-31

Point 3. Cadre stratégique 2022-2031

Tema 3. Marco estratégico para 2022-2031

(C 2021/7)

CHAIRPERSON

We can now move to Item 3, which is the *Strategic Framework 2022 – 2031* and the document before the Council is C 2021/7.

Introduction to Item 3: Strategic Framework 2022-31

Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management

The Strategic Framework 2022-31

As called for in the Basic Texts, since 2010 all of FAO's work is guided by a Strategic Framework prepared for a period of ten to fifteen years, reviewed every four years¹. The Strategic Framework is a Conference document presented by the Director-General. It is considered by the Conference together with recommendations from the Council which are informed by guidance from the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee, and their Joint Meeting.

The Strategic Framework 2022-31 sets out a new direction for the Organization over the next decade with a firm anchoring in the Agenda 2030. At its centre is the strategic narrative of supporting the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

As outlined in the document, the four betters represent an organising principle for how FAO intends to contribute directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) as well as to supporting achievement of the broader SDG agenda, which is crucial for attaining FAO's overall vision. The four betters reflect the interconnected economic, social and environmental dimensions of agri-food systems. As such, they also encourage a strategic and systems-oriented approach within all of FAO's interventions.

¹ Basic Texts, Volume II, Chapter F, Article 1.(a)

The 20 proposed Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) will guide FAO on filling critical gaps and putting in place the conditions needed to drive the changes that will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the selected SDG targets.

In these introductory comments, I would like to focus however on the process that has taken place since January 2020 to arrive at the document before you today, in particular as Members already have a good understanding of the content of the Strategic Framework from their review of the document and the formal and informal sessions that have taken place.

The process for the development of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 follows the schedule for Governing Body input and oversight under the reformed programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring systems as set out in Conference Resolution 10/2009. What that entailed in practice for this document was an extensive, inclusive and transparent consultation process with Members, both formal and informal, and an intensive internal process drawing on the breadth and depth of FAO's knowledge and expertise in all locations, as further outlined below.

Internal Process Phase 1 (January - September 2020)

The internal process for the development of the Strategic Framework started in January 2020. An extensive review of background documentation was undertaken to identify key areas that should be considered in the new framework.

Following the background review, an In-house Strategy Team (IST) was established consisting of 30 FAO staff members who were selected on the basis of being dynamic-minded, innovative, flexible and strategic thinkers. The IST was divided into four task forces on key issues: the development of the new theory of change; creating a shared vision (One FAO); enhancing the visibility of normative work; and strengthening partnerships. A Representative Decentralized Group (RDG) was also established consisting of 20 colleagues from Regional, Sub-regional and Country Offices across the five Regions, to systematically gather feedback and views from the Decentralized Offices throughout the process and to ensure the FAO Strategic Framework fully reflects the aspirations and concerns of the country and regional levels.

During this same period, and under the leadership of the Chief Economist, FAO embarked on the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise 2020-21, which included an internal expert consultation which fed into the presentation of the global challenges and opportunities presented in the Strategic Framework.

Programme Committee and Council (June and July 2020)

In June 2020, a Programme Committee document was prepared entitled Provisional Outline of the New Strategic Framework (PC 128/2) which presented the Director-General's vision, the strategic context and initial programmatic content deriving from the internal process. The Programme Committee and the Council in their reports appreciated the approach and the direction and provided guidance for the next steps.

Regional Conferences (September - November 2020)

Between September and November 2020, feedback from the Regional Conferences became available through the priorities described in the Regional Conference reports. Areas of common priority across the regions included developing sustainable agri-food systems, addressing food insecurity and malnutrition, promoting sustainable natural resource management, climate-resilient agriculture, promoting rural transformation focused on youth employment and smallholder income generation, and control and prevention of transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases. Emphasis was also placed on innovation and access and use of digital technologies. The full set of priorities are described in the respective reports.

Technical Committee Meetings (September 2020 – March 2021)

Between September 2020 and March 2021, the meetings of the four Technical Committees provided key technical inputs. The Technical Committees highlighted the need to prioritize the 2030 Agenda and its commitment to ending hunger and poverty, notably tackling its root causes by building sustainability and resilience into agri-food systems. The Committees also provided specific guidance

on some of the proposed PPAs, with the Committee on Fisheries welcoming the proposed PPA on Blue Transformation and the Committee on Commodity Problems welcoming the proposed PPAs on transparent markets and trade and on food safety. The full set of priorities are described in the respective reports.

Informal Consultation with Members (September 2020 – March 2021)

Between September 2020 and March 2021, FAO launched an extensive informal consultation process with Members. Ten informal consultations took place during this period, including separate sessions with each Regional Group and three consultations for Permanent Representatives (one for non-Rome-based Permanent Representatives).

Programme Committee, Joint Meeting, and Council (November and December 2020)

At the end of 2020, a Council document was prepared, Outline of the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (CL 165/3), which was reviewed by the Programme Committee (PC), the Joint Meeting (JM) of the Programme and Finance Committees, and by the Council in November/December 2020. In their reports, the PC, JM and Council welcomed the inclusive and transparent consultation process with Members, appreciated that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are at the centre of the new Strategic Framework, and appreciated the narrative guiding the Strategic Framework with the overarching aspirations of the “four betters” and the guiding lens of SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 10 and others.

Internal Process Phase 2 (October 2020 to March 2021)

This second phase of the internal process was designed with more of a technical focus, to further clarify and define the programme content (Programme Priority Areas, cross-cutting themes) and to develop the results frameworks and the SDGs to be supported by FAO. Setting up the internal process in two phases allowed the broader strategic thinking to take place first, and the more detailed planning to take place once the guidance from the Regional Conferences, Technical Committees, Programme Committee, Finance Committee, the Joint Meeting, and the Council was becoming available. Management also maintained detailed notes from the informal sessions with Members and cross-referenced the points raised in these discussions with the formal processes to ensure that all issues were addressed to the extent possible in the development of the new framework.

For this phase, a *Programme Priority Team* was put in place, charged with the identification of a set of Programme Priority Areas building on all inputs and guidance coming from the processes described above. The team was comprised of approximately 50 Senior Managers covering all headquarter technical units, the Partnerships and Outreach Stream, and all Regions. The Representative Decentralized Group established in Phase 1 was kept in place to complement the involvement of the Regional Programme Leaders for decentralized inputs and feedback.

In order to ensure focus of efforts and best utilization of background and knowledge of team members, 5 sub-groups were formed, one sub-group for each “Better”, and a fifth sub-group to identify and ensure cross-linkages are taken into consideration and to avoid silos. In forming the four Better sub-groups, specific care was taken to ensure a balanced participation of staff bringing economic, social and environmental perspectives.

The Programme Priority Team met over a period of 3 months, with a series of 3 iterative rounds of review, discussion, and refinement – each round involving the Team, core leadership and decentralized colleagues. During this period, two half day retreats were also organized with Core Leadership to finalize the proposed set of PPAs. Throughout the process, the Director-General was consulted to seek his input and agreement with PPAs vetted through the team process and core leadership team guidance.

The intensive meetings and consultations culminated in the presentation of the 20 Programme Priority Areas shown in the Strategic Framework Table 2, the Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 *Annex 1*, and the accompanying *Annex 3* specifying how FAO PPAs support each of the SDGs and illustrating secondary contributions to highlight inter-linkages.

Programme Committee, Finance Committee, Joint Meeting, and Council (March and April 2020)

The entire process described above resulted in the finalization of the Conference document Strategic Framework 2022-31 (C 2021/7), which is now before the Council. The Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and their Joint Meeting reviewed the document and provided their guidance to Council in their respective reports in March 2021.

The Council is invited to review the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and endorse it for approval by the Conference.

The introduction of this item by Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management has been circulated to you. This item was discussed by the Programme Committee at its 130th Session and the Finance Committee at its 185th Session as well as at the Joint Meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

I will now open the floor for Members to make their comments.

Mr Fayiz KHOURI (Jordan)

I would like to give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Iraq to deliver the statement on behalf of the Near East group.

Ms Safia Taleb AL-SOUHAIL (Observer) (Iraq) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to thank the Chairperson on behalf of our Group for the efforts that you have made, and we wish you the greatest success.

We wish everyone a good Ramadan. We wish all of the Members who celebrate it a good Ramadan. As the Ambassador of Jordan mentioned, I am speaking on behalf of the Near East Group and we have a number of comments regarding the Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

The document on the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, which seeks to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the content of this document, with the important issues that it addresses, has our support. However, we would like to state it is important to take into account the priority that should be given to countries that face political conflicts and environmental, economic and other crises because, as you are aware, these things have an impact on populations in these countries, particularly in our region.

This work requires urgent action. It requires considerable work to build peace and sustainable development, to strengthen dialogue and partnerships, which are important elements for SDG 17.

Overcoming current challenges, particularly in the context of COVID-19, requires that we work with greater efficiency in all areas at the national, regional and global level. That is why it is necessary to strengthen joint work. We must make greater efforts together, combine efforts of Members for the post-COVID era because that era will be important and difficult economically speaking, particularly for my group.

This period will constitute a great challenge for us, and we must place all of our efforts in overcoming this challenge. In this time, and in coming times, we must work to give more priority to women and youth and integrate them into our Organization's programmes so that we can build their competencies and capacities. Programmes must take into account the specific conditions of each country in that context.

We thank the donor countries, and we invite them to examine their financing so that our Organization can help developing countries. We must also take into account the recommendations of different Regional Conferences and update information on the FAO website because the information that is currently available on the website is not very precise.

To conclude, on behalf of the Group, I would like to draw your attention to the importance of coordination and cooperation at the regional and international level in the importance of strengthening current policies so that they will allow the implementation of reforms and ensure prosperity and food security.

My group proposes Egypt as Member of the Drafting Committee. I thank all the colleagues and I

thank all of the Members. Once again, we wish the Chairperson great success and we thank him for his excellent leadership of our work, and we assure you that you have all of our support.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

At the outset, we appreciate the hard work of the Secretariat for providing a foresight, comprehensive, and pragmatic Strategic Framework 2022-31 through an inclusive and transparent consultation process.

We support the efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and three Global Goals of Members by promoting food systems. We note with appreciation that the Strategic Framework supports the 2030 Agenda with the guiding lens of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1, 2 and 10, through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable, agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. We understand that the strategic narrative, with the capitalized more, properly addressed the direction of the agri-food systems transformation with due respect to the various current systems.

We welcome the application of four cross-cutting/cross-sectoral accelerators in program interventions, such as technology, innovation, data, and complements (governance, human capital, and institutions), to maximize efforts in meeting the SDGs and facilitating the management of trade-offs, stressing the importance of continued work between the Organization and Governments.

We note with appreciation that the twenty Programme Priority Areas, which include digital agriculture, climate change mitigating, Hand-in-Hand Initiative, reflecting FAO's comparative advantages and guide interventions, representing the Organization's strategic contribution towards the SDGs. Programme Priority Areas embody the interconnectedness and indivisibility of the SDGs and contribute to the realization of the SDGs through a tangible, issue-based programmatic way.

We highly appreciate that the Strategic Framework incorporates the conclusions of the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees, especially the guidance provided by the 35th Session of the Regional Conference of Asia and the Pacific, such as mainstreaming a food system approach into national planning processes, including social protection, to reinforce agriculture's role in ending hunger and eradicating poverty. We underscore the importance of smallholders and family farmers as critical stakeholders for the future of food and agriculture and sustainable food systems.

We believe the above aspirations can only be achieved through a widely engaged partnership, first and foremost, the collaboration with Members. The partnership should also be expanded and deepened with other UN agencies, financial institutions, and the private sectors. The instruments such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation should be invigorated and further enhanced.

We reiterate the strategic and catalytic importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and other technical work of FAO, within the context of FAO's institutional architecture, tailored to country-specific needs, in the efforts for the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

We welcome the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 builds on the momentum and harmonized transformations in the Organization, including increased efficiency, streamlining, and innovative approaches; a modular and flexible organizational structure; and initiatives including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

Asia Group supports the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which aims at accelerating the agriculture transformation and sustainable rural development through targeting the poorest and the hungry, differentiating territories and strategies, and bringing together all relevant dimensions of agri-food systems through analysis and partnerships. The members of the Asia group would like to share their development experiences with other countries in need through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

With these comments, the Asia Group endorses the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Sr. Julio Eduardo MARTINETTI (Perú)

En esta primera intervención, mi delegación desea saludar al Director General y a todos nuestros colegas y agradecer al Presidente Independiente del Consejo por su sensato y muy apreciado liderazgo

de nuestros trabajos en la presente sesión y durante los últimos años.

Agradecemos así mismo a la Secretaría por la presentación del esquema del Marco Estratégico de la FAO para 2022-2031. La delegación de Perú se alinea con la declaración que formulará Argentina en nombre del G77 más China y desea realizar algunos comentarios en su capacidad nacional sobre este tema, que consideramos de crucial importancia para la Organización y sus Miembros.

Respaldamos que el Marco Estratégico de la FAO se base en los Objetivos de Desarrollo sostenible (ODS) y en las tres metas mundiales de los Miembros. Y concordamos plenamente en que la agricultura, la alimentación y el desarrollo rural son claves para lograr la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. Si bien se deben impulsar soluciones a los principales desafíos mundiales, en especial para nuestros sistemas agroalimentarios, con el fin de proporcionar una dieta saludable de manera sostenible, es imprescindible precisar que cualquier proceso o transformación de dichos sistemas que resulte necesario, debe partir por considerar y ajustarse al contexto las prioridades y las capacidades nacionales de cada Miembro.

Las cuatro mejoras contempladas en el Marco Estratégico junto a los cuatro aceleradores, contribuirán decididamente a la utilización de los sistemas alimentarios en todos sus niveles: producción, elaboración, comercio, inocuidad, calidad y consumo. Contribuirán también a reducir la pobreza principalmente rural, así como las brechas de desigualdad que hoy se ven intensificadas por los efectos del COVID-19.

La transformación de la FAO en una Organización más ágil, eficaz, dinámica, innovadora, transparente e inclusiva, es determinante para hacer frente a los crecientes desafíos mundiales relacionados con las crisis provocadas por el hombre y la naturaleza, particularmente para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria y reforzar la resiliencia de los medios de subsistencia de la población.

Finalmente, queremos destacar la importancia de las cadenas mundiales de suministro de alimentos y el comercio internacional en la seguridad alimentaria y en el desarrollo rural y, por tanto, reconocer el papel fundamental que desempeña la FAO en estos temas, particularmente en su labor normativa y operacional, alentándola a seguir brindando servicios a sus Miembros, proporcionando una sólida base analítica y de información, buscando mecanismos y fuentes de financiación innovadoras y catalizando mejor las inversiones y asociaciones en torno a una visión común de desarrollo sostenible.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Brazil also, as Peru just said, aligns itself with the intervention that will be made by Argentina on behalf of the Group of G77 and China.

The recent crises have shown us that a world free from hunger and poverty, underpinned by greater equality, within and among countries, must remain the north of FAO. In this sense, Brazil welcomes the positioning of “no hunger” Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, “no poverty” (SDG 1) and “reduced inequalities” (SDG 10) as FAO's guiding goals.

We thank the Secretariat for the efforts in conducting informal consultations for developing a new Framework, and, following the formal consultations we are undertaking, we expect the Secretariat to incorporate the comments made by Brazil and by other Members in the Committees of the Council. FAO must use multilaterally-agreed concepts in its documents, and I stress this point.

For the moment, it is also a cause of concern that the proposed Framework did not absorb important debates and concepts agreed upon by the Technical Committees. We recall some of these aspects.

In our previous comments, we have cautioned against proposed language that tries to reduce the role played by governance, human capital and institutions, which are called “complements”. This is not the spirit of FAO Basic Texts.

As for the drivers and related trends of food systems, we see that the draft Framework still puts excessive emphasis on consumer awareness and consumer choices. With that, we run the risk of disregarding the role of food environments in shaping food behaviors, individual choices and social organization. Therefore, we would urge FAO – as it is a consensus between Members – to adopt a food-system approach when dealing with consumption and nutrition patterns.

The Framework also lists food prices among its drivers, and states that they fail to capture the full social and environmental costs of food. We believe that assertion is partial, by failing to incorporate the inefficiencies and unsustainabilities caused by distortive subsidies in the global food chains. For the same aim, a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable international agricultural trade, and its critical role for global food security and poverty eradication should figure in the document as a transversal lever.

To conclude, Brazil is actively involved in the preparatory work of the Food Systems Summit. We are organizing our national dialogues and engaged in the five action tracks. However, it is still not clear what the Summit's outcomes will be and, taking into account their voluntary nature, we should not prejudge its results.

In this sense, it is unfortunate to see that, in paragraph 23, the Strategic Framework proposes that the outcomes and follow-up actions of the Summit should guide the strategic work of FAO.

Brazil recalls that the Sustainable Development Goals are the normative framework for building the future of food systems, for the Food Systems Summit and for this Strategic Framework.

With these comments, we look forward to an updated version of the Strategic Framework, which allows an open and transparent consultation with Members towards a new text, to be presented to the next Session of the Conference.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia welcomes the draft Strategic Framework which will guide the direction of the Organization over the crucial next nine harvest seasons, and we endorse the recommendations made about the Framework in recent Governing Body meetings.

As we have previously expressed, Australia considers the Framework to be balanced and pragmatic. We welcome the efforts to align the document with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while also acknowledging that meeting these global goals requires flexibility in solutions and must involve actors at all levels.

In particular, Australia welcomes that the document seeks to leverage the comparative advantages of FAO, especially its normative and standard setting work as outlined under the Core Functions. Australia welcomes the overlay of the four cross-cutting accelerators which by virtue will serve to accommodate a range of transformative solutions and drive change in line with national needs and circumstances; and appreciates the introduction of inter-linked Programme Priority Areas under the four betters which all strive to a common goal of achieving the three pillars of sustainable development.

In addition, Australia highlights the importance of the Organization adopting the One Health Approach and maximising and enhancing the Tripartite plus the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) partnership. Australia notes that there is scope to better reflect climate change in the document and reiterates the importance of ensuring innovation of all forms are captured in the work of the Organization; and encourages equitable focus on fisheries and forestry areas within FAO's work-plan, including investment in emerging aquatic animal diseases.

We note advice that the areas of de-emphasis are not expected to diminish the overall work programme of the fisheries and forestry areas, and we look forward to working with the relevant technical areas of FAO to ensure that the applicability and use by Members of some such areas, like the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Cape Town agreement, remain.

With regard to the 'innovative funding and financing' section, we note that for the Organization to deliver against its objectives, Official Development Assistance, while important, will not be enough. Given the growing financial constraints on Members, and noting the financial needs of the Organization, Australia appreciates the dedicated focus of FAO on expanding its financial partnership base to include, among others, the private sector. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of the Organization in establishing a robust Strategy for Private Sector Engagement.

Finally, Australia highlights the need to better coordinate calls for funding and clearly explain how different programmes for which funding is sought complement rather than duplicate one another. We

also note that contributing funding in a non-earmarked way is challenging for Members and highlight the findings of the Finance Committee for the Organization to further elaborate possible mechanisms and approaches to promote more flexible voluntary funding, taking into account lessons learned from other UN organizations.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Argentina has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We welcome the Strategic Framework 2022-31 presented by the Director-General, which sets out the situation for an improved FAO aiming for a better world with no poverty, no hunger and malnutrition, and committed to the protection of the environment, a responsible economic growth and the promotion of equity.

We recognize that along with the overall challenges, needs, and priorities, an agreement identified at the regional level and in the Governing Bodies should guide FAO's work to ensure a bottom-up approach in reviewing the Strategic Framework, as foreseen in FAO's Basic Texts.

On that matter, we noted with concern that within the Strategic Framework several concepts, approaches and language are used which are not intergovernmentally agreed and we stress the need for FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts, approaches and language. On this, we expect FAO to adjust accordingly the new Strategic Framework, as has been requested in the report of the Programme Committee, Finance Committee and of the Joint Meeting.

We know with appreciation that the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals are the guiding principles of the proposed FAO Strategic Framework. Noting that genuine development only is achieved when the three dimensions of sustainability, economic, cultural and environmental are addressed in a balanced manner recognizing the interconnectors and indivisible nature.

We fully support the centrality of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 10 in FAO's work set in the Strategic Framework, and we all recognize that agriculture, in particular, is the most inclusive tool to end poverty and inequalities and ensure food security for all.

We welcome the need for more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems, and to that end, we value the four betters. Better production, better nutrition and better environment and a better life. We acknowledged the critical challenges for all stakeholders in the supply chain to guarantee more and better production while respecting and protecting the environment.

The G77 and China recognize the need for sustainable agriculture and food systems and highlights that in some context, and according to national priorities, transformations may be needed to achieve that goal. Such transformations, when appropriate, demand adequate transitional mechanisms in doing financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

In this regard, we recall that the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, solidarity and cooperation should guide the implementation efforts.

We also acknowledge the existence of a variety of proven approaches, systems and tools to achieve sustainable agriculture and food systems, and the goal of the implementation of Strategic Framework to guarantee that all of them are addressed by FAO in a neutral and balanced manner so that they can be made available to Members accordingly, taking into account we have different contexts, priorities and capacities.

We express the need for further efforts to make technologies and innovations available to all countries and stakeholders, hence reduce existing gaps and inequalities among and within countries and we highlight the importance of global food supply chain and international trade. On the latter, we welcome the call from the Council Committees for FAO to further showcase the Organization's mandate and work on commodity markets and trade.

We fully support FAO's scientific-based normative work, in particular regarding Codex and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). We would also like to refer the universal character of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and its importance for agricultural development on the field, and we welcome the alignment of the TCP-funded activities in the new Strategic Framework.

We appreciate and encourage FAO's efforts on transformative partnerships to contribute to improved and sustainable growth and especially to contributions to SDGs. The invigorating of the North-South partnership and South-South and Triangular Cooperation will significantly contribute to the successful delivery of FAO's mandate.

Being aware that the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 will be discussed by the Council under its next Agenda item but recognizing its strategic importance, the G77 and China encourages Management to put emphasis on innovative funding and financing mechanisms in order to broaden the financial base of the Organization and at the same time recommends to develop mechanisms to promote flexible and unearmarked voluntary funding to implement its Programme of Work.

The G77 and China is committed to a better FAO led and driven by its Members. This is while we look forward to supporting a successful Food Systems Summit 2021, we consider that none of its outcomes should redirect, reshape or limit the implementation of this new Strategic Framework without due consideration by Members through the proper Governing Bodies as foreseen by the Basic Texts.

We believe that the main objective of the Food Systems Summit should be to recognize the diversity of the existing path to achieve sustainable food systems: there is no single solution, no single path. We also have to avoid restrictive and exclusive narratives which seek to shape the future of food systems in the image of the productive systems of some particular regions and/or countries. The focus of this category should be on the dissemination of good practices and productive techniques that allow reconciling production with conservation. This is the only way to guarantee food security for our global population projected to reach more than 9 billion by 2050.

To that end, the G77 and China is of the view that the Sustainable Development Goals is the exclusive normative framework for building the future of food systems and in this regard, it should guide the Food Systems Summit 2021. The 2030 Agenda has encompassed the roadmap for achieving sustainable development.

With these comments, the G77 and China takes note of the proposed Strategic Framework of 2022-31, reminding FAO and other Members that the challenge ahead requires all stakeholders to do their best through an unselfish effort to support its implementation and hopefully lead to our work as a mission at the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

Ms Hyo Joo KANG (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea aligns itself to the Asia Group's joint statement delivered by Thailand. We do appreciate the Secretariat for their hard work, and taking the consultation process as transparent and inclusive.

My delegation welcomes a close alignment of the Strategic Framework to the 2030 Agenda within FAO's genuine mandate. We are also pleased to see the inclusion of cross-cutting four accelerators: technology, innovation, data, and complements. Thus, we express our general support to this document with three following observations.

Firstly, we cannot overemphasize the significance of transformative partnership with various actors including the private sector, civil society, and other international organizations. Since we approved the new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement (2021-2025) during the last Session, we look forward to seeing tangible outcomes and benefits through its sound implementation in near future.

We also stress collaboration among Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) not only in headquarters but also in regional and country level concerning various areas such as analyses for the imminent and long-term issues; monitoring and evaluation; and administrative services with an active participation to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). In this regard, my delegation is keen on the ongoing joint Sahel programme (SD3C) as well, and anticipates invaluable lessons as well as concrete results.

Secondly, the Republic of Korea supports efficiency and innovative approaches and working as One FAO as presented herein. These are indispensable elements for this organization to successfully work for the four betters and 20 Priority Programme Areas (PPAs) leading up to the SDGs. From the

cultural aspect, we request all offices to have an open-mind to creative ideas and opinions, and particularly to the HR (Human Resources Division), OIG (Office of Inspector-General) and Ombudsman to work vigilantly supporting all staffs to work in an equitable and respectful atmosphere with sufficient pride and motivation regardless of their duty station, gender, ethnicity, age, and other personal backgrounds.

Last but not least, my delegation welcomes the joint e-consultation which is for seeking potential linkages between the FAO's Strategic Framework and the World Food Programme's (WFP) Strategic Plan. As we envisage this linkage to guide RBA's future cooperation in a mid and long-term, we request the Secretariat to duly reflect relevant outcomes in the document before the coming Conference.

To conclude, the Republic of Korea endorses the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 12:30 hours and I think we need to break now the morning session, as it were, and we will meet again at 14:30 sharp.

I would like to inform Members that I have a long list of speakers and we will follow the order of the speakers as they are now. Therefore, you do not have to request for the floor again. We have taken note of the list and that is the list we will follow in the afternoon.

I adjourn the meeting and we will meet at 14:30 sharp.

The meeting rose at 12:29 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 29

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.29

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
SECOND PLENARY SESSION DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA
26 April 2021

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:30 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 30
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.30
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 2. Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee**
- Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents et nomination du Président et des membres du Comité de rédaction**
- Tema 2. Elección de los tres Vicepresidentes y designación del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción**

CHAIRPERSON

We can start our afternoon Session but before I go to the list of speakers for the previous Item, I would like to come back to Item 2, because now we have got the complete information. This is Item 2 - *Election of the three Vice-Chairpersons* and we have done that, so it was the Members of the Drafting Committee. I am pleased to inform you that we have received the remaining nominations for Officers of the 166th Session of the Council. We can therefore reopen Item 2.

For the Drafting Committee, the Regional Groups have proposed:

Mr Marc Mankoussou of Congo as Chairperson,

and the following countries as members:

1. Australia
2. Brazil
3. China
4. Equatorial Guinea
5. Egypt
6. Indonesia
7. Peru
8. Spain;
9. Sweden; and
10. the United States of America

Are there any objections?

I see none. It is so decided.

- Item 3. Strategic Framework 2022-31 (*continued*)**
- Point 3. Cadre stratégique 2022-2031 (*suite*)**
- Tema 3. Marco estratégico para 2022-2031 (*continuación*)**
(C 2021/7)

CHAIRPERSON

We can go back to the discussion on Item 3 which was the *Strategic Framework* and we had agreed that we would follow the list of speakers as it was displayed before we broke at 12:30 hours. My first speaker on the list is Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is to ask you to kindly give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Portugal) (Observer)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina also aligns itself with this statement.

We welcome and appreciate the efforts made by the FAO Secretariat to present and consult the Membership on the new Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

We wish to underline the essential role of FAO's Governing Bodies in building the Strategic Framework in terms of vision, priorities, and actions to be developed by the Organization in the next ten years to fulfil its mandate in the United Nations System, in particular in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We welcome the presentation of the draft Strategic Framework and acknowledge its coherence with the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget for the next biennium, in line with Resolution 10/2009 of the Thirty-sixth Session of the Conference, regarding the Reform of the Programming, Budgeting and Results-based Monitoring System.

As regards the content, firstly, the EU and its Member States consider that a sustainable food systems approach is needed on food and agriculture, with the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability on an equal footing. This implies that these three dimensions should be addressed in a balanced way across the four better identified in the draft Strategic Framework, with a strong linkage to the SDGs. We also wish to underline the Programme Committee's agreement on the need to better reflect and mainstream climate change and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within FAO's mandate. We also fully concur with the Programme Committee on the importance of the One Health Approach.

Secondly, recognising the importance of prioritising FAO's intervention in relation to the SDGs, we wish to underline that all SDGs are interrelated and that the Strategic Framework should, in a balanced and coherent way, reflect FAO's work on the SDGs under its mandate. While we acknowledge the importance of SDG 10, there would be others - alongside SDG 1 and SDG 2 - worth mentioning at the same level. We would appreciate if the Secretariat could clarify what meaning is to be attributed to the term 'Guiding SDG'. In addition, we wish to underline that references to 'equality' (SDG 10) should always be accompanied by references to 'gender equality' (SDG 5).

Moreover, the document rightly mentions the trade-offs between programmatic interventions, which are likely to occur due to competing objectives in the context of population growth over the next ten years. However, considering that FAO also needs to seek synergies, we would like to have more information on how any trade-offs will be identified and quantified, and how they can be minimised.

Thirdly, as regards partnerships, funding, and financing, we wish to highlight the need to ensure full integration in the UN system, especially at the country level, and the importance of ensuring accountability and transparency – which is fundamental for maintaining the acceptance and authority of the Organization within the multilateral system. The systematic flow of detailed information to the governing bodies is essential in this regard.

Fourthly, we welcome the strategic approach to delivering efficiently as One FAO, including through innovative approaches. The current context of increasing risk and uncertainty requires an agile and lean organisation. The increased use of the UN Resident Coordinators and their Partnership Offices can further contribute to this. In addition, ensuring the stability of the organisational structure and human resources is critical, in particular through transparent and merit-based human resource policies and practices. We take note of the positive developments in this area so far and look forward to further progress.

Fifthly, we welcome the clear synergies sought with the wider UN System, in the framework of the UN Development System (UNDS) reforms, and would encourage the Organization to enhance cooperation aimed at generating efficiency gains, in line with the Funding Compact.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Le Congo demande la parole pour vous demander Monsieur le Président de passer la parole au Ministre du Cameroun, qui va faire une déclaration au nom du Groupe Afrique. Je vous remercie.

Son Excellence Gabriel MBAIROBE (Observateur) (Cameroun)

Le Cameroun intervient sur ce point de l'ordre du jour, au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique. D'emblée, nous souscrivons à la déclaration du Groupe des 77 et de la Chine. Le monde a parcouru plus du tiers de son chemin dans la réalisation du programme des Nations Unies pour le

développement durable. Cette année 2021, marque la deuxième année de la décennie d'action pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable d'ici 2030.

Il s'agit d'une période critique, pour faire avancer une vision commune et accélérer les réponses aux plus grands défis actuels et émergents du monde, y compris l'élimination de la pauvreté et de la faim, la transformation du système alimentaire, et l'inversion du changement climatique. Ce que les statistiques nous disent, c'est que le monde n'est pas sur la bonne voie pour atteindre les ODD, en particulier les ODD 1 et 2.

Cette tendance alarmante est aggravée par la propagation rapide du nouveau Coronavirus qui a transformé un problème de santé publique en l'une des pires crises mondiales de notre temps, changeant le monde tel que nous le connaissons. Les prévisions indiquent que la pandémie pousserait davantage des millions de personnes dans l'extrême pauvreté en 2021. Maintenant, la tendance à l'augmentation de la pauvreté dans le monde, qui a commencé depuis 2020.

Avant l'épidémie de la COVID-19, les progrès étaient déjà inégaux, une attention plus ciblée était nécessaire dans la plupart des domaines. La pandémie a brusquement perturbé la mise en œuvre de nombreux ODD, et dans certains cas, a fait reculer des décennies de progrès accomplis. C'est dans ce contexte que la FAO est entrée dans un nouveau cycle de planification, qui commence par le cadre stratégique qui est présenté au Conseil pour approbation et pour la présentation à la prochaine Conférence.

Le Groupe Régional Afrique se félicite du document C 2021/7 du cadre stratégique dont le développement s'inspire du contexte mondial décrit ci-dessus. Nous apprécions l'intense processus consultatif, inclusif et transparent qui a entouré son examen par les membres, au travers de divers organes directeurs et des consultations informelles. Nous remercions le comité du programme et le comité financier pour leurs examens.

Continues in English

The Africa Regional Group notes that the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees requested further deliberation to ensure that global trends and challenges are covered properly in the Strategic Framework. We strongly believe that the narrative extensively speaks on these challenges. If any further discussion is to take place, it should not impose the loss of momentum, causing a delay in the decision of the Council.

We note the general direction of the Strategic Framework which aims to improve on four fronts of betters, namely better production, better nutrition, better environment and better living conditions, with a view to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2. The betters obviously reflect the interconnected economic, social and environment dimensions of agri-food systems. We equally note the renewed commitment to SDG 10 and the emphasis on the importance and interdependence of all SDGs in FAO's work, including SDG 12 and SDG 14.

We endorse the narrative around the theory of change, as well as that of the four core sectors and cross-cutting accelerators, namely technology, innovation, data and complementary governance mechanisms, human capital and institutions. While recognizing that the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) require FAO to fill critical gaps and put in place the conditions needed to drive the changes that will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the selected SDG targets.

The Africa Regional Group considers the following twelve PPAs as the utmost importance: small-scale producers' equitable access to resources, healthy diets for all, nutrition for the most vulnerable, safe food for everyone, transparent markets and trade, mitigating and adapting to climate change,, bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture, gender equality and rural women's empowerment, agriculture and food emergencies, resilient agri-food systems, Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and scaling up investment.

We welcome emphasis on the cross-cutting themes of gender, youth and inclusion, as well as indigenous people. The emphasis made on strengthening partnerships and collaboration with Members, United Nations agencies, financial institutions, the private sector, producer organisations, academic and research institutions, including the scientific community and civil society, and the Committee on World Food Security is highly appreciated by our Regional Group.

We look forward to working with all Members considering the strategic and catalytic importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and other technical work of FAO within the framework of FAO's institutional architecture tailored to countries' specific needs, including Africa's priority to eliminate hunger by 2025.

We are convinced that well-designed technical programmes will greatly help to better target FAO's priority action in our region. As requested by the Regional Conference for Africa, the Strategic Framework and its content adequately address the revision of priorities in our region in the new context of inclusive food system transformation, Hand-in-Hand Initiative, digitalization and innovation, COVID-19, global trade, and global value chain within the context of the implementation of the African Continental Free-Trade Area.

We consider that this document, with little adjustment, could be endorsed by this Council for onward transmission to the 42nd Session of the Conference for review. We recognize that there is room for improvement and the successive iteration of the Strategic Framework have obviously met the desired improvements.

The Africa Regional Group thus endorses the Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and my own country Sweden. The European Union (EU) countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the EU statement.

We appreciate the inclusive manner in which FAO has developed the Strategic Framework in collaboration with the Members so far.

We are ready to engage in further developing the Strategic Framework. A consultative process is fundamental in order to foster ownership amongst the Membership and we encourage FAO to continue working in this way.

The Strategic Framework is set to guide FAO's work through a challenging time in which we must jointly respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and deliver on the Agenda 2030. FAO has a unique competence and comparative advantages that need to be safeguarded and fully utilized in addressing these challenges.

We welcome the strong alignment of the Strategic Framework to Agenda 2030 and take note of the four betters as an organizational principle for FAO's work and which strengthen FAO's work on realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We support the request made in the report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee to strengthen the linkages between FAO's work under the Strategic Framework and how it contributes to achieving the SDGs.

We recognize the key role FAO plays within the United Nations system and in the work towards realizing Agenda 2030, which is evident not least in the wide range of SDG indicators under the Organization's custodianship. As such, it is all the more important that FAO manages to balance the three dimensions of sustainability - social, environmental, and economic, throughout the Strategic Framework, so that no one dimension takes precedence over the others. The Nordic countries are committed to supporting FAO in this endeavour.

We appreciate that the Strategic Framework sets out to deliver as a unified FAO towards achieving the SDGs through aligning its country level work with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the UN Development System, by contributing to deliver as One UN.

We highly appreciate that the Strategic Framework highlights the normative and standard setting work as a major comparative strength of FAO and very much agree with that notion. It is our view that this lies at the core of FAO's mandate and that it needs to be reflected in the Strategic Framework, including FAO's support to the Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

It is important to highlight FAO's comparative advantages in the FAO's diverse areas of work. In this regard, the Nordic countries agree with the request of the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry to more adequately reflect in the Strategic Framework the importance of forest issues and FAO's leading role on forest matters in the wider United Nations system. Along the same lines, we want to emphasize the importance of FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture under SDG 14 and request that this too is adequately reflected in the Strategic Framework.

We appreciate that One Health is a Programme Priority Area under Better Production and look forward to seeing a strong focus on FAO's work in One Health under the Strategic Framework. A One Health Approach that recognizes the interface between human, animal and plant health as well as environment is key to better meet the challenges we face with the current pandemic, and to prevent and be better prepared for future ones.

The Nordic countries support FAO's efforts to strategically address climate change affecting agriculture and food systems, and in this way to counter increasing hunger and food insecurity.

We welcome the continued emphasis on gender as both a cross-cutting theme and a Programme Priority Area under Better Life.

The Nordic countries look forward to continuing working with the Director-General, the FAO staff, and colleagues in the Membership under the Strategic Framework towards realizing Agenda 2030.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En lo relativo al Marco estratégico de FAO, quisiéramos comenzar manifestando nuestro total apoyo a la intervención de la Unión Europea (UE) y sus 27 Estados Miembros.

Además, deseamos subrayar los siguientes puntos.

Comenzar dando la enhorabuena a la FAO por el procedimiento de consulta puesto en marcha para la redacción de este Marco estratégico, así como su coherencia con el resto de documentos de planificación en consonancia con la Resolución 10/2009 del 36.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia, relativa a la Aplicación de las medidas del Plan inmediato de acción relativas a la reforma de la programación, la presupuestación y el seguimiento basado en los resultados. Es un esfuerzo encomiable que esperamos continúe en el futuro.

Desde nuestro punto de vista, el Marco estratégico debe considerar de forma más equilibrada las tres dimensiones de la sostenibilidad - económica, social y ambiental - a través de los cuatro ejes de acción de FAO y sus 20 esferas programáticas prioritarias, buscando, en último término, actuar como una FAO unificada en que las medidas a todos los niveles se orienten al cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Entendemos que, además de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) 1 y 2, la FAO ponga el foco sobre el ODS 10 con el objeto de reducir las desigualdades. Sin embargo, a la luz de las competencias de la FAO, creemos que el Marco Estratégico debería también considerar la importancia de la Igualdad de género del ODS 5, la Acción por el clima del ODS 13 y la Vida submarina del ODS 14.

Estamos interesados en las compensaciones consideradas entre las distintas intervenciones previstas en el programa, ya que habrá objetivos que compitan por los recursos e incluso que tengan sinergias negativas. En este sentido, destacamos la importancia de llevar a cabo un adecuado análisis de riesgo, desde diferentes perspectivas políticas, económicas y sociales, y nos gustaría estar informados de cómo se plantean los futuros trabajos para minimizar estos efectos negativos en las intervenciones.

Nos gustaría recibir más información sobre la justificación del uso del término "sistemas agroalimentarios" en el borrador del Marco estratégico en lugar de "sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios", término acordado en el sistema de las Naciones Unidas.

Finalmente, afirmar que estaremos encantados de seguir colaborando para trabajar, conjuntamente, en el planteamiento de la FAO para los próximos 10 años.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the Joint Statement of G77 and China as well as the Asia Group.

We commend the work done by FAO Management as well as the inclusive consultation process in developing the Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

In our view, the Framework has been concretely designed in defining issues and roles that have to be taken by governments and FAO in tackling issues on food security and hunger. Indeed, it is our hope that the Framework will enable us to recover the momentum and deliver more impact on the ground for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, particularly on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger.

We noted with appreciation that the strategic narrative of the four betters has reflected the interconnected linkages between economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Yet we request that FAO could ensure this interconnectedness will be well reflected in the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

We would like to support the agri-food systems transformation facilitated by the UN Food System Summit in raising the awareness of hunger, to better manage the food system across the globe. The five action tracks must be transformed into a concrete strategic action to help members achieve the SDG 2.

Indonesia also appreciates FAO's Management in building a reinvigorated, fit-for-purpose business model ensuring an inclusive and agile Organization. We highlight the importance of strengthening FAO's partnership with all its stakeholders, in particular at country level.

In this regard, considering the fact that technologies and innovation will certainly help farmers and governments to take full advantage of new agricultural technologies, we would like to encourage the FAO Secretariat to create an enabling environment including through capacity building and technical assistance programmes.

With this, Indonesia endorses the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Before giving back the floor to you, Mr Chairperson, as we understand that this is your last Council Session, allow us to thank you for your excellent guidance and hard work in fulfilling your tasks and mandates. Your persistence, calmness and wisdom during the Council Sessions and intersessional consultations have brought the Council to deliver concrete recommendations and to bring Members closer together.

Mr Frank CARRUET (Belgium)

Belgium aligns itself with the Joint Statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

Having said that, I would like to make the following remarks.

First, Belgium welcomes the orientation of FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the emphasis of the FAO normative work and standard setting.

Second, we note FAO's contributions to SDGs through the guiding lens of SDGs 1, 2 and 10 in the new Strategic Framework. However, in the context of FAO's main competitive advantages, SDG 1 and SDG 2 should be placed at the very core.

Third, we underline the need for full alignment with the repositioning of the UN Development System. The challenges the world is facing, reinforced by the ongoing pandemic, underscores how important multilateral cooperation is as a means to find solutions. We need a strong FAO, well placed within the United Nations System and implementing the United Nations Development System Reform, in order to succeed in the fight against hunger and in transforming food systems to be far more sustainable worldwide.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the close links between human, animal and environmental health. As such, we encourage FAO to further promote the One Health Approach, in collaboration with its partners.

Fourthly, Belgium welcomes the commitment to a transition towards more sustainable food systems. Due attention should be paid to the challenges involved, in particular with regard to sustainability issues such as soil degradation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity. The social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability should be at an equal footing across the four betters. In this line, we would like to see reference in the Strategic Framework to “food systems” instead of “agri-food systems”.

Fifth, we strongly encourage FAO to pay due attention to sustainable innovations, such as agro-ecology, which is a combination of traditions and innovations, and to include these concepts more prominently in the Strategic Framework.

Underscore the importance of women, youth, indigenous people, smallholders and family farmers as key stakeholders in a transition to more sustainable food systems and to address inequalities in this respect.

Finally, we welcome the improvements made in FAO’s Human Resource Management. For a knowledge Organization such as FAO, its staff is its most valuable asset. FAO needs a Human Resources policy that recognizes talent and creates a solution-oriented environment for continued learning. This needs to be encompassed in the Strategic Framework.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Un saludo muy especial con nuestro agradecimiento por su compromiso. Muy buenos días para todos los colegas y amigos que están participando este día en este importante Consejo.

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por brindarnos este informe tan completo sobre el Marco estratégico de la FAO para 2022-2031, el cual acogemos con mucho agrado y mi delegación apoya en el logro de los planes para no dejar a nadie atrás, y que todos los países tengan oportunidades para luchar contra el hambre, la desnutrición y la pobreza.

Costa Rica, así como todos los países de la región Latinoamericana y el Caribe se ha visto fuertemente afectada durante la pandemia, impactando seriamente los medios de producción agrícola, así como el acceso de estos productos a su población. Además, con un creciente desempleo, las condiciones económicas de nuestras poblaciones se han visto seriamente afectadas.

Valga aquí un llamado, como ya lo he hecho en otras intervenciones y otros foros, para que los países de ingreso medio y alto, o en desarrollo, también sean considerados en las estrategias de la FAO, pues estos países también tienen altos índices de pobreza y hambre.

Como es sabido, mi país se enorgullece por contar con una población en la que, en su ADN está fuertemente regido por la protección del medio ambiente y el cuidado de la naturaleza, y amante de la paz.

Para lograr que esta situación sea sostenible es necesario contar con el apoyo de la sociedad civil, las instituciones gubernamentales, los agricultores y, por supuesto, los organismos multilaterales.

Estamos plenamente convencidos de que, para poder anteponernos al embate del grave cambio climático, que es en gran parte el causante de estas pandemias y la degradación de los ecosistemas, poniendo en riesgo la seguridad alimentaria de nuestros pueblos, tenemos que hacer un cambio en los sistemas de producción, para que el sector agrícola produzca más, con menos.

Es indispensable, para lograr estos objetivos, contar con recursos tecnológicos y económicos, para que juntos avancemos hacia un mundo mejor.

Hacemos un llamado a la FAO para que apoye, en primer término, aquellos proyectos agroambientales, en los que prevalezca no sólo los parámetros de producción, sino que estos vayan de la mano con una economía más verde en nuestras tierras y más azul en nuestros mares, impulsando una “producción positiva con la naturaleza”.

Bien lo resume este informe en lo que apunta entre comillas *“orientar el marco estratégico es la transformación hacia sistemas agroalimentarios más eficientes, inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles para conseguir una mejor producción, una mejor nutrición, un mejor medio ambiente y una vida mejor, sin dejar a nadie atrás”*.

Vemos con positivismo que la Agenda 2030 contempla la inclusión de fondos y financiación innovadores, como el Fondo Verde para el Clima (FVC), el Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial (FMAM) y otros, que contribuirán con el apoyo de estos objetivos a una producción agroambiental sostenible.

Todas estas estrategias deben de concatenar, junto con la iniciativa Mano de la mano, las iniciativas Sur-Sur y triangular, para lograr resultados positivos ante esta crisis.

En este mismo orden de cosas y como aporten estas iniciativas, quiero compartir con todos los Miembros que Costa Rica estará presentando a los organismos internos de la FAO, una Catálogo de Cooperación Técnica en Agricultura y Alimentación, como aporte para todos los Miembros para que consideren, por intermedio de la FAO, la posibilidad de compartir conocimientos, experiencias y recursos. Así mismo, estamos poniendo a disposición de los países amigos una cantidad considerable de toneladas de captura de carbono, bajo la modalidad de PSA 2.0 (pago por servicios ambientales) donde, con un ingrediente nuevo que incluye en el logro de esta captura de carbono a los suelos, además de la reforestación.

Con estos comentarios, Costa Rica apoya el Marco estratégico presentado para el período 2022-2031, y desde ya se suma a los esfuerzos que en este sentido se hagan para lograr estos objetivos.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States of America would like to thank FAO for the work that went into drafting this document and the consultative process in the lead up to its production.

As we mentioned during the Joint Meeting, we have seen major improvements in the Strategic Framework that are based on Member States' inputs, in particular through the Reports of the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees.

We appreciate the inclusive innovation agenda that we see in the Strategy, including the specific mention of new technologies. These technologies are used throughout the world in agriculture and it is imperative that FAO not shy away from technologies that can help to improve the lives of farmers, ranchers, foresters or fishers around the world and those that contribute to solutions to global challenges.

We are glad FAO explicitly acknowledges a need to measure, consider and minimize trade-offs and the need to promote science-proven technologies to farmers, ranchers, foresters and fishers.

Additionally, we want to highlight FAO's framing of food systems transformation and the role FAO should play, which, and I will quote from paragraph 27, "requires a diagnosis of current agri-food systems", analysis of trade-offs, "and an understanding of how to trigger or accelerate the transformative processes."

We all know the importance of climate change in FAO's work and the Strategic Framework draft reflects that. The United States of America welcomes the emphasis FAO places on climate change throughout the Strategic Framework, where it is highlighted as a driver, a top challenge and financing and innovation opportunity, among other references throughout the document.

FAO dedicated over USD 1.2 billion to climate change activities and mitigation adaptation activities in 2019. It created the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment in 2020 to elevate the crosscutting issue of climate change.

As President Joe Biden stated at the Climate Summit last week, the administration 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.

This is a top priority of the United States of America Government. We welcome Council acknowledging in its conclusions of this discussion today the importance of climate change and its relevance throughout FAO's new Strategic Framework.

The United States of America supports making data-driven information available to Members for policy decision-making. We appreciate the emphasis on normative and scientific work and we encourage FAO to maintain both of those as priority areas.

FAO is well positioned to support building resilience to persistent and emerging threats by focusing on timely, science and evidence-based responses and highlighting the importance of global supply chains and international trade.

Lastly we noted a couple of Members asked for Strategic Framework revisions before Conference. The United States of America strongly believes the FAO's Governing Body action should be the result of joint consensus-based discussion. However, we would like to caution Members against seeking additional consultations or revisions to the Strategic Framework with a deadline that is inconsistent with Conference Resolution 10/2019, which lays out the process for developing the Strategic Framework, as well as the General Rules of the Organization.

We should not deviate from the established process for adjustments to the strategic plan, therefore we would welcome FAO Management clarification of that process.

Ms Vincenza LOMONACO (Italy)

I fully align myself with the European Union statement delivered by Portugal and I would like to add some national comments.

Italy welcomes and highly appreciates the efforts made by the FAO Secretariat to present and consult the membership on the new Strategic Framework. We consider that a sustainable food systems approach is needed on food and agriculture, with a social, environmental and economic dimension of sustainability on an equal footing.

We believe that these three dimensions should be addressed in a balanced way across the four better identified in the draft Strategic Framework with a strong linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We also wish to underline that all SDGs are inter-related and that the Strategic Framework should, in a balanced and coherent way, reflect FAO's work on the SDGs under its mandate.

We also believe that, as agreed by the Programme Committee and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, the Strategic Framework should always refer to agriculture and food systems, which is the common term used in the United Nations system.

We would also appreciate if paragraph 37 of the draft Strategic Framework could be reworded because we believe that references to specific systems, especially if they are related to technologies and tools on which there is no international consensus, must be avoided in the Strategic Framework.

With these comments we are ready to engage in further developing the Strategic Framework and we are looking forward to receiving a revised version of the document before the Conference.

Ms Mi MGUYEN (Canada)

Canada strongly agrees with the 130th Programme Committee's recommendations regarding the Strategic Framework, namely: the need to duly consider in an independent and neutral, balanced, science- and evidence-based manner all the available approaches, systems and tools to fully leverage FAO's comparative advantages and to measure and minimize trade-offs; the need to better reflect climate change - and we look forward in this regard to the revised Climate Change Strategy based on recommendations of the Evaluation; the importance of women and youth and indigenous peoples, in particular rural and indigenous women; and the importance of the One Health Approach, international trade for increasing resilience and fisheries and aquaculture.

I would like to just stress four points in particular. On gender, as recalled by the 165th Session of the Council, FAO is custodian for new risk indicators, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. We would welcome a greater prominence of that SDG throughout the Strategic Framework.

We do welcome the fact that gender is a cross-cutting theme and part of the four accelerators and that there is a dedicated Priority Programme Area (PPA). At the same time, we look forward to the

presentation of the Gender Action Plan 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.

We encourage FAO's Secretariat to allocate sufficient resources and to ensure that strong linkages are made between the Strategic Framework and the Gender Action Plan. We would like to reiterate in this regard that it is crucial for FAO to move beyond the mainstreaming of gender equality in its programming to establishing gender transformative approaches and gender equality results.

Given the prominence of gender as a lever of change in effective mainstreaming in all game-changing solutions, we also look forward to how the Gender Action Plan will take into account the outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in this regard.

The second point is indigenous peoples. There are several recommendations from the Programme Committee in this regard and we feel that their unique role as full partners and agents of change and innovators should be recognized and indicated.

On fisheries, we welcome the endorsement of the 2021 Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and it marked the 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. It sets a clear path for future collaborative efforts. We also join calls for further incorporation of fisheries and aquaculture into FAO's work on food security and nutrition, and that includes the Strategic Framework. We also support the PPA on food transformation, under better production. For us the concept of blue economy aligns well with several of our priorities that consider the sustainable use of ocean resources to improve livelihoods and economic growth. Canada is developing its own Blue Economy Strategy that will aim to create jobs in coastal communities, while ensuring our oceans remain healthy.

Finally, we would like to echo others in encouraging FAO's continued efforts to build partnerships, including stronger Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration in the context of the implementation of the United Nations reform, and with the private sector. The new Private Sector Engagement Strategy is a step in the right direction.

Mr Miguel GARCÍA WINDER (Mexico)

Allow me to start by expressing our condolences and solidarity with all of whom have suffered the impacts and the loss of loved ones as the consequence of COVID-19. Chairperson, please receive from Mexico our thanks for your service as the Independent Chairperson of the Council. We wish you the best in the future and we hope we continue to be friends.

Director-General, thank you for your message and of course Mexico reiterates its commitment to continue to support the work of FAO and your personal work.

My name is Miguel Garcia Winder and I have recently been appointed as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) from Mexico. I am looking forward to working with all of you and I also want to express my best wishes and respects to all friends celebrating Ramadan. Allow me to return to my native language, since this is my first intervention, and I would like to make it in my native tongue.

Continúa en español

México está de acuerdo con la propuesta del Marco estratégico de la FAO 2022-2031. Consideramos que esta propuesta es un Marco de trabajo equilibrado, pragmático e integral. México reitera el compromiso a seguir trabajando en este proceso y reconocemos el esfuerzo que se ha hecho y la consulta que se ha utilizado.

Creemos que este Marco estratégico apoya la consecución de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible y se alinea con los Objetivos y metas que en ellas se definen. Nos agrada que el Marco estratégico apoye la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios y de los sistemas agrícolas para contar con sistemas que cumplen con ser más eficientes, más excluyentes, más resistentes y sostenibles sin desde luego olvidar su valor económico.

De esta forma esperamos tener una producción mejor para una nutrición mejor, para un medio ambiente mejor y que resulte en una vida mejor sin dejar a nadie atrás ni a nadie afuera, política que

México ha utilizado en los últimos años. Creemos que, para poder enfrentar las amenazas, todos tenemos que actuar de manera oportuna y por lo tanto soportamos y apoyamos la idea de que la FAO siga construyendo *Partnerships*.

Los retos actuales exigen una nueva forma de cooperación, una forma de cooperación que trascienda las fronteras y que incluya a todos los actores de la sociedad. Creemos que las cuatro mejoras propuestas representan un principio organizador de cómo la FAO pretende contribuir directamente a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible 1, 2 y 10, así como los vínculos con otros Objetivos.

La cifra del incremento del hambre ya era preocupante antes del surgimiento de la pandemia. Este Marco estratégico debe ser la herramienta para liderar la cuestión del hambre, nutrición y seguridad alimentaria a los niveles más altos posibles dentro de nuestros países. Las 20 esferas programáticas prioritarias son muy completas y su alineación con las metas específicas de la 2030, permitirán darles un seguimiento puntual.

Temas como cambio climático, género, transición hacia dietas saludables, pérdida y desperdicio de alimentos, medio ambiente, biodiversidad, así como los sistemas alimentarios urbanos, están cubiertos adecuadamente en el Marco estratégico.

Agradecemos a la Administración la inclusión del tema de la juventud y el fortalecimiento de los temas de géneros, particularmente mujeres y niñas como temas transversales. También apreciamos que se mencione la desigualdad como un factor que incide directamente en el acceso a los alimentos y a los medios de vida, y que se incluya el concepto de inclusión como un tema transversal.

Queremos que la FAO responda a los retos que tenemos enfrente, algunos son nuevos, otros son de larga data. La FAO debe mantenerse en constante cambio y eso incluye nuevas prioridades, nuevas maneras de cooperar y de recolectar recursos, nuevos programas y nuevos conceptos. Una Organización que se queda en el pasado y no responde a los nuevos retos, corre el riesgo de perder relevancia y que nosotros, los Miembros, busquemos soluciones de otras fuentes. Queremos una FAO sólida, de vanguardia y con capacidad de responder.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nigaragua)

Nicaragua agradece a la Secretaría la presentación del documento programático, a la vez nos sumamos a la declaración realizada por la delegación Argentina a nombre del G77 y China. Valoramos que el Marco estratégico en apoyo a la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible esté orientado hacia la transformación de sistemas agroalimentarios más eficientes, resilientes, sostenibles e inclusivos.

Reconocemos que los retos actuales, agudizados por la crisis producida por la pandemia, requieren de un multilateralismo eficaz y solidario en la lucha contra el hambre y la malnutrición, que permita acelerar el crecimiento de la productividad, internalizar y difundir la revolución digital, transitar hacia la sostenibilidad ambiental, proveyendo un marco institucional para actuar en un mundo en el que se conjugan grandes desequilibrios con enormes posibilidades.

Consideramos los cuatro aceleradores transversales en particular, el impulso a la tecnología y a la innovación, herramientas útiles para encaminar el mundo rural hacia una producción agropecuaria más sostenible, capaz de adaptar e implementar soluciones innovadoras para ir superando la brecha digital que obstaculiza el progreso técnico en la estructura productiva, ampliando las brechas de desigualdad.

Es imprescindible coadyuvar el esfuerzo de todos los países en esta tarea para obviar los retrocesos en el cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), como seguir estimulando las inversiones de acuerdo a las capacidades y en apoyo a las prioridades nacionales.

Apreciamos los esfuerzos de la FAO encaminados a fortalecer las asociaciones en todos los espectros, mejorando la accesibilidad a las finanzas y las inversiones a través de una colaboración más estrecha con el sector privado, las instituciones financieras, las organizaciones de productores para generar un compromiso intersectorial que facilite un avance inclusivo y movilice los esfuerzos hacia un objetivo común.

Subrayamos la importancia del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) para el logro de los ODS y la necesidad de maximizar sus impactos en el terreno a través de una red de oficinas descentralizadas con

un nivel de flexibilidad y adaptación para atender mejor las demandas a nivel nacional y regional, como la importancia de impulsar el fortalecimiento de la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular.

Para finalizar, agradecemos y celebramos el rol de liderazgo de la FAO y los avances que en el contexto de la organización de la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios están desarrollando, creando las justas sinergias y complementariedades.

Aprovechando la oportunidad para reiterar el firme compromiso de nuestro gobierno de seguir apoyando los procesos de consulta que a nivel regional se están llevando a cabo para la exitosa consecución de los objetivos que ella persigue. Con esos comentarios, tomamos nota y apoyamos el Marco estratégico presentado.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

As this is the first time I have spoken, I would like to send a warm welcome to the new Ambassadors from China and Mexico and indeed any others that I have not yet had a chance to greet.

I would like to start off with three ‘thanks’. First of all, Independent Chairperson of Council, I would like to thank you for your patience, your perseverance and guidance to Council over the past four years. I would also like to thank the Director-General for his speech this morning and for his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Director-General and FAO colleagues involved in the process of developing FAO’s Strategic Framework for the next ten years. It comes at a very important time and it will take us to our deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, hunger was already rising and we are off-track to achieve the SDGs.

Hunger now threatens almost a billion people. We need a radical shift in the way we produce and consume food that includes wasting less and getting more good food to those in need. Sustainable agriculture and land use are indispensable tools for tackling so many of the challenges we face, not just for reducing hunger, but also poverty, pollution and the risk of deadly zoonosis like COVID-19 and also cutting greenhouse gas emissions, becoming resilient to the impacts of climate change and restoring the diversity abundance and connectivity of life on earth on which we all depend.

With the Food Systems Summit in sight, none of us can say we are doing enough. We look forward to working very closely with Italy on the G20 and 26th Meeting of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) and, as Presidents of the G7 and COP26, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is committed to working with all of FAO’s Members to achieve more sustainable agriculture and food systems.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomes the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) of the Strategic Framework and we welcome FAO’s focus on One Health, but as Canada, Australia and others have said, we would like to see greater recognition in the Strategic Framework of the challenge that climate change poses to all of us. FAO will rely on climate financing for 13 percent of its voluntary contributions in the coming biennium and more in future, but this relies on project approvals by the governing bodies of the climate funds.

It is really important that FAO sends a clear signal that we are serious in our intention to transform agriculture and food systems to achieve sustainability and the Paris Agreement goals. It is essential that FAO learns from experience, in partnership with others, and sets out a clear strategy for addressing the recommendations of the evaluation of FAO’s work on climate change.

I will conclude by calling on the Council to endorse three specific recommendations of the Programme Committee. Firstly, on the SDGs, Members have consistently called on FAO to align its Strategic Framework with the SDGs and we call on Council to underline the Programme Committee request for a stronger link between the four betters and the related SDGs. As FAO develops its output indicators and performance targets, we also call on Management to confirm these will use SDG indicators and targets.

Next, we would like greater clarity on how FAO will use its regular budget to achieve FAO’s strategic results and we call on Council to underline the request that the Strategic Framework sets out the principles that FAO’s new business model will use to allocate the regular budget.

Finally, it was very good to hear during the Programme Committee that FAO is actively involved in aligning its Country Programming Frameworks with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and we would like to underline the Programme Committee's request to include FAO's Country Programming Frameworks in its own strategic results framework, and we encourage FAO to report on progress at country level as a key part of the Director-General's commitment to improving transparency and accountability.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

China aligns itself with the Asia Group statement made by Thailand, as well as the statement made by Argentina on behalf of the G77 and China.

We express our appreciation for many inclusive consultations undertaken by FAO in carrying out the work of the new Strategic Framework, as well as the positive progress achieved. The Strategic Framework provides a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities in global food and agriculture and an accurate positioning of FAO and its core functions.

We acknowledge the centrality of the 2030 Agenda in the Strategic Framework, with the focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 10. We believe that the four improvements, or the four betters, will help FAO's overall organizational regime through strategic and systematic initiatives and that 20 Programme Priority Areas will help achieve the strategic goals and address the cross-cutting issues in a comprehensive and flexible manner and fully acknowledge the Strategic Framework.

At the same time, we welcome the inclusion of digital agriculture, reduced food loss and waste reduction, as well as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative as pragmatic focus areas, and highly recognize FAO's emphasis on reinvigorating North-South partnership and South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation in its partnerships transformation.

China encourages FAO to make full use of its expertise and knowledge to better place it in an important leading role in global food and agriculture to further strengthen its efforts at regional and country level to implement the new vision, strategies and business models and to provide, especially for the developing member countries, critical and effective support to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

We agree that the Council should consider and adopt the Strategic Framework and submit it to the 42nd Conference for consideration and approval.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank Mr Khalid Mehboob, your experience, wisdom and patience and the calm leadership impresses a lot. Under your wisdom and leadership, the Council overcame difficulties and challenges in discussions fruitfully. I would like to thank you wholeheartedly. Thank you very much, for a great contribution to FAO.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

We welcome this plan and appreciate the hard work made by the countries and the people who worked on that, especially in the two Committees, the Programme and Finance Committees. Japan really appreciates that there was a very transparent and comprehensive process for consultations.

Yet, we still believe that in order to implement this important Strategic Framework, how we implement the controls and monitors and how we ensure the transparency and the soundness of the process, is the important challenge we should be working on to establish appropriate legitimacy to do so.

Secondly, again we put much emphasis on the importance of free and open and the fair trade rule in order to have a smooth flow of foodstuffs. That definitely contributes to, and is necessary to, ensure food security. In the COVID-19 pandemic there were some cases of restrictions on the import of foodstuffs which led to the rapid rise of the prices of foodstuffs. We should not repeat this experience. We need to establish the mechanisms to avoid that.

In this context, as an outcome of better production, the local supply chains and sustainability - it is mentioned here - we appreciate that also in the Programme Priority Areas (PPA), the importance of

market mechanisms and trade and transparency and fairness are mentioned here. That is also what we appreciate and welcome.

Thirdly, addressing the food security crisis and environmental challenges and the climate challenges, among the four betters, we tend to believe that the better production is very important and we should implement those things in line with proper consideration of the environment. Also, we need to promote digitalization and innovation in order to increase productivity. That is very important for ensuring food security and also the cross-cutting accelerators are important.

Innovation and data mentioned here is what we also appreciate, but in order to see what actually happens on the ground, and the proper application of those innovations to reality, we would like to stress that intellectual property rights are important. Also, the proper consideration of human rights is most important. By doing this we should increase responsible investments of the private sector.

At the same time, when it comes to the digitalization, we also would like to underline the appropriate management of information and privacy is also important and it must be ensured that the fair access of all the stakeholders should be maintained.

Fourthly, we have got questions for clarification. In this Framework we see there are some terms which are not very familiar: that is the Blue Economy and Blue transformation. I would not think that these are definitions internationally shared, so I would like to stress that we need to define what these terms actually mean.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

I make this statement on behalf of the Caribbean Region. The Caribbean Region welcomes the 2022-31 Strategic Framework, which supports the 2030 Agenda aimed at transforming food systems into efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems, which certainly lines up with the objectives of the Caribbean region.

We wish to commend FAO for recognizing the need to re-evaluate systems and make the necessary adjustments to achieve goals. The new Strategic Framework being led by key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their indicators allows countries in the region to focus effectively and track progress towards national attainment of the SDGs. This shift in Strategic Planning allows for FAO's global work to have a more significant impact at country level.

The outline of the Strategic Framework that targets SDG 2 (no hunger), SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), are all important issues in our region. Specifically, the focus on SDG 10, by reducing inequalities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the actualities of achieving the four betters will be attainable. In an ever-changing environment, FAO must continue to adapt and position itself in the most strategic way possible to help SIDS Members prepare and become more resilient to the increasing uncertainty and exposure to environmental and economic shocks.

FAO's distinctive food systems approach of linking different aspects of FAO's work, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and land use sustainability, poverty reduction, and improved access to investment and finance, in supporting food systems transformation is welcomed.

As the Change Management Strategy (CMS) is inextricably bound to the Strategic Framework, and underpins FAO's internal vision, it is critical to ensure that this provides comprehensive support to smallholders, family farmers and fisherfolk, including women and youth, as well as for data collection and statistics related to improve the quality and frequency of data collection for Caribbean SIDS.

The CMS is proposed to modify corporate management governance, based on lessons learnt from newer programmatic initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, and the Food Coalition. However, the region requests that lessons learnt from previous initiatives such as the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS are addressed and agreed actions of this particular program are supported for future implementation.

With these comments, the region is pleased to join in supporting the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Ms Nosipho Nausca Jean NGCABA (South Africa)

Chairperson, at the outset I wish to acknowledge with much appreciation the constructive role you have played as the Independent Chairperson of the Council over the two years. The successful conclusion of numerous Council meetings and informal consultations under your stewardship is a testament to your commitment to facilitate the work of the Council in an inclusive and consultative manner.

Our future strategic approaches will need to prioritize the mitigation of the pandemic's impact, with an emphasis on strengthening the ability to cope and the resilience of the agricultural sector in all its aspects.

We align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Africa Regional Group and Argentina on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as guiding principles of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. Underscoring the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental).

We should remind ourselves that our common objective is to collectively address the challenges of poverty, underdevelopment and inequality to achieve a better life for all. Hence, the centrality of SDGs 1, 2 and 10, whilst recognising that agriculture is the key to producing food for everyone, to reduce global burden of greenhouse gas emissions, the global burden of diseases from malnutrition, contributing to the ending of hunger, famine and building a world for all citizens of the globe.

However, unprecedented extreme weather has not only led to devastating floods in some regions but also caused prolonged periods of drought in other regions. We are therefore encouraged to observe an emphasis on innovation, research and development.

Outbreak of animal diseases and the pests such as desert locust and fall armyworm are having a devastating impact on agriculture, especially in Africa.

The impact of climate change is reported to have negative effects on biodiversity and changes in ecosystems that pose a direct threat to a wide range of species.

If our multilateral commitments are not honoured, as stated under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, our achievements to reach the Sustainable Development Goals will be reversed.

South Africa's strategic approach to the climate change response is needs driven and customised; it is developmental in nature; transformational, empowering and participatory; dynamic and evidence-based; balanced and cost effective; integrated and aligned.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is an increasing threat to global health. South Africa's National AMR Strategy aims to slow the development and spread of AMR, and improve patient outcomes, including animal health and food production through better use of antimicrobes.

We appreciate the institutional support approach to enable countries to build national capacity to implement, monitor with science evidence, which is essential to mitigate risks for countries and leverage private sector investments.

The emphasis on transformative partnerships seeks to promote coalitions for the four betters to advance sustainable agri-food systems.

Women's empowerment in the land and agricultural sector is a central issue for South Africa's agricultural policies, regulatory reform and we have therefore set up programmatic interventions that prioritize women empowerment.

The inclusion of women in the agricultural sector requires that we address women's access to land, financial services, research, and technology, as well as support programmes to address challenges in the agricultural marketing and trade requirements.

In this regard, South Africa has an initiative on a targeted programme for women farmers and entrepreneurs, including setting up a database of women organization engaged in agriculture as well as in agribusiness.

With these comments, the FAO Strategic Framework for the period 2022-31 is supported by South Africa.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

A warm welcome to the new Ambassadors from Mexico and China.

Achieving Agenda 2030 and FAO's Global Goals require a deep analysis to the current agri-food systems; and the preparation of the Food Systems Summit is engaging and working towards that exactly.

As we examine the triggers of change implicating our past, we believe that through innovative technology we would be able to achieve the greatest impact. As we look to technology to provide us the solutions, we must make the technology according to a structure and strategic features.

Technology that should not only make the food systems more efficient, but also be specifically oriented to the society, climate and culture futures of the recipient. The technology we seek and sponsor should not only offer a means-to-end solution, it should offer a wide range of educational skills integration of the recipients in the development process to make sure the technology is tailor-made perfectly to the recipients' needs.

We wish to create independent actors and communities in the market. For that we must ensure that in the future the reliance on the technology will also engage them in its implementation, in being a part of the process of improvement and encourage the local communities to increase participation through self-education.

The dedication to the Goals is important and crucial, but paving the way is as crucial, nonetheless. The educational pillars should be a cornerstone when examining technologies and allocating them to the recipient. This will create a circular process. If we educate on technology use and the employment of knowledge, this will engage the communities to extend education levels and be more invested in the actual process. This will result in a win-win for all parties and reduce dependency on external partnership.

As the saying goes, give a man a fish and he will eat today, teach a man how to fish and he will eat forever.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I can be very brief, being the last Member of the Council to speak. Germany fully aligns with the statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Let me just add three observations to what has been said so far.

We are very happy with the new Strategic Framework now being centred on the Sustainable Development Goals. This is really important and was overdue. When it comes to sustainability, we fully subscribe to what many other Members already said. It is important to address all dimensions of sustainability in a balanced manner.

Certainly, one of the challenges that had an impact on all three, but which deserves more attention as compared to what is currently in the Strategic Framework, is climate change. This is one of the main drivers that really deserves very firm attention.

Thirdly, in addressing all these dimensions FAO has to respect its own mandate, but also the mandate of other organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Pedí la palabra para hablar en mi capacidad nacional como Argentina y por supuesto voy a tratar de ser sintético porque la gran parte de lo que voy a decir estuvo incluido en la presentación en nombre del G77 más China.

En nombre de Argentina, apoyamos la visión estratégica del Director General en el Marco estratégico. Y en este sentido resulta esencial que contenga los conceptos acordados internacionalmente, por lo tanto, resulta necesario que el *Management* encuentre una salida constructiva, para dejarnos tranquilos

respecto de los conceptos utilizados sea a través de una nota conceptual adicional o de un glosario o de un índice conceptual revisado o cualquier otra propuesta en ese sentido.

Apoyamos a que la FAO sea una Organización neutral, balanceada, basada en evidencia científica con todos los modelos y sistemas agroalimentarios sustentables a disposición de los Miembros, porque la FAO tiene ventajas comparativas y es la gran esperanza para los países en desarrollo.

Permítame reconocer expresamente lo dicho por los países nórdicos en esta reunión en cuanto a la necesidad de que las tres dimensiones de la sostenibilidad estén capturadas de manera equilibrada en la acción de la FAO y del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas. Como dijeron los países nórdicos, no hay ninguna dimensión más importante que las otras.

Nadie puede negar la importancia del cambio climático, justamente por ello, la cuestión ambiental está capturada en las tres dimensiones de la sostenibilidad. Como hemos expresado siempre: género, juventud, multilingüismo, inclusividad, son valores y objetivos en las cuales la FAO debe seguir defendiendo y promoviendo.

Para terminar, celebramos la inclusión en el Marco estratégico de la importancia de la innovación y la incorporación de las tecnologías como aceleradores para reducir las diferencias entre y dentro de los países, así como el reconocimiento al comercio internacional como parte de la solución y no del problema, a pesar de que algunos Miembros les cuesta avanzar en los compromisos asumidos en esta materia respecto de los países en desarrollo.

Por último, ratificamos la importancia de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) 1, 2 y 10.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of Members of the Council. I have a request from two Observers.

What I would like to do is break for ten minutes and we will resume discussion when we come back. We will reconvene in ten minutes sharp and carry on with our discussions.

The meeting was suspended from 16:03 to 16:23 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 03 à 16 h 23

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.03 a las 16.23

CHAIRPERSON

Members, we can start our discussions again. I will give the floor straight to the Observers. The first one is France.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

La France s'aligne sur la déclaration de l'Union Européenne et de ses 27 états membres. Je souhaiterais saluer à cette occasion les nouveaux représentants permanents de la Chine et du Mexique, et leur souhaiter la bienvenue. Je souhaite aussi vous remercier, Monsieur le Président Indépendant du Conseil, et remercier également le Directeur Général pour ses propos introductifs et sa vision pour l'avenir de la FAO.

La France remercie la FAO pour la présentation de son projet de cadre stratégique, pour 2022-2030. Ce sera une décennie particulièrement importante pour le mandat de l'organisation. Alors qu'il reste moins de 10 ans, avant l'échéance de 2030, il est urgent de transformer nos systèmes alimentaires, notamment pour lutter contre la faim et la malnutrition sous toutes ses formes, pour faire face au changement climatique, et à l'érosion de la biodiversité, pour protéger et gérer de manière durable les ressources naturelles et plus largement, pour réaliser l'ensemble des objectifs de développement durable.

À ce titre, la France se félicite de l'alignement du cadre stratégique avec le programme 2030. La dimension transversale des objectifs de développement durable justifie le besoin d'une approche équilibrée, entre les trois piliers du développement durable dans l'ensemble du cadre stratégique. En particulier afin d'atteindre cet équilibre, il nous semble que le projet de cadre stratégique doit traiter de manière renforcée les questions environnementales. Actuellement, elle bénéficie du plus petit nombre de domaines prioritaires, et de l'allocation de crédit budgétaire la moins importante. De même, le

besoin d'une approche équilibré implique que la FAO se concentre sur son mandat, et que le commerce ne soit pas reconnu comme un objectif transversal du cadre stratégique. Nous nous félicitons qu'un domaine prioritaire soit consacré à l'approche "une seule santé" et encourageons la FAO à renforcer sa collaboration dans le cadre de la tripartite, mais aussi avec le PNUE, pour une meilleure prise en compte de la dimension environnementale.

Nous saluons la création du panel d'experts de haut niveau, "une seule santé". Nous saluons également l'adoption d'une définition de l'innovation au sens le plus large. Nous souhaitons une reformulation du paragraphe 37 sur les technologies et approches novatrices.

Nous pensons que le cadre stratégique n'a pas vocation à faire référence à des techniques spécifiques et qui ne relèvent pas du mandat de la FAO, d'élaborer des orientations réglementaires sur la surveillance des risques liés au développement de nouvelles technologies en matière d'alimentation.

En conclusion, nous attendons avec intérêt, la poursuite du processus de consultation, inclusif et transparent, ainsi que l'élaboration avant la Conférence d'une version révisée du projet de cadre stratégique.

Mr Tim KRÄNZLEIN (Observer) (Switzerland)

The international community has progressively reached the understanding that the way food is produced and consumed is not sustainable, neither economically, socially nor environmentally.

The Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 entitled 'Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development', highlights this evidence and identifies sustainable food systems as an entry point for transformation.

Therefore, Switzerland welcomes that the Strategic Framework puts the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems at the heart of all strategic actions.

Switzerland also welcomes the greater focus on enhancing FAO internal cooperation and on fostering partnerships and choosing youth as a cross-cutting theme; this is an important step to contribute to the future development of food systems and agriculture.

However, there are also some critical aspects. Let me name two.

First, while a strong emphasis on productivity, efficiency and technology-based approaches is understandable, FAO should consider financial, institutional and social innovations on the same level as technology.

Second, as all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are given an equal weight, FAO should take a systemic perspective and carefully choose the entry points for its contribution to the Agenda 2030. Considering a changing reality of urbanization, changing consumption patterns and the scarcity of key production resources, SDG 12 is and will remain key to address SDGs related to food systems.

In view of the finalization of FAO's new Strategic Framework, we would like to therefore raise three important point.

First, FAO undertook a great effort to collect internal and particularly external expertise to identify relevant external drivers and key parameters. Therefore, a more prominent place should be given to these key critical drivers that influence the basic resources needed to produce food: soils, water, biodiversity and climate.

Second, structuring the Strategic Framework around four betters entails a positive message - the attempt to improve, while at the same time being aware that this is a long process. However, particular attention should be given to carefully articulate and differentiate between strategic values, objectives, outcomes, methodology and instruments.

Third, FAO should avoid duplication of efforts of other UN agencies and international organizations, be it in its normative work on biotechnology or technical work in the field and therefore operate within its mandate and focus on its core competence: the normative work and technical advice to members.

Finally, Switzerland stresses the nature of the Strategic Framework. It needs to be owned by all the Members. The clearer the key strategic orientation is outlined, the stronger it is owned by members

and the more we can achieve together as an Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to the Chairs of the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee and the Secretariat to answer some of the comments and remarks of the Members, I would like to say that since we are somewhat behind our Order of the Day, the plan is to break at 17:30 hours and to reconvene at 17:45 hours, then carry on until 19:00 hours. In this way we hope to catch up somewhat with our timetable.

Now I give the floor to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee if she has any comment or remarks to make on what the Members have said.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

He seguido con atención el debate que ha suscitado el tema tres de nuestro programa. Muchos de los comentarios sin duda reflejan las discusiones que mantuvimos en la reunión conjunta y en el Comité de Finanzas sobre este tema, por lo que quisiera recordar algunas de las conclusiones que considero pertinentes y que pueden servir para orientar las suyas, señor Presidente. Los dos Comités, y la reunión conjunta, apreciaron el proceso de consulta mediante el cual se había elaborado el Marco estratégico 2022-2031. En el caso de la reunión conjunta, se acogió con agrado el discurso estratégico, el Marco estratégico de la transformación hacia sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios más eficientes, inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles para lograr una mejor producción, una mejor nutrición, un mejor medio ambiente y una vida mejor sin dejar a nadie de lado con miras a respaldar el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 y las Metas Mundiales.

Se acogió con beneplácito que el Marco estratégico se basara en el impulso y las transformaciones armonizadas que ya se estaban operando en la Organización, en particular el aumento de la eficiencia, la racionalización, los enfoques innovadores, una estructura orgánica modular y flexible e iniciativas tales como: la iniciativa Mano de la mano y el Programa de la FAO de Respuesta y Recuperación de la COVID-19.

Se acogió con satisfacción los temas transversales de la FAO: género, juventud e inclusión y pueblos indígenas. Se destacó la importancia del enfoque “Una salud”. Se acogió con agrado el hincapié en el fortalecimiento de las asociaciones con las partes interesadas relevantes. Se reconoció que la Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios, podría respaldar el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030.

Se apreció la elaboración de elementos del modelo operativo revitalizado. Se subrayó la importancia de todas las formas de innovación y se reiteró la importancia estratégica y el efecto catalizador del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) y otros trabajos técnicos de la FAO.

En cuanto al Comité de Finanzas, se acogió con satisfacción el compromiso de la Organización de integrar la gestión del riesgo institucional en la elaboración del Marco estratégico. Se hizo hincapié en la importancia de perseverar en los esfuerzos para aumentar la eficacia y reducir la burocracia, lograr una mayor transparencia y reforzar los flujos de datos.

Se reconoció la creciente importancia de los mecanismos innovadores de financiación. Se alentó a la Organización a redoblar sus esfuerzos para ampliar su base de financiación incluso mediante el establecimiento de asociaciones con el sector privado. Y se subrayó la importancia de una financiación voluntaria, flexible, clara y no asignada a fines específicos para apoyar las prioridades esbozadas en el Programa de trabajo integrado y se recomendó a la Organización que siguiera elaborando posibles mecanismos y enfoques en sus esfuerzos para promover una financiación voluntaria más flexible.

Agradezco al señor Presidente sus esfuerzos y auguro éxito en la conducción de este período de sesiones.

CHAIRPERSON

I just want to check whether the Chairperson of the Programme Committee is available because I had received a message that for a few minutes he may not be available. Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen are

you back? I do not think he is. Therefore, I will give the floor to Ms Beth Crawford to answer some of the questions and then we will get back to the Chairperson of the Programme Committee.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Thank you so much Members for this very interesting and extensive discussion today. It has been a very good process for us and I thank you as well for all of the comments that you made in welcoming the process that has been put in place and that has brought us to the place where we are now.

There were lots of comments, maybe not as many questions, which I would like to go, just briefly, through a few of the main elements. We are really at an important step in the two-year process that is described in the Basic Texts. Conference Resolution 10/2009, describes the two-year process to get to the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). We are at an important step right now because this is the last Council before Conference, and the Council has before it all the necessary guidance that is coming from the Regional Conferences, the Technical Committees, and the Council Committees, and you have the two Conference documents before you, the Strategic Framework and the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget.

I know that the MTP and the PWB will be discussed under the next Agenda Item, but I am just mentioning it because the documents are very closely aligned. It is a suite of documents and sometimes it is difficult to separate them and I may need to refer to the Medium Term Plan, in particular in some of my comments.

Thank you again for all the positive comments about the process. In addition to the formal process, we had a very in-depth informal process with about ten meetings from the second half of last year through to March of this year with Members and with Regional Groups, and we kept very careful track along the way of all the comments that were coming in to make sure that your views and comments were well incorporated when getting to the more detailed elements, for example the Programme Priority Areas.

Thank you also for your welcoming of all the main elements and your positive feedback on elements like the strategic merit in the Strategic Framework, which is supporting the Agenda 2030 in the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for *better production, better nutrition a better environment and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

The *four betters* I believe are welcomed as an organizing principle. We have the accelerators, which we hope will support that acceleration and transformation that needs to take place in order to achieve the Agenda 2030 - these accelerators of course being innovation, technology, data and complements. The cross-cutting issues, I believe are welcomed with gender, youth and inclusion.

The 20 Programme Priority Areas, many of you have also mentioned that they represent well the breadth and the comparative advantage of FAO's focus. This is really how these Programme Priority Areas were developed. They are interdisciplinary, issue based, technical themes that are representing FAO's strategic contribution to specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and indicators.

That rationale for the Sustainable Development Goals targets and indicators associated with the Programme Priority Areas was really developed through a situation and gap analysis. We had a very strong team of approximately 50 FAO staff from all locations of the Organization and all disciplines. We had them working together on these Programme Priority Areas, identifying the gaps, identifying the related SDGs and developing these programmes that you see in the Strategic Framework and also in the Medium Term Plan.

Many of you mentioned the importance of balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental perspectives. We fully agree with you on that. The way that we put together the teams that developed these Programme Areas was specifically looking at ensuring that type of balance in the team.

I hope that that is reflected in what you are seeing in the Programme Priority Areas, but we will of course ensure a further and solid embedding of these three pillars of sustainability in the

implementation through the further elaboration of the Programme Priority Areas and the work planning, which will take place in the second half of this year after Conference.

Many of you also mentioned the importance of climate change and we thank you for that and take note and welcome the support and encouragement from Members to continue and enhance our work on climate change. In the Strategic Framework we have climate change listed as a critical driver of agri-food systems.

We also have it as an overarching challenge, which directly relates to FAO's Goals. Of course, we have the Programme Priority Areas on the climate change mitigation and adapted agri-food systems and we have the Climate Change Strategy. You will see how various elements in a Framework like this come together to guide our work in an important area like climate change.

I also wanted to mention how the SDGs are important in an example like climate change. If we look, for example, at SDG 2.4, which is the SDG that looks at ensuring sustainable food production systems and resilient agriculture practices, this is all related to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding, disasters, etc. You will see, in particular in the Medium Term Plan, where it is further elaborated in *Annex 3* that SDG 2.4 figures very strongly across a number of Programme Priority Areas. You will see strong contributions across the Programme Priority Areas under *better environment*, but also under *better production* and under the resilience programme *better life*. Again, this shows how the Framework, similar to the Agenda 2030, is completely interlinked and indivisible. We have those types of linkages defined in the Medium Term Plan, in particular in *Annex 3* where you can see the interlinkages coming together.

Many of you mentioned the importance of SDG 1, SDG 2 and SDG 10, which are the guiding SDGs, but also the importance of all Sustainable Development Goals in our Framework. We fully agree with you on that and have tried to describe it in the way that we are showing the measurement that will happen under each Programme Priority Area across a number of Sustainable Development Goals. The Framework also includes all SDGs for which FAO is custodian or contributing agency.

We need to also mention the importance of managing trade-offs, which those SDGs, both the guiding SDGs and the accelerators, can help us do and also managing risks. Again, this is in the further elaboration of the Framework, which is presented in the Medium Term Plan. We have indeed, for every Programme Priority Area, identified what the main trade-offs are that we believe will need to be managed under that PPA and what the main risks are that will need to be managed.

The intention is that at every phase of development and operationalization of the Strategic Framework, we continue to keep in mind these important elements: the three dimensions of sustainable development, managing trade-offs, and managing risks. Also, that at every level we embed that in the way that we are further developing the Programme Priority Areas and the implementation plan.

Gender was mentioned as an important cross-cutting issue by many of you, and indeed again in our Framework you will see gender as a cross-cutting issue, also it is in one of the Programme Priority Areas in *better life*, and we have the Gender Strategy. Again, these are the various ways how we bring together important elements like this.

I would like to just thank the Members for your comments related to the reinvigorated business model. From what I have heard, it resonates very well with Members. The elements that we have identified in that reinvigorated business model have been mentioned by many of you. One is partnerships - all types of partnerships, the importance of having those partnerships to really move forward in a transformational manner to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The importance of innovative financing, new types of financing. This includes, for example, the climate and environment financing which indeed is already growing and we hope will continue to grow in FAO's budget and have a strong impact. Also 'working as one', as all of FAO, but also at country level. We describe in our documents, for example in *Annex 3* of the Strategic Framework, how that country level planning will flow directly into this Framework that we are discussing now.

It has been developed in close cooperation with our colleagues also at the country level and we have very strong support and buy-in from our colleagues at the country level for the way that this Framework moves from their planning framework at the country level with the United Nations. How it

moves from that document up into FAO's corporate Framework and how they can identify the type of support, input, guidance that they can get at the country level by FAO 'working as one.'

Finally, there were some comments about the process now going forward and then also a specific request to explain that process. Indeed, let me try to do that. The process that we are following, as I mentioned at the beginning, is the Conference Resolution 10/2009, which is in Volume II, Section F of the Basic Texts.

It is in the first year of the biennium that we develop and receive input on priorities for the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, specifically from the Regional Conferences, the Programme Committee, Finance Committee, Council and Technical Committees. We are now at the stage where we have all of that input and, as mentioned, we have also added on the very strong informal process with you as well.

Moving forward, it is now Council's role to provide guidance and advice to the Conference on the Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget. Management's intention would then be to issue an additional paper, so this would be after the Council, but before Conference, and that additional paper that we would issue would reflect the guidance of the Council.

This is a paper that would accompany the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget - the Conference documents that you have before you - and would accompany that to Conference. The content of this paper would depend on the exact guidance that is coming from the Council. It would generally include an updated draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolutions for 2022-23.

That would come into effect after your discussion on the PWB budget level. Then we would also include any other clarifications based on specific guidance from the Council. It would be a document that shows an updated draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution and any clarifications based on specific guidance that is in the Council report.

Conference will then review all of that, provide its final guidance and, after Conference, we would then publish the Strategic Framework in line with the final guidance from Conference and we would begin the operationalization of the Strategic Framework, which would be reflected in the Adjustments to the PWB 2022-23, which would be reviewed by Council at the end of the year.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we can move on because I am told Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen is still not available. What we can do is I will read out my conclusions. We will put them on the screen and go forward that way.

We have got my conclusions on the screen. I will read them out slowly so that Members can follow easily.

1. The Council reviewed document C 2021/7, *Strategic Framework 2022-2031*, and in particular:

- a) appreciated the extensive, inclusive and transparent consultation process followed in the development of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and that it reflected the guidance and priorities stemming from the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees;
- b) welcomed that the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 builds on the momentum and harmonized transformations already taking place in the Organization, including increased efficiency, streamlining and innovative approaches, a modular and flexible organizational structure and initiatives including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme;
- c) welcomed the strategic narrative of the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition or a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind, to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and FAO's three Global Goals of Members;
- d) appreciated that the Strategic Framework aligns itself with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the guidance lens of SDGs 1, 2 and 10;

- e) supported the four crosscutting, cross-sectional accelerators: (i) technology, (ii) innovation, (iii) data and (iv) complements (governance, human capital, and institutions);
- f) welcomed that the Framework anchored in the SDGs allows FAO to articulate its mandated targets and respective results in alignment with the goals of the United Nations Development System at country level and with partners;
- g) recognized that the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and its outcomes may support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, especially SDG 2 and SDG 1;
- h) welcomed FAO's crosscutting themes of gender, youth and inclusion and recognized their role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind;
- i) appreciated the prominence of climate change and biodiversity within the Strategic Framework;
- j) welcomed the Programme Priority Areas formulated at inter-disciplinary issues based technical teams to guide the programmes that FAO would implement under the four betters;
- k) underlined the importance of all forms of innovation, including digitalization, as a driving force in agriculture, environment and food security and nutrition;
- l) acknowledged the important role of scientific and evidence based normative work of FAO and welcomed the increased visibility of the Organization's normative and standard setting work in the Strategic Framework, including FAO's support to the *Codex Alimentarius*;
- m) stressed the importance of partnerships in the implementation of the Strategic Framework, including with other institutions, financial institutions, the private sector, as well as by means of instruments such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation;
- n) underlined the need for alignment with the repositioning of the United Nations Development System and recommended the inclusion of FAO's Country Programming Frameworks in the Strategic Results Framework;
- o) supported FAO's commitment to strengthen risk management, while also ensuring that the Organization is agile and flexible, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and other known and unknown future challenges in agri-food systems; and
- p) appreciated the elements of the reinvigorated fit-for-purpose FAO business model and requested Management to set out for Members the principles that will be used for allocating the regular budget.

2. The Council noted the recommendations of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, the 185th Session of the Finance Committee and of their Joint Meeting on the Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

3. The Council requested that, consistent with the process established in the Basic Texts, an additional paper be submitted to the Conference accompanying the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 with clarifications as needed based on the Council's specific guidance.

4. The Council recommended endorsement by the Conference of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031.

That is the end of the list of my conclusions. They are all on the screen. The floor is open for Members now.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is just about procedure. Should we not go through it subparagraph by subparagraph, otherwise we risk that everything is mixed up. There is a comment on subparagraph (b), another on (c), another on (h) and back and forth. As we have always done, I propose we go through it subparagraph by subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, because it is a long list, perhaps that is an efficient way to proceed.

Ms Vincenza LOMONACO (Italy)

I was asking the same as my German colleague.

We have no reservation on subparagraph (a). On subparagraph (b) is it possible to add, at the end of the subparagraph, after “and COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme”, “including the Food Coalition Programme.”

I go through subparagraph (c), where we mentioned, “Welcomed the strategic narrative of the transformation”, etc., where we quote “agri-food systems for better production” etc., we would like to see there “agriculture and food systems.”

The same wording in (o), but I will leave it to others. The same word, “agriculture and food system.” after food, “agriculture and food system.” Okay. “System,”

CHAIRPERSON

Maybe I could have comments on the first three subparagraphs.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estamos bien con el subpárrafo (a). Con respecto al subpárrafo (b) tenemos un pequeño comentario a partir de las propuestas de mi querida amiga de Italia, sobretodo pido consideración en un par de cuestiones, que no todos los Miembros somos miembros de la *Food Coalition* todavía, segundo, es un tema que va a ser discutido en el G20.

Pero como tengo una actitud constructiva sobre este tema, quiero tener una posición práctica, me gustaría, entonces agregar después, o sea, cuando en el subpárrafo dice “Response and Recovery Programme” coma, y cuando está la propuesta de Italia, “Including the Food Coalition Programme”, yo pondría una coma, “Avoiding -” no, sorry, “Including the Food Coalition Programme”, le sacaría el punto y coma. Le pido a la Secretaría, por favor...

“Including the Food Coalition Programme”, after “programme,” COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme. No, I am talking about “Response and Recovery Programme,”. That is right and after “Programme” I would like to suggest “avoiding potential overlapping with Rome-Based Agencies (RBA) mandates.”

Insisto, no tengo ningún juicio de valor negativo, pero considerando que es un tema que está en un proceso de discusión y de negociación y de conversación entre Miembros, me parece que de esta manera no tendríamos problemas y además, con todo gusto, comprender la *rationale* de mi estimada amiga, la Embajadora de Italia.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We have two points. First on subparagraph (b). We agree with the suggestion of Italy, including the Food Coalition Programme. Concerning Argentina’s proposition, we are also flexible.

Secondly, on subparagraph (c), we note that at the Programme Committee discussions on agri-food systems we have different understanding on this concept. The Secretariat please give us some clarification because we think agri-food systems is very accurate and reflects FAO’s strategic thinking. It is concise and precise. We do not object to agri-food systems.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? In response to China’s comment for the Secretariat to provide a comment on this issue, may I give the floor to the Secretariat? I believe Mr Máximo Torero Cullen you would be commenting on it?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Sorry, what is the question Chairperson?

CHAIRPERSON

China, on subparagraph (c), there is the amendment, “agriculture and food systems.” China wanted an explanation. Perhaps, China, you could repeat your question?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We note that at the Programme Committee discussion, agri-food system is a concept to which different parties have different opinions, but China supports the expression of agri-food systems and we would like to take this opportunity to listen to the clarification from the Secretariat.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Sorry, but there was an issue with the translation before. The explanation that we provided at the Programme Committee and the Joint Meeting was that FAO is an Agriculture and Food Organization and we are looking at agri-food systems work which is everything that is used in agriculture to produce food and also any other type of food production, like creation of other types of elements of food outside of agriculture.

We also look into the agricultural sector as part of the systems. That corresponds to other activities within agriculture that relate for example to fibres, generator to biofuels, things which are not used for food. That is why we use the concept agri-food systems, which tries to incorporate both elements, the food-related systems part and the agri-non-food-related systems part.

In taking both together is what we call the agri-food systems. This was a concept that was used before, there is a book that was published in FAO on this topic. That was the explanation we provided on the definition.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

Not on a particular paragraph, but a similar kind of clarification question. In my interventions I mentioned two times the Blue Economy and Blue Transformation are not very clear and my understanding is there is no widely accepted definition of those terms.

I would like the Secretariat to clarify what this means. Without this clarification, it is a bit problematic for us to endorse the whole plan. In that case, we should be back to the last paragraph that the Council endorsed the plan. Maybe I would be like to put some disclaimer. First, I would like to listen to the explanations of what those two terms actually mean.

CHAIRPERSON

I thought the Secretariat had just explained. Perhaps Ms Beth Crawford could supplement what Mr Máximo Torero Cullen has said.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

The Chief Economist just explained the term agri-food systems. Japan, I believe, is asking about, I did not hear the second, I think it is Blue Economy and I am not sure if it is Green Innovation the other one, the other term that is being requested for information? However, it is similar to what we have had questions on Blue Transformation, Blue Economy and Green Innovation.

When I mentioned earlier in my intervention that, based on specific requests, guidance in the Council report that we would provide further clarifications in a document, it would be this type of element that we could do. For example, we would explain why we used Blue Economy and what the definition of Blue Economy is. This is the type of thing that we could explain in the supplemental document.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me parece muy, muy importante lo que mencionó mi colega de Japón y también nosotros hemos hecho algún tipo de cuestionamiento sobre esos conceptos. Yo me permito reiterar, si me permite Sra. Beth Crawford con todo cariño y con todo afecto, más que no estamos hablando de definiciones, estamos hablando de conceptos que no están internacionalmente acordados. Y entiendo el punto de la Sra Crawford en términos de que va a haber clarificaciones sobre esos conceptos que no están acordados internacionalmente.

Yo pedí la palabra para sugerir un cambio, para un agregado en el subpárrafo (c) para, justamente, ver si de esta manera evitamos cualquier tipo de malinterpretación. Y quizás nuestra sugerencia, nuestra propuesta, pueda satisfacer la preocupación de Japón. Voy a ir a velocidad de dictado en inglés.

Subpárrafo (c). “Welcome that...” No, I need to go to the first part of the subparagraph. I am talking about, “Welcome that the strategic narrative of the transformation”. Delete “the”. Add a comma after “transformation”. Next, instead of “be encouraged”, “should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate and in accordance with, and dependent on national contexts and capacities to achieve”. Please, delete “more”. My suggestion is to delete the word “more”. That is right. This is something that is coming from the 164th Session of the Council and also from the voluntary guidelines. Hence, it is a concept agreed by Members.

CHAIRPERSON

With these amendments, could we go ahead with subparagraph (c)? I see there is no request for the floor. China?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I believe that “MORE” capitalized is exactly highlighted by Director-General. I think “MORE” has more connotation and should be reflected in the report. That is why we suggest to keep it.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo para decir que somos flexibles con la propuesta de China sobre dejar “more” en el texto, en la medida que podamos utilizar lo que viene de los acuerdos anteriores.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you for giving us the floor and for your indulgence. We would like to thank the work until now and we are in a situation we are facing in the last months, in the last time in FAO.

At this time, I would like to recall the last words of our Director-General. The Director-General asks for an efficient and effective session of the Council. I would like also to recall what our distinguished Chair of the Finance Committee has just said when commenting on this Item, saying that some discussions we are having here are the same questions that we have been discussing in the last months. In fact, it is a signal of the inclusiveness and transparent work and our common goal, our common endeavour to get a positive and consensual outcome.

Hence, I think that we are going for a discussion on concepts and on ideas and I think that some of our colleagues have already said that it is time maybe not to discuss and going for more actions. Just a small reflection from our side, and with this, I recall our very first words in this Council that more than ever your leadership, your experience in this area is more important than ever.

I think that the discussion we are having here, we had it already at the Programme Committee. At the Programme Committee, for example, we all agreed on a language that we are replacing “agri-food systems” for “agriculture and food systems”. I think that one way to go forward, is going for the language we already accepted. It is all right to go and the meaning of the paragraph is not putting to press in our view. It is just a humble view from our side, but I think that if we can go through the language we already accepted in this case. Of course, it is not written in stone, if we are changing things, we need to go for new things. I think it is clear for all of us. However, in this case I think and I am begging for the Members, I am begging for all the colleagues that if you can go for what we already decided, that is a way of fulfilling what the Director-General suggests in his role of the leader of the Organization, of the Secretariat, and going for an effective and efficient Council.

Maybe we can go with this language, which is again, and we are very thankful for this from our distinguished colleague from Argentina. It is in line with the Programme Committee and in the same line I think that we can use what we also accepted at the Programme Committee and going for “agriculture and food systems.” I am saying this also making our position for these discussions.

CHAIRPERSON

I would make one comment. The Committees, like the Finance and the Programme Committees are Committees of the Council and they give a view to the Council. However, when the Report of the Council has to be the Report of the discussions in the Council, it cannot just mimic the Reports of the Committees because the Council has 49 Members and they have a discussion.

The Council's Report must and should reflect the discussions in the Council and obviously the Council takes into account the Reports of the Committees and all, but it is not necessary that it just transports what the Committee said. That is just my comment for Members to bear in mind.

What I would suggest, as I had said, we will break at 17:30 hours for the interpretation to be organized and then we will take this up at 17:45 hours again. We will break now at 17:30 hours and we will take this subparagraph up at 17:45 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 17:28 to 17:48 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 28 à 17 h 48

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.28 a las 17.48

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Referring to what the European Union Presidency has just explained, of course in the understanding of your explanation, the Council does not necessarily have to take up the language or agreements found in its committees. However, it would be really strange if now we use a different term.

It is on "agri-food systems", so if we now use "agri-food systems", which was in the original document, the draft Strategic Framework, which was discussed in the Programme Committee and after lengthy discussions, there was agreement then in the Programme Committee to use agriculture and food systems. Now it comes back to the Council.

Several Members have used in their statement "agriculture and food systems" and now it has turned back to "agri-food systems". Somebody who reads the Report would really become a bit confused and I frankly thought that we have gone a step further in agreeing on "agriculture and food systems". You know how lengthy the discussions around that were and we should not reopen this but stick to what has been found after long discussions as an agreement.

CHAIRPERSON

The reason I was saying that is there were lengthy discussions in the Programme Committee but the Programme Committee is 11 Members. Here there are 49 Members. They may have a different view. Obviously, it is up to the Members in the end, and it is not me but it should be the Members deciding.

It should not be just because 11 Members could not agree and spent a lot of time. Here it comes, the Council is 49 Members, maybe the Council will decide let us take the wording of the Programme Committee. However, it is up to Members. The Representative of Portugal gave his view and we will listen if there are any other views. If not, then we will go ahead.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

As a Member of the Programme Committee, I would very much support the Council using the word "agriculture and food systems", just as Germany and Portugal have suggested.

On another point, I and several other Members of the Council, made a number of comments and statements supporting the recommendations that the Programme Committee made and, indeed, I did not hear anyone dispute any of the recommendations that the Programme Committee made. In fact, I did not hear anyone disputing the use of the term "agriculture and food systems" rather than "agri-food systems".

Therefore, I cannot see what the problem is with using the Programme Committee language on this, given that no one has objected to it and several people have supported it. Indeed, when we come to discussing some of the other recommendations that the Programme Committee made, or discussing how we conclude, I do hope that we can recognize the fact that many Members of Council have endorsed them and no one has disputed them.

CHAIRPERSON

My point is if the Members have endorsed them, then there is no problem. Hence, I was just drawing a point of principle to the attention, that just because a Committee has agreed on a particular wording, it is for the Council to decide whether it will go forward with that or with some other wording. However, as you say, if the Council agrees, I do not have any problem because I am in the hands of the Council.

Therefore, it is what the Council decides and what the Council's report is. I was just making a point of principle, that it should not be automatic because a Committee has said so. It has to be the Council and since you say nobody is objecting, then there should not be a problem because then it is the Council which has decided.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Thank you Chair, I asked the floor basically to agree with you. We are here in a more open transparent and democratic Body of FAO. If we were solely to ratify what only 11 Members discussed in the Programme Committee, there would not be any use of having meetings for the Council and even for the Conference.

Of course, the Council is sovereign over the Committees, and the Conference over the Council. It is a principle that everyone agrees.

And since I have the floor, I would like to support the proposal coming from Argentina, both on subparagraphs (c) and (d).

As far as Brazil is concerned, we are more comfortable with "agri-food systems" than "agriculture and food systems" for this specific point.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We would like to express our position, we fully support the Independent Chairperson of the Council's explanation. We had a discussion during the Programme Committee, but here in Council is where we should conduct the discussion among Council Members and make the decisions.

Therefore, we support the further discussion about "agri-food systems" instead of only accepting the expression from the Programme Committee. Our position, as my previous colleague has expressed, is that we appreciate the explanation from the Secretariat, since FAO has a new understanding about this expression and it actually has been used in the previous document. Hence, we would appreciate that Members could reconsider to accept this expression. Our position is that we would like to support the "agri-food system" expression.

Second, I think that the distinguished Ambassador from Argentina's expression is very important. Therefore, we would appreciate if it can be put into a new subparagraph to stress it to a further extent and then we would like to explain our reason is that with the capitalization of the word "more" it actually not only stressed the importance of the transformation but also means that we fully respect the original "agri-food systems".

We acknowledge the importance, the efficiency, inclusiveness, resilience of the previous "agri-food systems" and our position is that we want to promote better agri-food systems, so with the capitalization of "more", as has been stressed by the distinguished Ambassador from Argentina, it has already been fully expressed here.

Still, we believe that his explanation is very important. Therefore, we would appreciate if it can be built into a new subparagraph to stress this expression and maintain the original strategic narrative.

CHAIRPERSON

China, you were suggesting a new subparagraph. Would you have a suggestion which we could put on the screen?

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

We could have a new subparagraph up on the screen. We will send the new subparagraph through right away.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quería agradecerle a mi querida colega de China sus amables palabras, pero me gustaría recordar que cada instancia de debate es autónoma, pero hay una historia en todas las discusiones que hemos llevado adelante en la Organización.

Nosotros no hemos sido los únicos, sino que siempre cuando se habla de transformación, para evitar que el contexto de transformación se encuentre de manera general y aislado, queremos que eso siempre esté acompañado del *caveat* que está aquí expresado en el subpárrafo (c).

Yo entiendo perfectamente la *rationale* de mi colega de China. Pero nosotros tenemos incluso este concepto, quiero decir, yo lo expresé como representante del G77&China, lo expresé en mi capacidad nacional y lo hemos dicho en todas las reuniones y debates que hemos tenido.

Quizás la única alternativa es no utilizar en ese párrafo la palabra “transformación” y utilizar allí o “improvement” o “promotion” o “enhancement” o “achievement”. O sea, algún tipo de palabra que no sea “transformación”, pero nosotros entendemos que cuando mencionan la palabra “transformación”, el concepto “transformación”, es muy importante poner énfasis en el tema de las diferentes realidades.

Sobre todo, cuando hablamos de transformación, estamos hablando en concreto de la necesidad de adecuarlo a los grados y realidades de cada uno de los Miembros. Creo que es una visión, un concepto sumamente inclusivo y amplio. Esto es mi primera reflexión, quizás pudiéramos reemplazar la palabra “transformación” que está en el romanito C por la palabra “promotion”. Y quizás eso, de “promotion” de “transformation” the narrative over...

Repito, sacar la palabra “transformation” y reemplazarla por “promotion”. En todo caso, yo creo que cuando está la palabra “transformación”, debería ser utilizada alguna otra expresión.

Presidente, lo único que le pido cuando hablo de cambiar la palabra “transformación” — transformation—, estoy hablando del subpárrafo (c), no del subpárrafo (d). Pero es simplemente una sugerencia.

Ms Renate HAHLEN (European Union)

For the European Union, the term “transformation” needs to stay and also we prefer definitely subparagraph (c) as it stands and not the addition because it really waters down the level of ambition of what needs to be done to get to more sustainable food systems.

I would also want to come back that we do not understand the concept of agri-food systems, and we have heard a definition today, other than the one we have heard earlier from Mr Máximo Torero Cullen where he says we put agri-food systems so that we know that the emphasis is on production. This is not exactly what we want.

This is definitely not a definition that we would want to live with and this was what he reported to the Programme Committee. Hence, if even for FAO the definition of agri-food systems changes within a few weeks, I would suggest that we stay with “agriculture and food systems” instead of “agri-food systems”.

And then of course we very much look forward to what the definitions will be in the paper that FAO has promised us to deliver.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Le pido por favor que le indique a la Secretaría que mantenga la propuesta como estaba en el subpárrafo (c) y, además, si quieren que se agregue la sugerencia de mi estimada colega de China como subpárrafo (d), pero que mantengamos tal cual estaba la propuesta en el subpárrafo (c), por favor. Para poder tener claridad de cuáles son las diferentes ideas propuestas.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, could you reiterate subparagraph (c), the way you are saying so that it can be put on the screen again?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

“Welcomed that the strategic narrative of transformation should be encouraged in a coherent manner as appropriate and in accordance and dependent on national context and capacities”.

After “capacities” it is “to achieve more efficient, inclusive”. That is right.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Please put “agri-food systems” in brackets and also insert in brackets “agriculture and food systems”. There is no agreement on this term.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments on subparagraph (c)? We have a difference of opinion here. Any comments from other Members?

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (Spain)

A la luz de este debate que estamos manteniendo, queremos apoyar lo que han dicho Miembros como el Reino Unido, por citar algunos, además de la propia Unión Europea y de nuestros socios comunitarios. Creemos que la definición de “Agriculture and Food Systems”, por emplear la terminología en inglés, es más amplia y por tanto más inclusiva, aparte de haber sido lo que se acordó en el Comité de Programa. Por tanto, nuestra opinión es de volver a esa terminología.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We too can go along and support the “agriculture and food systems” language. We feel that it is inclusive and also better captures the breadth of the agricultural sectors, forestry and fisheries and would also, we believe, accommodate the explanation that FAO’s work also pertains to agricultural systems and is not always related to food items.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Nosotros quisiéramos respaldar lo expresado por Argentina. Tenemos nuestras reservas con respecto a la narrativa de transformación y lo hemos expresado hoy durante la mañana en la sesión. La transformación es algo muy profundo en realidad, implica una metamorfosis, puede concebirse como una transmutación, variación, es muy complejo.

Por eso si entendemos que la agricultura y los sistemas alimentarios deben mejorarse o deben promoverse o debe optimizarse, estamos concordando con esa narrativa expresada por Argentina. Y si es necesario usar la palabra “transformación”, definitivamente tendrá que ser de acuerdo al contexto y a las capacidades nacionales.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Firstly, on the discussion we are having of “agri-food systems” versus “agriculture and food systems,” Australia is actually comfortable with using either of these terms. However, in our following of the Programme Committee and the reading of the Programme Committee Report as well as the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, we recognize that “agriculture and food systems” was the language that was used and we were happy to endorse that, as we indicated in the opening of our statement, saying we endorse the findings of the Programme Committee.

With regards to the “transformation” versus “promotion”, again we recognize the discussions that have been had and the concerns of other Members and therefore, we would be happy with “transformation,” providing the additional language introduced by my colleague from Argentina is maintained.

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ (México)

Mi colega de Australia leyó rápidamente nuestra intervención. Creemos que, efectivamente, si se está hablando de una narrativa, la narrativa de promoción, pues, es extraña.

Yo creo que aquí estamos hablando de una narrativa de transformación, entonces también México es de la idea que permanezca transformación con el agregado que el Embajador Cherniak puso sobre el contexto en el que se tiene que llevar a cabo.

Y con relación al “Agri-food Systems” o “Agricultural Food Systems”, México piensa que tenemos que ir por el concepto que más consenso tenga. Porque si no, se va a hacer una larga discusión sobre conceptos y lo que necesitamos es, pues, ya planes de acción, ya actuar o poner esto en el campo, ¿no? Esa es la intervención.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

To highlight what Australia just said, I think Australia made a very good point and I would like to support that statement. Therefore, going along with “transformation” and maintaining “agriculture and food systems” and we are fine with the addition from Argentina on the “appropriate and in accordance with” etc.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

Following the principle of consensus, we can accept the proposal of the Ambassador of Argentina. We can agree with the new amendment but we think we should keep the word “transformation” because it reflects better the direction of action of FAO.

As regards the terms of “agri-food systems” or “agriculture and food systems,” I think many delegates were talking about the frequency of the terms that we have used and I do not think we should concentrate on the past. I think we should look at the future direction. Maybe the Secretariat can give us more clarification on these terms, what kind of impact the uses of these terms will have on our future work?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

De manera muy breve quiero agradecerle muy especialmente la flexibilidad de mi estimada colega de China, gracias por comprender nuestra preocupación.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand is flexible for using the term either “agri-food systems” or “agriculture and food systems.” Actually, this morning in our statement as well we mentioned the “agri-food system”.

It is subparagraph (c) which actually is also in line with our statement that we delivered this morning, where we would like the word “transformation” to remain. Furthermore, we would like to support the Ambassador of Argentina that we need to consider the national contexts and capacities as well.

Ms Nathalie CASSIERS (Belgium)

I just wanted to intervene on the terms “agri-food systems” or “agriculture and food systems.” For us “agri-food systems” is really much narrower than “agriculture and food systems” and we also having a Food Systems Summit coming up, which is really encompassing. We have a good view of what the food systems and the agriculture systems are, whereas agri-food systems is really much less clear to us. Therefore, we would support “agriculture and food systems.”

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

For Indonesia, we are flexible in using “agri-food systems transformation.” We have mentioned it in our national statement. We would like to also thank the Ambassador of Argentina for the addition of the “national context and capacities.”

CHAIRPERSON

I see, Members, there is a difference of opinion particularly on the words “agri-food systems” and “agriculture and food systems.” Is there also a difference between “transformation” and “promotion”? I thought the difference of opinion is mostly restricted to the wording “agri-food systems” or “agriculture and food systems”. May I know whether the word “transformation” is also where the people are having a difference of opinion?

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

Sorry, I thought it was quite clear that everybody was in favour of maintaining the word “transformation” and in my opinion, from listening to this discussion, most delegations were either flexible or in favour of “agriculture and food systems.” There were only a few that preferred “agri-

food systems.” What I hear from this discussion is that most either want “agriculture and food systems” or are flexible. Hence, I would say the majority would be in favour of what is new in brackets “agriculture and food systems.”

CHAIRPERSON

There is a difference of opinion. There are those, quite rightly, who are flexible.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Just on your question about “transformation,” as we all know, this is an old debate that keeps recurring and we are supportive of the language proposed by Argentina that is drawing from the language of the Council’s Report of December. I think that in order to move forward, we could go along with that.

CHAIRPERSON

It has been pointed out, there is a difference of opinion on “agri-food systems” and “agriculture and food systems.” There are several countries who are flexible and China, I think, asked for a further explanation by the Secretariat. Hence, may I ask the Secretariat to clarify what China requested, to see whether we can then come together?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Let me explain. The definition is exactly the same as we explained before. “Agri-food systems” covers the journey of food from farm to table, including when it is grown, harvested, processed, packaged, transported, distributed, traded, bought, prepared, eaten and disposed of. It also encompasses non-food products, for example, parts of forestry, biofuels and fibres.

It also constitutes livelihoods and all of the people as well, the activities, investments and choices that they play a part in getting us this food and agriculture products. Therefore, it is a comprehensive term and that is why we prefer to keep it as “agri-food systems” rather than two words which is a phrase and not a comprehensive term.

CHAIRPERSON

Does this explanation make any difference to the views of the various Members? If not, then my suggestion would be we hold this subparagraph in abeyance and move forward. We cannot spend all our time on this subparagraph.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

I would like to thank Mr Máximo Torero Cullen for his explanation. Based on our previous discussions, my understanding is that many delegates prefer “agriculture and food systems” because they are worried that “agri-food systems” is a new term but Mr Torero Cullen has explained this term has been used in the past.

Furthermore, the Secretariat has explained that agri-food systems is more wide-ranged and it will help FAO to fulfil its mandate more widely. Some delegates think “agri-food systems” are more wide-ranged and others think “agriculture and food systems” are more wide-ranged. However, I think we should listen to the explanation of the Secretariat because many delegates might not be agricultural experts.

I really think that we should listen to the scientific explanation of the Secretariat to use the term of agri-food systems so that we can assist FAO’s fulfilment of its mandate.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no requests for comments. As I said, we can hold this subparagraph in abeyance and move forward, and then we will come back to it. Therefore, subparagraph (c) we will hold in abeyance and we will move forward to subparagraph. Argentina, do you want to speak about this subparagraph?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo intentando ver si lo puedo ayudar al consenso, pero si no, le pido que haga de cuenta que no digo nada, por favor. ¿Se podría aceptar "Agriculture," comma, "Food and Agri-food Systems"? It is only a suggestion.

CHAIRPERSON

With this new wording, any reaction to the new wording suggested by Argentina?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Thank you to the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina for trying to help us out here. I think we need to reflect a bit on this. Therefore, I support your proposal. Let us move on and let us get back to this. Now we have additional food for thought. Maybe this is a way out. We have to give it some thought.

CHAIRPERSON

We will move forward.

Subparagraph (d), any comment?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No tengo nada sobre el subpárrafo (d) pero luego del subpárrafo (d), iba a hacer propuesta de subpárrafo. Si hay alguien que tiene algo sobre el subpárrafo (d), espero.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Chairperson, could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, actually I have been informed that when it comes to conclusions, only Members can speak, and if you want an explanation, I could ask the Legal Counsel to say a few words. I have been approached that when it comes to conclusions of the Council, only Members should speak.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

If I may, I have to say I am a bit astonished at this point because this is common practice. We did that several times in the past, just that we have a rotation scheme and the whole system in the European Union is built up that way, that it is the Presidency to coordinate everything and that makes it much more efficient. I have to say I am really astonished that this now should not be possible anymore.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I understand the question at issue is the scope of participation of a Member Organization. At the outset, I'd recall, as everybody is well aware, that Rule XLIV of the General Rules of the Organization specifies that "Members Organizations shall not hold office in the Council or any subsidiary body of the Council."

At the same time, Article II, paragraph 9 of the Constitution establishes that, "Except as otherwise provided in this Article, a Member Organization shall have the right to participate in matters within its competence and in any meeting of the Organization, including any meeting of the Council or other body, other than bodies of restricted membership referred to below, in which any of this Member States are entitled to participate."

In this regard, here I would note that the report of a meeting is the report of its Members and I believe there, there is a distinction between participation, i.e. discussion in the debate as distinct from participation in the formulation of the recommendations of the Members of a body and indeed those Members who will approve or adopt the report as such. Accordingly, I see a distinction between interventions, say, at this particular moment as distinct to participation during a discussion of this matter.

I hope that that provides some guidance on the legal interpretation at this moment in time but, of course, I am ready to assist as needed.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I am not satisfied with that. That is a different practice. There were also conversations at the beginning of the semester of the EU Presidency with the FAO Secretariat and apparently this was not a problem at all, at the time. It was discussed, at the time.

It is all the more surprising that now it has become a problem but maybe you should give the floor to the Presidency who had these talks with the Secretariat, so that we have a discussion with those directly involved in these conversations. I am a trained lawyer as well and there are many ways to interpret rules, provisions. And current practice helps in understanding the appropriate way to interpret certain rules.

For the Legal Counsel, I find it very astonishing, all the more so at this point in time, when this had never been a problem in the past and, in January the Secretariat confirmed that this was possible.

CHAIRPERSON

I think, Germany, I would like to go forward in adopting this and we will have to clarify this, like you are saying, speaking to the Secretariat, but I have the Legal Counsel giving not only the opinion but quoting from the Basic Texts, as it were. If we go off on a tangent on that, we are going to spend the evening without having done the work which we are supposed to do. Therefore, what I would appeal is that let us move on with the adoption and I promise we can take that up separately, to sort that issue out separately. May I go forward with the subparagraph (d) and after, if there are no comments, if you agree?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just for your consideration, Chairperson, prior to each session of the Council, the European Union submits a Declaration of Competences. This is certainly of mixed competences, shared competences between the European Union and the Members. Even against this backdrop, there is something wrong in the interpretation we have heard. It is not taking into account certain specificities when it comes to the European Union.

CHAIRPERSON

Legal Counsel, can I ask you to react to that?

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

Yes, my reaction was, in fact... Quite correctly, Germany has indicated that there was a Declaration of Competence. That Declaration of Competence reflects the Member Organization's competence to participate. At the same time, as far as decision-making for this Item, it says Member States' Competence. That is a distinction that I am making here. Of course, I am willing to review the practice and have a look at it and see what interpretations have come before.

However, at the moment we are discussing a report which is a document embodying Membership of the Council's views, recommendations, decisions which is approved by Members of the Council. That is where the distinction comes from that I am putting forward at this moment in time.

I hope that clarifies where I see the distinction between participation and deliberation, as opposed to participation in the writing of a report at the Meeting, which at the end of day will be the body, the content will be those opinions and views of its Members and approved by its Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I think this debate is going to take us off track and, Germany, what I suggest is that if whatever comments were envisaged by the Presidency, Members could make and we move forward. Otherwise, we are going to be again in the situation. It is always the Programme Committee's wording. The last Council we spent two days, so much so, that the Council had to decide that the Programme Committee's Agenda should be reduced.

So, on a principle, my recommendation and my ruling is that the Council has to decide on its own Report. If the Council decides on its wording, which are similar to the Programme Committee, no problem, but we cannot just say because Committee XYZ had a paragraph, we should put that paragraph in the Council's Report.

It can only be put in the Council's Report if the Council agrees. Because this is the Report of the Council. Even last Council created such a jam, it took two days for this argument to go forward.

Therefore, what I suggest is we have to sort this out separately and we move with the adoption of the Report.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I take note, Chairperson, and I just want to put on the record that this has to be looked into further and that we do not accept this now as a precedent.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, Germany, that is exactly what my suggestion would be, that we do not hold this up but we look into it.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La verdad que estoy preocupado porque me gustaría que nadie sienta que el procedimiento intente excluir a nadie. Yo, por principio, tengo una posición de transparencia y de apertura a la participación de todos. He hablado del principio de inclusividad siempre. Yo creo que la cuestión de la interpretación de la Oficina Jurídica, requeriría seguramente a futuro una reunión específica del Presidente Independiente del Consejo con los Miembros para poder clarificar esta cuestión a futuro.

No creo que podamos resolver este tema ahora pero sí creo que es un tema que merece ser resuelto porque no puede haber prácticas y diferentes interpretaciones, es necesario tener en lo posible una única interpretación que los Miembros puedan conocer anteriormente, *a priori*, y en consecuencia poder ir hacia adelante con esas prácticas.

Por lo tanto, respaldo su propuesta de hoy seguir para no demorar más esta discusión, pero, tomo nota como Miembro de la preocupación de otros Miembros porque más allá de las diferencias que muchas veces hemos tenido en algunos temas, siempre voy a defender la idea y el principio de la inclusividad.

Entonces, lo que quiero es que se clarifique este tema y tengamos reuniones a futuro inmediatamente cuando termine el Consejo, sobre esta cuestión para poder seguir adelante hoy con lo que tenemos previsto en el programa, que sigamos con la práctica habitual para poder avanzar en este tema. Pero no quería dejar de mencionar mi preocupación sobre esta cuestión.

CHAIRPERSON

I could not agree with you more. We have to clarify this. We cannot have this type of debate in the middle of some agenda items which holds up that. I do agree with Germany that we need to discuss and clarify this and I agree with you. I undertake to do this exactly, to clarify this so that it does not raise its head again, because we are wasting our time. Our Agenda Item, we are still there. Therefore, I promise that this will be clarified in a separate discussion.

Now we carry on with our Agenda Item, subparagraph (d).

Ms Nathalie CASSIERS (Belgium)

On the previous discussion, to support Germany, but also raise a little point: if a Member of the Council asks for the Presidency to take the floor, it is an expression of the view of the Members. I just wanted to put that on the record.

CHAIRPERSON

Now we have agreed that we will take this matter up separately. Members, if you are going to comment on this, could we hold your comments until we meet on this issue separately and we carry on with subparagraph (d)?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I support your decision, but also add that we also take this opportunity to discuss the practice that we do not agree on. Some regions, and sometimes the Secretariat, try to discuss the places according to the Basic Texts to the regions and not to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the G77. I think that there should also be an opportunity to discuss this matter and have a final decision supported by the Legal Counsel.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I have a suggested addition to subparagraph (d).

At the end of the paragraph, I would add: "and requested stronger linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the four betters". This is one of the Programme Committee recommendations that we agreed on in the Programme Committee and I in my intervention called on Council to endorse. I hope that we can endorse it.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I would like to support what the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland just said but I also want to add something to the previous discussion. I know you want to move on, but I would like to refer you to the 155th Council, where Slovakia spoke as an Observer on behalf of the European Union.

Therefore, we have very firm historical practice of this. I want you to take that into account. Sweden supports what Germany said in that we reserve ourselves for this new idea in the middle of a discussion that, in fact, Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) raised in this discussion, without any previous information provided to the European Union.

We have precedent in the 155th Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Just for your information, in fact, people have questioned me on this and that is why I raised it. I did not just pick it up, I received a question as to why, and that is why I raised this issue.

I open the floor again for subparagraph (d) as amended by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. If there are no comments, we can adopt subparagraph (d) and move forward to subparagraph (e).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No tenemos objeciones respecto al subpárrafo (d), con la sugerencia de mi colega del Reino Unido y voy a proponer dos párrafos adicionales, luego del subpárrafo (d). Voy a leer a velocidad de dictado en inglés.

"Highlighted the importance of a balance between the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental)" throughout the Strategic Framework, including in numbers of Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and allocation of budget between the four betters".

In the next subparagraph: "Stressed the need to duly consider in a mutual, balanced, tiers-based manner, all available approaches, systems and tools to fully leverage FAO's comparative advantages to promote working at scale for greater sustainability and long-term impact in response to Members' needs."

Estos subpárrafos los proponemos ya que capturan elementos que fueron mencionados, no solo por mi intervención sino por otras intervenciones de otros Miembros. Y en la primera lectura del borrador del Informe, que la hicimos muy rápida, creo que no fueron capturadas y creemos que es importante que estos elementos queden bien reflejados en el Informe para ser equilibrados, balanceados y sobre todo yo diría, puedan recitar, como mencionó mi colega del Reino Unido, lo expresado por los Miembros en este debate.

Obviamente estamos tratando de que de alguna manera el lenguaje utilizado, sea el lenguaje ya acordado en otras reuniones. Solamente permítanme hacer una diferencia, hay una corrección en el subpárrafo (f) nuevo, no es “rules”, es “tools”.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (d) is adopted because there was no comment and now we are talking about subparagraph (e) and (f). Any comments on subparagraphs (e) and (f)?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

In subparagraph (f), I would like to insert after “science”, “and evidence”. This is what we usually have here, it is language which can be supported by all Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Le agradezco mucho a mi colega de Alemania la propuesta de mejorar el texto que he formulado. Lo único que pediría para ser preciso o más preciso, la idea es colocar luego de “Science and”: “Science and peer reviewed evidence based manner.” Porque obviamente no estamos hablando de cualquier evidencia sino evidencia que pueda ser confirmada con un rigor científico.

CHAIRPERSON

Hence, a new subparagraph (f) with the amendments.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

These are two different things. When there is scientific evidence, it is fine. However, oftentimes, science reaches a point where there is scientific evidence. In this case, we refer to evidence. It may turn out later that evidence may be confirmed by science, but peer-reviewed evidence – this does not work. “Peer review” can be put before science or be a qualifier for science, but not for evidence. So I cannot go along with the proposed insertion.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Soy flexible, no me interesa demorar esta discusión. Tomo en consideración lo expresado por mi colega de Alemania y para mí está okay así y si eso genera consenso, habría que sacar “peer-reviewed” para poder acomodar también la posición de mi colega de Alemania.

We can delete “Peer-reviewed” in order to accommodate Germany’s position.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Argentina, for your flexibility. Could we agree to go forward, agreeing to subparagraph (e) and (f)? I see no comments. Ms Beth Crawford, do you have a comment?

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

At the end of subparagraph (e), where it says “an allocation of budget between the four betters” it now also says “and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. I am unclear on this since, in our documents, we have allocations of budgets to the four betters but not to the SDGs.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estoy viendo que no fue capturado exactamente lo que expresé en el subpárrafo (e). Lo voy a volver a leer de acuerdo como yo lo tenía aquí. Esto es “Highlighted the importance of a balance between the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) throughout the strategic framework, including in number of Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and allocation of budget between the four betters.” The rest should be deleted.

CHAIRPERSON

With that we can go ahead with the subparagraphs (e) and (f). We go to subparagraph (g).

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I just want to insert, at the end of subparagraph (g), inside the brackets, after “institutions” I want to insert: “the protection of intellectual property rights”. Also, delete the “and” before “institution”.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

We would prefer to keep the original text. If we were going to talk about protection of intellectual property rights, we can mention it in a separate subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? Would there be a suggestion for another subparagraph containing intellectual property rights? Japan, would you have a suggestion?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

If China has a suggestion, I would greatly appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 19:00 hours. We are going to lose the interpretation soon, therefore I think we will stop here and take up subparagraph (g) tomorrow.

We had agreed that we will start at 17:45 hours and finish at 19:00 hours. It is 19:00 hours already, so I will adjourn the meeting and we meet tomorrow at 09:00 hours in the morning and carry on with the conclusions on this Item.

I thank you and I adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 19:03 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 03

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.03

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
THIRD PLENARY SESSION TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
27 April 2021

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:33 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 33
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 09.33
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the third meeting of the 166th Session of the Council to order. We start from where we left off yesterday.

I would like to inform Members that we have been approached by the European Union to sort this little controversy which we had yesterday evening about whether an Observer can speak when the conclusions of the Council are being discussed. Although yesterday there was the wish that we should separately sort this matter out, Governing Bodies Servicing Division (CSG), the Secretary-General was approached as, they would like this matter to be sorted out today.

Therefore, I am informing Members of this. How would they like to proceed? Should we have a discussion with the full Membership or should we discuss separately with the European Union and come back and report to you?

However, I agree, we need to get this off the table so that we can carry on with our work.

We have got two options. One, we deal with them separately but we have not been able to contact them, as to how they would like to proceed. Does separately mean first thing today or can it be during the course of the day, during the break, after 12:30? Or, would they like to clear this matter straightaway and then I inform you as Members as well? How should we proceed? Any ideas?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would, frankly, prefer that the European Union and European Group would try to solve this separately, so we could still have our discussions and interventions in the substantive items of our Agenda.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I would like to ask to pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and 27 Member States.

CHAIRPERSON

That is what we were trying to sort out. I will give the floor to Portugal. I want to inform Members that this matter arose, and if you recall, I did give the floor to Portugal in earlier Sessions, because some Members approached the Governing Bodies Servicing Division (CSG). That is how the matter has arisen. Therefore, what we are trying to sort out, is how we should proceed.

Germany, you have suggested that I give the floor to Portugal, which is the issue we have to sort out because we have been approached by a Member who asked us why this happening. So, how would you like to proceed?

I can suspend the Council for half an hour and discuss it with the whole Council or discuss it separately with the European Union. But I think we need to sort it out rather than continue this way. While the matter is being questioned, you are still asking me to give the floor to Portugal, in other words as if nothing has changed. What do I tell this Member who approached us?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

The matter arose around discussions of the conclusions and not around the general discussion and therefore I asked you to pass the floor to Portugal again to speak on behalf of the European Union.

CHAIRPERSON

It is true, we were talking about conclusions and not the general debate. Portugal, you have the floor.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We are following a well-established practice that we have been following in this Organization for so many years, not only for the European Union but also for the Regional Groups and from other situations. As we saw, for example, in the last Council, it is very well reflected in the Verbatim of the last Session. That is why we are astonished about the intervention of the FAO Secretariat and the FAO

Legal Service during the FAO Council yesterday evening with respect to whether the European Union can function in the FAO Council meeting and hereby we formally protest.

The interpretation given by the FAO Legal Counsel deviates from the established practice. We are highly surprised about that and by the sudden intervention in the midst of a meeting, this is changing the rules of the game during the game. We are also surprised by the implicit differentiation in the right to participate in the FAO Council between presenting a statement and discussing the implications of that statement for the conclusions of the Council.

The intervention by the Legal Counsel compromises the European Union Membership rights and compromises the ability of the European Union to participate in the Council. The European Union has been a Member of FAO for 30 years. We urge the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), to return to the situation of the usual practice in which it is possible for a Council Member to pass the floor to the European Union Presidency.

That is what we are following, what we have done in the past, and what others, and the Regional Groups, have done in the past. This is what we have in our Statement of Competence. We are following the decision we had taken in the 1990s about the participation of the European Union in these meetings and we are breaking the rules in the middle of the game. That is what we are doing.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Ayer me expresé en el sentido de que había que tomar nota de la preocupación por parte de algunos Miembros, en este caso estoy hablando de la Unión Europea, sobre su sensación o su percepción de que la interpretación de la Oficina Jurídica estaba afectando derechos.

Sinceramente, yo no lo sé si legalmente es así. Confío en la Asesora Jurídica y en su interpretación, pero solo quiero decir que cuando yo pedí la palabra para hablar en el debate sobre el Marco estratégico, a mí me dijeron que yo no podía pedir la palabra como G77, como Chairperson del G77 y China porque el G77 y China no era Miembro del Consejo, que la tenía que pedir como Argentina. Y a pesar de que intentaba expresar la posición del G77 al inicio de la discusión, tuve que esperar al momento que le tocó el turno a Argentina para poder expresarme luego en representación del G77 y China.

Quiero decir, y en línea con lo que expresó Brasil el día de ayer, que tenemos necesidad de tener una reunión especial para poder tener un debate y una discusión sobre este tema. Porque es un tema muy importante, es un tema serio, pero es un tema que requiere un espacio especial que lo debemos discutir, me parece a mí, en otro ámbito quizás inmediatamente después de esta reunión.

Pero creo que aquí las reuniones, tenemos un programa del Consejo y tenemos que seguir con esta reunión del Consejo. Incluso, tenemos necesidad de avanzar con ello, pero esto no significa que yo subestime o banalice la preocupación que tiene la Unión Europea sobre esta cuestión. Porque en realidad también yo sentí que como G77 quizás podía haber tenido la posibilidad de expresarme.

Creo que este tema lo tenemos que conversar o discutir después de la sesión del Consejo, que podamos avanzar ahora en esto y no frenar este proceso, pero teniendo en cuenta y tomando en consideración todas estas preocupaciones. Incluso si fuera necesario, discutirlo en la Conferencia, pero me imagino que tendremos alternativas para poder discutir esto antes.

Yo lo único que no estoy dispuesto es acompañar la idea de que la FAO no es una Organización transparente o una Organización que no da la posibilidad o que hay algo poco claro o poco transparente. Para mí la Organización es muy transparente, lo que creo es que hay situaciones que deben ser discutidas para que *a priori* de las reuniones, estén claras, porque lo que no podemos tener son situaciones que nos lleven a interrumpir nuestros programas por situaciones que no están claras.

Entonces, si hay prácticas anteriores o no hay prácticas anteriores, si hay cuestiones legales o no hay cuestiones legales, tenemos que terminar esa discusión en algún momento y respeto absolutamente el principio de inclusividad y por supuesto me preocupa lo planteado por mi estimado colega de Alemania y mi estimado y amigo colega de Portugal en representación de la Unión Europea.

Pero repito, yo creo que sin considerar que el tema está saldado, lo tenemos que discutir en una reunión especial, porque si no, vamos a condicionar toda discusión de todo este programa que tenemos

en el Consejo y me parece que, eso sí, no sería constructivo. Pero que no quede en mis palabras la idea que estoy poniendo en un nivel de poca importancia la preocupación de mis colegas. Si se entiende lo que quiero decir, yo agradezco. Porque, repito, soy muy respetuoso de las posiciones expresadas por mis colegas presentes.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I really appreciate the way you are leading the Council. I think this is my first time to take the floor. The most important thing is I think we do not have to spend a lot of time on a point that is not on the Agenda. We have to follow the Agenda. On top of that, there is a culture and a procedure in FAO, which has been progressing for the last several years. I cannot say five or six, but I know it is for the last four years.

I think a Member can pass the floor to another one, which is not actually a Member of the Council. This is a usual procedure we have been working with for the last several years. Why are we now trying to raise this issue at this point of time and spending a lot of time on it?

We have to follow the traditional way of doing things at FAO and if we feel it is very important and pertinent not only for the Council but also for other meetings, we can sort another agenda and discuss about it. To tell you, frankly, at this point of time we have to take a very strict and final decision. It is possible for a Member to pass the floor to other countries which are not Members of the Council.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China believes that this issue is a very serious issue. This is related to the efficiency and to the mechanism of the Council. I agree with Brazil and Argentina. We should have a separate meeting to discuss this issue. Now we are holding the Council meeting. We should dedicate our time to the Council items. This issue should be separated and we should have a dedicated time to discuss about this and also about our conduct.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

We have heard a number of delegations and I clearly sense that there is a wish to carry on with our Agenda and so do we wish to carry on going through our Agenda. There is a problem that is recognized and acknowledged by those who have taken the floor, and a problem that needs to be discussed separately. Therefore, my plea would be, for the sake of efficiency and fairness, not to change rules during the game and to continue this Council Session following the way these sessions have always been conducted. We continue to pass the floor to the Presidency.

The European Union is a Member Organization and this is a different thing compared to other groupings. But, again, I do not want to enter into the merit of this question. So, my plea is let us agree upon going ahead with this Council Session, following the established rules as in the past and then we can come to this issue, if it is an issue, apparently some considers it such, and discuss it separately.

Do not let us get bogged down now in a procedural legal discussion which not all Members, I guess, are fully knowledgeable about because this regards a certain group of Members and a Member organization.

I think this is the best way forward at this point in time. Let us not waste our time. Let us get down to business.

Mr Bommakanti RAJENDER (India)

I have been following it. I fully agree with the statement made by Brazil and Argentina. I think we should move ahead and this particular issue may be discussed later on. I know, as others have mentioned, that it should be, like in the previous Council meeting, the way we used to follow. We should move ahead. I think we should not get bogged down and we should not let it be taken in a different direction.

Ms Renate HAHLEN (European Union)

I saw that there was once again an attempt to put us down to Observers, so thanks for reacting to my comment into the chat. We have had this incident already at a previous Council, that all of a sudden

the European Union was not considered a Member of Council. This is not the case. I listen with interest to the interventions of others.

Of course we also want to go ahead but, please, other Members, you see that we have a problem as our rights are all of a sudden being cut from being an active Member of Council on a basis of arguments that we do not understand and that are contrary to previous practice. There I want to come to an example from the last Council where, for instance, Malaysia was passed to floor to negotiate the conclusions of an item while Malaysia was an Observer and not a Member of Council, on behalf of a group. I think we have to have same rules for same issues.

I also do not understand, and I would really want to know, what the justification is to split up the different parts of the plenary into giving a Member a right on one place, but not on another. We can make statements, but then we cannot negotiate the conclusions. This is what we have heard yesterday from the Legal Counsel and I really want to know where this idea of splitting up the plenary and applying different rules to different parts of plenary comes from.

Also, we have heard already the reference to previous practice in Council where also a European Union Member State who was not a Member of Council did all the negotiations for the European Union. It is really interesting to see that in the middle of the game there is a change of rules. This is nothing that we can accept and it is nothing that we take easily.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, all the Members have said we should not hold up the Council discussions and we should carry on with the Council discussions. Members have also said let us carry on following past practice and then have a separate discussion to sort this issue out. That it is once and for all understood how the Council will proceed.

My suggestion and recommendation to Members is to agree with those who are saying, let us carry on with our discussions now, following what the practice was in the past and definitely address this issue to sort it out. Otherwise, if I keep getting the floor on this particular issue, a whole morning session would go without us having dealt with what we were supposed to.

Would you all agree that we proceed with our Agenda and follow the practice which was followed perhaps in past sessions, maybe there was a mixture but there were occasions or sessions where this issue was not raised and we carried on?

Would you agree that we carry on with the Agenda following past practice and come back to this issue later on? I see positive nods from Members. So, unless someone objects, we will go back to our Agenda. We were discussing the conclusions of our meeting.

Angola and Observer from Malaysia, please bear with us. If you are going to comment on this issue, then hold your comments until we have this specific meeting. We would like to carry on with the Agenda Item.

Item 3. Strategic Framework 2022-31 (*continued*)

Point 3. Cadre stratégique 2022-2031 (*suite*)

Tema 3. Marco estratégico para 2022-2031 (*continuación*)
(C 2021/7)

CHAIRPERSON

I think we were on subparagraphs (f) and (g).

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

Thank you, first of all, for your hard work yesterday, everyone. Before going to the conclusions, as some Members have mentioned, we would like that the discussion today will be as effective and as efficient as possible, considering the time difference between Rome and Tokyo. Here in Tokyo it is now 17:00 hours and yesterday we finished past 02:00, so I hope today's discussion will be carried out as efficiently as possible.

Going to the conclusion of item 3, yesterday we proposed to insert language on intellectual property rights on subparagraph (g) and I understand that a delegation pointed out or mentioned another subparagraph and we came up with the language used in the Joint Meeting for the Strategic Framework.

Therefore, we would like to propose to add a sentence using that Report for subparagraph (k), starting with “underline the importance of all forms of innovation, including digitalization”. Following the word “digitalization”, we propose to insert the sentence used in the Report of the Joint Meeting, which will follow with “while ensuring protection of data privacy and intellectual property rights”, continuing with a comma after intellectual property rights and continue to “as a driving force”. Yes, that is the same wording used in subparagraph (s) of the Report of the Joint Meeting for the Strategic Framework.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solamente quería saber si vamos a seguir el orden subpárrafo por subpárrafo para poder tener claro cómo trabajar.

CHAIRPERSON

We will go subparagraph by subparagraph, but since yesterday we were dealing with two subparagraphs, (g) and (h), I thought we could take it together. However, it is subparagraph by subparagraph. We are discussing (g) and (h) for the moment. They are two short subparagraphs. Then, we will go back to the subparagraph by subparagraph. For the moment it is (g) and (h). Or, if it is easier for you, we take (g).

Maybe it is quicker to move forward. Let us take paragraph (g). In fact, it is not (g) and (h), it is (f) and (g).

Let us take subparagraph (f) and go subparagraph by subparagraph.

Subparagraph (f), the way it is drafted now, is it acceptable to Members? I see no requests for the floor, so subparagraph (f) is adopted.

Now we go to subparagraph (g). I see no requests. It is adopted.

We go to subparagraph (h). I see no requests.

Go to subparagraph (i).

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am a bit confused with the new letters? Is subparagraph (h) about the reference to leaving no one behind? The one that says “welcomed FAO’s crosscutting themes of gender”. Is that subparagraph (h)?

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, the Secretariat has darkened the subparagraph (h). That is the one.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Okay. Then, I will wait.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me voy a referir al actual (i) que era el anterior (g). Voy a hacer una propuesta de texto alternativa que refleje mejor lo que varios Miembros hemos dicho. Voy a leer en inglés a velocidad de dictado, como un subpárrafo alternativo al (i). “Recognized the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and its expected outcomes, would support the achievement of 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, especially SDG 1 and 2, and should be considered by Members as appropriate through the Governing Bodies”. That is fine.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

I just wanted to add after the “United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021”, “the Tokyo Nutrition Programme Summit”, which you may know is to be held in December this year in Tokyo. I would like Argentina’s clarification on the meaning of the sentence after “by Members as appropriate through the Governing Bodies.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muchísimas gracias a mi estimada colega de Japón por darme la oportunidad de explicar la *rationale* de la propuesta. La culminación del texto propuesto, refleja lo expresado oficialmente por los organizadores de la Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios en cuanto a que los resultados no serán un documento negociado acordado entre los Miembros sino, un *statement* del Secretario General.

Por lo tanto, si esto no es negociado en la Cumbre para que esto pueda de alguna manera ser considerado y apropiado por los Miembros, tendrán que ser de alguna manera conversados en los órganos rectores de esta Organización. Esa es la *rationale* sobre esto. Este es el primer punto.

Con respecto a la propuesta de Japón, si bien tenemos todavía varias cuestiones inciertas para nosotros sobre la Cumbre, no tenemos objeciones en principio. Pero, la verdad depende, estoy a la espera del resultado del consenso de los Miembros sobre ello, porque para nosotros eso no lo tenía previsto. Pero soy abierto y veamos si eso es parte del consenso de los Miembros.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

I just wanted to correct the name of the Summit for Tokyo Nutrition Summit. Actually, it was Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit. After hearing the explanation by Argentina, we can go along with this.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We would like to support the proposal coming from Argentina. This was one of the points we mentioned in our intervention and it goes in line with what we consider important. I would like also to support the inclusion of the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit but we have to correct what comes after. Instead of “its expected outcomes” “their expected outcomes”.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just a very minor thing. Should we only refer to the outcomes to be then considered by the Governing Bodies? Now it reads the two Summits and their outcomes could support the achievement. That is okay, but what should be considered by the Members are the outcomes, not the summit itself. It is very minor, but it is something to be clarified. Maybe that can be done in the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, I agree, Germany, let us leave that aspect to the Drafting Committee.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We can support the proposal made by Argentina which is, I think, wording that is also recommended or in the Report of the Programme Committee. .

We thank Japan for highlighting as well the relevance of the Nutrition for Growth Summit, but I am just wondering if it would not be better placed either at the end of the subparagraph. I mean, the United Nations Food Systems Summit and FAO is a United Nations Organization. So, in terms of “after that incorporating outcomes”, I can see how we would consider them through the Governing Bodies. But I do not know if we would treat the Nutrition for Growth Summit in the same kind of governance way and there are also other events that are relevant, like the 26th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). I am just wondering if we could add in other events, such as the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit and the COP26, the 26th Conference of the Parties, something like that. I do not know what would be the formal title for the COP26, but that would be a proposal that I would like to make.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you have a suggested pre-formatting, Canada?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Instead of putting the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, after “should be considered by Members as appropriate”, at the end of the subparagraph, I would put “as well as other key events such as the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit and the COP26”.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, could we go ahead with subparagraph (i) bis as amended?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Gracias a la intervención de mi querido amigo de Brasil y también a mi estimada colega de Canadá. El único problema es que entendemos que la FAO no tiene mandato sobre el 26.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de las Partes sobre el Cambio Climático (COP26). No me parece que sea apropiado incluirla en este párrafo, somos abiertos a la sugerencia de incluir la Cumbre de Tokio sobre nutrición porque es un tema que por su propia definición es parte del mandato originario de la FAO. Entonces, creo que quedó clara mi posición, mi *rationale*. Creo que la idea no es incluir todos los eventos que haya en el Sistema Internacional que puedan tener alguna relación con la FAO, sino aquello que específicamente se adecúe a los temas de su mandato principal y en todo caso por eso digo, apoyo la iniciativa, la sugerencia de Japón y me parece que tiene una *rationale*.

Tenemos que, tener cuidado y de evitar armar un árbol de Navidad aquí, incluyendo todas las Cumbres y reuniones y tratemos de concentrarnos, en aquello que son básicamente temas del mandato de la Organización. Porque si no, también podríamos empezar a incluir cuestiones vinculadas a Cumbres de comercio y a otras cuestiones que me parece que van a generar y reabrir un debate que no es el lugar para hacerlo ahora y no sería constructivo seguramente.

Entiendo igual la buena intención planteada por Canadá, pero creo que, por una cuestión constructiva y práctica, mejor mantengamos este tema del mandato de la FAO natural y originario.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

Thank you, Argentina, for your supportive comments. As you stated, we prefer the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit be together with the United Nations Food Systems Summit, because the FAO is one of the anchor Organizations for organizing the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit. It is expected to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 and SDG 2 and we should not state any other unrelated events in this subparagraph. Therefore, we would like to propose the original language after the “United Nations Food Systems Summit”.

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you to Canada for the suggestion made for this additional subparagraph (i) as proposed by Argentina, which we can support. However, we did just want to add that, of course, we are not interested here in seeing a Christmas tree list of events as such. But of course the 26th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) is focussed on many of the threats that are posed to FAO’s mandate and indeed FAO does have a strong focus on climate smart agriculture, sustainable agricultural production, addressing biodiversity and addressing climate change. Therefore, there is reasoning behind the reference suggested for inclusion here with regard to COP26. I just wanted to reiterate that there is a very clear and strong correlation with FAO’s mandate.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Gracias a Argentina por la propuesta que hizo, que es una cita literal de lo acordado en la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º

período de sesiones donde también en su momento discutimos la propuesta que hizo Japón sobre la Cumbre de Nutrición.

Y la verdad es que, si bien, estamos familiarizados con la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios, hemos estado menos familiarizados con el evento que propone Japón. Y como otros, lo que estoy viendo es la reacción que tuvo Reino Unido y otros, es que este párrafo se está convirtiendo en un árbol de Navidad y es justo lo que muchos no queremos que se convierta.

Cabe recordar que este tema es las implicaciones de estos eventos en el Marco estratégico y hemos discutido en los últimos meses cuál sería la implicación de la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios en el Marco estratégico, pero no tenemos tanta claridad con los otros eventos mencionados. Por ello, mi propuesta es regresar al texto que propuso Argentina, que es una cita literal de la reunión conjunta, en particular en el párrafo 9 (n) del informe que estamos discutiendo en este momento.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests for the floor. Therefore, subparagraph (i) bis as amended, could we go forward with this, which would mean deleting “and COP26”? I see no requests so paragraph (i) bis is adopted.

Subparagraph (j).

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to make a proposal at the end of this subparagraph. I would like to thank the explanation yesterday of Ms Beth Crawford with respect to the many calls during the discussions about the importance of gender and effective mainstreaming.

I did know that she said there is a series of documents, including the gender strategy of which we have not seen the revised version yet, but even more important is the Gender Action Plan that we have been waiting for since the Evaluation of the Gender Strategy in 2019. I have noted that in the status of implementation of the Council’s decision, this will be presented at the next Programme Committee.

Therefore, we would like to add language, recognizing as well that in the previous discussions on the Strategic Framework it was mentioned that there were strong linkages between the Strategic Framework and the Gender Action Plan. Hence, we would like to add “and look forward to the Gender Action Plan at the next Session of the Programme Committee to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender in all of FAO’s work with targets, outputs and indicators”.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on the amended subparagraph (j)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No tengo objeciones respecto de la propuesta hecha por Canadá. Era solo que quería agregar una sugerencia de un nuevo subpárrafo después del subpárrafo (j). Usted dígame cuando es el momento.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first adopt subparagraph (j) and then we will come to the new subparagraph. Any comments on subparagraph (j) as it is worded now?

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We would like to support Canada’s inclusion to the new element in subparagraph (j). To make it stronger, can I just put after “effective,” “and efficient” for colleagues’ consideration?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Leyendo el párrafo propuesto por Canadá, quisiera sugerir para poder ir en línea con la manera en que trabajamos en la FAO, que el Programa de Acción, “The Action Plan”, debería ser parte de un “open, transparent, and inclusive process”.

Esas tres expresiones: “open, transparent, and inclusive”, dan la idea de un proceso de participación de los Miembros antes de llegar al Comité del Programa. En todo caso daría la idea de un proceso consultivo, “a consultation process, open, transparent, and inclusive”.

Eso yo lo pondría antes de que llegue al Comité del Programa. Entonces en todo caso la expresión sería: “And look forward to an open, transparent, and inclusive process of consultation” or “process prior to...” Sí, “a process prior to the...” o “consultation to the gender and youth submitted to the...” perfecto. Y after “gender”, is “gender and youth”, “prior to the gender and youth action plan”.

Después tengo la propuesta del nuevo párrafo cuando termine esta discusión. Y “plan” debería de ser “plans” in plural because we are talking about gender and youth. Action Plans, two plans.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO GUISSOU (Burkina Faso)

La fin de ce paragraphe, et notamment quand on dit: "To ensure inter alia effective and efficient mainstreaming of gender in all of FAO's work..." Je pense qu'il ne suffit pas de dire "mainstreaming", il faudrait ajouter: "and women's empowerment."

CHAIRPERSON

Could we go forward with this subparagraph (j) as amended?

Mme Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Je voudrais remercier ma collègue du Burkina Faso, pour rajouter: "Women's empowerment." Je voudrais rajouter après "gender", "equality".

Continues in English

I am sorry, I am switching languages here but it is just a question of clarification. I was not aware that there was a Youth Action Plan in the works along the same timelines. Although we very much support youth, I was aware that there was a Rural Youth Action Plan that had been adopted and I just wanted to have some clarification. I just want to make sure that the Gender Action Plan process would not be dependent on the one that is following the Youth Action Plan, if it is not the same timeline.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría, para respetar la posición de mi país, lo cual acepto que poner la disposición del consenso, pero no puedo dejar de proponerlo. Primero, apoyar a mi querida hermana de Burkina Faso en su planteo, pero además yo agregaría aparte, después “of gender equality”, “including LGTBIQ+”, que representa un concepto de inclusión que por supuesto tiene que ver con nuestra visión y nuestra política.

Continues in English

It is only a proposal because it is our national position, but of course, I respect that there is not consensus. I am respecting all. I only wanted to raise our national position.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Thanks to the distinguished delegations who also proposed this new language. We can support this language, but we cannot accept mentioning LGBTIQ and diaspora and we would like to delete it.

In addition, we have another proposal to try to clarify this wording. “Looked forward to an open, transparent and inclusive,” we could delete “process.” So “inclusive consultations”. Therefore delete “process,” and after “consultations with Members on drafting or developing”.

We can also delete “prior to”. So “developing the gender and rural youth action plans”, prior, could add “action plans, prior to the submission to the next Session of the Programme Committee.” We can support this wording.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I wanted to take the floor to thank Members for these additions, which I think are very good. I also wanted to take the floor to support Argentina on their proposal that was now deleted. From the Nordic countries, we very much appreciate Argentina putting that forward. We know it is a difficult issue, but we want to raise our voice to this very modern and appreciated approach by Argentina.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

First of all, in our national position we also have to express that we want to delete the addition made by the Ambassador of Argentina although we understand his position, but our national position wants to delete that. The second one is the comment made by our colleague from Egypt, we support it, and we can include that in the text.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to thank the Secretariat for having clarified that we are talking about the Rural Youth Action Plan. I saw from the last Programme Committee Report that there were still some reviews to be made before the next Session of the Programme Committee and then approval by Council.

Therefore, I would suggest that we do not put “developing”, because I think the Gender Action Plan, we have not seen it. The Rural Youth Action Plan has gone to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) so maybe just on the Gender Action Plan and the Rural Youth Action Plan. I would prefer to mention them separately.

Finally, we would like to also strongly support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Argentina, and we are also very flexible.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We can accept the proposal made by Canada to delete “developing.”, but we cannot accept mentioning “LGBTQI and diaspora”. Therefore, we would like to delete it.

CHAIRPERSON

We have subparagraph (j) with all the amendments.

Mrs Angela Jacinto Lee SAJDAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

We strongly support what our colleague from Egypt said. We believe indeed that we could not accept any reference to LGBTQI+ inside the text.

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

We also just wanted to come in and thank Canada and Argentina for their suggestions on this subparagraph and to note that we would also support the suggestion made by Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

I would prefer that we move on and we come back to this subparagraph. So let us keep this pending, and we go to subparagraph (k).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría agregar un subpárrafo como había mencionado luego del último subpárrafo. Trato de encontrarlo en la pantalla, por favor. Leo en inglés a velocidad de dictado.

Continues in English

“Highlighted the need to further showcase FAO’s mandate and work on commodity markets and trade and appreciated the importance of its inclusion in the new Strategic Framework.”

CHAIRPERSON

We are now looking at new subparagraph (k).

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I will come back on this. Just a second, I think we need to add something related to FAO’s mandate here as we usually do. I will come back with some wording.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Apologies, my intervention was going to be on the next subparagraph, which is now (l). I will come back.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

We are comfortable with the new subparagraph (k). We would like to add some wording taken from the Report of the Joint Meeting on the Strategic Framework, which would be after “in the new Strategic Framework”. “Highlighted the importance of global food support supply chains and open, transparent and predictable international trade taking into account the mandate of FAO in this respect”. That is the same wording taken from the Joint Meeting on the Strategic Framework, subparagraph (f).

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

It is also to support the proposal presented by Argentina. We also mentioned this specific point in our intervention, and we do support also the proposal by Japan.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I will be very brief as Japan did the job. I can live with that.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

We would like to thank the proposal made by Argentina and also the word from Japan to highlight the work on commodity market and trade, and also the global food supply chain, which we are comfortable to include.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We support the inclusion of this subparagraph.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We express support for both proposals by Argentina and Japan.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Just one tiny request in subparagraph (k). After “showcase FAO’s work”, insert “within its mandate”, on commodity markets and trade.”

CHAIRPERSON

Members, may we go ahead with subparagraph (k) as it stands now? I see no request for the floor. Subparagraph (k) is adopted.

We got to subparagraph (l).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I wanted to reflect on some of the discussion we had on the importance of climate change. I think that certainly I, Canada, Australia and others highlighted the importance of climate change. Indeed, we said we would like greater focus on it in the Strategic Framework.

I do know that one intervention mentioned that climate change had been reflected throughout the Strategic Framework, but I think there were far more interventions recognizing or calling on FAO to further enhance the recognition that the challenge that climate change poses.

Therefore, I would like to propose the following wording to replace the beginning of this subparagraph. I would like to propose that it reads, “Highlighted the importance of,” which I think is already a bit of a compromise given that we wanted further emphasis on climate change. Indeed of course, as we have learnt working so closely with Argentina and the Programme Committee it is always useful and important to reflect statements on trade and have them closely linked to statements on climate change.

I do hope other Members will agree with this proposal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco mucho a la colega del Reino Unido de Gran Bretaña e Irlanda del Norte su sugerencia. Quisiera agregar después de “biodiversity”

Continues in English

“biodiversity, within FAO’s mandate,” “within” be replaced by “in.” Therefore, the proposal is “within FAO’s mandate in the Strategic Framework.” I think that we can be clearly balanced and, of course, have in a coherent manner what we just discussed before in the other subparagraphs.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I am taking the floor now to support the proposals that have been made and also to flag that before we move to the new subparagraph (m), I would like to propose a new subparagraph to insert, please.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we move forward with subparagraph (l) as shown on the screen? I see no request for comment, so subparagraph (l) as amended is adopted.

Australia, I give you the floor for your suggestion new subparagraph.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I am going to lift some text directly from the Joint Meeting, while I recognize we have a Council, I heard the same discussions that occurred. I would like to include the paragraph of the Joint Meeting 9 (l), which reads, “Highlighted the importance of the One-Health approach, the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other relevant international organizations, in line with their respective mandates in this respect.” This is something that Australia raised in their intervention, and I heard a number of other delegations raised it as well.

CHAIRPERSON

We have a new subparagraph (m). I see no requests for the floor. So the new subparagraph (m) is adopted.

Subparagraph (n). I see no request for comment. So we can agree on subparagraph (n). Paragraph (o).

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I would like to propose a subparagraph to come before the current subparagraph (o). So a new subparagraph (o), which would read “highlighted the importance of ensuring an equitable focus on fisheries and forestry across the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs).” This is designed to pick up on something Australia raised in our intervention and, again, a number of other delegations raised this importance.

CHAIRPERSON

So new subparagraph (o).

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand would like to add an additional subparagraph, which I will address at dictation speed. “Highlight the importance of smallholders and family farmers as critical stakeholders for the future of food and agriculture and sustainable food systems,” which we also addressed in our statement, and also other delegates mentioned during the Council. “Highlighted the importance of smallholders and family farmers as critical stakeholders for the futures of food and agriculture and sustainable food systems.”

CHAIRPERSON

Just could we first decide on subparagraph (o). If there are no comments in subparagraph (o), we will go to the new (p), but first subparagraph (o). I see no comments. We agree to go forward on subparagraph (o), and now we are dealing with new subparagraph (p).

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I do support the proposal from Thailand. I only want to add after farmers, “rural and in particular, rural and indigenous women” or “including in particular rural and indigenous women”.

Perhaps it is better to say, “In particular rural women and indigenous people,” because I think that is the agreed expression that we are used to in other reports.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am sorry just to come back on subparagraph (o). I just wanted to express strong support for the Australian proposal, and also maybe to add not just “across the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs)”, but I would add “and the Strategic Framework”. I would also like to support the proposal made by Argentina and Thailand for the subsequent subparagraph.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

First, we would like to support the proposal of Australia and the addition by Canada on subparagraph (o).

On subparagraph (p), we thank Thailand for the proposal. We support the proposal, we also support Canada with the addition, but we want to add “the local community” after ‘indigenous people’ so that it will be more inclusive in our context.

CHAIRPERSON

We can agree to subparagraphs (o) and (p) and move forward. Now we are looking at subparagraph (q).

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I would like to suggest to include after “environment”, “commodities and food trade”.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other request for the floor. Hence, we agree to subparagraph (q).

We move to subparagraph, (r).

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We have a small change to propose to subparagraph (r), and it would be in the second clause, “welcomed the increased visibility of the Organization’s normative work, and support to the standard setting work of Codex Alimentarius in the Strategic Framework”, or “within the Strategic Framework”.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Quand nous avons lu la déclaration du Groupe Afrique, il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas apparu qu'on voulait bien faire figurer sur le paragraphe (q). Nous voulons ajouter sur le (q) ceci:

"Recognise and stress the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and of the technical work of FAO as strategic and the partnership between FAO and many Members."

CHAIRPERSON

Now before we go back to subparagraph (r), Members is this amendment okay by you in subparagraph (q)? , I had the request from Sweden and Argentina, but I think that was for subparagraph (r).

I take it that subparagraph (q) as amended, we can agree and go forward.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I only have a very small proposal and correction in subparagraph (r). That is to add after “Codex Alimentarius”, “and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)”.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me acuerdo perfectamente de que el grupo regional africano planteó esta cuestión y también el G77 y China, así que yo estoy totalmente de acuerdo. Lo único que me pregunto, para darle más importancia a ese mensaje, ¿no sería bueno que haya un párrafo por separado?, pero depende de lo que mi colega de Congo interprete.

Simplemente mi propuesta tiene que ver con la idea de darle más visibilidad y más claridad al texto. Pero si no está de acuerdo, yo no tengo ninguna objeción sobre la propuesta. Además, ya que me permite, apoyo la sugerencia de Estados Unidos de América y de Suecia sobre el subpárrafo (r).

CHAIRPERSON

Congo, do you agree with what was suggested by Argentina.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

On peut effectivement donner plus de visibilité en créant un nouveau paragraphe comme suggéré par notre collègue argentin, cela me va droit au cœur, je pense qu'il a parfaitement raison.

CHAIRPERSON

We go forward and now we are on subparagraph (s).

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

I would like to propose to have an additional subparagraph to talk about the conclusion and the outcome of the Regional Conferences. Perhaps, we can add this new subparagraph before subparagraph (t). "Underline that the Strategic Framework incorporate the conclusions of the Regional Conferences, especially mainstreaming our food system approach into national planning process, including social protection to reinforce agricultural roles, in ending hunger and eradicating poverty, and taking into account, taking into consideration the national context and capacities."

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like to go back to subparagraph, (r) and I would fully support the proposal made by Congo on this regard. However, we would like to propose some wording to enhance or make this wording a little bit stronger. We would like to propose to start with "reiterated". "Reiterated the strategic and the catalytic importance of the Technical Cooperation Programmes, (TCP)."

We can delete "Recognized and stress importance", again, "on the other Technical Cooperation work, technical work of FAO". We can delete also "cooperation". So, "On the other technical work of FAO within the context of FAO's institutional architecture, tailored to country-specific needs, in the efforts for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda".

We can delete the rest of the subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Right, thank you. We have got subparagraph (r) reopened again, and we are on subparagraph (s), and (t).

What I would suggest is we take a break for 10 minutes and we come back and deal with these two subparagraphs. It is 11:10 hours now, we will come back at 11:20 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 11:10 to 11:26 hours

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 10 à 11 h 26

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.10 a las 11.26

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Where are on subparagraph (r). If this is to become a new subparagraph, fine. However, I think we cannot overdo it here. Therefore, we are at "the strategic and catalytic importance", I would advocate to take out "the strategic and catalytic" here. We reiterated the importance.

Why I am saying this, we have had an evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), from which it became clear that there is a potential for catalytic function of the TCP, but that unfortunately, we have to say has occurred only in a minor number of cases. Therefore, it is something to aim at, but to be factually correct here I think we are on the safe side to say, we reiterated the importance of, and the rest is okay.

Maybe we could take out, in order not to be redundant, at the end "the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda", I think this is the same. So, or we say "of the SDGs" or we say "of the 2030 Agenda".

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We would prefer to have “strategic and catalytic” wording in this subparagraph. I would like to just remind my colleague, the distinguished delegate from Germany, that this is not a new wording. This is a wording that have been already agreed upon during the last Joint Meeting of the Finance and the Programme Committees.

I am not inventing the wheel, this is agreed wording and if you check the last Report of the Joint Meeting you will find it. I think it is the last paragraph or the paragraph before the last one in the Joint Meeting.

We would prefer to keep this wording as it is.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voulais présenter mes remerciements à notre collègue égyptien, qui a repéré ce texte adopté par la réunion conjointe. En fait, c’est ce que nous avons déclaré dans notre intervention du Groupe Afrique. Je confirme ce qui est dit dans le contexte, et à nous appuyons de remettre ce que nous avons dit dans la déclaration, pour que le consensus soit trouvé, j’espère que notre collègue dallemmand va se joindre à nous pour pouvoir avancer.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I have just put it in the chat box. I make the day of our colleagues, I withdraw.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Germany, for your flexibility. So, the way subparagraph (r) is shown, can we go ahead and adopt?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I was actually wondering, because I looked at it, as well as the report, and I just had a small change to suggest. To say “reiterated the importance of a strategic and catalytic Technical Cooperation Programme”, because I think that what the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee in the Joint Meeting discussed, as well as a Programme Committee, is the need to make it strategic and catalytic.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tengo un comentario sobre otro subpárrafo anterior, pero prefiero que usted de por terminado este punto para luego entonces poder hacer mi sugerencia.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like also to thank my colleague from Canada for reminding us that this wording was already discussed during the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee. So to be consistent and also relevant to the wording that we already agreed on the Joint Meeting, that is “reiterated the strategic and catalytic importance”. So we would like to keep the same language, the same wording, so “reiterated the strategic and catalytic importance”. This is exactly the wording that we have already agreed in the Joint Meeting, in paragraph 9 (u) of the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

I would suggest if the present wording is not acceptable, the concepts are there, so could we leave it to the Drafting Committee. Otherwise we are becoming a Drafting Committee here. Since the concept is not being questioned, can we leave the wording to the Drafting Committee? Do we agree with subparagraph (r), the way it is drafted? If not, then we leave it to the Drafting Committee.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would agree with your proposal. I did not realise, I am still not finding this exact wording in the Joint Meeting, but I think the Drafting Committee can figure it out.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Canada. We move from (r). Argentina, what was your suggestion?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

This is the second time that I try to ask for the floor, when I try to talk and speak, there are technical problems from the Secretariat that do not give me the possibility to speak. I am still on mute. It is not my technical problem. It is something that perhaps it is in the Secretariat, so only to let you know.

I would like to capture a proposal coming from Kenya, one of the Observers, coming through the chat, related to the question of the Food System Summit, so it is necessary to go to other paragraphs. I think that we have to go up, please.

I think there is a specific subparagraph about that, number (i). Kenya is right, because it is not “recognized”. We “took note”. This is the real expression and I only wanted to express this proposal, not only because I agree, but also because the Observer suggested me to raise this issue.

Please, I only want to speak on behalf of Kenya and other Observers. Thank you very much, because, as we just said, it will not be negotiated, I think it is correct to say “took note” and not “recommended”.

CHAIRPERSON

With that amendment, we consider everybody agrees on subparagraph (i).

I see there is agreement there, so we can move forward again.

I think we are on subparagraph (s), can we move forward with the amendments in subparagraph (s)? I see we can, so we go to subparagraph (t). I see no request for comments, so we go to subparagraph (u).

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

It is just a minor amendment here, which would also make it clearer. On the second line of subparagraph (u), “including with other United Nations”, we would like to delete “institutions” and add the word “agencies”, “including with other United Nations agencies” and we could support this wording.

We would also like to propose a new subparagraph after this subparagraph. Could we propose it right now or when we have finished this subparagraph?

CHAIRPERSON

Let us finish this subparagraph. If there are no comments on subparagraph (u), we can move forward. I see there are none, so, Egypt, let us have your new subparagraph.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

The new subparagraph, so we are speaking about here partnerships. We would like to find a proposal on innovative financing. Our proposal is, “underlined the importance of innovative financing mechanisms and sources to complement traditional funding modalities and encouraged FAO’s efforts to expand its funding base”. This is our proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on this new subparagraph (v)? I see none, so we can move forward to subparagraph (w).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am content with the subparagraph proposed by Egypt. However, I wonder if it would sit better next to the subparagraph on the business model, which I do not think we have come to yet, have we? Because it is very closely related to the business model, and principles for allocating the regular budget. I think this is a point that I have made, both in this Council and in the Joint Meeting, that it is really important to understand how FAO will use its regular budget to raise inactive financing. Hence, while I agree it is important to be innovative and find new ways of raising money, it is also really important to be clear about how FAO will use the regular budget to do that. Therefore, it would be good if we could link those two points.

CHAIRPERSON

We will try and shift this wording and see how it sounds there. Therefore, we will keep this wording in abeyance.

We go to subparagraph (w). I see no comments, so we go to subparagraph (x).

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Here again, I think we have to be coherent when it comes to agri-food systems. This is still pending in one of the first subparagraphs and has to be bracketed here as well, because it is exactly the same issue.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría recordar que en el día de ayer yo hice una propuesta que intentaba ser inclusiva porque de alguna manera capturaba las posiciones de todos los Miembros que fueron expresadas en términos de hablar de *agri-food*, *agricultural food* and *agri-food systems*.

Entonces, me gustaría que también, obviamente como dice mi colega de Alemania, en términos de coherencia, me gustaría que la propuesta hecha en el subpárrafo al inicio de este Informe también esté incluida en esta parte del mismo. Porque la idea es tratar de que lo que utilicemos de alguna manera sea balanceado, inclusivo y requiera las posiciones que todos han expresado en esta discusión.

CHAIRPERSON

We have got this subparagraph also with pending wording. Let us move forward to subparagraph (y).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Aquí me parece que necesitamos volver a un subpárrafo anterior, el cual ya lo hemos conversado y que habla del presupuesto porque me parece que este subpárrafo, no tendría sentido si utilizamos lo que ya fue expresado en el subpárrafo anterior.

Podríamos ir hacia arriba, por favor, quiero revisar porque no tengo todo el texto entonces es muy difícil. Si pudiéramos subir el texto para yo poder verlo. Es el subpárrafo (e) si no me equivoco. Allí dice, “highlights the importance of a balance between the three pillars and include the number and allocation of budget between the four betters”.

Y ese principio creo que incluye perfectamente la cuestión del presupuesto, por lo tanto, creo que hay que eliminar el subpárrafo que está justamente al final de la discusión. Porque ese subpárrafo refleja claramente los equilibrios que de alguna manera fueron expresados, por lo tanto, creo que no es necesario y sugiero eliminar el subpárrafo, no recuerdo cuál era el subpárrafo que estábamos en conversación. No, me estoy refiriendo al final.

Continues in English

Please. I said, with this subparagraph (e), we do not need the subparagraph at the end of this Report. Okay, so... subpárrafo (x). Creo que este subpárrafo no es necesario, en particular. Lo que dice “for allocating the regular budget...” this is something that should be deleted according to what is the logic and the rationale of the other paragraphs that we have just included in this Report.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do think we need both subparagraphs and I would like to thank my Argentinian counterpart for suggesting subparagraph (e) in the first place. I do think it is a useful addition.

I would highlight that subparagraph (e) is talking about one of the principles for allocating the regular budget and, of course, that is a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development and we, and many others, agree with that. However, I think what we are talking about in this subparagraph (x) is all of the principles that should be used in allocating in the regular budget. For example, one of those principles might be that, if the regular budget is used to raise innovative financing, perhaps some of that innovative financing should be used to repay any regular budget, or something like that.

I am just speculating but I think the point that we are making here about the principles for allocating a regular budget go beyond just a balance between the different aspects of sustainable development. I think there are other principles, I think, that would be useful.

Therefore, I would be keen to retain this subparagraph. I can see that you have also included the point that Egypt raised, which I think is a good one. My only suggestion would be to perhaps move that addition from Egypt earlier on in the sentence, perhaps where it says, “appreciated elements of the reinvigorated fit-for-purpose business model,” we might then add, “underlined the importance of innovative financing mechanisms,” and so on. Then, come back to the point about the principles at the end of the subparagraph. I do think it is worth including both subparagraphs here.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco a mi colega, mi contraparte del Reino Unido de Gran Bretaña e Irlanda del Norte. Con respecto a su lógica para sostener el subpárrafo, yo creo que este párrafo estaría más adecuado a ser incluido en el punto siguiente de la discusión que tiene que ver con las cuestiones presupuestarias.

Los principios ya fueron incluidos en el Marco estratégico y las cuestiones presupuestarias las podemos incluir en el próximo punto del programa. En caso que hubiera consenso por sostener esta cuestión, yo preferiría, me sentiría más cómodo si no habláramos solamente del *regular budget* si no que pondríamos directamente “allocating the budget”. Que está incluido o que está formado no solo por el *regular budget* sino por todas las diferentes fuentes con la cual se financía la acción de la FAO.

Pero repito, creo que sería más adecuado, y espero que esto tenga consenso, pero si no ver la posibilidad de imaginar esta cuestión incluida en el próximo punto del programa, recordando que el compromiso de los donantes es evitar las contribuciones etiquetadas... O que no haya un gran desequilibrio sobre esta cuestión, es un tema que hemos hablado, que hemos expresado muy claramente los varios Miembros.

Pero repito, es mi sugerencia. La primera propuesta es que esto sea incluido o sea conversado en el próximo punto del programa, en caso de que hubiera consenso por sostener este concepto aquí, creo que preferiría no poner “regular budget” y dejar “budget” en términos generales y ahí me quedo por ahora.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We just would like to propose one word addition in subparagraph (x), for clarity, and that is where it says, “expand its funding base,” we would like to request to insert the word “voluntary” before the word funding. Therefore, it would read, “to expand its voluntary funding base.”

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do hope we can keep this subparagraph here. It is a point that I raised under this Item, as I plan to raise under the next Item as well. However, I would be keen to keep it here because, of course, there is a section in the Strategic Framework document that does refer to FAO’s business model, and I do think that is important. Indeed, I think our last meeting of Council in fact requested that there should be a section on the business model in the Strategic Framework document, and that is why I think it is important here.

I do think that it is important for FAO to be clear about the principles for allocating the regular budget. However, I take the point from Argentina that it is not just about the regular budget. Hence, I could suggest some language that would read something along the lines of, for allocating, “set out for Members the principles for what is funded through the regular budget and what should be funded through extra budgetary contributions,” so that it is clear that we would like the principles for both to be set out. Indeed, I would thank the Argentinian Ambassador for his prompt to strengthen this subparagraph.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I will be brief. I wanted to support maintaining the subparagraph and I also support the United Kingdom proposal just now.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quisiera agregar a ese subpárrafo después de “resources” y lo voy a decir en español, “recordando el compromiso de los donantes de aumentar las contribuciones no etiquetadas”.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original language Chinese)

I noted that extra budgetary voluntary contributions, most of them are earmarked. If they are earmarked and it is very hard to reallocate them, therefore my suggestion is that the allocation principle should only be limited to the assessed contribution.

CHAIRPERSON

We are still on subparagraph (x). Have Members agreed on this amended wording of subparagraph (x)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

A modo de ser constructivo, yo puedo acompañar lo planteado por mi estimado colega de China, pero me gustaría que quedara la última expresión que hemos propuesto en el subpárrafo porque lo hemos planteado en diferentes momentos del debate, por eso creemos que es importante que esté en el subpárrafo.

CHAIRPERSON

China, may I ask you, there was some technical problem and my colleagues did not quite catch your intervention. Could you repeat?

Mr Hongxing NI (China)

“Set out for Members the principles for what is funded through the regular budget and what should be funded through the unearmarked budget, extra-budgetary. Unearmarked extra-budgetary resources.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Now that the brackets are from “recalling” to the end, it is fine. I mean, we couldn’t go along with that wording. There is no such commitment, at least from our side, for unearmarked contributions, nor from the European Union, to which we are major contributors.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would accept the subparagraph as it stands now, with the Chinese proposal. I would also say that there are principles that we all know that are used for allocating extra budgetary resources, even earmarked ones. Indeed I think the main one is that any extra budgetary resources are allocated to, or for activities that fit within FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and, indeed, that is why the PWB covers so much voluntary funding. Hence, of course, there are principles. However, I am happy to accept the wording that China has proposed and leave it at that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United Kingdom, for your flexibility.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

Let me just have a minute to read this. It is about the principles for what is funded through the regular budget and what should be funded through; I suppose this is okay, because we talk about principles. I just reacted to the word, what should be funded through unearmarked contributions, because, of course, if they are unearmarked, then they should be used according to needs, and it is not always possible to predict those needs. For instance, we had the grasshoppers, etc. Therefore, I just wanted to check that there is no problem with this. However, since we are talking about the principles, then probably it is okay.

CHAIRPERSON

I think the wording, as it is shown on the screen now.... Argentina

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Okay. Solo para decir que también nosotros somos constructivos, podemos ir con el subpárrafo, pero me gustaría permitirme la oportunidad de recordar los principios que están capturados en el *Funding Compact* aprobado por el 74.º período de sesiones de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, que establece claramente cuáles son los principios generales de las actividades operacionales para el desarrollo del sistema de las Naciones Unidas y establece algunos criterios claros que los donantes deberían considerar. Y diciendo esto, tengo una actitud flexible, para ayudar al consenso.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Still I think we should delete in the last part the word “unearmarked,” so it is about what should be funded from the regular budget and what should be funded from extrabudgetary resources. If they come in unearmarked, fine, if they come in earmarked, fine as well. However, we should not be restrictive here. Therefore, I think keep it to these two funding legs, regular budget, extra budgetary resource, without specifying the nature of the extra budgetary resources. This is a different issue.

CHAIRPERSON

May we go ahead with this amendment to subparagraph (x)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Traté de ser flexible en la línea de todos los Miembros que hemos conversado este tema, pero creo que la palabra “unearmarked”, debe estar en el subpárrafo conforme a lo planteado por China, si no, quisiera entonces volver a la sugerencia, a la propuesta anterior que hizo Argentina. Pero para evitar empezar de nuevo la discusión, preferiría que mantuviéramos el subpárrafo tal cual fue producto de diferentes concesiones hechas entre los Miembros.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, could we retain the word “unearmarked”? Because if they are earmarked, then probably they are not available. Therefore, in the interest of consensus and moving forward, could we retain “unearmarked” and move forward?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

No, I think I cannot be flexible on this one. This is simple reality that now only 39 percent of FAO’s activities are covered from the regular budget and 71 percent from extrabudgetary resources. This is the primary thing to look, what should we use for what activity, which budget for what activity? Fine, if they come in unearmarked, but I understand it is a very minor part of the extrabudgetary resources. We should not restrict funding flow to FAO by limiting its budgetary contributions to unearmarked ones. Hence, this is on the principle we have these two funding legs. I cannot be flexible on this. “Unearmarked” has to go out, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we leave this to the Drafting Committee? Let it go like this to the Drafting Committee and sort it out there. The concepts are there. We should be dealing with the concepts. If we carry on like this, then what I had suggested in one of my informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, what is the point of having a Drafting Committee? We have been talking about words here now almost the whole morning. What is the Drafting Committee supposed to do?

May I have your agreement that we move this subparagraph to the Drafting Committee, because it is a difference of opinion on words? Therefore, maybe leave the wording to the Drafting Committee and let them argue. We have got a whole Agenda to move forward to, and we are stuck on individual words. Could I have your views on whether this can be shifted to the Drafting Committee, the subparagraph (x)?

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I fully understand the rationale behind the proposal made by the distinguished delegate of Germany. However, I, in the same vein, also would prefer to find a wording or a language here recalling the importance of increasing the unearmarked resources. Therefore, would be happy to retain the same

wording that was proposed by Argentina, at the end of this subparagraph that is recalling the donors for increasing unearmarked resources. Furthermore, we could delete “unearmarked” from before “extrabudgetary resources”. Therefore, I think this would be a midway or a consensus here to finish this subparagraph.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Obviamente nosotros podemos también ser constructivos, teníamos una propuesta adicional, alternativa, que, si a ustedes les parece, yo la pondría también a disposición, pero podríamos ir con esta, con la sugerida por Egipto.

Pero expreso, solo aspecto informativo, cuál era nuestra idea, es un párrafo que exprese claramente “Recalling that the Funding Compact is a guiding lense for improving quantity and quality of funding for the United Nations Development Systems (UNDS), including the need for increasing un-earmarked contributions.”

Pero podemos ir con la propuesta de Egipto que capta nuestras preocupaciones y las de muchos países en desarrollo.

CHAIRPERSON

I see from the chat that the wording proposed by Egypt is also acceptable to Germany, if I am correct. That means we have a consensus on this subparagraph, so could we move forward with subparagraph (x)?

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

My idea was on subparagraph (x), but I think it has been already accomplished. I had in my mind just to take out “unearmarked” and it is already deleted.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, am I correct in my assumption that the Egyptian wording is acceptable to you?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I said that in the chat, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Therefore, we have a consensus on subparagraph (x), the way it is worded now, with the Egyptian proposal. Hence, we can move to paragraph 2.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

On paragraph 2, I think that we can replace the word “noted” at the beginning with “endorsed,” because I think that it is what we want here, is to endorse the recommendations of the Programme Committee. I think it better reflects the discussions we had in Plenary.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Thank you, Portugal for this proposal. However, I just want to clarify something, that we did not take all the recommendation or accepted all the recommendation of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee.

Therefore, I think it is a little bit strong wording. Hence, I would propose instead of “noted,” use “considered,” so the Council considered the recommendations of both Committees and their Joint Meeting. I think this could be a constructive proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment to the proposal as it is now from Egypt?

I see no request for the floor. Therefore, paragraph 2 is agreed, as amended.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think in previous Council meetings, we have endorsed the Reports of the Programme and Finance Committees and Joint Meeting. Therefore, to not endorse them I think is sending quite a significant signal in this case, is it not? You would think the Council would need to explain why we are not endorsing them.

CHAIRPERSON

The wording seems to be the recommendations. If I heard Egypt correctly, he was saying that there were recommendations, which there was no consensus.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We would like to go on record with full support for the proposal by our colleague from Egypt. We prefer the word "considered the recommendations of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and the Joint Meeting."

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo creo que no puedo menos que respaldar absolutamente la sugerencia de Egipto y de Estados Unidos de America, me parece que no hay que encontrar detrás de las palabras ninguna intención extraña. Por lo cual, creo que hay que simplemente tomar a veces las palabras como son, sin ningún tipo de necesidad de pensar qué puede haber detrás de cada palabra.

Creo que las palabras representan justamente ese mínimo común denominador de consenso que incluya a todos e incluir a todos es una buena práctica. Ratifico la idea de que "consider" es mejor.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, what it means is that the Council considered the Report of the three Committees and then the Council has concluded the way it has concluded. Therefore, my appeal would be to Members to agree on this wording, because it actually means that the Council had these Reports before it, they considered these Reports, and have come to conclusions that we have been discussing since yesterday. Hence, I think my appeal is to go ahead with the present wording, as proposed by Egypt.

Mr Hongxing NI (China)

[No interpretation – 47:21- 47:42]

CHAIRPERSON

Maybe we go ahead with paragraph 2, as amended by Egypt. I see no request for the floor. Therefore, paragraph 2 is agreed to.

Paragraph 3. I see no request for the floor, therefore paragraph 3 is agreed to.

Paragraph 4. I see no request for the floor, therefore paragraph 4 is agreed to.

Now, we can go back to the subparagraphs that we still have to agree to. The first is subparagraph (c), and the wording which is in yellow was the one on which we could not get Members to come together on.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

C'est le dernier paragraphe qu'on a adopté. Je pense qu'il y a une entorse à la règle sur le point quatre. Au lieu de parler de "endorsement", normalement on dit "review", c'est ce que disent les textes de base. Sur la règle II.2(c).iii. On ne peut pas parler de "endorsement" mais "review". C'est ce que disent les textes de base, Monsieur le Président. Au lieu de parler de "the council recommends the review by the Conference." Non "endorsement."

On ne peut pas parler de "review" parce que les textes de base disent dans la règle de II.2(c).iii, on parle de "review" pas de "endorsement".

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Podemos volver al párrafo 3. Aquí necesito incluir algunas cuestiones, en particular después de “with clarifications”.

“For future amendments as appropriate” should be “as needed, based on the Programme Committee, Finance Committee, Joint Meeting and the Council”.

La *rationale* es que muchos de los conceptos que hemos mencionado que no están acordados internacionalmente, fueron expresados en esas reuniones y no volvimos sobre estas cuestiones ahora en la difusión, en el Consejo.

Pero quedó claro y hay un compromiso por parte del *Management* de hacer esas clarificaciones en el futuro. Entonces creo que es importante que esto esté incluido.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on paragraph 3?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We would prefer to use the word “adjustments,” instead of “amendments,” in that paragraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? I see no request for the floor on paragraph 3, as amended.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

It is clear now after adding “Council specific guidance”. Therefore, we could support this proposal, no problem.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Just a clarification, if we could, on that paragraph 3. Conference takes recommendations from Council, not necessarily the subsidiary bodies, is that correct? If it is correct, we would prefer to just have, “based on the Council’s specific guidance,” but we could ask for clarification on that point.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, that is what the wording is saying, “Council specific guidance”, the Committees are out there in brackets, but I can ask the Legal Counsel to comment on this.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

With respect to paragraph 3, as quite rightly indicated, essentially the Council Committees advise the Council. This is as reflected in the General Rules of the Organization. For the Programme Committee, it is in Rule XXVI.7 (a), where the Programme Committee tenders advice to the Council. With the Finance Committee, according to Rule XXVII.7 (a), that provides recommendations to the Council. As regards the Joint Meeting, pursuant to Rule XXVIII.2 (a), this reports to the Council. Thereafter, in turn, the Council takes into consideration the advice of its Committees, makes recommendations and provides guidance and its views to the Conference, in accordance with Rule XXIV.2 (a). The Council transmits its recommendations to the Conference.

With respect to paragraph 4, as quite rightly indicated, the Conference undertakes in its agenda, to include in its agenda, a review of the Strategic Framework. Nevertheless, the Conference also thereafter would normally approve or endorse the Strategic Framework, bearing in mind that, under Article IV.1 of the Constitution, “The Conference shall determine the policy and approve the budget of the Organization”. Furthermore, in Resolution 10/2009, as shown in the timetable that is contained in that Resolution, this would appear to call for the approval of the Conference of the Strategic Framework.

I hope that is of assistance.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Donata Rugarabamu. We have paragraph 3.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, no me parece una buena práctica borrar directamente del subpárrafo 3 una propuesta de un Miembro hasta que no terminemos la discusión. Por lo cual, sugiero que lo primero debería estar en el subpárrafo, lo que hemos propuesto.

Lo segundo es explicar que nuestra intención es que quede claro que hay una cantidad de conceptos internacionales no acordados que hemos mencionado largamente en las diferentes instancias del Comité del Programa, el Comité de Finanzas y en la reunión conjunta que por una razón de tiempo era imposible poder incluirlos en nuestras presentaciones de manera específica porque hemos hecho planteos en términos generales.

Entonces, la alternativa quizás para poder ser rigurosos con el Consejo, con el planteo de la Consejera Legal, es que luego del “Joint Meeting”, lo que yo diría es, “Based on the recommendations of the Programme, the Finance, the Joint Meeting and the Council a specific guidance”.

Porque si lo que estamos diciendo es que el Comité del Programa, Comité de Finanzas y la reunión conjunta formulan recomendaciones y allí en esas recomendaciones están capturadas nuestras preocupaciones, esta sería la manera de poder incluir por un lado la *specific guidance* del Council y por otro lado las recomendaciones. El problema es que en este Informe no está expresamente determinado que los conceptos que no están acordados internacionalmente van a ser tomados en consideración y va a haber un glosario o una nota conceptual o algún instrumento que nos permita poder estar tranquilos. Eso lo hemos dicho claramente.

Por eso es que estamos insistiendo en la necesidad de incluir las recomendaciones. Si tuviéramos alguna otra alternativa, nosotros no tendríamos ningún inconveniente en mantener el subpárrafo original, pero necesitamos algo concreto que nos de la tranquilidad de que vamos a tener en los diferentes “adjustment” algo que justamente vaya a respetar los conceptos internacionalmente acordados.

Digo, si pudiéramos quizás encontrar una salida de esa manera, no tenemos inconveniente en no incluir las recomendaciones del Comité del Programa, del Comité de Finanzas o de la reunión conjunta. Pero tenemos al menos, hay tres o cuatro conceptos muy claros como economía azul, como *Green Innovation*, como bioeconomía, que todos son conceptos que necesitan ser definidos, la economía circular, todas cuestiones que deberían ser claramente definidas de acuerdo a lo acordado internacionalmente y eso no está en ningún lado y lo hemos expresado.

Entonces, me gustaría ser lo más constructivo posible, pero no veo cómo esta preocupación está capturada en el Informe.

CHAIRPERSON

It is time that we have to close, but I would just like to comment on this question of “based on the recommendations of the Programme and Finance Committees”. Their recommendations are to the Council. Therefore, it is for the Council to take those recommendations into account, pronounce on those recommendations and include whatever it wants to in its Report. However, we cannot be having Finance Committee and Programme Committee recommendations going to the Conference. What is the role of the Council in between?

The Committees report to the Council, they are Committees of the Council. Hence, I make this comment and leave it with you all.

We have to break now, because we have already gone past 12:30 hours. We would meet again at 14:30 hours sharp.

However, please, bear in mind, which is the role of the three Committees, and which is the role of the Council? If we keep putting the Committees also to the Conference, then the role of the Council is negated. If the Council has not dealt with some concepts, which are being mentioned, then something needs to be done there.

We can pick this up at 14:30 hours. I adjourn the meeting because we have gone well past 12:30, and that is our timeframe. Thank you. The meeting is adjourned until 14:30 hours.

The meeting rose at 12:35 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 35

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.35

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
FOURTH PLENARY SESSION QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
27 April 2021

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:33 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 33
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 14.33
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 3. Strategic Framework 2022-31 (continued)**Point 3. Cadre stratégique 2022-2031 (suite)****Tema 3. Marco estratégico para 2022-2031 (continuación)**
(C 2021/7)**CHAIRPERSON**

Good afternoon colleagues, we can commence our Session. Could we have the text on the screen again? We were on paragraph 3.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría compartir con usted dos cuestiones que son para mí importantes. La primera es sobre este párrafo que estamos conversando, el otro es sobre la cuestión de género, que está más arriba. Y le voy a pedir por favor que me permita expresarme en las dos cuestiones.

Voy a ir al punto 3 de este Informe, el cual escuché muy atentamente, Presidente, cuando usted hizo su intervención al final de la reunión de esta mañana y creo que usted tiene razón. Por lo cual yo le quiero pedir, si me permite, cancelar mi propuesta respecto de incluir las recomendaciones del Comité del Programa, del Comité de Finanzas y de la reunión conjunta. Le pido por favor que no considere esa propuesta y por otro lado le pido por favor que la Secretaría incluya una nueva propuesta en la cual después de “on the Council’s specific guidance”, incluir “comma, as well as guidance from the Technical Committees”.

La razón fundamental de esta propuesta tiene que ver que, por un lado, deja en claro el rol del Consejo como eje central de los Órganos rectores de la FAO y por otro, que la Conferencia se nutre también de los insumos y conceptos de los Comités técnicos. Entonces, de esta manera, creo, podríamos por lo menos para nosotros y creo para otros Miembros, capturar nuestras preocupaciones, y respetar su intervención Presidente que por supuesto tomo muy en cuenta. Esa es mi propuesta, y cuando usted me diga, me gustaría hacer una propuesta sobre el tema de la cuestión de género.

CHAIRPERSON

I think your suggestion of the Technical Committees in my view is appropriate because I think the Technical Committees on policy issues report to the Conference and on administrative and budgetary types of issues, their views come to the Council. For me, the reference to the Technical Committees is fine and appropriate.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I will not take much of your time, just to support what Argentina said, for the basic reasons that you already explained to us.

CHAIRPERSON

If there is no other comment on paragraph 3, and we can agree on paragraph 3, then I will give the floor to Argentina for their other proposal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿Podemos ir al párrafo sobre el tema de la cuestión de género, por favor? En ese sentido, permítame, Presidente decir dos cosas. La primera es que nuestra propuesta refleja extensivamente nuestra posición nacional y, por lo tanto, era lógico que, en esta instancia, yo expresara la posición que tiene mi país internamente. Al mismo tiempo y, además agradezco, a los Miembros que acompañaron esa propuesta.

Por otro lado, el principio fundamental que guía mi trabajo siempre es el de buscar consenso. Jamás voy a pretender imponer una visión o una perspectiva por encima de mis colegas, por lo tanto, lo único que quiero es que quede claro mi respeto a todas las creencias y a todas las visiones, pero de ninguna manera puedo avanzar y sostener un texto que no tiene el consenso de mis colegas.

Por lo tanto, pido dejar sin efecto esa propuesta que incluye la cuestión del colectivo LGBTQI+ y, solo a modo de consulta y en la medida que ello no incluya ningún tipo de afectación para las visiones y las

creencias de los Miembros, preguntar si después de mainstreaming of gender equality”, podemos incluir alguna referencia a la no discriminación, “a no discrimination”. Pero no quiero imponer, eso fue una posición nacional pero que, en el contexto de la Organización, nosotros trabajamos por consenso.

Así que, a mis colegas de Burkina Faso, Egipto, Mali, Indonesia, Federación de Rusia, Senegal, Sudán, con todo respeto tomé nota de su planteo y, por lo tanto, voy a insistir en buscar el consenso y no imponer ninguna visión.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Argentina for your flexible position and constructive suggestion.

Mr Fayiz KHOURI (Jordan) (Original language Arabic)

I am taking the floor on this point concerning gender equality and I thank Egypt for the proposal made. We support the proposal that was made this morning.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Ambassador of Argentina for his constructive way to move on with this. It is a very delicate and a very sensitive issue and I would like to thank him, for taking away his proposal, and with this we could support this wording. We could also delete the third line on developing an inclusive consultation with Members. We could take out also “developing” on the Gender Action Plan and Rural Action Plans. With this we support this wording.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

Just to echo what my colleague from Egypt said, we thank the Ambassador of Argentina for the flexibility and, as Egypt says, we can also support this paragraph as it currently stands.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Respecto a la propuesta que en su momento hizo Argentina, nada más para el registro, México no tiene ningún problema. De hecho, es parte de nuestra posición nacional y pues, recordar que este mandato es para la FAO, no para los países por lo que no debería haber ningún temor. Pero, por otro lado, hay que reflejar lo que se dijo en la reunión ayer. Y la propuesta que mencionó Argentina, viendo mis notas, no estaba, no me acuerdo haberla visto en la discusión de ayer y ese debe ser el principio que nos debe guiar en la formulación de las conclusiones, en este y en todos los temas.

En ese sentido, agradezco la flexibilidad de Argentina y apoyo la mención que hizo para incluir la parte de “no discriminación” en alguna parte de este párrafo. Y creo que de esto se puede hacer cargo el Comité de Redacción.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I too would like to support the proposal made by Egypt and I support Egypt’s statement this morning. I also would like to thank the Ambassador from Argentina for his cooperation and his constructive work.

Mr Salah A. ALKHODER (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

In turn, we concur with the proposal presented by Egypt. We agree with the current paragraph to be as drafted.

Mr Shoaib Sarwar SANDHU (Pakistan)

Just to echo here what has already been said by my colleagues from Jordan, Egypt, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. We support the proposal of Egypt and this paragraph as it stands is perfectly fine with us. Also, thanks to the Argentinian Ambassador for his very consensual approach.

Mr Abdelhalim GUESMI (Tunisia)

We just want to reiterate our support for the proposal of our Egyptian colleague and I would like also to thank His Excellency, the Argentinian Ambassador for his consensual spirit.

CHAIRPERSON

I don't have any other speakers, so the subparagraph which you see on the screen in yellow, subparagraph (j), with its current wording, we can agree and go forward? I have no requests for the floor, so I think we can agree on this subparagraph and go forward.

That moves us to paragraph 3. I think we had agreed on paragraph 3 before we reverted to this, so now we are on subparagraph (c) where there is reference to agri-food and agri-food systems.

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

La dinámica de la revisión de las conclusiones de este documento ha ido construyendo, a mi parecer, conceptos que ya pueden incorporarse o pueden decantarse aquí en el subpárrafo (c).

Le pediría, por favor, a la Secretaría que se recorra al subpárrafo (k), solo como referencia. Aquí estamos hablando de una mayor visibilidad de la FAO en los *Commodity Markets, Trade*, la inclusión en la nueva estrategia del nuevo Marco estratégico, etcétera. Este concepto está englobado en lo que a mi parecer describió ayer el Economista en Jefe de la FAO, Máximo Torero Cullen, de lo que es un *agri-food system*. O sea, que el sistema agroalimentario engloba todos estos conceptos. Entonces, nuestra Delegación está a favor de que se conserve el *agri-food system*.

Si otras Delegaciones quieren también mantener “agricultura y alimentación”, está bien, pero que *agri-food systems* se mantenga en el documento.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on the proposal in subparagraph (c)?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Members?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

On this particular point, we are very thankful to the Secretariat for the explanation that was given on this. We are also very grateful for the constructive proposal made by our distinguished colleague and friend from Argentina.

Our question here is, taking what was said by the Secretariat, that the wording agri-food systems is something new, and we do not think that it would be the most understandable for everyone that will read this Report. We should stick to the language we are used to writing these kind of reports.

If we could go to the proposal we have in yellow, the proposal by the Argentinian Ambassador. We prefer to have something more in line with the language that we are used to, which is agriculture, agri-food chains and food systems, and in that case we will retain agriculture, which is the mandate of FAO. We will retain food systems, which is international agreed language, and we have this concept of agri-food chains, which is also very well defined in FAO as in the international scene. If I can repeat and if the Secretariat can take note, I would be very grateful for that.

Our proposal is agriculture, agri-food chains and food systems. It is a slight change from what has been proposed by Argentina. I think that it is in line with the language we used to utilize in our reports at FAO.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think the term agri-food systems incorporates many things. It includes agriculture, it includes food and even it includes food chain systems. Therefore, if we can say agri-food systems, everything is included and I feel that agri-food systems is enough.

The other phrases are not; they are repetitive. They are not giving further explanation, because when you say agri-food systems, it includes everything. It even includes the soil, it includes the water because it is included in the system. The system is not a very small thing. It has a very detailed explanation. Instead of simply dividing everything into small phrases, agri-food systems is enough and the others you can delete then.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería agradecer la posición, la sugerencia de mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea (EU), pero en esta oportunidad no compartimos, no estamos de acuerdo y, la verdad, es que lo que me preocupa de esto es que transformemos un tema técnico, en una discusión política.

Si es un tema técnico quizás sería bueno volver a escuchar o pedirle a la Secretaría que, a través del Economista en Jefe, pueda ser más preciso, si es necesario, sobre la rigurosidad técnica o la cuestión técnica de este subpárrafo. Porque, obviamente, todo se puede incluir aquí pero incluso yo recuerdo, quizás me equivoco y pido disculpas a mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea (EU), pero yo me acuerdo haber leído en una estrategia de un documento de la Unión Europea, pero repito, no quiero usarlo si no es algo que ustedes están de acuerdo.

Pero en la estrategia "De la granja al tenedor", creo que se habla de *agri-food systems*, pero seguramente también tenemos otras maneras de expresar "agricultural". O sea, para evitar una discusión política, quizás lo ideal sería volver a consultar a nuestro Economista en Jefe para ver si nos puede volver a adentrar. Pero no quiero robar tiempo, depende lo que usted considere, Presidente. Simplemente es una sugerencia.

Lo que sí quisiera es evitar que un tema que es técnico, que tiene una rigurosidad y una lógica técnica, pueda convertirse en un debate de carácter más político. Entonces, por las dudas, preferiría recurrir a los técnicos en este caso.

CHAIRPERSON

I would agree because we have got a difference of opinion here and we need clarification from the technical people involved here. I have got one request for the floor. That is from Peru, but a technical explanation may even assist the intervention from Peru and then the United Kingdom.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Efectivamente, y lo digo como agrónomo y como especialista en agroecología, el término de sistemas agroalimentarios es muy amplio y permite captar la esencia de lo que se está indicando. No compartimos la idea de que se tenga que individualizar agricultura, desde las cadenas agroalimentarias y los sistemas alimentarios porque ya dentro del sistema agroalimentario está incluido todo esto.

En el caso de que quisiéramos separar la parte agroalimentaria con lo que tiene que ver solamente con la parte agrícola, por dar un ejemplo, el caso algodón, que no necesariamente es un producto agroalimentario entonces sí podríamos recurrir quizás a solamente la expresión "agricultura y agroalimentario". Entonces sería al final "agriculture and agri-food systems".

CHAIRPERSON

Before I continue with other speakers, I would take up the suggestion made by Argentina. I would ask the technical person from the Secretariat to give an explanation before I give the floor to the speakers. Máximo, are you connected with us?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Yes, sir. Let me indicate that this is not a new term. It is even in the Oxford Reference Dictionary. Agri-food systems is a term that is defined there. It is in many scientific publications. Just to give you a reference, it is in Sustainable Food and Agriculture, chapter 33 – there is a very detailed definition of agri-food systems. It is a term that exists and it is scientifically described. As has been explained by Peru, Argentina and others, the term is comprehensive.

Let me explain the definition and repeat the definition again so that we are all on the same level. Agri-food systems covers the journey of food from farm to table, including when it is grown, harvested, processed, packaged, transported, distributed, traded, bought, prepared, eaten and disposed of. It also encompasses non-food products, for example, forestry and biofuels, which are activities that FAO does. It also constitutes livelihoods and all of the people as well as the activities, investments and choices that play a part in getting us these foods and agricultural approach.

It is a very comprehensive definition that includes all the activities that we at FAO do because we are an agriculture and food organization. During the previous meetings we showed the definition, and I can graphically show the definition that we presented, which basically encompasses the terms that I am referring to. However, I do not want to take more of your time because I do not have access right now to share my screen, but that is exactly the definition.

Let me repeat so that we are clear. Again, the agri-food system covers the journey of food from farm to table, including when it is grown, harvested, processed, packaged, transported, distributed, traded, bought, prepared, eaten and disposed of. It also encompasses non-food products, for example, forestry and biofuels. It also constitutes livelihoods and all of the people as well as activities, investments and choices that played a part in getting us this food and agriculture approach, and we keep it as agri-food systems because we want to comprehend all of this definition. In the same way that we have bio-economy and we do not call it biotechnology and economy and the same where we have agro-ecology as one word. That is exactly what we are trying to do, and it is a definition that already exists, as I mentioned before.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I will go back to our speakers.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I guess one of the concerns I have on this debate, really, is whether FAO is trying to distinguish what it does from food systems. Of course, we are working towards a Food Systems Summit and we hope that as many people as possible can get on board with the Food Systems Summit and help it to make a difference.

My concern here is that by using a different terminology, FAO is somehow trying to say that it is different and it is not working on food systems, it is working on a distinct agenda, which is agri-food systems. If agri-food systems is essentially the same as food systems, then perhaps it is not so different. However, I think what I would be seeking is some sort of reassurance from FAO Management that they are not trying to distinguish their agenda as separate from the food systems agenda, which we are all working towards.

CHAIRPERSON

Máximo, could you clarify that before I go to the next speakers, in case they raise the same point?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Of course, Chairperson, we will never try to go against the Food Systems Summit. On the contrary, we are completely supportive of the Food Systems Summit. The Food Systems Summit is focussing on food – only the food element. That is the argument of the Food Systems Summit. That is why it is called Food Systems Summit.

FAO is the Food and Agriculture Organization and that is why we have to have a very clear definition in our Strategic Framework of what agri-food system means. I will repeat it again. Agri-food system covers the journey of food from farm to table, including when it is grown, harvested, processed, packaged, transported, distributed, traded, bought, prepared, eaten and disposed of. It also encompasses non-food products, for example, forestry and biofuels, but also constitutes livelihoods and all of the people as well as the activities, investments and choices that play a part in getting us these food and agricultural products.

Let me repeat, we are not at all trying to go against the Food Systems Summit. That is completely out of what we are trying to do. On the contrary, we are extremely supportive. However, we would have to be very clear on what the definition that we are working on in the Strategic Framework is and that is why we are trying to be very clear and we will clarify this in the document that will be supplied with clarifications.

Nonetheless, this is a definition, which I repeat, is not a new, invented definition. It is already scientifically published. It is in many publications, it is even in dictionaries. It is nothing new and it is exactly what we are trying to clarify so that we can move forward.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Máximo, for that explanation. Now, I will go back to our list.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

Thank you for the explanations given and, yes, we will listen to this explanation very carefully but I still miss certain parts that are relevant for FAO's work, which is fisheries and aquaculture that I did not hear mentioned. I did hear forestry mentioned and I think this is, at least for us, one of the issues with this term of agri-food systems, while agriculture does encompass all of it.

We, speaking for the Nordic Countries here, would support the Argentinian proposal of writing agriculture, food and agri-food systems. That for us would cover all of these parts that we are concerned should be covered. In addition, just as a curiosity, checking the former Programme of Work and Budget that we had agreed on, the one that is now standing, not the one we are discussing under the next Agenda item but the previous one, agri-food systems is mentioned once while food systems is mentioned over 90 times. This is indeed a shift in the way we use this terminology that we can hear now from FAO.

The Nordic Countries would be absolutely fine with agriculture, food and agri-food systems, leaving the agri-food systems as we can very clearly hear that FAO cares about maintaining but also pointing to agriculture and food which is broader than what was mentioned by the Chief Economist. Those are my points.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We would like to thank the Chief Economist for the explanation provided. We have agreed to go to our science and we have right now heard a lot – the definition made by the Chief Economist of this Organization. The mandate of this Organization is agriculture and food.

We would be, I think – also based on the clarification made by the Chief Economist, and also this comprehensive and wide terminology of agri-food systems – happy to stick to this terminology, agri-food systems, which covers everything from farm to table.

In addition, instead of using a lot of terminologies here, I have also checked the Report of the 165th Session Council last year. We also used agri-food systems when we were addressing the Report of the Committee of Agriculture. It has been used before, even in the Council reports and we would be happy to support agri-food systems.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I really appreciate the Chief Economist because he has given us a very nice explanation. Agri-food system, is very comprehensive. It includes everything. It includes agriculture, it includes food. Even when we say food, it includes fish also, because somebody mentioned that fish is not mentioned but we incorporate it in the food and more than everything, the system.

The system, it includes not only the life but even the issues which do not have life, for example, the soil. They are part and parcel of the system, so it is very comprehensive. It includes agriculture, it includes food and it includes also the system. We do not have to complicate it and to mention several meanings. I think the agri-food system is very appropriate and comprehensive and it is well accepted.

CHAIRPERSON

Máximo, did you have something to add before I move on?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

No Chairperson, just to respond to the previous comment. Of course, we include fisheries and when I mentioned the definition, I was very clear to say, for example, forestry and biofuels, but of course in the definition of agriculture of FAO, we have fisheries included. Therefore, the agri-food systems of course will include fisheries.

Simply just to repeat what I have been saying, this is the slide that we explained during the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Programme Committees that clearly specifies how we are covering all the elements of the agricultural sector and the food systems which have food products and non-agri food products like our genetically engineered foods and so on. There is a very clear definition which I have repeated, and which is here again, and of course we are including fisheries in this definition, and forestry and so on.

CHAIRPERSON

That should assist Members.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

Thank you Chairperson for the way you are conducting the meeting. We are grateful for your patience. When this debate started yesterday, I was wondering whether there was a difference or no difference. However, I must express my gratitude to the Chief Economist, because what he said is what I thought I understood – and I am not an agronomist. His explanation made things much clearer and I would like to add my voice to those that are embracing the term agri-food chains. From what was on the screen, I would like to say that Zimbabwe appreciates the definition that he gave us and support the use of that term.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

After listening to the explanation, particularly given by the Chief Economist, regarding the coverage and definition of agri-food systems, and taking into account that what we have said yesterday in our national statement, Indonesia can support the terminology of agri-food systems.

Sr. Elías REYES BRAVO (México)

Para complementar un poco, conceptualmente y dada la práctica en los trabajos de la FAO, consideramos obviamente que la fuente para el suministro de alimentos es justamente la agricultura, en su acepción más amplia.

Se habló ya de la pesca, de la acuicultura, de la agricultura, la silvicultura, etcétera y aparte la ganadería, entonces consideramos que, en esta situación, en esta conjuntura donde se están discutiendo los temas pues, hay que abordar también conceptualmente esto. El señor Máximo Torero Cullen nos ha ilustrado con el rigor conceptual, pero en la práctica, la acepción amplia con que se usa el término “agricultura” en la FAO nos ilustra y nos circunscribe en buena medida a lo que muchas veces exige, que es, circunscribirnos a los trabajos de la FAO.

Si gustan, en la Cumbre de Nueva York, se puede hablar de Sistemas Alimentarios, etcétera, pero la FAO puede llevar el concepto de Sistemas Agroalimentarios o en última instancia considerando también la posición de Alemania, de la Unión Europea, pues tomar en cuenta también la propuesta del distinguido Embajador de Argentina.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Solo con el ánimo de que luego de las explicaciones que nos ha brindado el Economista en Jefe, el señor Máximo Torero Cullen, nos ha quedado súper claro el concepto y por qué debemos usar *agri-food systems*. Yo creo que, para darle una solución final a esto, pudiéramos utilizar ese concepto y de ser necesario, incluir una nota al pie de página donde podamos colocar el concepto que Máximo Torero Cullen nos puso en pantalla.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Peru, for your suggestion.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is again to ask you to pass the floor to Portugal as European Union Presidency.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you for your indulgence for returning to this. Yes, indeed, we already put in the chat that we can go along with the proposal we have that we got from Argentina. Thank you very much for that. Our only purpose is trying to adapt the language to the language we are used to having in this forum at FAO.

Of course, we are not native speakers. We sometimes have some difficulty on this. I am asking for indulgence of the Members. We were listening carefully to the explanation from the Chief Economist, and, again, asking for your indulgence, we can skip the proposal we made before.

We are listening to you, we are listening to Members and we can go along. We are very thankful for the previous proposal from our Argentinian colleague.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero clarificar que mi propuesta era solo si tenía un consenso general entre todos los Miembros, pero la verdad es que me gustaría reconocer que, desde el punto de vista técnico yo creo que la posición del Economista en Jefe es bastante clara. Incluso yo compartí en el *chat* declaraciones oficiales por parte incluso de la Unión Europea en la cual específicamente habla de *agri-food systems*. Por lo tanto, yo lo único que digo es que, si es un tema técnico, deberíamos respetar la rigurosidad técnica de nuestros equipos en la FAO y, sobretodo, si no cruza líneas rojas de los países o incluso si esos mismos conceptos son sostenidos por los países públicamente. Porque si no, es una complicación entrar en una discusión de carácter político cuando es un tema técnico, insisto en esto.

Y cuando hicimos la consulta técnica, lo técnico fue muy claro. Por eso, en todo caso me gustaría, yo no sé si es posible, no me gusta la técnica de pedir que un Miembro dé explicaciones, pero quizás la Unión Europea (EU) podría clarificar sus diferencias con *agri-food system* con relación a que está dentro de sus declaraciones oficiales públicas e incluso en documentos que son públicos.

Yo cité la estrategia "De la granja al tenedor" pero hay otros documentos. Entonces, la pregunta es ¿cuáles son las objeciones con el término técnico que está planteando el Economista en Jefe si la propia región utiliza estos contextos de manera oficial? Esa es la única cosa que no tengo en claro, ¿cuál es la lógica? No tengo derecho yo a pedir explicaciones, es solo mi curiosidad que me hace preguntar cuál es el problema. Si está utilizado en declaraciones oficiales y es refrendado técnicamente por el equipo de la FAO, ¿dónde está el problema?

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to get the view of Members. The Chief Economist has explained to us in very clear terms, in fact, twice, what agri-systems means in the interpretation of FAO. He even showed us the definition on the screen. In view of these further explanations by the Chief Economist and further clarifications, could we go along with the subparagraph which I had proposed, which said agri-food systems? Would Members agree to that? Because the explanations were very, very clear. I see no requests for the floor. Do I take it that the subparagraph originally drafted would be agreeable?

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I was wondering about the proposal of having a footnote because I thought it was quite interesting, the wider explanation that was given, that it was including fisheries that we were a little bit worried about. Perhaps that could be a way forward. However, I am happy to hear what the United Kingdom has to say as well as my European Union colleagues, of course. I am now speaking as a Nordic Countries representative.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, the idea of the footnote I think is a good one, which would give an explanation of what exactly is meant.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was going to make a very similar point, that I think if the footnote can give the definition and, indeed, provide reassurance that the definition also encompasses food systems as well as the other agri parts of it. I think that would be very helpful.

Sra. Patricia RODRIGUEZ (República Dominicana)

Muy brevemente, simplemente para apoyar el concepto externado por Argentina, Perú y otros Miembros, en particular las explicaciones brindadas por el Economista en Jefe, al mismo tiempo apoyamos el consenso externado por usted, señor Presidente.

CHAIRPERSON

I am assuming that by including a note that would explain. In fact, I think it was Peru's suggestion, which has been supported by some Members. With that note and the original wording of subparagraph (c), we can go forward? Can you put the original wording? Subparagraph (c) which would have further explanations as a footnote, so we can agree to move forward.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was hoping to come back to paragraph 4. Perhaps when we get to paragraph 4, you will let me come back in again.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes. In the meantime, just to speak about subparagraph (w), it is similar to subparagraph (c) in terms of agri-food systems. That Note would apply to this subparagraph also.

I assume we can go forward, agreeing to this as well. I think we can. Is there any other paragraph? Now we have paragraph 3 and 4. I think we had agreed paragraph 3.

Paragraph 4.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Reflecting on our discussion of paragraph 2, I would like to learn some lessons from that and use it to suggest a slight rewording of this paragraph. Also having listened to my colleague from Congo and, indeed, Legal Counsel's explanation that the Basic Texts mean that Council should recommend a review by Conference. Here I would like to propose that paragraph 4 reads: "The Council recommended that the Conference reviews and considers endorsing the Strategic Framework 2022-2031." Or perhaps, in fact, just "considers". That might be more in line with what we agreed for paragraph 2 but I am flexible on that.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment on this amended paragraph 4?

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We could support the proposal made by United Kingdom but we would like to mention also the number of the Session of this Conference. It would be the 42nd Session of the Conference.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voulais remercier la collègue du Royaume-Uni et notamment le collègue de l'Égypte qui m'a arraché pratiquement les mots de la bouche. J'ai appris énormément la proposition, et [inaudible], il n'y a pas de problème. On peut aller dans ce sens.

CHAIRPERSON

Colleagues, thank you, we have completed Item 3, Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Item 4. Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23
Point 4. Plan à moyen terme 2022-2025 et Programme de travail et budget 2022-2023
Tema 4. Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 y Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23
 (C 2021/3)

CHAIRPERSON

Now we can go to our next Item on the Agenda. We have concluded Item 3 and now we move on to Item 4, which is *Medium-Term Plan 2022-2025 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023*.

Please ensure that you have documents *C 2021/3*, *C 2021/3 Information Note* and *C 2021/3 Web Annex 10* before you. The introduction for this Item by Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy Planning and Resources Management (OSP) has been circulated to you. This item was discussed at the 130th session of the Programme Committee and the 185th session of the Finance Committee and at the Joint Meeting.

Introduction to Item 4: Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23

Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management

The Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 covers a period of four years and provides the programmatic framework for results and monitoring to support the achievement of objectives by Members and the international community with support from FAO, in accordance with the Strategic Framework 2022-31.

The Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 builds on the key foundational elements presented in the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and presents a quantification of costs under all sources of funds (net appropriation and extra budgetary resources) across the budgetary chapters and organizational structure. It also includes a calculation of cost increases, an overview of long-term liabilities and reserve funds, and a draft Conference resolution for approval of the biennial programme of work and the budgetary appropriations.

Medium Term Plan 2022-25

The MTP further develops the strategic narrative of supporting the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

In line with the transformative nature of the Agenda 2030, the results framework uses a systems approach, considering social, economic and environmental development dimensions simultaneously and addressing the relevant trade-offs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

FAO's contributions are guided by the lens of SDG 1 No poverty, SDG 2 Zero hunger, and SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, while acknowledging the interconnectivity of the SDGs and thus the importance of all other SDGs in achieving FAO's overall vision.

FAO's move to an SDG-based framework provides a common language and facilitates dialogue and integration of results agreed at country level through UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) into the Strategic Framework results hierarchy, in alignment with the 2018 UN development system repositioning.

The basic elements of the results architecture are described in Figures 1, 2 and 3 and the seamless hierarchy from country to corporate level is detailed in Annex 4 (Figure 8).

The 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) guide the programmes that FAO will implement under the four betters in order to fill critical gaps and put in place the conditions needed to drive the changes that will ultimately contribute to the achievement of the selected SDG targets. The Programme Priority Areas respond directly to the issues and challenges emanating from the Corporate Strategic Foresight Exercise, the Regional Conferences, the Technical Committees, and other formal and informal consultation processes. They represent FAO's comparative advantage as a UN specialized agency in contributing to the 2030 Agenda, bringing together FAO's breadth and depth of technical expertise and knowledge.

Annex 1 provides a more detailed presentation of the PPAs and their results frameworks, including the main gaps being addressed, how these relate to SDG targets and indicators, how FAO will leverage the accelerators to fast-track progress, principal thematic components, including normative aspects and those relating to FAO's core functions, and key risks and tradeoffs.

The SDGs are central in FAO's overall theory of change. Overall, the 20 Programme Priority Areas of the results framework make primary contributions to 15 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, encompassing a total of 59 distinct targets and 75 associated indicators. All 26 indicators under 21 targets for which the Organization has custodianship or contributing agency responsibility for measurement, are included.

Annex 3 further describes FAO's contribution to the SDGs through the Programme Priority Areas under the four betters. The Annex provides an overview of both primary or "anchor" PPA contributions as well as additional SDG contributions, recognizing the interconnected nature of the SDGs and the interconnected nature of the four betters.

A more explicit articulation of FAO's business model together with the strategic narrative, the accelerators and SDG-based results framework are key foundational elements in the Strategic Framework and the theory of change. FAO's aim is to create an inclusive and agile Organization that is transparent, open, innovative, responsible, effective and impactful, and that serves its Members to achieve the four betters.

Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23

The Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 builds on the key foundational elements presented in the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25, including the vision around the four betters and the results framework with its 20 Programme Priority Areas anchored in the SDGs.

The PWB 2022-23 presents a quantification of costs under all sources of funds (net appropriation and extrabudgetary resources) across the budgetary chapters and organizational structure. It also includes a calculation of cost increases, an overview of long-term liabilities and reserve funds, and a draft Conference Resolution for approval of the biennial programme of work and the budgetary appropriations.

The PWB 2022-23 has been developed around the following principles:

- a) maintain a flat nominal budget, with no change in the level of assessed contributions and net budgetary appropriation compared with 2020-21;
- b) ensure that all increased costs are covered without negatively impacting the technical work of the Organization;
- c) maintain the organizational structure currently in place to accelerate the delivery of effective and demonstrable results;
- d) adjust the budgetary Chapter structure to reflect the strategic narrative, with the first four Chapters representing the four betters; and
- e) identify areas of programmatic de-emphasis and realignment, based on developments and guidance received.

As mentioned above, the proposed net appropriation budget for 2022-23 has been maintained at USD 1 005.6 million, the same nominal level as the approved budget for 2020-21.

Extrabudgetary contributions are estimated at USD 2.25 billion. Further detail on the extrabudgetary contributions is provided in the Information Note.

Within the flat nominal level of the net appropriation budget, USD 30.6 million has been re-allocated to fund cost increases and high-priority areas. The strengthening in high priority areas of USD 13.1 million is described in paragraph 59.

The increase of USD 1 million each provided in the Adjustments to the PWB 2020-21 in December 2019 for the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme and the International Plant Protection Convention has been maintained.

The resources for the Technical Cooperation Programme (Chapter 7) have been maintained at USD 140.8 million, or 14 percent of the net budgetary appropriation.

The budgetary Chapter structure has been adjusted to align to the results framework, with the first four Chapters of the budget reflecting the four betters.

As set out in the Basic Texts¹, the Programme of Work and Budget is also required to include a provision for long-term liabilities and reserve funds. In this regard, two items to improve FAO's financial health, liquidity and reserves are proposed: i) USD 14.1 million assessment for the After-service Medical Coverage past liability; and ii) USD 19.2 million assessment to bring the Working Capital Fund to the level of at least one month Regular Programme cash flow.

Conclusion

The Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 are submitted for Council's consideration and recommendation to the Conference, including on the budget level of USD 1 005.6 million.

I now open the floor for Members. The floor is open.

Mr Laith OBEIDAT (Jordan) (Original language Arabic)

Independent Chairperson of the Council, it is an honour today for us to deliver this statement. We are making these comments on behalf of the Near East Group. These comments are on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). We would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this document which sets out a number of priorities which are aligned with the priorities of our country and our Regional Group.

CHAIRPERSON

We cannot hear.

Mr Laith OBEIDAT (Jordan)

I think I was disconnected. I am not sure what is going on. Can you hear me now? Shall I start from the beginning?

CHAIRPERSON

You are back. Yes.

Mr Laith OBEIDAT (Jordan) (Original Language Arabic)

Mr Independent Chairman of the Council, we are honoured to submit my observations on behalf of the Near-East and North Africa about the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget. We would like to pay tribute to the Secretariat for the efforts made in preparing this document, which is inclusive and sheds light on the comparative advantage of FAO.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions, in addition to the environmental problems, we do nevertheless agree that the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget do hinge on a number of factors - technology, digital technology, data, capital, human resources and good governance, as well and these factors can bring about transformation in order to lead to more productive agriculture, more livelihood and more competitiveness. These are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the national level, in order to measure the progress and in order to put in place criteria and standards, we do need a proper reporting mechanism in order to assess what has been achieved. My Group would like to call for transparency, particularly as far as the data are concerned. The data should reflect the situation in the various countries. Thus, the Regional Offices, which were not given proper interest in the past, should be given the necessary support.

¹ Volume IIF, paragraph 1(c) iv

The Medium Term Plan, as submitted now, is leading to better prospects for the implementation of our objectives. This Organization will focus on innovation and comparative advantages of this Organization and thus it is promising. The MTP would include all elements related to the additional resources and the contributions.

We would like to call for a reassessment of allocations to our part of the world. Young people should be given an opportunity to hone their skills in order to tackle the environmental issues, particularly taking into account climate change and the hard and difficult situation in our Region. We believe that this Organization can help us bridge the gap in technological and knowledge. We would like to express our support for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

Indonesia has the honour to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

At the outset, the Asia Group appreciates the Secretariat for its hard work. We are pleased to review this document today subsequent to the 165th Council, informal briefing, and Technical Committees. This discussion is timely in terms of reviewing together with the Strategic Framework, and given the FAO's mandate under the current multiple challenges including climate change, zoonotic and transboundary diseases, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In overall, this document is well aligned with the Strategic Framework particularly in reflecting FAO's new organizing principles called "four betters" (4Bs) and 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) as a strategic contribution towards the SDGs. We express our general support to this document with some following observations including one specific question.

Firstly, the Asia Group welcomes maintaining a flat nominal budget, no change in the level of assessed contributions and net budgetary appropriation compared to 2020-21 as presented. We also appreciate the Secretariat's information note for voluntary funding which was circulated before the Council. On the one hand, we do regard USD 2.25 billion extra-budgetary contribution as ambitious considering the current global economy. On the other hand, we understand this amount as world's great expectation and trust upon FAO's work and responsibility in coming years.

In this regard, we do hope FAO can secure the estimated extra-budgetary resources herein through strengthening as well as widening its partnership with not only member states but also with other UN agencies, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and private entities. With regard to an un-earmarked funding, we request FAO to communicate with partners more closely, and believe "One FAO" embracing efficient and innovative approaches can support this work.

Secondly, the Asia Group appreciates FAO for maintaining its budget for the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) as 14 percent of the net appropriation. We stress that the Asia and the Pacific is the second largest region for the TCP budget. Thus, we request FAO to keep country's ownership as a priority by close consultations with governments, various stakeholders, and Rome-based Agencies' proactive collaboration in consideration of each country's unique context; the four Regional Initiatives which were derived from the Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference held in last year; and TCP as another area that requires additional extra-budgetary funding. Needless to say, we look forward to hearing improvements on further streamlining of FAO's operation; transparency, communication, and reporting on TCP implementation and results as recommended in the TCP Evaluation and Audit report.

Last but not least, the Asia Group acknowledges the re-mapping of the budget within the total net budgetary appropriation as presented in Table 7, and the Results Framework as in the Annex 1. While we appreciate the Secretariat's efforts in this regard, we would like to point out that KPIs for the outcome 6.3 (Cross-cutting areas) and 6.4 (Accelerators) need to be supplemented in near future. Considering these two outcomes' significance, we look forward to hearing from the Secretariat when these KPIs can be updated, particularly before the Conference in June or not, and any difficulties that the Secretariat is currently facing or envisaged to have.

To conclude, Chairperson, with these comments, the Asia Group endorses the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Brazil would like to commend FAO's Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and their alignment with the Strategic Framework, the permanent Goals of the Organization and the 2030 Agenda. We note that, from a structural point of view, the draft of the PWB sometimes has unclear gains and unclear outlines with confusion and eventual overlapping of elements such as drivers, change and triggers. The set is not entirely objective.

We also have a lot of examples related to concepts incorporated in the document which, besides not being mutually agreed, do not reflect the debates undertaken at the Technical Committees. Among the non-agreed and imprecise concepts used are 'circular agriculture' and 'circular bio-economy.' These concepts have not been openly discussed beforehand at FAO. For the benefit of precision, reference to circularity should be replaced with 'approach to efficient use of resources.' For more clarity, a definition of bio-economy should be included in the document.

Similarly, we were surprised with the use of green innovation instead of sustainable innovation. The concept of sustainability has been developed over many decades, introducing a much-needed balanced approach between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. We do not consider it a minor issue to have this concept substituted by less clear, unestablished expressions through the use of the colour green.

Bearing in mind that the Programme Committee underlined the need to give more emphasis on environmental issues in the Strategic Framework and MTP and "to better reflect and mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within FAO's mandate," it would be appropriate to recall that United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process remains the preminent international forum for addressing matters related to climate change and other fora serve in a contributory supplementary role under the guidance of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP) and the provisions and principles of the UNFCCC.

Brazil endorsed the proposal to maintain the values of Regular Budget and its quotas within a zero nominal growth for the next biennium. Nevertheless, we recall the concern noted by the Programme Committee with the fact that 90 percent of extrabudgetary contributions are earmarked, which brings the risk of potential mismatch between the voluntary contributions, due to their labelling, and the priorities of the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget.

Finally, in order to avoid this incompatibility, it would be important to explore mechanisms for the transfer of voluntary resources to the Regular Budget. The language approved in the report opens up the possibility of greater transparency in voluntary donations and the possible creation of mechanisms to reinforce the Regular Budget, as recommended by the Programme Committee.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Apoyo plenamente lo expresado por mi estimado amigo el Embajador de Brasil y además quiero formular algunos comentarios. El Plan a plazo medio (PPM) para 2022-25 establece los objetivos estratégicos y los logros que deberán alcanzar los Miembros con el apoyo de la FAO en un plazo de cuatro años, de conformidad con el Marco estratégico para 2022-2031.

El Plan de Plazo Medio es, entonces, la base programática y el marco de resultados para preparar el Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto bienal y la correspondiente rendición de cuentas. Por ello, en ocasión de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y del Comité de Finanzas, la Argentina señaló preocupación por el desbalance existente en las esferas programáticas del Plan, que son las que orientarán los programas que la FAO aplicará a futuro.

Nuestro país notó que más allá del hecho de que las 20 esferas en su conjunto operen en favor de la atención balanceada de las tres dimensiones del desarrollo sostenible, tal equilibrio debe lograrse también al interior de cada una de ellas, atento a que no existe certeza respecto del resultado final de la implementación del Plan a plazo medio.

Si alguna de estas esferas llegara o llegaran a quedar desatendida o desatendidas, o no lograse su implementación, el Plan a plazo medio resultaría en efecto desbalanceado, mermando así su real aporte al logro del desarrollo sostenible y su contribución a la Agenda 2030 en las tres dimensiones.

Así mismo, reiteramos que existen diversos enfoques, sistemas y herramientas de producción sostenibles y la FAO, como plataforma neutral, debería actuar como usina de todas las ideas comprobadas por la ciencia para que cada Miembro adopte la mejor decisión posible de cómo pretende alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

En este sentido, se valora positivamente que el Informe de la reunión conjunta haya plasmado estas preocupaciones, así como el pedido reiterado sobre la necesidad de que la FAO utilice conceptos y términos acordados multilateralmente, ajustando el proyecto de Plan a plazo medio y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 en consecuencia.

Para hacer uso eficiente del tiempo, nos gustaría que el informe del Consejo incorpore lenguaje similar de los párrafos mencionados anteriormente para su informe. En cuanto al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23, nuestro país desea manifestar su conformidad con la asignación de recursos en el marco de un presupuesto nominal sin variaciones, en el marco de un contexto crítico para el mundo debido al COVID-19.

Por lo tanto, agradecemos que no haya cambios a las cuotas asignadas a los Miembros y lamentamos no estar en condiciones de financiar parte del pasivo del Plan del seguro médico, después del cese de servicio a partir de cuotas adicionales preparadas para el bienio 2022-23.

Para terminar, por otro lado, preocupa el nivel de las contribuciones extrapresupuestarias que según se estima duplican las cuotas asignadas de los Miembros y representan el 69% de las necesidades totales de recursos, el 95% de las cuales se encuentran etiquetadas. Ello implica el riesgo de desnaturalizar la Organización, convirtiéndola en una de provisión de servicios.

Alentamos a FAO a promover e incentivar contribuciones extrapresupuestarias de donantes no etiquetadas y en su defecto, más programáticas y de manera plurianual a fin de permitir a la FAO despegar todo su potencial equitativamente en todo el mundo.

Al mismo tiempo, hacemos un llamado a los países donantes a honrar los compromisos asumidos y diferentes oportunidades para aumentar sus contribuciones no etiquetadas para el desarrollo, como fue el caso del Pacto de Financiación para la aplicación de la Resolución A/RES/71/243 relativa a Revisión cuadrienal amplia de la política relativa a las actividades operacionales del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

L'Angola et le Zimbabwe font cette déclaration au nom du Groupe Régional Africain. Nous savons que cette demande a été structurée, ainsi que les avis techniques et les recommandations du Comité Financier.

Nous apprécions et soutenons en général les propositions présentées par la direction, afin d'inclure des innovations, en tenant compte de la période que nous vivons, avec la pandémie du Covid qui a eu un impact au niveau économique et social. Il faut inciter à réactiver les activités économiques, en particulier celles liées au secteur de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'élevage. Les plans présentés s'inscrivent dans les cadres stratégiques de la FAO pour 2022-2031 et prennent en compte de manière prioritaire les objectifs de l'agenda 2030 pour le développement durable.

Le Groupe Africain souhaiterait toutefois souligner certains aspects. Il partage la perspective des quatre améliorations soulignées par la direction. À savoir les améliorations de la production, de la nutrition, de l'environnement et d'une vie meilleure, ainsi que l'importance de considérer la dynamique des ODD (Objectifs de développement durable) d'une manière intégrée, mais avec une plus grande pertinence pour les ODD 1 - 2 et 10.

L'introduction des quatre aspects dont nous avons parlé dans le document précédent, à savoir les technologies, l'innovation, les données et les aspects liés à la gouvernance et au capital humain, introduit une nouvelle dynamique dans le travail de l'organisation. Nous pensons que le plan reflète

bien les préoccupations du Sommet du système alimentaire, qui a eu lieu cette année. À savoir, transformer de manière innovante le système alimentaire, pour qu'il contribue de manière adéquate à la sécurité alimentaire et à l'amélioration de la nutrition, pour tous les êtres humains tout en respectant l'environnement et la biodiversité.

Ce système alimentaire devra être inclusif, résilient, durable, et continuer à réduire les disparités de revenus entre les pays et les populations. Le secteur privé joue un rôle important dans ces plans à moyen terme, en tenant en compte des éléments importants du développement agricole. Les efforts doivent se poursuivre pour améliorer les conditions de l'agriculture familiale afin qu'elle devienne plus efficace, diversifiée, productive et afin qu'elle contribue à l'amélioration des conditions de travail et de vies des communautés rurales.

À ces fins, il convient d'utiliser des technologies modernes adaptées, y compris la numérisation, et d'exploiter les énergies des petites, moyennes et grandes entreprises agricoles et les entreprises des services. La FAO devrait continuer à renforcer le travail activement en sélectionnant des sujets qui contribuent de manière significative à la réalisation de ces ODD.

Nous sommes d'accord avec la décision de changer le nom de la Division de la pêche en Division de la pêche et de l'agriculture (NFI), en raison de la contribution croissante de l'agriculture dans la production alimentaire. Il convient de continuer à aider les pays à mettre en œuvre les principaux accords, codes ou directives. Concernant les programmes travail et le budget 2022-2023, nous comprenons que la proposition d'un budget à croissance nominale zéro est le résultat de la crise mondiale aggravée par la pandémie.

Nous considérons qu'il s'agit d'un défi important pour les délégations de la FAO, qui doit courageusement travailler avec plus de rigueur, d'efficacité pour réduire les coûts et faire des économies dans les domaines les moins importants, afin d'utiliser les fonds dans les domaines prioritaires, définis dans le programme. Nous sommes satisfaits que le processus de centralisation se poursuive afin de rendre les Bureaux régionaux et les pays plus modernes, efficaces et de réduire aussi la bureaucratie. La formation du personnel doit être renforcée, le suivi et la responsabilisation améliorée.

Nous encourageons les bailleurs de fond traditionnels à contribuer généreusement avec des ressources extrabudgétaires, y compris les ressources du Programme d'aide au développement, pour équilibrer le budget et améliorer l'assistance aux pays. Nous espérons dans une meilleure compréhension de la part des bailleurs de fond, afin qu'ils évitent d'affecter les dons à des fins spécifiques. Les ressources allouées aux PCT (Programme de coopération technique) sont maintenant au même niveau de 14 %.

Nous reconnaissons que ces chiffres ne sont pas encore significatifs pour satisfaire les besoins des pays. Nous espérons que cette ligne pourra bénéficier de ressources provenant d'autres sources à l'avenir. À cet égard, nous pensons que la FAO pourrait faire des nouveaux efforts, pour renforcer son soutien aux pays et élaborer des nouveaux financements pour le développement agricole. Par exemple, à travers l'utilisation d'une partie de la valeur du PCT pour la préparation des projets structurels, avec des montants plus importants et en collaboration avec les pays. La FAO pourrait demander aux donateurs des institutions financières internationales pour des financements.

Le Programme travail et budget 2022-2023, devra envisager un soutien spécifique à l'Afrique, conformément aux recommandations prioritaires de la Conférence régionale, telles que l'élimination de la faim, l'augmentation de la production et de la productivité, la résilience, le développement d'une chaîne de valeur, et le renforcement du commerce interrégional.

À ces fins, le renforcement des capacités, et la modernisation de l'agriculture familiale, la création d'infrastructures, la lutte contre les fléaux, la résilience au changement climatique sont indispensables. En ce qui concerne le détail des dettes pour cela, il y aura l'assurance médicale, le secrétariat devrait analyser avec les autres agences confrontées avec la même difficulté, des solutions communes émettant de résoudre définitivement l'action.

Pour conclure, Monsieur le Président, avec ces observations, l'Angola et le Zimbabwe, au nom du Groupe Africain approuvent les plans à moyen terme pour 2022-2023, le Programme 2020-2025, et le Programme travail et budget pour 2022-2023, je vous remercie.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by Indonesia.

Thailand appreciates the efforts of the secretariat to provide timely updates on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

We appreciate the commitment of FAO in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals through the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), based on the vision of the *four betters* contained in the Strategic Framework (better production, nutrition, environment, life), which well reflect the mandate and the comparative advantages of the Organization.

We take note of the maintained flat nominal budget, with no changes on the assessed contributions and net budgetary appropriations, and acknowledge the presentation of the integrated view of total resource requirements and the results-based approach to more effectively mobilize resources for the Programme of Work.

With regard to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), we acknowledge of the universal character of the TCP criteria and appreciate the maintaining of the TCP budget at 14 percent of the net appropriation.

We welcome the identified areas of technical de-emphasis and re-alignment to effectively support the delivery of the four betters presented in the document. In particular, support the reorientation of the technical areas of work and services focusing on the development of greenhouse gases measuring techniques, food authenticity and traceability, global capacity program on IUU fishing in paragraph 63 (d), and the completion of methodological work on extension of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting to include ecosystem services in paragraph 64 (i).

These Priority Areas are in line with our national strategy on Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG) and the Sufficiency Economy Principle, and these areas will support members in transformation into sustainable and resilient agri-food systems. We look forward to the broader dissemination of data, publications and technical services as well as the joint collaboration Partner Agencies when feasible.

In this connection, we encourage further adjustments of the criteria and technical areas of work in close consultation with decentralized offices to ensure the good flow between “top down” and “bottom up” communication in planning and delivery, and in alignment with the regional-specific challenges and priorities.

With this statement, Thailand endorses the MTP 2022-25 and PWB 2022-23.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia welcomes the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, recognising and highlighting the important role these documents play in operationalising the Strategic Framework and guiding the success of FAO over the next ten years. We endorse the recommendations made in recent Governing Body meetings about these documents.

As we did with the Strategic Framework, we welcome that the Medium Term Plan is grounded in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enabling national priorities to be contextually addressed under a common language. We note the proposal for the outputs to be elaborated in the second half of 2021, and we highlight the importance of being able to measure and monitor progress.

On the Programme of Work and Budget, we commend FAO for the undeniably challenging task of achieving a nominally flat budget while upholding the technical work of the Organization. In this regard, we note with appreciation the maintenance of the increased funding for the Codex Scientific Advice Programme and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). We look forward to

continuing to work with Management and Members to ensure these important programmes are sustainably funded into the future.

As we also did with the Strategic Framework, we highlight the importance of FAO working closely with Members and other potential funding sources to determine what mechanisms and oversight processes can be put in place to encourage flexible funding contributions, while also considering how greater flexibility can be in-built into the work-plan to accommodate ear-marked funds.

Finally, we support the efforts by FAO to strengthen the Decentralized Offices through more autonomy over resources, staff, policies and regulatory decision-making. However, we also reinforce the need to address capacities and systemic administrative issues through enhanced accountability and strengthened internal controls.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States of America commends FAO and the Director-General for their efforts to maintain a zero nominal growth budget. We thank the Director-General for focusing on this assumption, while overseeing a growth in voluntary contributions which demonstrate Members trust in the Organization's ability to deliver on its mandate.

We appreciate the Director-General's commitment to good governance demonstrated by allocating additional resources to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Legal Office, and Human Resources.

We are also pleased to see a more prominent role for FAO's normative work as well as the inclusion of innovation in all its forms in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) document.

We also appreciate a stronger link to country level planning and a commitment to monitoring and reporting on results and look forward to the Key Program Indicators that will be developed and presented in the adjustments phase during the upcoming fall session.

Finally, we note that the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 include new concepts and language not previously agreed by Members and so we join other Members in stressing the need for FAO to use multilaterally-agreed concepts and language, in particular with regard to the concepts agreed in the FAO Technical Committees and other Governing Bodies.

Mr Miguel GARCÍA WINDER (Mexico)

Thank you, Chairperson. Again this is Mr Miguel García Winder in my intervention as the Mexican representative. I will do that in Spanish.

Continúa en español

Apoyamos la propuesta del Plan a plazo medio 2020-25, creemos que responde de manera adecuada a los desafíos apremiantes y sin precedentes que estamos enfrentando como en este caso de la pandemia por COVID-19 y sus repercusiones en la economía.

Los fenómenos meteorológicos extremos, las plagas y enfermedades zoonóticas transfronterizas y los conflictos, son desafíos importantes adicionales que pondrán presión a los Miembros en los años por venir.

El riesgo de un retroceso respecto a los avances logrados en la radicación del hambre y la reducción de la pobreza es grande, sobre todo porque las personas en situación de pobreza están en la mayor situación de vulnerabilidad y cargarán con una gran parte de las consecuencias negativas generadas por las circunstancias actuales.

Al mismo tiempo, resulta evidente que la transformación de los Sistemas Agroalimentarios es uno de los elementos claves que permitirán avanzar hacia el cumplimiento de toda la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible y de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

La FAO siendo el principal organismo mundial en el ámbito de la alimentación y de la agricultura, tiene una oportunidad histórica de conducir un cambio transformador para beneficio de todos. Para esto es fundamental contar con un Plan a plazo mediano y un Programa de trabajo y presupuesto que,

enmarcados dentro del Marco estratégico, asegure la pertinencia al trabajo de la Organización para dar respuesta a los retos que tenemos enfrente y dar paso a la construcción de un mundo más equitativo, sostenible e incluyente.

México está de acuerdo en las cuatro esferas de mejoras propuestas, así como las 20 esferas programáticas. Será importante trabajar directamente con los Miembros para que, de acuerdo a su soberanía, necesidades e intereses, esto se materialice en comparaciones concretas a nivel de los territorios, logrando una mejor producción, una mejor nutrición, un mejor ambiente, pero sobre todo un mejor nivel de vida.

Apoyamos la propuesta del incremento nominal cero en el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23, manteniendo la asignación en USD 1 005.6 millones. Ya que esto refleja el entendimiento de las enormes restricciones presupuestarias que tienen prácticamente todos los países en gran parte derivadas de la pandemia.

Vemos con interés que en la programación de recursos se definieron montos para el Programa Conjunto FAO/OMS de asesoramiento científico sobre inocuidad de los alimentos, pasando de 1.6 millones de USD en el periodo 2020-21 a 2.6 para el periodo 2022-23.

Así mismo apoyamos una mayor asignación de recursos a las áreas mencionadas en el párrafo 59, tales como las 20 esferas programáticas, la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG), Oficina Jurídica (LEG), de Ética y otras oficinas en materia de supervisión y de recursos humanos.

México reitera su apoyo para cambiar el nombre de la “División de Pesca” a “División de Pesca y Acuicultura”, reconociendo así el importante papel que la acuicultura tiene para mejorar las condiciones de vida y la nutrición de muchas comunidades y de la población en general.

Agradecemos la nota informativa sobre las fuentes y fines de la financiación voluntaria para el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto. Esperamos que las contribuciones extra presupuestales estimadas se concreten en los montos mencionados en este documento. Agradecemos se mantenga informado a este Consejo, así como a los Comités del Programa y de Finanzas sobre la evolución de la financiación voluntaria para hacer los ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto correspondientes en caso de ser necesario.

Es importante que los recursos cuota sean adecuadamente distribuidos para asegurar una cooperación equitativa, reconociendo la diversidad de necesidades de los propios Miembros. En relación a los recursos voluntarios, se debe insistir en la importancia de que estos apoyen a las funciones esenciales de la FAO y se hace necesario en reflexionar sobre mecanismos que protejan la integridad y la imparcialidad de la Organización y prevenir que esta se convierta en una agencia solamente prestadora de servicios.

Esto, y en concordancia con las conclusiones de la reunión conjunta, es necesario para generar confianza en la imparcialidad de las acciones de la Organización y para alentar aportaciones de fondos extrapresupuestarios más flexibles. Es imperativo mantener un diálogo permanente entre la FAO y sus Miembros sobre este tema.

México reitera su apoyo al Plan a plazo medio para 2022-23, al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 y confirmamos nuestro compromiso de trabajar para lograr su correcta y pronta implementación, fortaleciendo la gobernanza de la propia FAO.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. The Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 fully reflect the overall vision, strategy and business model put forward in the Strategic Framework and they also provide action guidance for FAO's work for the coming four years and the next biennium. China welcomes the MTP 2022-25 and the PWB 2022-23.

FAO should be guided by these two documents, continuously improve its efficiency and effectiveness, address challenges in global food and agriculture and step up the transformation of agri-food systems. We note that the 2022-23 budget, funded by assessed contributions has zero nominal growth compared

to the previous biennium; it means that FAO will continue to expand its Programme of Work and advance its transformation despite the zero growth budget. This will be an arduous task.

We encourage FAO to mobilize resources through multiple channels, improve further its efficiency and effectiveness and ensure the implementation of the MTP and PWB. China supports the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) continuing to be a priority in the next PWB.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is to kindly ask you to pass the floor to Portugal, to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Thank you.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina aligns itself with this statement.

We welcome the presentation of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the next biennium in conjunction with the Strategic Framework.

As stated in the comments of the EU and its 27 Member States on FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-2031, a sustainable food systems approach is needed on food and agriculture, which puts the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability on an equal footing. This implies that the PWB should address these three dimensions in a balanced way, particularly when it comes to the results framework and the four betters.

Echoing the Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, we highlight the need to better reflect and mainstream climate change and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources within FAO's mandate. We also fully concur with the Programme Committee on the importance of the One Health Approach, the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Furthermore, we request that the FAO Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) should make adequate reference to the relevant Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products as well as to the 'Ten Elements of Agroecology' and the 'Scaling up Agroecology Initiative', which were adopted by FAO Members in 2019.

We support maintaining the budget at the same level as for the previous period, considering the economic and financial crisis situation triggered by the current pandemic.

As regards the total level of the budget, we note an increase of 13 percent, based on a 20 percent increase in voluntary contributions, which will account for almost 70 percent of FAO's budget. We recognise the importance of diversifying the Organization's resource sources and the role of innovative funding and financing.

We thank FAO for the Information Note provided on the sources of voluntary contributions and the uses to which they are put. We would nonetheless appreciate more detailed information on the origin of the resources, in particular on where the anticipated growth in voluntary resources comes from.

Moreover, we wish to reaffirm the importance of enhanced and balanced technical support from FAO to Members' access to climate finance.

Attention should be paid to the vacancy rate and its impacts on the Organization's work. As regards the Management structure, we look forward to the assessment of the impacts of the new modular organisational structure on FAO's work and delivery.

We welcome the full coverage by the regular budget of commitments to conventions, treaty bodies and UN cost-sharing. This funding is of the utmost importance for the delivery of the Organization's public goods function.

Furthermore, we affirm the principle of full cost-recovery. We encourage FAO, together with its sister agencies in the United Nations System, to explore in a collaborative manner options for harmonised cost-recovery policies, based on common cost classification and cost-recovery methodologies.

Lastly, we welcome the fact that the PWB proposal provides for adjustments to the results framework and associated resource allocations to be presented to the December 2021 Council Session.

We stand ready to continue working with others in the run-up to the Conference, so as to provide guidance to the Organization. We look forward to seeing the requested adjustments being incorporated into the draft Strategic Framework, with the corresponding adjustments in the terms of operational and budgetary programming being reflected in the Medium Term Plan (MTB) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

With these remarks, we endorse the budget level proposed in the PWB 2022-2023.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

First of all, we appreciate the zero nominal growth plan and the intent to strengthen the governance and the monitoring functions. That is very important for us, especially for the prospect to get understanding of the tax payers from Japan; so it underlines the importance of the efficiency and the transparency.

When it comes to the voluntary contributions, this plan has a very ambitious plan for having the 120 percent amount compared to the last term. I guess that many of the countries in the very difficult financial situation, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and so on, so I would say it is a bit ambitious. In terms of our efforts, actually we have made contributions as large as four times of what we contributed the term before in this year and last year. We have already made a certain increase and it is quite difficult for us to increase that much. I guess that the situation is not so different from many countries, so I would say again that we need to review and revise the plan depending on the necessity by monitoring and how you can mobilize the financial resources.

We attach importance to the normative functions of FAO, so the updated increase of budget allocated to the Codex and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is there, so we appreciate that and I request that the FAO would continuously enhance the normative functions.

I would like to take the importance of the fisheries and forestry industries. Those industries are listed in the areas of no emphasis, but still those industries are quite important for the prospect of the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) achievement. Even in a budget which is already focused, still the necessary allocation of the budget should be made, ensured for the necessary activities in the field of the fisheries and the forestry.

We also highlight the importance of the utilization of big data and the digitalization of agriculture and the promotion of innovations and FAO's effort to promote them are very much appreciated. In our views, when it comes to the innovations on the ground, there are some elements that we believe that should be there.

Those are the appropriate protection of the intellectual property rights, appropriate consideration to the environment and human rights that would lead to the responsible private sector investment, and appropriate products and management of the information that should be related to the appropriate consideration of the privacy, ensuring fair access to the entire stakeholders. Furthermore, we underline the importance of enduring the fairness and transparency of FAO's procurement.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and my own country Sweden. The EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the EU statement.

We welcome the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 and support the flat nominal regular budget which we find prudent.

We agree with previous statements on the need to diversify the resource base for voluntary contributions which is all the more important in view of the projected increase in voluntary funding in both absolute terms and relative to the regular budget.

With almost 70 percent of the projected budget consisting of voluntary contributions of which over 95 percent is expected to be earmarked at project level it is essential for FAO to increase its efforts towards attracting more flexible funding. Building trust with resource partners and exploring different funding modalities are essential. We appreciate the efforts done in this regard with the Flexible Multi-partner Mechanism (FMM) and the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) but further work is still needed. Improved financial flexibility could increase FAO's effectiveness and should be a priority of the Organization.

We note that more than half of the forecasted voluntary contributions in the PWB is expected to go towards emergency and resilience building activities. This in our view further underscores the need for FAO to improve its attractiveness for flexible funding in order to enable better delivery of emergency programming in line with the humanitarian principles - humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

On a final note, we maintain our wish for FAO to be a global knowledge hub of excellence providing neutral and science-based evidence and statistics in the areas of food and agriculture in accordance with its unique mandate. The most important asset for achieving that vision is the staff of FAO and in this regard we welcome the work FAO has done to improve and strengthen Human Resources (HR) policies and functions and look forward to seeing that work continued.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría la preparación en la presentación del Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 y del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23, muy centrado en los Objetivos y Metas que pretendemos alcanzar a nivel nacional, regional y mundial armonizado con la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

El enfoque, las integraciones, el uso optimizado de los recursos, la capacidad técnica, así como la capacidad de respuesta y las Asociaciones, son seña de identidad que definen a la FAO y que permitirán a la Organización, prestar apoyo a los Miembros en sus esfuerzos para erradicar el hambre y promover el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Observamos que el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto mantiene un presupuesto del Programa Ordinario sin variación nominal, lo que evidencia la importancia de las contribuciones voluntarias para la realización del Programa de trabajo.

No obstante, ante los retos históricos que nos depara la fase post-COVID-19, consideramos que las fuentes de financiación alternativas dirigidas a los países en desarrollo, representa una alternativa viable para implementar programas que permiten una recuperación inclusiva y accesible para todos en un contexto de riesgo e incertidumbre crecientes.

En cuanto a la orientación estratégica contenida en el Plan a plazo medio, el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto enfocado en la transformación hacia sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios más eficientes, inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles, tomamos nota de las cuatro mejoras y de las 20 esferas programáticas prioritarias, entendiendo que es necesario concebir la interrelación y transversalidad entre estas.

Para ello, es indispensable reforzar los mecanismos que permitan la contribución efectiva de los cuatro aceleradores como de los temas transversales con énfasis en las cuestiones de género y la juventud.

Apreciamos que los recursos para el Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) se mantengan al nivel del 14% de la consignación presupuestaria neta. No obstante, solicitamos que la FAO promueva iniciativas para lograr mayores recursos del presupuesto ordinario hacia esta.

Agradecemos a la Administración por incluir las orientaciones derivadas de las prioridades e iniciativas de nuestra región, recogida en el Informe de la Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, contribuyendo a instrumentar de forma más eficaz su trabajo en el terreno.

En ese sentido, consideramos indispensable avanzar en el fortalecimiento de las oficinas regionales y nacionales para lograr el éxito de éstas y otras iniciativas, esperando conocer oportunamente el avance de estos procesos.

Con esos comentarios, Nicaragua respalda el Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 y Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto para 2022-23 e instamos a la Administración a supervisar sistemáticamente el desempeño, eficiencia y eficacia del mismo, solicitando recibir oportunamente informes al respecto.

Ms Ida Ayu RATIH (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the statement of Asia Group.

Indonesia welcomes the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 and appreciates the work done by Management. We further appreciate the centrality of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of both documents, including the anchoring of targets where FAO is the main custodian. We believe that the MTP will be crucial in supporting FAO Members to recover momentum for the achievement of food security.

Indonesia wishes to highlight some pertinent points as follows.

First, we encourage FAO to increase coordination with its Regional Office to assure its implementation of the plan in each region and conduct periodic evaluation. In this regard, we support the FAO to further empower its Decentralized Offices at regional, subregional and country levels using decentralized structures to better implement its projects in accordance with the regional situation and condition.

Second, regarding the Programme of Work and Budget, we would like to support the efforts made by the FAO Secretariat to further improve transparency, communication and reporting on the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23.

Third, we emphasize the need for more coherent efforts and coordinated actions in developing FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) to ensure the alignment of strategic direction as well as the national and regional context.

Fourth, we underline the importance of ensuring effective use of Technical Cooperation Program (TCP) resources as well as achieving the target of 100 percent delivery of TCP projects against the 2018-19 appropriation by the end of 2021.

Last but not least, on monitoring and reporting of results, we reiterate the need to ensure proper accountability to Members in reporting results achieved in the implementation of MTP and PWB.

On that notes, Indonesia endorses the MTP and PWB.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom welcomes Zero Nominal Growth (ZNG) budget proposed for the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022- 2023 and we support the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) remaining at the established 14 percent of regular budget. As others have said, we also welcome the increase in resources allocated to strengthening FAO's internal controls. Like the other Members of Council and its committees, the United Kingdom cannot support the additional assessments proposed for After Service Health Care (ASHC) and Working Capital Fund (WCF).

As both the Programme Committee and the Council have underlined, getting the right balance of resources between the four betters and the three dimensions of sustainability is important both for the Strategic Framework and for the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). We would support European Union (EU) comments for a greater focus on Climate Change

Likewise, clear principles for allocating the regular and voluntary budget is essential for both the Strategic Framework and the Programme of Work and Budget.

The Programme Committee also highlighted the need to improve and achieve a balance in the technical support that FAO provides to its members to access climate finance. We call on Council to endorse this recommendation. It is needed urgently. We call for clarity on how much of the core budget will be spent on supporting countries to access climate finance.

We look forward to FAO stepping up its support, particularly to the poorest and most vulnerable countries, for climate programmes that focus on agriculture and improving food security, including in

Africa we note, and Council members will recall as mentioned in the 165th Session of the Council, that less than 10 percent of the funds FAO has accessed from the Green Climate Fund have been for African countries.

As we have also agreed on the Strategic Framework, we call on Council to endorse the Programme Committee recommendations to strengthen the links between the 4 betters, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and FAO's Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) in the PWB. This will support FAO's work with others, including the Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) and also within the context of UN Development System Reform. Clear links between FAO's activities and their impact on the SDG indicators will also strengthen data collection and monitoring of progress. We join other members in calling on management to set out a robust results and monitoring framework as well as improving accountability this will enable the coordination that is needed between the many actors working to achieve SDG 2.

Finally, we would like to welcome FAO's enhanced focus on One Health. We encourage FAO's proactive engagement and emphasise the Programme Committee conclusion on the importance of the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). We know many other Members have made the same point and we look forward returning to this issue under Item 8.

Mr Barend Jacobus LOMBARD (South Africa)

South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the Africa Regional Group on this Item.

We are all facing the challenges of declining national growth, with decreased revenue available to advance the socio-economic growth of our people.

Unemployment, inequality and poverty have increased.

Due to the reallocation of resources to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget of South Africa's Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development was cut by approximately 14 percent.

In the development of the Programme of Work and Budget of FAO for the period 2022-23, it is appreciated that the anticipated expenditure has been kept to the same nominal level as for 2020-21.

Every effort must be made to continuously evaluate the efficiency of programmes and to re-prioritise resources to the most critical needs.

Staff numbers, reflecting equitable geographic representation and gender parity, should be kept to the absolute minimum required.

We have to do more with less.

The substantial amount of anticipated extra-budgetary resources is welcomed.

However, the earmarking of such resources should not inhibit the Director-General to have the flexibility to re-direct resources to respond timeously to emerging emergencies.

With these comments the Medium Term Plan for 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-23 is supported.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

España apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea (EU), en nombre propio y de sus 27 estados Miembros al tiempo que desea resaltar los siguientes aspectos en relación con este punto.

Uno. Acogemos con satisfacción y respaldamos el Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 junto con el Marco estratégico debatido en el punto 3 y que marcan las grandes líneas de trabajo de la FAO en la próxima década. Ello reviste a esta cuestión de una especial trascendencia, ya que resulta necesario identificar las áreas en las que priorizar nuestros esfuerzos que, previsiblemente no serán ni escasos ni menores en los años venideros.

En relación con el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto, España apoya al mantenimiento del presupuesto en el mismo nivel que para el periodo anterior a pesar de las dificultades causadas por la crisis económica y financiera desencadenada por la actual pandemia y otros precedentes. Aún en este contexto, cabe destacar el aumento total del presupuesto en un 13%, basándose en un aumento del 20% de las contribuciones voluntarias, que a su vez constituyen prácticamente el 70% del presupuesto de la FAO como bien sabemos.

No obstante, siendo necesaria la diversificación de los recursos de la FAO, no debemos dejar de estar atentos a su papel en tanto que proveedor de servicios para iniciativas y proyectos con fines específicos. Por ello, solicitamos a la FAO una mayor y más detallada información sobre las fuentes financieras y el destino de tales recursos.

En este sentido, y en lo que se refiere al Programa a medio plazo, es necesario un enfoque equilibrado y triplemente sostenible desde el punto de vista social, económico y medioambiental de los sistemas alimentarios.

Internamente para el buen funcionamiento de nuestra Organización, consideramos que es necesario prestar atención a la tasa de vacantes y al impacto de la nueva estructura organizativa en el trabajo y la ejecución de la FAO. De igual manera, estimamos importante que la FAO explore en coordinación con otras Agencias del sistema de las Naciones Unidas, diferentes opciones que permitan el desarrollo de políticas armonizadas de recuperación de costos.

Con estos comentarios respaldamos el nivel presupuestario propuesto en el Programa de trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP) para 2022-23 y esperamos continuar trabajando con todas las partes para seguir mejorando la gobernanza de la Organización.

Ms Keva MCKENNIREY (Canada)

Our comments this morning will be brief. We would like to express our appreciation of the work and the consultation process that has brought us to this discussion today on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23.

Canada supports the proposal for the zero nominal growth budget. We appreciate the detailed Results Framework 2022-25 presented in the Annex of the MTP, the alignment between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), *four betters*, Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), normative aspects and indicators is noted and important.

We commend the FAO for its commitment to maintain the allocation for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the scientific advice programme. Given their core mandates, including facilitating trade, Canada requests that Codex and the IPPC be referenced as normative aspects under BN5 - Markets and trade - in the Results Framework.

Canada welcomes additional information regarding the net increase in budget allocated to the *four betters*, as presented in paragraph 69. Specifically, Canada is interested to know what the increase in appropriation is between the 2020-21 and 2022-23 PWB that is earmarked for the *four betters*, but not a result of the resources being provided to the PPAs.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Costa Rica felicita al Director General y a la FAO por la elaboración de este Plan a plazo medio y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto, el cual recibe con beneplácito y sumo agrado. En aras del tiempo, acortaré mi intervención para referirme únicamente a un par de temas de especial relevancia para mi Delegación.

Nos complace de sobremanera que, en este documento, se valora como eje importante para la erradicación del hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición, los temas ambientales y la agroecología. Nuevamente hacemos un llamado a FAO para que se impulsen con un lugar prioritario aquellos proyectos e iniciativas que se ajusten a la Agenda Verde. Para esto se debe tener en cuenta las diferentes necesidades de cada uno de los Miembros, así como una distribución más equitativa de las cuotas de asistencia y cooperación.

Por último, mi Delegación ve con mucho agrado el aumento en la autonomía que se le dará a las oficinas regionales de manera que estas se ajusten más fácilmente a cada región según sea el caso.

Con estos comentarios, Costa Rica reitera su apoyo al Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 y al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23, planes al que se suma a trabajar para el logro de los Objetivos fijados.

Ms Renate HAHLEN (European Union)

I just wanted to intervene as the Director-General has referred to us yesterday as the biggest provider of voluntary contributions to the Organization. Just to clarify that, as in the past, also in the future, we will continue to engage with FAO and using FAO as an aid implementer for us and for promoting those initiatives that are part of the European Union (EU) priorities and that coincide with FAO's strategic orientations.

This is something that both Ms Beth Crawford and Mr Alex Jones in previous meetings have also already pointed at. FAO can only accept funding that comes to support the agreed priorities of FAO. In that sense, we will continue working on that, but I do not see that we will engage in unearmarked funding, because our funding is to implement, to foster the EU priorities that we have for the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end my list of speakers, the Members. Now I go to the Observers.

Mr Tim KRÄNZLEIN (Switzerland) (Observer)

Switzerland would like to thank FAO Management for the preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23, as well as for Information Note 1 indicating sources and purposes of voluntary contributions in the PWB 2022-23.

Especially Information Note 1 is much appreciated as FAO's budgetary transparency and accountability is of importance for Switzerland.

Switzerland welcomes the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and PWB 2022-23's focus on supporting the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems.

Switzerland notes the priorities within a flat nominal budget level proposed in the PWB and would like to emphasise the following two points.

First, funding of the four betters: As indicated earlier in the discussion concerning the Strategic Framework, particular attention should be given to carefully articulate and differentiate the strategic objectives, results, methodologies and instruments. The same goes for the allocation of funding. The four betters receive different amounts of funding. Switzerland strongly recommends allocating financial resources in a more balanced way between the *four betters* and in line with strategic objectives. Especially, the priorities around the protection and sustainable use of natural resources should be given the necessary financial resources, as they are among the greatest challenges facing humanity.

Second, increasing share of voluntary contribution for categories named "Efficient and effective administration" and "FAO Governance": These two categories are co-financed from voluntary contributions by 24 percent and 15 percent respectively. A comparison with the Programme of Work and Budget of 2019-2020 shows that the share of voluntary contributions has increased proportionally by 9 percent ("Efficient and effective administration") and 13 percent respectively for these two elements. Switzerland would like to point out that in our view both categories should be ordinarily paid out of the Regular Budget of the Organization in order to guarantee its independence. The growth in and share of voluntary contribution for these two items is in Switzerland's view too large.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Pido disculpas por pedir la palabra nuevamente, pero, como en general trato de escuchar las intervenciones de todos los colegas en mi lengua nativa, o sea, la interpretación en español y en este caso escuché a mi estimada colega de la Unión Europea sin interpretación, si no que la escuché en

inglés. Quizás puede ocurrir que no haya logrado captar o entender exactamente un mensaje y como mi intención no es polemizar sino es ser claro, quisiera reiterar algunas de las expresiones vertidas en mi intervención que además fueron capturadas también y expresadas también por muchos países en desarrollo.

Basicamente, reitero que la FAO es una Organización de todos los Miembros, de todos. La Agenda y las prioridades de la FAO son definidas por todos los Miembros en sus órganos de conducción, en sus órganos rectores. En tercer lugar, el financiamiento de la FAO es parte de los compromisos asumidos por los Miembros en función de las prioridades establecidas por la agenda que acuerdan los Miembros y que, es importante recordar, la problemática del desequilibrio entre contribuciones etiquetadas y contribuciones ordinarias y por otro lado la importancia del Pacto de Financiación para la aplicación de la Resolución A/RES/71/243 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas relativa a las actividades operacionales del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo.

Por lo tanto, para terminar, reitero, la FAO no es una consultora y no es y no debe ser funcional a ninguna región en particular, sino que debe alinearse con las prioridades definidas por los Miembros y que no es otra que la implementación de la Agenda 2030 y sus Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Espero entender y dejar en claro y reiterar que la FAO no es una Organización de servicios, no es una consultora, es una Organización de los Miembros en el Sistema de las Naciones Unidas y por lo tanto de alguna manera, ese es el marco en el cual la FAO existe y opera. Espero haber sido claro.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just to react on this, I think we all are in agreement that FAO is not a service provider. I think what my colleague wanted to explain is that there is no commitment for Members to provide unearmarked contributions. Of course, the voluntary contributions that are made available to FAO have to fall under the Strategic Framework, the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), no doubt. It was just to make sure that there was no misunderstanding: there is no such thing as a commitment of Members to provide unearmarked funding.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Very briefly, without any intention of going into controversy and further discussions here. I would like first to strongly support what the Argentinian Ambassador just stated. I guess it is clear to everyone that any country, any Member has the right to propose, or to incentivize, or to ask other Members to, if possible, of course, guarantee some unearmarked contributions. It is a clear right. I do not have any spirit of going into discussion, but it is a balanced spirit that we have to work with in this multilateral Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of speakers. I will give the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some of the comments made by Members. I will give the floor to Ms Beth Crawford.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Thank you to all the distinguished Members for all of your feedback, your comments, and your guidance on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) for 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2022-23. As many of the distinguished delegates mentioned, this is really the document that now starts to operationalize the issues that we have been discussing earlier in the Strategic Framework, and we thank you very much for your comments.

I wanted to just start by recalling again the process now going forward, because there were a few questions, for example, related to the Results Frameworks and some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that need further elaboration, and some of the indicators. Indeed, as part of the process, it is after we have final guidance from Conference and approval of the budget that we move to the more detailed work planning in the Organization.

As part of that more detailed work planning, there are some interesting additional elements that will be coming to you, that is to the Programme and Finance Committees and to Council at the end of this

year; one is that we will be developing outputs along with indicators for measurement. We will be developing further these Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and going into more detail on the specific outputs that we will be planning for this coming biennium and how they will be measured. This will be done in very close cooperation with all of our decentralized offices because, as many of you have also said, it is the importance of the country level coming together with the top-down, and so we hope that we will also be able to provide more information in this document that will be the Adjustments to the PWB 2022-23.

We will also be able to provide more regional views on the PPAs, because we expect that some PPAs will be more heavily used in certain regions than in others, and it is this additional type of information that we hope to provide for you.

Similarly, we will be continuing the refinement of the Results Framework. The Results Framework, as it currently stands, is presented in Annex 1. As some of you have pointed out, there are areas where we need to still provide, for example on the KPIs, additional information - that will all come into the Adjustments to the PWB.

As part of that more detailed work planning, we will also be establishing baselines for these KPIs and establishing targets, and those will be presented to you in the Adjustments to the PWB. This is also described in the document in paragraphs 29, 79 and 80.

There was also a question on the four betters. If I understood the question from Canada correctly, it was, is there any allocation that is not under the PPAs, but is under the four betters? If I have understood the question correctly, no, that is not the case. The four betters, as many of you have also said, are the organizing principle for the PPAs.

As you can see, for example in Annex 2, all resources under the *four betters* are specifically allocated to PPAs. The Annexes of the PWB always show the two dimensions that we have in the budget. It is the results dimension, and that is where you will see the new budgetary chapters, with the first four chapters being the four betters. Below those four betters are the 20 Programme Priority Areas, and then we have the remaining chapters of the budget, which are very similar to the chapters in 2020-21, which are Chapter 6, which is the special chapter, and then the Functional Objectives and other special chapters.

We have Annex 2 which shows, for example, the allocation of resources, along with the budgetary chapters, and then we have other Annexes which show the allocation of resources along the organizational structure. For example, Annex 7 provides that overview by organizational units. Then, we have one Annex which shows the combination of the two - that is Annex 6, where you can see the combination of budgetary chapter and organizational unit.

Thank you also for the many comments on the extrabudgetary resources. We welcome very much the discussion on the importance on flexible, or unearmarked, or lightly earmarked funding because this does indeed help us work together in a programmatic way under these four betters and the 20 Programme Priority Areas.

There were several comments on the level of extrabudgetary resources and that there is a big increase compared to the previous PWB. I just wanted to provide a little more information on that. Indeed, if we look at the PWB for 2020-21, the one that is currently in effect and that was approved by the Conference in 2019, we had an estimated level of extrabudgetary resources of approximately USD 1.9 billion for the biennium.

Keep in mind that, similar to currently, this estimate in 2019 was made close to a year before the start of the new biennium, and we now, of course, have much more updated information. We see now that our estimates in that PWB for 2020-21 were underestimated, and where we report that is in the Mid-Term Review (MTR) and in the Programme Implementation Report (PIR). That is where we report back on actual extrabudgetary levels.

In the document, the MTR 2020, the MTR Synthesis Report, which is the document that was reviewed by the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee in their Sessions just now in the last month,

you will see that the delivery of voluntary contributions in 2020 stands at approximately USD 1.18 billion.

What we are proposing now for 2022-23, or what we are forecasting, is very much in line with what we are seeing in the current biennium. We are also seeing very strong resource mobilization in the current biennium. This is what we have tried to explain in our Information Note 1, where we have said that the estimates in the budget for 2022-23 are based on operational projects that will continue their implementation into the next biennium, proposed projects in the pipeline, and likely to be approved, and prospects, based on project ideas and positive contacts with partners. A substantial part of the estimate is based on ongoing projects that we are already seeing in this biennium.

That having been said, we do, of course, monitor this very carefully, and that is another element that we will update in the Adjustments to the PWB, where we will be providing our updated estimates for extrabudgetary contributions in the next biennium.

In response to some of the comments on issues like clarifications of elements in the document. Similar to what we discussed in the Strategic Framework, it would be the intention of Management to issue an additional Note that would provide clarifications as necessary, based on the specific report of Council. In the case of the PWB, we would be providing an updated Budgetary Appropriations Resolution. In the document you have a draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution, this is following paragraph 157 of the PWB. This draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution will be updated in this Note I am referring to, based on the Council's report.

For example, if Council's final guidance is that the budget level is appropriate as presented, which it sounds like this would be the case, and also that Members' guidance is that we would defer the funding of the After-service Medical Coverage and the Working Capital Fund, we would adjust as necessary that draft Budgetary Appropriations Resolution to take that into consideration, so that Conference has before it what would be the final version that Conference could approve. In that document we would also provide any other clarifications, as necessary.

Mr Chairperson, I believe that there were several other comments and we have taken careful note of all of the priorities and important areas, Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), mentioned by Members, but I believe that, as far as specific questions, that these were the main ones.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Beth Crawford. United Kingdom, you wanted the floor?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you, very much, Ms Beth Crawford for her clarifications. I would just like to come back on a couple of points, if I may. Firstly, thank you very much for reminding us of the process for elaborating FAO's Output indicators. As I mentioned in my statement, and indeed I made some similar points, please would you confirm that these Output indicators will be directed to SDG indicators? I think that is really important...

CHAIRPERSON

The sound is not good, United Kingdom. We cannot hear.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I just wanted to ask two further queries, if I may. First of all, I am just looking for confirmation from Ms Beth Crawford that as FAO elaborates the Output indicators for the Results Framework, these will be directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators.

Secondly, I wanted to ask about the further Notes that Ms Crawford said that Management would be preparing in advance of Conference. She mentioned there will be a further Note on the Strategic Framework and a further Note on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). I also wanted to ask if there would be a further Note on the outcome of the joint online consultation on World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO's strategic planning processes. I note that the link for this was sent

around the end of last week, and then, actually, it would be very useful to hear what the outcome of those consultations were before Conference.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

First, I would like to thank Ms Beth Crawford for her very clear explanation on some pending issues. I would like to ask from the Secretariat, not necessarily Ms Crawford, some explanation on the comments we presented concerning the use of concepts and language not multilaterally agreed in the documents. This would be important for us, and I understand for some other delegations also.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Beth Crawford, I give you the floor to address the points. Are you going to address the question raised by Brazil or someone else from the Secretariat?

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I can try to address all the points. The question raised by Brazil, indeed in this additional Note, and we would need see based on the Report of Conference exactly what that Note would look like, and it could also be one Note covering the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

It would be in this Note, indeed, where we would provide clarification on some of the concepts that have been requested for clarification; that would be part of the Note that would also include the full report of the Council and it would include the updated Budgetary Appropriations Resolution.

The online consultation, thank you United Kingdom for bringing that up, I believe it was also raised yesterday in the Strategic Framework discussion. We are indeed having an online consultation, together with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is also participating, but a little more lightly, and that is set to end in the middle of May.

I would need to discuss this with my colleagues also in the WFP to see what or if we might be able to provide as a light update on that consultation before Conference. I am not able to say right now, but I hope that we could do something, perhaps not as an official Note, but something that we could share with Members on how that consultation is taking place.

The United Kingdom also asked about the linkage of the Output indicators to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indeed, our entire Framework, as you have seen, is very fully anchored in the Agenda 2030. At the highest level, where we have the *four betters*, they will be measured by SDG indicators that have that longer-term outlook. The Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) will be measured by SDG indicators that have more of the medium-term outlook, and we have listed them in the document. The Outputs will be directly below those PPAs. Thus, by definition, they will be linked up through that chain from the Output to the Outcome to the higher-level SDG indicators. We would need to look at the Outcomes to also see how they best can be measured, because the SDG indicators are often at a higher level. I meant to say we should be looking at the Outputs to see how they can best be measured because the SDG indicators are often at a higher level, but that link from output to outcome to the higher level will definitely be in our Results Framework and that will be described in the next document.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estuve muy atento a lo expresado por la Director General Adjunto Señora Beth Crawford, agradezco sus explicaciones. Solamente me permito hacerle una modificación a su afirmación en cuanto a que la idea es, no solamente “clarification”, es “clarification and future adjustment” que es el texto que hemos acordado en la parte puntual del *Strategy Framework* en esta discusión, en este Informe del Consejo. Pero es simplemente un comentario.

Pero lo más importante para mí es referirme a la interesante reflexión de mi colega del Reino Unido de Gran Bretaña e Irlanda del Norte. A ver, el gran desafío es que por un lado tenemos una sola Naciones

Unidas, la importancia de mantener la mayor sinergia posible entre los organismos con sede en Roma (OSR), todas cuestiones que son cosas que los Miembros hemos defendido y defendemos.

Pero lo importante y el desafío es lograr esa sinergia, lograr el fortalecimiento de una sola Naciones Unidas en un contexto donde al mismo tiempo se respeten los diferentes mandatos de cada una de las Agencias sin sobreponer o superponer las diferentes acciones, mandatos y roles de cada una de estas.

Entonces, podemos tomar nota de cualquier plan que pueda tener, en este caso, por ejemplo, el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA). Pero no más que eso, porque además nosotros recién después de la Conferencia, si el Marco estratégico es aprobado y el Plan a medio plazo, recién allí tendremos un instrumento y a partir de ahí podemos tener diferentes conversaciones, intercambios, pero todavía eso no está. Por lo tanto, yo creo que para que no haya confusiones, debemos confirmar por un lado la necesidad de tomar nota en todo caso del Plan del Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) pero FAO es la FAO.

FAO no es otra Agencia. Entonces, una cosa es sinergia, cooperación, trabajar de manera coordinada, otra cosa es confundir, mezclar los mandatos y los diferentes objetivos que tiene cada Organización. Entonces, solamente digo esto para que quede claro y para que después en todo caso en el Informe, quere absolutamente claro que tenemos que evitar cualquier tipo de confusión o mal entendido respecto a la posibilidad de que la identidad de cada una de las Agencias de alguna manera se vea afectada en la relación o en la coordinación entre ellas.

Hay que coordinar acciones entre organismos que tienen mandatos claros. No confundir a las Agencias o hacer superposición entre las Agencias.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I apologize for asking for the floor for a second time, but I understand it is clear what I had to say and what I have to demand. Hearing Ms Beth Crawford saying that the Secretariat is going to clarify the concepts in a new document, I would like to state that we have a different view from this specific point.

We understand the Secretariat should not innovate, should not create new concepts and new ideas and not even clarify what they understand. What I am asking, and I am sure I am not speaking only for Brazil, but for a certain number of countries, is that the Secretariat does not use new concepts, new ideas, like I mentioned: *circular agriculture*. We do not have a common understanding of this, or *circular bioeconomy*.

This is what I am clearly stating, and I would like to again apologize for asking for the floor for the second time.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Just to say that we have taken note of the comments of Brazil.

CHAIRPERSON

We have reached almost 17:30 hours and there is the Chairperson of the Programme Committee and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. I will ask them to take the floor should they have any comments, but I think we will do that when we come back. We are far behind our Agenda, so I would like to propose some timings which we are bound to follow today.

We will break now and reconvene at 18:00 hours. Then, we will work from 18:00 hours to 20:00 hours and we will break again because then people would have to break their fast and we will reconvene at 21:00 hours and we will carry on until midnight. That is the schedule.

When we recommence at 18:00 hours. I will give the floor to the Chair of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee and then I will read out my conclusions and try and finish item four and go on to the other items.

I have United Kingdom asking for the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you very much, for clarifying the timings, it is very helpful.

I just wanted to very briefly respond to my colleague from Argentina. I just wanted to reassure him that I do not think there is any possibility of any confusion in the mandates between FAO and World Food Programme (WFP).

I think both Organizations are fully organizing the online consultation. It is extremely welcome, and I would indeed thank Ms Beth Crawford very much for her suggestion that she will consider how Conference can be updated on the outcome of that consultation. As you Members will have seen, I put the link to the consultation in the chat.

CHAIRPERSON

I will now adjourn the meeting and we will reconvene at 18:00 hours. Thank you, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 17:25 to 18:00 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 25 à 18 h 00

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.25 a las 18.00

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor to the two Chairpersons. First the Chairperson of the Programme Committee and then the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer) (Netherlands) (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

Chairperson, you are doing a great work and I think you already reached a milestone by agreeing on Item 3, the *Strategic Framework*, with excellent conclusions. I think we should take that as a spirit how we further conduct our work in the Council. As we have seen this afternoon, I think the Item of the MediumTerm Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget is closely linked, and it should be closely linked with the Strategic Framework in Item 3.

I take as an example the cycling tour raised for bicycles and we have seen the bicycle tour here in Rome this Sunday. If you say that the Strategic Framework is the big frame to design how we reach our destination, the MediumTerm Plan (MTP) is providing how we can reach the first stop, to get service to fuel, to supply, and to analyse and adjust if necessary to better reach our destination and climb the highest mountains, if needed. The Programme of Work and Budget is more likely to design the staffing, the concrete actions to take to ensure that all conditions are prepared for reaching our final destination and it is our ultimate goal, a world without hunger.

I think the Programme Committee had intense discussions also on the MediumTerm Plan and, to be brief, I think in a nutshell, the Programme Committee underscored the importance of appropriate balance amongst the *four betters*, including the distribution of resources, agreed that the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) adequately represent themselves where FAO has comparative advantage, track record and ability to act, to address the key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), targets and of course, achieve the SDGs and challenges of all countries, and appreciate increased visibility of FAO's normative work in the MTP results and the frameworks.

However, if you looked at the overall element, I think the spirit of the Programme Committee is to act. I think if you look to the crisis which we are in now, if there was one moment in time in history that we unite, it is now. To unite as countries of the United Nations. To unite as Members of FAO. To raise the profile of FAO. To show solidarity and moreover to make sure that we have increased resources, new and additional resources for FAO. Would it be increasingly innovative funding? Would it be financing for investments at scale? Would it be financing from other resources like the private sector? That is what we need. That is what we have to do as the overall goal for us as the Council also to give a very strong signal to the next Conference, because we have to unite for those who need it the most.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Hans Hoogeveen for your comments. Now I give the floor to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Muchas gracias, señor Presidente y muchas gracias por el trabajo que está realizando hasta este momento y por toda su paciencia.

Seré breve, en principio, por ahorrar tiempo que nos hace muchísima falta. En principio, igual que en el tema anterior, muchos de los comentarios que se han hecho hasta el momento en el tema del Plan a plazo medio. Los comentarios reflejan las discusiones que mantuvimos en la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º período de sesiones y en el Comité de Finanzas, así que voy a recordar algunas de las conclusiones a las que llegamos en aquel momento.

En caso de la reunión conjunta, se respaldó la cantidad del presupuesto, acogió con agrado la reflexión sobre el discurso estratégico en el Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 Plazo y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23. Tomó nota con aprecio al mantenimiento del incremento de los recursos destinados a la labor normativa. Apreció que los recursos para el Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) se mantuvieran en el nivel del 14% de la consignación presupuestaria neta.

Se recomendó cambiar el nombre de la División de Pesca a División de Pesca y Acuicultura para reflejar mejor sus responsabilidades y programas de trabajo. Se alentaron los esfuerzos de la FAO para intensificar la labor de las oficinas descentralizadas y se hizo hincapié en la necesidad de abordar las cuestiones administrativas sistémicas y las relativas a las capacidades mediante la mejora de la rendición de cuentas y controles internos. Y se acogieron con agrado las asignaciones adicionales para la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG).

Teniendo en cuenta las dificultades actuales para traer financiación sin asignación específica, se sugirió que la FAO colaborase estrechamente con los Miembros y otras fuentes posibles de financiación.

En cuando al Comité de Finanzas, quisiera resaltar que se elogiaron los esfuerzos del Director General con objeto de mantener un presupuesto del Programa Ordinario sin variación nominal, especialmente en el contexto del actual clima financiero mundial sin cambios en las cuotas asignadas ni en la consignación presupuestaria neta con respecto a 2020 y 2021.

Se respaldó la propuesta de que se asignaran recursos adicionales a la Oficina del Inspector General y se reiteró la importancia de mantener en exámen la necesidad de establecer prioridades en cuanto a los recursos adicionales destinados a la oficina dentro de la actual consignación neta para garantizar la plena ejecución de su plan de trabajo.

Se apreció el mantenimiento del aumento del nivel de financiación asignada a la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria y al Programa Conjunto, FAO/OMS de asesoramiento científico sobre inocuidad de los alimentos.

Se recomendó que la consideración de las propuestas relativas a la financiación adicional del pasivo por servicios prestados en el pasado del Plan de seguro médico después del cese en el servicio (ASMC) y la reposición del Fondo de Operaciones, se aplazaran a un futuro bienio y se solicitó a la Administración que siguiera estudiando estrategias alternativas para satisfacer esos requisitos.

Se hizo hincapié nuevamente en la importancia de la colaboración entre los Organismos de las Naciones Unidas con sede en Roma (OSR) en lo relativo a los servicios administrativos, los servicios de apoyo y las instalaciones comunes. En ese sentido se reiteró la preocupación de que la petición con un plazo determinado por el Consejo para que se hiciera una valoración de la viabilidad de integrar funciones administrativas, no se había logrado e instó a la Administración a presentar esa evaluación antes del próximo período de sesiones de la Conferencia.

Esto es lo más destacable, le agradezco al señor Presidente Independiente del Consejo haberme dado la palabra y espero que pueda avanzar de forma más fluida en este tema.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers. I hope we make some progress because if you look at the Order of the Day we are behind our schedule. Hopefully we will make up. Thank you for your comments.

Dear colleagues, allow me to conclude on this Item. We will project the text on the screen.

This is Item 4: *Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23*.

1. The Council reviewed the *Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23* and in particular:

- a) Welcomed the reflection of the strategic direction in the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) with its focus on supporting the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.

Members, I would just like to point out that the term “agri-food systems” is in this paragraph again and as we agreed on Item 3, we will reproduce the same note for this subparagraph as well.

- b) Commended the efforts of the Director-General in maintaining a flat nominal Regular Programme Budget in the context of the prevailing global financial climate with no change in the level of assessed contributions and net budgetary appropriation compared with 2020-21.
- c) With regard to the proposals to improve FAO’s financial health, liquidity and reserves, recommended deferral to future biennia the issues of replenishment of the Working Capital Fund as well as incremental funding of the After-Service Medical Coverage past service liability.
- d) Appreciated the anchoring of the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) in the 2030 Agenda and welcomed the articulation of both primary PPA contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as additional contributions recognizing the interconnected nature of the SDGs and the *four betters* and the importance of the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- e) Reiterated the importance of scientific and evidence-based normative work of FAO and the global public goods for which FAO is responsible and appreciated the increased visibility of FAO’s normative work in the MTP results framework.
- f) Highlighted the importance of climate change and biodiversity within FAO’s mandate in the Medium Term Plan 2022-25.
- g) Welcomed the focus on the One Health approach in the Programme of Work, including the Tripartite partnership and the cooperation with UNEP and other relevant international organizations, in line with the respective mandates in this regard.
- h) Appreciated the presentation of the integrated budget, bringing together all sources of funds for the implementation of the agreed Programme of Work and noted the additional information provided in the Information Note.
- i) Concurred with the resource reallocations to strengthen priorities within a flat nominal budget level.
- j) Highlighted the importance of internal control within the Organization and appreciated the prominence ascribed within the PWB to associated mechanisms.
- k) Welcomed the maintenance of the increased level of funding for normative work from 2020-21, including for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advise Programme.

- l) Appreciated that resources for the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) are maintained at the level of 14 percent of the net budgetary appropriation, given the strategic and catalytic importance of the TCP within FAO's institutional architecture and its goods and services provided to members.
- m) Highlighted the need to increasingly leverage innovative funding and financing for investment at scale.
- n) Stressed the importance of flexible, lightly and unearmarked voluntary funding to support the priorities as outlined in the integrated programme of work and recommended FAO further elaborate possible mechanisms and approaches in its efforts to promote more flexible voluntary funding; and
- o) Recalled that adjustments in resource allocations and results framework arising from decisions and guidance of the Conference and the more detailed work planning process would be reported in the adjustments to the PWB 2022-23 for consideration by the Council at its 168th Session in line with the established programming and budgeting processes.

2. The Council considered the recommendations of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, the 185th Session of the Finance Committee and of their joint meeting on the *Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23*.

3. The Council requested that, consistent with the process established in the Basic Text, an additional paper be submitted to the Conference accompanying the *Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23*, as well as the *Strategic Framework 2022-31*, with clarifications for future adjustments as appropriate, based on the Council's specific guidance, as well as guidance from the Technical Committees.

4. Regarding the budget level for 2022-23, the Council:

- a) Encouraged members and other partners to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate the implementation of the integrated programme of work under the results framework; and
- b) Endorsed the budget level of USD 1,105.6 million at a budget rate of exchange of EUR 1 to USD 1.22 and recommended approval by the Conference of the draft Conference Resolution as set out in Appendix C.

The floor is now open for comments on the conclusions I just read out.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo veo positivo que en las conclusiones se consideraron algunas cuestiones que ya fueron acordadas en la discusión sobre el Marco estratégico en este debate, pero falta un elemento que me gustaría que también esté incluido porque fue parte de las conversaciones, es a partir de la palabra "transformation". Necesitamos incluir el *caveat* que ya hemos expresado, después "transformation", lo voy a decir en inglés a velocidad de dictado. "Transformation that should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate and in accordance with, and dependent on national context and capacities to achieve". We need to delete "to" and that is okay.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other request for the floor? I see no request for the floor. Argentina, again?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿No podemos mejorar el *wording* de ese subpárrafo y en lugar de la palabra "climate" podemos incluir "crisis"? "A global crisis", not financial", it goes, the actual crisis en el mundo no es solamente como consecuencia de la pandemia, hay una crisis global, social y económica, por lo tanto, y además por el impacto climático. O sea, tenemos muchas, muchas dimensiones de la crisis, entonces.

Continues in English

Please, I suggest to delete “financial” and leave “global crisis.” That is right. Okay, “prevailing global crisis.” That is right.

CHAIRPERSON

We are on subparagraph (b). If there is no other comment we go to subparagraph (c).

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

In subparagraph (b), regarding “global crisis”, I think we need to be more specific. We think that just referring to a global crisis is too general. Might we say “in the context of the prevailing pandemic” or “global”, we were fine with what was there before, the financial climate. However, I think “global crisis” is perhaps not specific enough and perhaps other Members have suggestions here..

CHAIRPERSON

Members, any comment on subparagraph (b) on the intervention by the United States regarding the wording “global crisis”?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

How about “global economic contraction”? But I should say that we are flexible with “financial climate” as well.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Gracias tanto a mi colega de Estados Unidos de America y mi colega del Reino Unido por los comentarios. Yo en vez de “contraction” prefiero poner “recesión”, “an economic recession”, pero la verdad que en términos reales lo que tenemos es una crisis global de proporciones enormes y que no es solamente económica, pero podemos ser flexibles. No quiero generar una polémica interminable. Okay, “global economic recession crisis”. Si eso puede funcionar, okay para nosotros.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on subparagraph (b) as amended? I see none, so we agree on subparagraph (b) as amended.

Subparagraph (c)?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

With regard to subparagraph (c) we would just like to add one word. After “biennia” the word “both”. It would read, “deferral to future biennia both the issues of replenishment of the Working Capital Fund as well as incremental funding of After-Service Medical Coverage.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments on subparagraph (c)? I see no request for the floor.

Subparagraph (d)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Luego de “four betters”, yo sugiero, y voy a dictar en inglés.

“And the need to address the three dimensions of sustainable development in a more balanced way.” I suggest to delete the rest of the subparagraph.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do want to make some quite substantial changes to this subparagraph, but first let me react to the proposal from Argentina. I do agree with the concept here and my proposal in fact would be to reflect this concept when we get to talk about allocation of resources in subparagraph (i). I am not at all rejecting the concept. It is just that I think in this subparagraph, I would like to focus on the link between the Programme Priority Areas and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

My proposal would be to keep the first line and then to delete the rest of the subparagraph and replace it with something along the lines of: “called on Management to ensure the direct links between FAO’s output indicators and the SDG indicators when elaborating the results framework.”

I read that a bit quickly, apologies. Shall I repeat it?

CHAIRPERSON

If you could kindly read it a little slower.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

“between FAO’s output indicators and the SDGs indicators when elaborating the Strategic Results Framework.” Or perhaps just “the Results Framework”. My proposal would be that we delete the rest of the subparagraph.

But of course I do absolutely agree with the concept introduced by my Argentinian colleague. I would like to see that reflected in subparagraph (i).

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment on subparagraph (d)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muchísimas gracias a mi colega del Reino Unido por sus comentarios, pero no, no estamos de acuerdo porque la memoria me hace recordar que este es un debate que ya hemos tenido en el Comité del Programa. Y esa discusión la tuvimos y la saldamos y justamente el texto que yo propuse, es texto acordado en el Comité del Programa.

No tengo ningún inconveniente en que la propuesta del Reino Unido pueda ser incluida en otro párrafo, pero lo que nosotros intentamos expresar es que el equilibrio al que mencionamos, no es solamente un equilibrio entre recursos, no es solamente una cuestión de recursos.

Así que insisto, preferiría mantener los acuerdos que hemos logrado en el Comité del Programa como consecuencia de este debate y soy abierto y flexible a que pueda haber un párrafo alternativo y vemos a ver cuál es la propuesta que pueda hacer el Reino Unido al respecto, u otros colegas.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests, so may I ask the United Kingdom whether the text proposed would be in a separate subparagraph?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, I think that would be okay. I think it might need a little bit of tweaking, which perhaps we can leave to the Drafting Committee.

I do think the point about balance in the allocation of resources does need to come out and perhaps we can have that in subparagraph (i) as well, while leaving subparagraph (d) as it is, with the addition of what my Argentinian colleague has suggested.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, I see Argentina nodding positively. We can shift that text to subparagraph (i).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would be grateful if the Drafting Committee could strengthen the drafting of the new subparagraph (i).

CHAIRPERSON

Now we go to subparagraph (f). I see no request for the floor. Sorry, Argentina?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No sorry Mr Chairperson, we do not have any problems with this subparagraph. I only want to suggest a new subparagraph, if I may? A new subparagraph after (f). I will dictate in English.

“Appreciated FAO’s support in building resilience to persistent and emerging threats by focusing on timely science- and evidence-based responses, taking into account the three dimensions of the sustainable development, and highlighted the importance of global food supply chains and international trade taking into account the mandate of FAO in this respect.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on the new subparagraph (g)?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

No comments at this moment on subparagraph (g), but I do hope that we can reach agreement on the next subparagraph as well. I have a suggestion to make on subparagraph (h).

CHAIRPERSON

I see there is no other comment on subparagraph (g), so we go to subparagraph (h).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

What I would like to do is to reflect one of the requests I made in my statement, and indeed something that we agreed on in the Programme Committee. I would like to add to the end of this subparagraph the following suggestion: “called on FAO Management to improve and achieve a balance in the technical support that FAO provides to its Members to access climate finance.”

I think there was some other language that Argentina had proposed in the Programme Committee, in response to their demands or requests, which of course I would be happy to include here as well. I just do not have it at my fingertips.

Mr Nobuyuki KUKUCHI (Japan)

Just a small comment on paragraph (g) because I just missed the timing. Before “international trade”, I would like to insert “under fair international trade.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco los comentarios del delegado de Japón, pero en realidad el término que utilizamos no es “fair”, es “transparent” or “equitable”, pero no “fair”.

Continues in English

I do not have any problem with “equitable” or “transparent”. Those are concepts that we use in other reports agreed by Members.

Mr Nobuyuki KUKUCHI (Japan)

I do not have any objection to replace “fair” with “equitable” or “transparent.” Either is fine with us.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We do not support inclusion of the word “equitable” prior to “international trade” in subparagraph (g).

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? I see no comment. United States, would you have a substitute for “equitable” or would you just prefer its deletion?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We would prefer its deletion. Alternatively, we could go with “open, rules-based, non-discriminatory, predictable international trade.” Just to be clear, that is from the Committee on Commodity Partners (CCP) language. Our preference is to either use the CCP language, but in any event to just avoid use of just “equitable” by itself.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comment on these amendments in subparagraph (g)? I see none, so do I take it that we can go along with “open, rules-based, non-discriminatory and predictable?” I think we can, so we will delete “equitable.” We will go subparagraph (h) now.

Argentina do you have any additions to make as the United Kingdom mentioned? Any comment on subparagraph (h)? I see none, so we go to subparagraph (i). Argentina?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I have no problem with subparagraph (i), I only have a new proposal after subparagraph (i).

CHAIRPERSON

I remember at an earlier subparagraph, to one of your amendments, the United Kingdom had suggested that perhaps we should include that wording in subparagraph (i)? What was that? Argentina, go ahead and make your proposal.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I only wanted to stop according to your direction. In English, “noted with concern that in the Medium Term Plan similar concepts and language are used which are not inter-governmentally agreed, and press the need for FAO to use multilaterally-agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies, as appropriate, and adjust accordingly the Medium-Term Plan.”

This proposal is based on the comments made by Brazil, our delegation and other Members. It is just to stress the importance of using agreed language.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just to clarify, on the earlier subparagraph talking about climate finance. I am happy to leave it as it is if no one else wants any further additions, but I had thought that colleagues might want us to add in something like “in response to Members’ requests for support,” at the end of that subparagraph. However, I am happy to leave it as it is if no one else thinks that is necessary.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

First of all, I would support the proposal coming from the United Kingdom. I think it would be a good amendment for subparagraph (h).

Concerning subparagraph (j), I would first of all thank Argentina for interpreting very well our understanding, not only Brazil’s but some countries. Only one very minor amendment, “the need for FAO to use only multilaterally-agreed concepts.”

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would also like to thank the Ambassador of Argentina for proposing this new subparagraph. We do not have much more concerns on this subparagraph, but we would prefer to make it more positive.

We would propose to delete the first part of this subparagraph and start this subparagraph with “stressed the need for FAO...” and we can agree with this as it captures already the intention of Argentina and Brazil. However, we just make it in a positive way, not in a negative way. This is my proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on this amendment, Members?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I only want to go back to my original proposal, please. I would like to not delete the proposal by Members before we have just defined what can be the consensus or the way forward. I would proceed with my original proposal on the screen.

In order to capture what is the suggestion from Egypt, I think that what we can do is to delete the words “with concern”; “noted that,” and without “with concern,” and perhaps these proposals can capture perfectly well the positive approach from Egypt.

CHAIRPERSON

Could members react to subparagraph (j) as amended?

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like to thank Ambassador of Argentina for his flexibility. If there are no other reactions from Members on this subparagraph, we could accept this proposal as it is.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment from Members? I see none, so we agree on subparagraph (j) as it is on the screen now.

We go to subparagraph (k). I see no request for the floor, so we agree on subparagraph (k).

Subparagraph (l)?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

This is going to be a little bit complicated. Let me start off here. I think we, as discussed previously, we think it is important to reflect here the concept of a balance in resource allocations between the three dimensions of sustainable development. I know we have agreed on that in our previous item, so I hope we can use some very similar language here.

I also think it would be useful to recall our agreement on the importance of principles to be used for resource allocations as well. Here it says “concurring with the resource reallocations to strengthen priorities,” but really I think where we really all agreed was on some of the resource increases. In particular to the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG) and indeed we see below to International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Food Safety Advice Programme, so no need to repeat that here.

However, I do think what we talk here about concurring with resource reallocations. I do think we need to nuance that and specifically refer to the areas where Members mentioned, which I think were OIG, Human Resources and there may be one other, rather than just generally.

I would then like to add in our language on balance between the three dimensions and the *four betters* and then also the language on principles that we agreed on the last Item. I hope that is okay.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you have a suggestion or language to propose?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Starting with the subparagraph as it is, where it says “concurring with the resource reallocations.” Cannot we say something like “welcomed resource uplifts for the Office of the Inspector-General, Office of HR,” and I will have to rely on colleagues because I know there were some other key points that were raised by Germany and the United States as well. I defer to them to mention them specifically here. Then I would like to come back and propose some wording from the previous Item.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Indeed, we did mention in our intervention we wanted to specifically mention by name the increased resources for the Office of the Inspector-General, the Human Resources Office and the Legal Office.

One suggestion we had was to perhaps mention those three in subparagraph (m), where it talks about internal control. We could suggest adding after “mechanisms,” “including the Office of the Inspector-General, the Legal Office and the Human Resources Department.” I of course defer to Secretariat on the proper wording of that Office.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

In that case I think we could possibly just delete this paragraph (l) and replace it with two of the subparagraphs we agreed under the previous Item. The one that referred to a balance in resource allocations between the *four betters* and the paragraph that referred to principles for allocating resources.

I do not have those to hand. Indeed, it would be quite helpful if the Secretariat could send us round what we have agreed on Item 3.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, they are just trying to retrieve it.

That is it? United Kingdom, we are having some difficulty retrieving the other one. Could you guide us a bit what the gist of that subparagraph was?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think it was the very last subparagraph under paragraph 1. I think it was subparagraph (x) or something. When we agreed on Item 3 there were four main paragraphs, and it was the last subparagraph under paragraph 1.

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, are these the two subparagraphs you had in mind?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, they are and I am happy with them as they are. I would also point out that on subparagraph (l), my proposal is that subparagraph (l) is deleted and replaced by these subparagraphs.

I would say we perhaps do not need to mention “appreciated the elements of the reinvigorated, fit-for-purpose FAO business model,” given that we have already said that. I do think it is worth keeping the rest of that paragraph because it relates to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and Medium Term Plan (MTP).

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Quizás esta es una pregunta para la Señora Beth Crawford, porque creo que el subpárrafo (l) que se acaba de borrar, el que es de una sola línea, creo que es necesario mantenerlo porque son 11 asignaciones presupuestarias y no sé si los nuevos párrafos las cubren y creo que este párrafo es necesario para que precisamente esas reasignaciones puedan ser aplicadas.

CHAIRPERSON

We will ask Ms Beth Crawford for some comments.

Ms Beth Crawford (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Indeed, the full list of the reallocations are described in paragraph 59 and there are approximately 10 or so of those elements. The following paragraphs do not refer to all of them, so it may be appropriate to have a more general sentence on that as well.

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, could we keep that sentence?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think, if I may, my concern here is that we are somehow endorsing all of the reallocations when, indeed, I think we have made some points about the need to achieve balance. Particularly, I made some points about resources for technical support to access climate finance.

I would be happy for the report to reflect concurrence with the resource allocations, specific resource allocations, perhaps by referring to the paragraph that Ms Beth Crawford mentioned, or alternatively we could note the proposed resource reallocations, or something like that.

My point here really is not to give the sense of a blanket approval for all of the resource allocations proposed because indeed we are making some suggestions for improvements.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I am not very sure. I tend to prefer that we keep the language within the flat nominal or the equivalent, because the allocation should be done in principle within the flat nominal. I think that the element was not captured in the previous proposed language. I understood that is what the Mexican colleague tried to say.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment on subparagraph (l)? Any comments on subparagraph (k), (l) and (m), as amended?

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

La verdad es que muchos estamos de acuerdo con las asignaciones que hay en el párrafo 59 del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) y al no hacerlo damos un mensaje confuso a la Conferencia. Y, creo que, podríamos terminar reabriendo todas las asignaciones del presupuesto. No sé si sea lo que más nos conviene. Creo que algunas cuestiones se podrían incluso reajustar después de la adopción del nivel de presupuesto por la Conferencia como ha especificado Sra. Beth Crawford. Entonces, en ese sentido, prefiero la redacción, de lo que es ahora el subpárrafo (k), como se propuso originalmente.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Creo que la *rationale* planteada por mi estimado colega de México es correcta, es clara y yo respaldo esa posición también.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? United Kingdom, any flexibility there so we could move forward?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think if we can refer to the specific place in the Medium Term Plan (MTP) or the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) where these reallocations are listed. I think Mexico said it was paragraph 59. I am just looking for that now. Then, I think that would be okay.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Ms Beth Crawford, would you have any suggestion?

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I believe that we could go with the suggestion from the distinguished delegate from Mexico which was to go with the original language, but add the paragraph. Perhaps we could say, “concurrent with the resource reallocations described in paragraph 59,” and then we go back to the original, “to strengthen priorities within a flat nominal budget level.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on this amended paragraph now?

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ-SAUMA (México)

Está muy bien. Nada más, para el Comité de Redacción, simplemente agregar la referencia del documento que es el C2021/3, pero eso lo puede hacer el Comité de Redacción.

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, you are fine with it too? Thank you. We have agreed with subparagraph (l), (m) and (n).

We go to subparagraph (o). I see no comments, so subparagraph (o) is agreed.

Subparagraph (p)?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I want to make a comment on subparagraph (p). Is that okay, or I wait?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, go ahead.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I would like to add the [XX] because we welcome the increased level, but we would like to strengthen this work when it is needed. I will read it out at dictation speed.

After “programme”, “and stressed the importance of further strengthening of the normative work when needed.” I am very much open to any wording and language as long as it captures the reference to the possibility for further strengthening of the normative work.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Gracias por los comentarios de mi colega de Japón. Me gustaría en ese mismo párrafo, en honor a tratar de ser más claro, más preciso y más concreto, reemplazar las palabras "normative work".

Continues in English

I suggest to delete "normative work" to be replaced by "Standard-setting work". At the end of the paragraph and also in the first line subparagraph.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

It is acceptable and I think it is good wording.

CHAIRPERSON

If there are no other comments on this subparagraph, we can agree to go to subparagraph (q). I see no request for the floor, so we have agreed on subparagraph (q).

We move to subparagraph (r). Any comments on subparagraph (r)?

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I have a small proposal. I think what is in this subparagraph is okay, but I think we should really widen the scope a bit. I would propose that after “FAO”, in the second line, we would add “to” and then we would move, after “approaches,” “and strive to build trust with resource partners.” Thank you. After “promote,” next line, we could add “and attract.”

CHAIRPERSON

We are looking at the amended subparagraph (s). Any comments on amended subparagraph (s)? I see none, so we agree on subparagraph (s) and move to subparagraph (t).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Bien, ¿podríamos volver a la sugerencia del subpárrafo planteado por mi estimada colega de Suecia que nosotros agradecemos porque nos parece absolutamente correcto. Muy positivo. Solo una cuestión de *wording*, si es posible y si mi colega de Suecia está de acuerdo, como una manera más positiva. “...and continue striving to building trust.”

Continues in English

This is okay, but only if my dear colleague has said it. I only tried to put it in a more positive way. Of course, if she agrees.

CHAIRPERSON

Sweden, are these amendments okay with you?

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

Yes, we can agree with the proposal from the Argentinian Ambassador.

CHAIRPERSON

We can move to subparagraph (t).

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Chairperson, it is not on subparagraph (t). Could we go back to the one on the standard-setting? The first line, I think it should read “normative work” and then “standard setting” down there, otherwise it limits the scope of that. Sorry, it was a back and forth, but I would really prefer to have in the first line “funding for normative work” and then the addition from Japan “standard-setting.” Fine with me.

Even better, so if this makes sense for everybody, but for me it is important that we keep “normative” here.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería agradecer los comentarios de mi colega de Alemania, pero me parece que no quedó claro cuando hice esta propuesta, la *rationale* por la cual la hice. La *rationale* de esta propuesta tiene que ver con que los ejemplos que están incluidos en el párrafo, se refieren específicamente a “standard setting work” cuando, por supuesto, es diferente lo que son “normative” de “standard setting works”. El problema es que, “normative” es algo que todavía no está acordado entre los Miembros a qué es lo que se refiere. Entonces, como estamos en un intercambio y, todavía, en un proceso y los ejemplos que se mencionan en este párrafo tienen que ver con “standard setting work”, creo que lo que corresponde es ser riguroso en el lenguaje y ser riguroso con respecto a lo que estamos hablando.

En todo caso, cuando tengamos acordado a qué nos referimos cuando hablamos de “normative” no hay ningún problema. Pero esa es la *rationale* de nuestra propuesta.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Frankly I do not see the problem here to use “normative”. First, even in the document itself and what the Director-General explained normative work becomes more visible. We have clear ideas on what normative is and it is not something new and it is for decades that we are talking about and discussing normative work.

I think if we keep “normative” and standard setting work and that “including”, fine, everything is covered. It is “including”, but it is not only International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme. I really appeal for flexibility here to keep “normative” in and have “standard-setting” also mentioned then.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I just would like to support my Germany colleague that “normative” would also be preferable for us and what we would like to see in this subparagraph.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We just wanted to make clarification that we have normative work and the standard-setting work of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme, so perhaps we could just make a slight adjustment. “Increased level of funding for normative work and the standard-setting work of Codex Alimentarius (CODEX) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).” Just to make that distinction that FAO does the normative work, but the standard-setting work FAO supports, that’s done by the CODEX and IPPC.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (p), as amended? May I give the floor to Ms Beth Crawford first? Perhaps she has got some explanation.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I do not want to intervene in the discussion of the Members here. I did want to just clarify that that paragraph originally is referring to the increased level of funding that was provided in the 2021 budget, specifically for the Codex Alimentarius and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

In the further adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget in 2020-21 we increased those two areas by USD 1 million each and we maintained that increased level of funding in the current budget. That is what that subparagraph is about. It may be somewhat confusing now to refer to the increased level of funding for normative work in general.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quiero agradecerle a mi colega de Estados Unidos de America su sugerencia. Por otra parte, también agradecerle a la Sra. Beth Crawford, porque ella justamente planteó cuál es nuestra preocupación porque hemos tenido debates sobre esta cuestión en el Comité dle Programa, sobre que hay algunos Miembros que consideran que el trabajo normativo son determinadas producciones de la FAO y otros Miembros que no. Entonces, como ese es todavía un tema en discusión, está pendiente. Por eso, creemos que era mejor diferenciar y colocar que son "standard setting work". Quizás, una alternativa, no sé, estoy pensando en voz alta, una nota al pie que diga que "The normative work does not include or refer to FAO flagship publications", for example.

Mi idea es dejar en claro que no tenemos saldada la discusión sobre lo que es trabajo normativo. Entonces, eso es un tema que está pendiente y que creo que lo hemos planteado varios Miembros en momentos distintos y, creo que, es importante recordarlo.

Esa era la *rationale* de nuestro planteo. Entiendo perfectamente lo que planteó la Sra. Beth Crawford. Entiendo también el planteo de mi colega de Estados Unidos. Nosotros podríamos tratar de ir con esta propuesta, pero, sobre todo, me parece importante recordar esto que yo dije.

CHAIRPERSON

Perhaps Members can also, because the idea of a Note to explain further the concept behind the subparagraph may also help.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Thank you to Ms Beth Crawford to remind where all this comes from. Maybe it is really better to return to the initial language, not to refer to Codex Alimentarius (CODEX) because that has in the past created confusion. The additional funds were made available for the Scientific Advice Programme for Food Safety. That is a different thing and they are the ones to prepare for the CODEX standard-setting, but it is not CODEX.

We had many discussions on this and there was this basic misunderstanding with the previous leadership when we always referred to the need to increase funding there and we were told CODEX has enough money. This was correct, but it was just a misunderstanding, where the additional funds had to go for the Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme.

In order to avoid recreating this confusion, misunderstandings, it is better really to go back to the text as it stood before I took the floor. Sorry for the confusion, but now it is clear where this comes from thanks to the clarifications and explanation from Ms Crawford.

CHAIRPERSON

Perhaps we can go back to the original wording, in view of the explanation of Ms Beth Crawford. If necessary, one can follow on the suggestion of Argentina to have a Note, in case it is needed. Ms Beth Crawford's explanations would help.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

While I appreciate that explanation by Ms Beth Crawford. It is clear and it is sensible and the original wording is fine with us. At the same time, we did not agree with the deletion of my suggestions to add the language because I would like to stress the importance of this area of work.

I would say stress the importance of further increasing of the budget or further increasing of the allocation, or something. I just put it in a bit more general sense. I do not think this phrase is in conflict with the original sentence, even having heard where it comes from. If my understanding is not correct, please correct me, but if it not the case then I would like to prefer to maintain my proposal. Thank you.

I would like to leave the comprehensive work, the normative work on the standard-setting. I would like to listen to your discussion and maybe we would be able to find a way out.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, you have the floor, and your suggestion of putting a Note to explain further perhaps should be explored as well.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, intentaría buscar una solución de compromiso sin nota al pie. En caso que no tuviera consenso, entonces, sí sugeriría una nota al pie.

Continues in English

“Increased the level of funding for normative work from 2020-21”, delete “including” and leave “for the International Plant Protection” and replace “for” with “of”. So it would read, “normative work from 2020-21 of the International Plant Protection Convention and the Joint...”

Continúa en español

Si eso es una solución de compromiso que podemos acordar, yo estaría dispuesto para evitar una nota al pie. Espero la flexibilidad de todos en orden de avanzar.

CHAIRPERSON

I agree, there is a need for flexibility, especially when we consider the time we have devoted to this Item.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

La verdad es que de este subpárrafo tenemos una lectura una poquito distinta. Lo que vemos es un apoyo a la reasignación de recursos para estos dos instrumentos de son de trabajo normativo o de estándares. Y nuestra preferencia es mantener el lenguaje original. La razón es esta: cuando se le asigna un incremento presupuestario a alguna actividad es porque le estamos dando una prioridad y no hay que ponerlo explícitamente. Si le damos más dinero es porque apoyamos su trabajo y tiene mayor prioridad. Entonces, creo que el lenguaje es muy claro en el original y creo que ese es el que debería permanecer.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia is very flexible with this subparagraph and we agree with the sentiment that what we are trying to focus on here is the maintenance of the funding for International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Codex Alimentarius (CODEX) Scientific Advice Programme. But, following the conversation I was wondering if the following compromise might help address the concepts that have been raised.

My suggestion would be that we address two concepts in this. So, it reads as follows: “appreciated the increased focus on the FAO’s normative and standard-setting work and welcomed the maintenance of the increased funding provided in 2020-21 for the IPPC and the joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme.”

That covers the two concepts, the first that we have noted and we welcome the increased focus by the FAO on its normative and standard-setting work and we have welcomed the maintenance of the funding for CODEX scientific advice programme and IPPC.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

China wishes to go back to the original text. Here we are stressing the increased funding for these two areas, the International Plant Protection Convention and the joint Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme.

On this subparagraph, China wishes to go back to the original wording, which stresses or highlights the increased funding 2020-21 and in later financial years there is an increase in the budget. Then in the other subparagraphs we should allow this 17 percent increase for later years as well.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Germany. Colleagues, could we show some flexibility, we have to move on. We have got almost the whole Order of the Day outstanding and we are stuck on just words saying the same thing in different ways. There is preference for the one way or the other, could we have some flexibility to move forward?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just to say what I already said in the chat box. I think Australia made an excellent proposal that should accommodate the concerns of all those involved here. There is this focus without referring to increased budget allocations. Then we come to International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Scientific Advice Programme with an increase in the budget and, if Japan insists to have this addition there, fine with us as well. I think Australia made a very good proposal here.

CHAIRPERSON

In addition to this subparagraph, we will put the Australian proposal as well so Members can see both.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

We are flexible, but there is one point that we would like to capture in this subparagraph. Also, we would like to have the Australian wording. That very much addresses the two things that can be captured here.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

He sido flexible tratando de buscar un compromiso. Hay varias propuestas en curso. Creo que una alternativa que estoy tratando y, cualquiera de las alternativas sea la planteada tanto por Australia o por China, de volver al texto original, es sacar la palabra “including” y directamente abocarnos a las dos iniciativas para las cuales se van a recibir o se van a aumentar los niveles de fondos.

Continues in English

I suggest to delete “including”. Perhaps this can help. Also I could say that another alternative for (p bis) is “FAO’s science-based normative and standard-setting work.” With both proposals I am available to achieve consensus with Members. Depends on what you consider can be better. For me, it is okay. But I only want to say that, to be flexible and constructive.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Argentina, for your constructive suggestion. I give the floor to Egypt, but Members please bear in mind that we had agreed on this subparagraph and moved along and then we came back and it has reopened the whole thing.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSAHAT (Egypt)

We would prefer also to support China, who would like to work on the original wording, which is in subparagraph (p). We could support the deletion of “including” as proposed by Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, could we look at subparagraph (p) with the amendment of deletion of “including,” and see if we can agree on subparagraph (p) – not (p bis) – just (p). Would it be agreeable to members if we adopt subparagraph (p) without the word “including” and go forward?

I see no requests for the floor. I take that to mean that members agree with subparagraph (p), with the word “including” deleted.

We had reached subparagraph (t).

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I am sorry for saying that. I am flexible, but I would like to go back to subparagraph (p). I did not understand that you were doing the silent procedures. I do not stick to my proposal, but the Australian suggestion is very good and that has been supported by other delegations, so why will you not put

some of the elements of that, for example the “appreciates the increased focused on” something and it goes as it is?

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED (Egypt)

Chairperson, we would like to support the wording that is right in front of us in subparagraph (p) and we are not in favour to support any increased focus for any kind of normative work. This wording welcomes the maintenance of the increased level. We could support it, but we cannot support to put any focus for any specific normative work of the Organization.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

In order to try to find a way to take us out of here and accommodate what seems to be very important to Japan, maybe we could just start the sentence with “appreciated FAO’s science- and evidence-based normative and standard-setting work and welcomed...” Then we would keep the elements that Japan would like to have and we are not talking about increased focus, which seems to be something that Egypt will avoid, and then we can move on.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Sweden, for your suggestion.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Lamento en esta oportunidad no coincidir con mi estimada colega de Suecia. Repito lo que ya expresé y es parte de viejas discusiones sobre que todavía no hemos logrado tener claro a qué nos referimos con “trabajo normativo” en la FAO. Pero está claro que, cuando hablamos de *International Plant Protection Convention and Joint FAO/WHO*, it is “science”, but it is not “evidence”, y lo que nos creemos es tener básicamente una FAO con un gran rigor científico porque eso es lo que le da mayor legitimidad para poder orientar a los países e sus acciones. Por lo tanto, sobre este tema lamento no compartir la posición de mi estimada colega de Suecia.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I have been quiet in order to speed up the process. I would like to support what Argentina just said. We have the same view concerning the “evidence-based” expression.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, we are stuck on words and, as I was saying, we are far behind. It is 19:50 hours. We will have to adjourn and we have not made the progress which I thought we would make. We are stuck. The strange thing is that we had agreed this subparagraph and we had reached subparagraph (t) and one Member came back, but that Member is now very flexible and other Members have got stuck and we are back to arguing over words.

Should we be dealing with concepts and let the Drafting Committee look at the words? Otherwise we are sitting here, we are not a Plenary, we are a Drafting Committee. We talk about abolition of Drafting Committees so that we can do the Drafting Committee work here. You all disagree with abolition of the Drafting Committee. What are they going to do when they meet now? They have the whole conclusions, including the words and perhaps even the commas. What is the point of the Drafting Committee?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I fully agree. I always tend to agree with your statement upon the important role of the Drafting Committee. If we can send it to the Drafting Committee and leave it to their decisions, I am totally flexible and I agree with the Chairperson. We do not want to stick only to this wording issue.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to Eritrea, may I put this thought on the table? Can we defer this subparagraph, leave it to the Drafting Committee, because at this rate we are not going to go through our Order of the Day. We are not going to meet the deadline of closure of the Council, which in a sense goes against

the Conference decisions. Council used to be two weeks before. Conference reduced it to one week, but we, by going into evening sessions, are back to two weeks almost. The Conference had decided, for efficiency and cost savings, to reduce the Council to one week and we keep having evening sessions, which adds on costs.

May I request that we leave the wording to the Drafting Committee? The concepts are there and the Drafting Committee can ask for explanations, can ask the Secretariat for explanations. They will be your Representatives, Regional Representatives in the Drafting Committee. It can be worked out there, rather than here.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

Actually, I really agree with you more than 100 percent. We have been talking simply on this one subparagraph and it is not on the main objective. We were talking only on words. I really agree with what you have decided. We can leave this and just leave it to the Drafting Committee because it is part and parcel of the Drafting Committee. If there is any new objective or new idea well and good, but there is no new idea at all on this one subparagraph. We are just talking on changing words. Therefore, I really agree with what you have decided. Let us leave this one and just forward it to the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no other speakers for the intervention. My suggestion to Members would be that we leave this subparagraph to the Drafting Committee. You have your Representatives in the Drafting Committee. When I say your Representatives, I mean each Region's Representative. They have the Verbatim Records of what was said. They have the document and they can work out the wording. The concepts are there. It is just the wording. We cannot carry on this way.

It is nearly 20:00 hours. We are going to adjourn and I thought if we finished this Item at least we can start with the Order of the Day for the rest. Since I have no other requests for the floor, my suggestion is this text, this subparagraph goes to the Drafting Committee and we go to subparagraph (t).

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

No es en el subpárrafo (t), sino es una pequeña propuesta para un nuevo subpárrafo. Entonces, por favor, indíqueme en qué momento la puedo hacer.

CHAIRPERSON

Go ahead, Mexico, make it now.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Es una pequeña propuesta. Es algo que mencionó mi delegación y otros países que, simplemente quisiéramos resaltar el apoyo del Consejo para cambiar el nombre de la División de Pesca a División de Pesca y Acuicultura. Espero que no sea controversial y la redacción específica puede recaer en el Comité de Redacción.

CHAIRPERSON

I doubt whether that is controversial, so the Drafting Committee can find the appropriate wording.

As I said, the Drafting Committee has regional representation, so they can represent the views of each Region. We will leave it for the Drafting Committee, but we will put something so that it is not overlooked.

We go to the next subparagraph, now it is subparagraph (u). Any Members for subparagraph (u)? We agree on subparagraph (u)?

We go to paragraph 2, which is the same wording as we used in Item 3. I see no requests because this is the wording which was agreed in Item 3. We move to paragraph 3.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Muy brevemente, solo queríamos manifestar nuestro apoyo a la cuestión que acaba de comentar México de cambiarle el nombre a la División de Pesca a División de Pesca y Acuicultura.

CHAIRPERSON

We have agreed, Spain that it will go to the Drafting Committee at the suggestion of Mexico. Thank you for your support for that.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Lo sé, era para enfatizarlo.

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph 3? I see no requests for the floor, so paragraph 3 we have agreed.

Paragraph 4?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I know that when we were agreeing Item 3, Congo made a very good point that the Basic Texts set out the recommendation that Council should provide. I just wanted to double check that we should be recommending approval by the Conference as opposed to consideration or review. I just wanted to check that.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Beth Crawford, would you be able to clarify that for us?

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I was also just checking if our Legal Counsel is here. Perhaps that would be better, Mr Chairperson, to ask Ms Donata Rugarabamu because there is a difference here in what Council is requested to do.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, Ms Donata Rugarabamu, you have the floor.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

In this particular instance, here I refer again to Article IV of the Constitution as regards the request to the Conference. I would recall that Article IV.1 specifies that “the Conference shall determine the policy and approve the budget of the Organization”.

As regards the Council action, “the Council shall consider and make recommendations to the Conference on the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget”. This is Rule XXIV, paragraph 2 (a) of the General Rules of the Organization.

If you wish me to repeat, The Council considers and make recommendations to the Conference and the Conference approves the budget, according to the Basic Texts.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu, should it be “the Council recommended” or “the Council endorsed”?

Ms Donate RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I would recommend, in line with the text that we have - the General Rules of the Organization - that the Council recommend, the Conference approve.

CHAIRPERSON

The Conference approves. Yes. United Kingdom?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, I think that addresses my proposals. So presumably we would then delete... That is lovely.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, we have agreed paragraph 4. Is that the end? That brings us to the conclusion of Item 4. Item 4 is concluded.

It is 20:00 hours. We break now and we will come back at 21:00 hours to deal with the rest of the Order of the Day, which we have quite a few Items. Hopefully we move forward.

I would like to thank Members and congratulate them because these two Items are really the items which can generate different points of view and I thank Members for showing the flexibility so we move forward, although at a slow rate. We have completed them and I thank everybody and look forward to seeing you at 21:00 hours. Thank you, the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 19:59 to 21:04 hours

La séance est suspendue de 19 h 59 à 21 h 04

Se suspende la sesión de las 19.59 a las 21.04

Item 5. FAO's response to Covid-19: Building to transform

Point 5. Action menée par la FAO pour faire face à la covid-19: construire pour transformer

Tema 5. Respuesta de la FAO a la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19): construir para transformar

(CL 166/5)

CHAIRPERSON

We are on Item 5 now. Item 5 is *FAO's Response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Building to Transform*. The document before the Council is CL 166/5. The introduction provided by the Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, has been circulated to you. This Item was discussed at the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee.

Introduction to Item 5: FAO's Response Covid-19: Building to Transform

Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

Monitoring Policy Responses to COVID-19

The last edition of the State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) projected that even without considering the impact of COVID-19, the number of undernourished people in the world could rise to reach 840 million people by 2030. COVID-19 is expected to worsen the overall prospects for food security and nutrition as it erodes people's ability to purchase food. Pockets of food insecurity are appearing in countries and population groups that were not traditionally affected. A preliminary assessment also presented in SOFI 2020 suggested that the pandemic may add up to 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world in 2020. The expected recovery in 2021 would bring the projected number of undernourished people in 2030 down, but still above what was projected in a scenario without the pandemic.

As part of its monitoring of the impact of COVID-19 on food security, FAO collected data between October 2020 and January 2021 using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES). Results show that there was an increase, between 2019 and 2020, in the prevalence of chronic food insecurity at moderate-or-severe level, severe level only, or both, in twelve out of the fourteen countries surveyed and where a previous assessment was available. Among these twelve countries:

- seven countries show an increase only in the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity (combined), but not in severe food insecurity: El Salvador, Guatemala, Iraq, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zimbabwe;
- two countries show an increase at severe level only: Ethiopia and Niger;
- three countries show a worsening at both levels: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

FAO's data shows that the magnitudes of the increases are modest. There is no evidence of a sharp increase in food insecurity between 2019 and 2020. On average, relative change at moderate or severe level was larger than that at severe level (10 percent versus 5 percent respectively).

In addition, FAO has been monitoring country specific policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on agri-food systems in more than 30 low and middle-income countries. The analysis shows that the sector has proved to be more resilient than others. The result is due to relatively large exemption from the restrictive measures but also to policies aimed at supporting the smooth functioning of the agri-food production and markets.

However, chronic undernourishment and acute food insecurity have increased, mainly due to the effects of the global recession which has affected the most vulnerable groups (women, children, youth, rural and urban poor among others), through reduced employment and incomes. Conducive policy decisions taken by Governments targeting the agriculture and food sectors have helped to adjust within the overall framework of restrictions, namely;

- Support to local agriculture and food production through provision of subsidies, direct distribution of agricultural inputs, and promotion of mechanization and home gardening, among other measures.
- Provision of financial support and facilitating access to credit for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other private sector actors.
- Limited and short-lived use of both export- and import-restriction measures and, instead, increased flexibilities in trade-related border procedures and trade facilitation measures, to keep supply chains alive.

Governments and development/humanitarian partners have been providing support to the livelihoods of vulnerable groups in almost all countries surveyed. However, such support has not been and will not be sufficient to compensate for the effects of the recession. Expanding and sustaining support to agri-food systems and livelihoods has depended and will continue to depend upon the capacity of countries to mobilize additional resources or re-purpose existing ones with implications for long-term development of the agri-food systems.

The FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme has a corporate target of USD 1.32 billion. This Programme, as of mid-March 2021, received confirmed and pledged contributions for USD 247 million, nearly 19 percent of the overall target. Voluntary contributions – which are channeled to both development and emergency-oriented projects – amount to USD 218 million, of which USD 106 million are confirmed contributions and USD 112 million are pipeline contributions. FAO's resources currently invested in the programme amount to USD 29.8 million.

The World Bank, the European Union, Canada, Japan and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) are the current top five Resource Partners, followed by Belgium, the United States of America, Saudi Arabia and Sweden who have also significantly supported the initiative across the Organization. The share of development-oriented approved voluntary contributions has shifted from an initial 9 percent to the current level of 25 percent of the overall approved contributions. Forecasted voluntary contributions with development-based targets progressed from an initial 37 percent to the current share of 50 percent of the overall forecasted contributions.

Examples of results and activities are provided below for the priority areas of work under this Programme:

- 1) Ensuring availability and stabilizing access to food and ensuring continuity of the critical food supply chain for the most vulnerable populations. 24 million acutely food insecure people threatened by COVID-19 impacts have received emergency livelihood support and scaled-up cash transfers in the 34 focus countries of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan.
- 2) Strengthening governments' capacities to invest for post COVID-19 recovery and the development of a new monthly Nominal Rate of Protection (NRP) indicator to timely assess the incentive/disincentive that different policies have generated for the value chains. It serves as a tool to recommend policy responses to facilitate economic recovery.

- 3) Strengthening national shock-responsive social protection to address the impact of the pandemic (e.g. Rwanda, Somalia), linking social protection to agricultural and rural-based livelihoods, and integrated country approach for decent jobs for youth in agri-food systems adapted for COVID-19.
- 4) Support for gender equality and enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable groups with focus on indigenous people in 4 countries. Green Transformation in the context of resilience for recovery in an additional six countries.

The Food Coalition

The Food Coalition is a multi-stakeholder global alliance, a network of networks facilitating unified global action in response to and recovery from COVID-19.

The Coalition aims to mobilize political commitment, financial resources, innovation and technical expertise while establishing a neutral space for dialogue among countries and key partners in support of the most vulnerable. The Food Coalition is currently mobilizing support for FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, with operational requirements of USD 1.32 billion. For this purpose and in order to provide 3 information on needs and demands on the ground, the Food Coalition's web-based hub hosts 100 Action Sheets developed by FAO's Country Offices and COVID-19 teams, in close consultation with national governments and Decentralized Offices.

In addition, the Food Coalition will provide significant support for the Food Security Agenda of the G20 under the Italian Presidency, with the objective of mobilizing political and financial assistance around a number of priority areas of support in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. FAO will launch and facilitate a call for proposal, which will offer FAO Members an opportunity to submit their proposals and express interest for receiving support.

I open the floor to members for their comments. The floor is open.

Ms Hyo Joo KANG (Republic Of Korea)

Since I have two statements, one for the Asia Group's joint statement and the other for the national statement for this Agenda Item, with your permission, Mr Chairperson, I will deliver the Asia Group's joint statement, followed by country's national statement.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay. Go ahead.

Ms Hyo Joo KANG (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea has the honour to deliver this Joint Statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

At the outset, the Asia Group commends FAO for its timely and continuous effort to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, and as such, in preparing this document.

FAO's continued effort in addressing the negative impact of the current pandemic is paramount, in particular to support the livelihoods of vulnerable groups, including women, in different regions.

We would like to highlight some pertinent points:

First, we encourage FAO to continue support governments in all regions, as appropriate, in developing recovery programme for short and medium term. Multiple threats risen from the impact of pandemic, including deep economic recession, could be a combination that elevate further the level of hunger, poverty, and acute food insecurity and malnutrition. Subsequently, it may reverse a decade or more of development progress in all regions. Thus, a well-designed recovery programme is important in order to help countries keeping its progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. In this regard, a more geographically equitable distribution of the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme is encouraged.

Secondly, we highlight the importance of monitoring global and national commodity market, including providing updated data and information to help ensure timely interventions for any disruptions. In this regard, we encourage FAO to continue publishing data and information of global commodity markets, as well as supporting Members developing appropriate policy measures that would not distort agriculture commodity and markets and would not constitute unfair restrictions to trade.

Third, recognizing the importance to boost smallholders and family farmers' resilience and to promote the local food supply chain to recover from the impact of the pandemic, we encourage FAO to help countries in need to improve their livelihoods and agricultural production capacity.

Last but not least, we encourage FAO to continue their collaboration with other international and regional organization, including at national level, in order to strengthen capacities for COVID-19 recovery.

With those comments, the Asia Group notes positively of the progress made by the FAO's response to COVID-19: Building to Transform.

Now, I will proceed the national statement.

The Republic of Korea aligns itself to the Asia Regional Group's joint statement which was just delivered, and we do appreciate the Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen and his team for their hard work.

Since the pandemic has extended, we have to deal with both issues, one for responses to overcome the current crisis and the other for preparations towards the post COVID-19. Under the current ongoing pandemic, FAO's pertinent roles such as data analyses and up-to-date information sharing in a timely manner are crucial more than ever.

The document gives us a bit of consolation in terms of that food systems were proved to be more resilient than other sectors of the economy. On the other hand, we are quite concerned about the outcome that the crisis has further affected more vulnerable populations including particularly women and children. Thus, we request FAO to keep the priority towards more vulnerable people during its implementation of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

With regard to the COVID-19 Programme, we regard the seven priority areas of work well fit to its original purpose. We are grateful to the detailed information about the progresses and achievements so far. Particularly, we highly value strengthening governments' and national capacities for 'post' COVID-19 recovery; leveraging digital technologies to strengthen the inclusion of small-scale producers; and several good examples of collaboration with other international organizations including Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). It is evident that the COVID-19 Programme should be engaged with various Members, organizations, and actors working on the spot.

Lastly, the Republic of Korea understands FAO's Food Coalition, which was launched in last November is also closely linked to the COVID-19 Programme. Thus, we look forward to hearing further updates with regard to its progress, relationship with other initiatives, and the future plan bearing in mind that synergistic impacts have to be maximized on the ground.

With these comments, the Republic of Korea takes well note of this document and requests FAO to continuously keep us updated in this regard.

Ms Ruth MALLETT (Australia)

Australia thanks the FAO for its ongoing advocacy and support of well-functioning agricultural trade and markets in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through continued monitoring and provision of information on prices, production, consumption and trade of major commodities. We endorse the recommendations made in recent Governing Body meetings about FAO's response.

The FAO's Recovery and Response Programme is a comprehensive and ambitious plan and in particular, we commend the focus on quality data and analysis. Getting real-time data to inform decision-making can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions at a country level. In

this regard, we have welcomed the role of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS). We highlight the importance of continued efforts on data collection and analysis, particularly in countries such as the Pacific Islands where data collection can be challenging.

We also welcome the ongoing provision by FAO of scientific advice to support food standards setting, and we appreciate the international collaboration and cooperation that has been strengthened since the onset of the pandemic. We urge the FAO to continue this collaborative and coordinated approach, including under the Tripartite plus United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) partnership, to ensure One Health is embodied into the work of the Organization with a focus on preventing future zoonotic pandemics.

Finally, we appreciate that strengthening of short value chains can contribute to local and regional food security, in particular when employed as a strategy to reduce food loss and waste. However, we highlight the complementarity of FAO's advocacy and support to international trade and to ensure open markets. Together, these approaches work to improve food security, with trade importantly ensuring the flow of food to import-dependent countries, allowing for variety and choice of food to improve the nutritional status of people, and promoting the economic prosperity of farmers through participation in markets.

M. Marc MAKNOUSSOU (Congo)

Le Congo présente cette déclaration conjointement avec le Burkina Faso, au nom du Groupe Afrique. Nous voulons tout d'abord féliciter la FAO pour la qualité du rapport parce qu'il traduit la complexité et la qualité des analyses réalisées sur la situation, et présente les interventions à la fois d'urgence, de court et moyen terme, tout en tablant sur des actions préventives.

Dans un contexte où la pandémie continue de sévir dans le monde, les effets en chaîne engendrés par les mesures de restrictions visant à casser le rythme et transmission du virus ont déséquilibré les marchés agroalimentaires, les chaînes d'approvisionnement, les emplois et les activités de production industrielle, agricole et animale.

Ce déséquilibre, Monsieur le Président, a provoqué une instabilité économique et a entraîné des pertes de revenus dans les ménages des classes moyennes et pauvres, contribuant ainsi à une augmentation notoire du nombre de personnes souffrant de sous-alimentation chronique. La pandémie n'a pas seulement eu des conséquences économiques et sociales, elle a aussi révélé les insuffisances des systèmes de santé partout dans le monde, ainsi que la fragilité des programmes de réduction de la pauvreté, et ce malgré les efforts de résilience déployés par les populations affectées.

Monsieur le Président, le Groupe Afrique salue le travail réalisé par le mécanisme dénommé «Impact sur la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle, résilience, durabilité et transformation» mis en place avec l'Union européenne, à travers le suivi de plus de 30 pays et le suivi de la Communauté économique des États d'Afrique de l'Ouest, la CEDEAO. Ce travail a servi de base à l'évaluation, faite par la FAO, des mesures prises par les pays face à la covid-19 et de leurs effets multiformes, qui laissent présager que la pandémie continuera d'être une source d'incertitude sur les marchés alimentaires et la sécurité alimentaire.

Nous apprécions également, Monsieur le Président, le Programme FAO d'intervention et de redressement dans le contexte de la covid-19, qui porte sur sept domaines prioritaires visant à faire face aux effets socio-économiques de la pandémie en essayant de répondre à la demande des gouvernements. Tout en comprenant l'ampleur des sollicitations financières qui pèsent lourdement sur les budgets nationaux du fait de la pandémie et des autres crises humanitaires, nous déplorons que la contribution à la mi-janvier 2021 représente seulement 18 pourcent des besoins financiers opérationnels du Programme.

Nous sommes néanmoins très reconnaissants du fait que 33 pourcent des contributions volontaires et des ressources de la FAO soient orientées vers l'Afrique, et voulons encourager les États à poursuivre leurs efforts de soutien financier, pour la mise en œuvre de ce Programme. Le Groupe Afrique considère que l'ampleur des effets néfastes de la pandémie sur la sécurité humanitaire globale est

révélatrice de l'inadéquation de systèmes économiques, alimentaires et sanitaires, qui reproduisent des vulnérabilités et des inégalités de plus en plus flagrantes et insoutenables.

C'est pourquoi, Monsieur le Président, nous continuons d'apporter notre appui à la FAO dans ses efforts d'intervention et de redressement face à la covid-19 en approuvant ce rapport. Enfin, Monsieur le Président, le Groupe régional Afrique formule le vœu que le Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires offre un cadre de lancement d'actions solides visant à relever ensemble les défis que représente l'atteinte des objectifs de développement durable à l'horizon 2030.

Sr. José Luis DELGADO CRESPO (México)

Mi Delegación agradece el contenido del Informe que refleja la respuesta de la FAO ante la pandemia de COVID-19. Sin lugar a dudas, la pandemia por esta enfermedad ha tenido efectos sin precedentes en todas las dimensiones de la vida humana. El alcance de las repercusiones económicas y sociales aún se está manifestando en la medida en que la enfermedad sigue propagándose por todo el mundo.

Coincidimos con el programa de la FAO de respuesta y ayuda en la recuperación de las secuelas causadas por el COVID-19, haciendo un llamado para que se adopten medidas inmediatas, de medio y largo plazo, dirigidas a impedir que la crisis sanitaria se convierta en una crisis alimentaria y que pretenda mitigar los efectos inmediatos, al tiempo que refuerza la intención de crear resiliencia en los medios de vida a más largo plazo, avanzando hacia una recuperación verde y construyendo para transformar los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Específicamente sobre el tema de la “evaluación de la FAO sobre la evolución de los mercados alimentarios y la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición” donde se menciona que, los gobiernos apoyaron activamente la agricultura y la producción de alimentos locales mediante la concesión de subvenciones, la distribución directa de insumos agrícolas, la apertura de tierras para el cultivo, la promoción de la mecanización y huertos caseros, y la facilitación del acceso al crédito para los agricultores y las pequeñas y medianas empresas (PYME), la Delegación mexicana apoya la producción regional de granos básicos, mediante capacitación e inversión económica, que repercute en la seguridad alimentaria de los países en desarrollo.

Con estos comentarios, México reconoce el papel estratégico de la FAO en los esfuerzos internacionales para enfrentar la pandemia que nos aqueja.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by the Republic of Korea. We would like to congratulate FAO for a timely response and ongoing advocacy to support members in dealing with the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate FAO's response and results achieved through this COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priority areas of work. We encourage FAO to continue to support governments in developing a programme for the short, medium and long-term to help Members to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and also to avoid the food crisis at the country level.

Since the new wave of the pandemic is affecting many countries globally, Thailand would like to stress that the need to boost smallholders, family farmers, resilience and recovery by promoting economic recovery, enhancing risk management capacities and building the capacity to strengthen resilience against the current pandemic and future disruptions is very important.

Thailand highly values the concept of self-sufficiency and self-reliance and Thailand has also implemented measures grounded in the sufficiency economy philosophy as a sustainable solution to strengthen food systems and to ensure food security and nutrition at local and national level. These measures are based on a people-centred approach and aim to empower people and communities, especially family farmers, smallholders and vulnerable people and communities, particularly children, women and indigenous people, while balancing economic progress, environmental protection and human needs to help them overcome the hardships during and after the COVID-19 outbreak.

We would like to emphasize the important role of market trade and quality data, especially the agri-food market and prices. The latest FAO food price index has shown that the global food commodity

price surged for the tenth consecutive month, reaching its highest level since June 2014. We encourage FAO to continue the effort in monitoring global and national food commodity market and the food security situation to avoid becoming a food crisis. In this challenging period, partnership is a key to strengthen the resilience of agricultural and food value chains and enable them to enter future crisis. We need the collaboration of all stakeholders to build back better and to keep balance among the three pillars of sustainability, economic, social and environmental aspects.

With this statement Thailand takes note and welcomes the progress of FAO's response to the COVID-19.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

The second and third wave of the pandemic has demonstrated how challenging it is to be fully prepared and respond to predicted problem. In its support to the food system, FAO is collecting and analysing the data to coordinate the best short- and long-term policy through the entire Organization. This groundwork can help us advantage and partner up to achieve greater results in the future.

However, as the pandemic is ongoing and evolving in waves and magnitude, we are yet to grasp fully. We need to consider FAO's engagement also in the urgent and immediate dimensions. Many communities and societies need our own and immediate involvement with supplies, funds and guidance. The pandemic is affecting even the most resilient countries and weakening the already challenged societies. The two must coexist.

The short-term and long-term programmes should be implemented side by side with an emergency plan or should respond to the designated needs and to be taken into consideration when planning forwards. Integrating an immediate emergency plan into the umbrella programme can have significant impact on any future planning regarding COVID-19 impact on the food systems and weak societies. This kind of a plan can actually put the brakes on the rapid decline in growth and development and have a positive impact on short and long-term programmes.

Israel thinks that the Food Coalition is a great move forwards but needs to be continued and gain more support and continuation. While we are planning the recovery, we need to react, we need to take action and step up today.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

China supports the collective statement made on behalf of the Asia Group. Many thanks to the Secretariat for the report on the negative effects created by COVID-19. FAO has taken rapid steps through its Response and Recovery Programme, which focuses on seven priority areas and has also mobilized resources and technical possibilities in order to roll out serious action.

We welcome FAO's response to COVID-19 and we encourage FAO to continue to enhance measures to better respond to the pandemic. China supports FAO in continuing its activity, building on actions already implemented, particularly in the following areas. Firstly, improving agricultural warning systems in order to enhance responsiveness to emergencies and prevention. Secondly, accelerate the setting up of a system for correctly adapted agricultural systems, particularly in developing countries, in order to build the agricultural development capacity. Thirdly, to enhance training of farmers to increase the productivity and income of our small-scale farmers.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Apreciamos las labores de la FAO, así como la del Economista Jefe de la Organización en la actualización y contenido de este documento. Apreciamos que el Informe sobre *El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo* (SOFI), aún sin considerar las repercusiones de la enfermedad del COVID-19, nos orientara en un indicador que es, a todas luces, más que preocupante. El número de personas subalimentadas en el mundo podría aumentar hasta alcanzar 840 millones de personas en el 2030.

Agradecemos a la FAO el hecho de estar dando seguimiento a las respuestas de políticas específicas de cada país a la pandemia del COVID-19 y sus efectos sobre los sistemas alimentarios en más de 30 países de ingresos medios y bajos, y nos alegra saber que el sector ha demostrado ser más resiliente

que otros pero, igualmente, lamentamos que la subalimentación crónica y la inseguridad alimentaria aguda hayan aumentado debido, sobre todo, a los efectos de la recesión mundial afectando a las mujeres, niños, jóvenes y personas pobres que viven en los medios rurales y urbanos, aquellos más vulnerables.

Tomamos nota de que la meta institucional del Programa de la FAO de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19 es 1320 millones de USD, así como de las diversas contribuciones que han estado llevando a cabo los diferentes actores contribuyentes de esta importante causa. Por ello, considero importante recordar que Costa Rica ha invitado a la Comunidad Internacional a ser parte de la iniciativa sobre el Repositorio de Derechos del COVID-19 lanzado con el apoyo de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) el pasado 28 de mayo de 2020, así como la propuesta del Fondo para Aliviar la Economía COVID-19, las cuales recibieron recientemente, apenas la semana pasada, el respaldo de los países iberoamericanos y tienen con fin último reducir los efectos negativos causados por el COVID-19.

Nuestro país se ha propuesto también el Tratado internacional de respuesta a las pandemias en el marco de la OMS y al amparo del reglamento sanitario internacional y, por ellos, agradecemos a los Jefes de Estado de Chile, Francia, España y Portugal, la celebración del primer diálogo entre los marcos jerarcas llevado a cabo el pasado 20 de abril de 2021.

Con ello, el país ratifica su compromiso con los principios de solidaridad y cooperación que atienden la salud como un bien global y accesible para todas y todos. Por ello, plenamente conscientes de que la recuperación socioeconómica vendrá desde el multilateralismo, agradecemos a la FAO y a todos los Miembros su compromiso por dar respuesta efectiva, solidaria e inclusiva para todos y cada una de las naciones de todos los rincones del planeta.

Con estos comentarios agradecemos la presentación del documento, así como su respectiva actualización.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to deliver the statement of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer)(Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina and San Marino aligns itself with this statement.

We congratulate FAO on its continued efforts in tackling the pandemic's multiple negative effects on food systems, including through its comprehensive COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priority areas of work, including the Food Coalition.

We wish to highlight the crucial role of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) in providing valuable data to ensure well-informed and timely decisions.

The COVID-19 crisis has more than ever demonstrated the urgent need to build resilient and sustainable food systems, including through strengthening the resilience of rural jobs and livelihoods, granting access to markets, and paying particular attention to supporting the most vulnerable groups such as smallholders and family farmers, the youth and women.

In this regard, we call on FAO to ensure, within its mandate, close cooperation with the other UN entities, relevant initiatives, and bodies, including as appropriate, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). We also stress the importance of the One Health approach and urge FAO, in the context of the Tripartite partnership, to intensify its collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the One Health High Level Expert Panel involving FAO, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO) and UNEP, and the participation of FAO in PREZODE Initiative.

We thank FAO for having this Item updated and discussed on a regular basis.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

As we stated during the Joint Meeting in March, we believe coordinated action is the only way we will tackle the added challenges posed to food security and nutrition by COVID-19.

We would like to reiterate our support for the work FAO is doing and we welcome the progressive shift of FAO's COVID-19 response towards medium- and long-term interventions, which will "set the foundations for long-term recovery."

We also want to highlight our support for FAO's continued advocacy for well-functioning agricultural trade and markets. Interventions, such as governments imposing export restrictions, or implementing unjustified trade barriers, undermine well-functioning global agriculture and food supply chains and their ability to respond to this crisis. Some countries have used food safety concerns as a reason for imposing barriers on imports. Based on the best available information from scientific bodies across the globe, there is a continued international consensus that the risk is exceedingly low for transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus to humans via food and food packaging.

Mr Naoki HAYASAKA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We are grateful for FAO's efforts to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Both in developing countries and developed countries the impact of the spread of COVID-19 affects global food security. Japan will continue to focus its activity through FAO in cooperation with other countries.

In this regard we would like to emphasize the following four points. First, acquisition of mass immunity by vaccination is an urgent issue. In order to ensure equitable access to vaccine, Japan will take the lead on formulating a multilateral framework for vaccine supply, including the COVAX facility and will contribute USD 200 million. On the other hand, since this framework does not include the establishment of vaccination systems in developing countries, Japan provides the development of a code-chain through the provision of equipment such as refrigeration equipment and transportation methods.

Secondly, Japan also provided emergency assistance through FAO to many countries affected by the outbreak of COVID-19, including assistance for the strengthening of the vulnerable livelihoods and improvement of food systems. In order to ensure global food security, Japan continued to support food supply chains and support free and open trade. Also, through FAO, we are formulating a guiding principle to enhance the resilience of the world food supply chain as well through contributing to the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan.

Third, we appreciate FAO's recommendation to promote local production for local consumption and short supply chains from the viewpoint of strengthened resilience of the food supply chain.

Lastly, the importance of the One Health approach, based on regional and international cooperation in preventing and mitigating future pandemics is increasing. Japan hopes for continued proactive activities in close collaboration with international Organizations such as World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) to prevent gaps and overlaps between Organizations.

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom would like to also thank FAO for its comprehensive report on COVID-19 and to reiterate our appreciation for FAO's response. The pandemic has underscored the critical role of FAO in the world, as well as the importance of coordination with partners to maximize effectiveness for global responses to global problems. FAO has a unique responsibility in helping to strengthen the One Health approach, contributing to preventing zoonotic pandemics.

We strongly support FAO's engagement in the Tripartite partnership with the World Organization for Animal Health and World Health Organization (WHO), including on the global early warning system and the zoonosis guidance on national pandemic preparedness using a One Health approach. We also

encourage the tripartite's collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), including on policy issues and identification of priority actions.

Secondly, we underscore the key role of FAO in data collection, together with partners and sharing of analysis as a global public good. The United Kingdom welcomes the information provided on the food security data and rapid data collections conducted by FAO based on the food insecurity experience scale. We encourage FAO to build on this, taking on board lessons learnt on supporting and updating monitoring systems in collecting real-time data and analysis.

We note the importance of the policy advice provided by FAO, particularly with regard to ensuring that COVID-19 related movement restrictions do not create disruptions in food chains. As the report highlights, COVID-19 is increasing global food insecurity, exacerbating the effects of conflict, climate change, pests such as locusts and fall armyworm, trans-boundary diseases and other shocks. In this context we underline the need for reinforcing collaboration and coordination and encourage FAO's response as part of the United Nations COVID-19 global humanitarian response plan and the United Nations comprehensive response to COVID-19 to save lives, strengthen resilience, protect societies and build back better.

Ms Nathalie CASSIER (Belgium)

Belgium aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

We wish to underline that supporting the most vulnerable groups such as smallholders, family farmers, the youth and women is a key factor to strengthen the resilience.

In this document, Belgium is mentioned along with Canada, Japan, the United States of America, the European Union, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Bank as the current main resource partners investing in FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme.

However, the FAO Special Fund for Emergency Activities (SFERA) is not mentioned here, although it played a crucial role.

In 2020, FAO opened a specific SFERA COVID-19 window. Belgium was the first donor to contribute to this fund, with a total amount of EUR 2.5 million.

Through this SFERA COVID-19 window, Belgium financed several projects such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This project improved the socio-economic conditions and the nutritional status of 2 500 households through raising awareness on the prevention of the spreading of the virus and increasing the availability and access to fresh food and fish products.

Another example is in Sudan, where a project for the amount of USD 500 000, targeted 1 700 vulnerable households affected by floods and COVID-19. The project provided cash, agricultural inputs, personal protective equipment, and awareness raising activities to enhance safety and prevent the spreading of the virus.

For more than 10 years, Belgium has allocated non-earmarked core contributions to the Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM) to support the Regular Programme budget; and contributed to the FAO Special Fund for Emergency Activities, in the humanitarian field. Channelling Belgian non-earmarked funding through these funds, we believe to reach a bigger value for our taxpayers' money.

Indeed during the Grand Bargain discussions at the World Humanitarian Summit, Belgium pledged that we would direct 60 percent of our total humanitarian budget towards core and flexible funding (whereas the Grand Bargain target stands at 30 percent). The Belgian target was achieved in 2020.

Finally, let me conclude that Belgium encourages other donors to step in and join the non-earmarked core funding of FAO's budget, through the FMM and SFERA mechanisms, as it proofed to be successful in creating value for money.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

La delegación del Perú agradece la presentación del informe sobre las repercusiones de la pandemia en la seguridad alimentaria y en los sistemas alimentarios y, asimismo, el programa de la FAO de respuesta y recuperación de la pandemia producida por el COVID-19.

La crisis sanitaria, económica y social que se ha desencadenado continúa poniendo en riesgo la seguridad alimentaria, ocasionando un grave retroceso en los progresos alcanzados en materia de reducción de la pobreza y la lucha contra el hambre en los últimos años, en particular en los países de renta media.

Las medidas restrictivas para contener el COVID-19 han provocado la disminución de la actividad económica, la pérdida de ingresos y consecuentemente el poder adquisitivo de millones de hogares, lo que agrava ineludiblemente la crisis alimentaria preexistente.

Esta situación repercute en la demanda de alimentos y agrava la desigualdad en el acceso a dietas saludables, produciendo daños a la salud y a la nutrición, especialmente entre los grupos más vulnerables. Es aquí, donde los países productores de alimentos, tenemos el gran desafío de proveerlos en cantidad, calidad y oportunidad adecuada para garantizar el funcionamiento de las cadenas de suministro agroalimentarias.

Como parte de los esfuerzos para contribuir a la seguridad alimentaria en medio de la crisis, los países de América Latina y el Caribe, con el apoyo de la FAO y el Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA), se han realizado tres reuniones de Ministros de Agricultura. La última reunión, hospedada por nuestro país, el pasado 15 de abril de 2021, permitió compartir los avances de políticas, planes y acciones de contención ante los efectos del COVID-19 en las Américas, además de las iniciativas para la recuperación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Y es en ese sentido que resulta pertinente destacar la labor de la FAO en el Marco del Programa de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19 al prestar apoyo a los Miembros, en particular en el ámbito regional y nacional, a través de la producción y difusión de información, sistemas de alerta temprana, así como de asistencia técnica no sólo dirigida a la atención de la emergencia, sino también dirigida a la recuperación con intervenciones a mediano y largo plazo que contribuyen al desarrollo de los Miembros.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

I make this statement on behalf of the Caribbean Region. I wish to thank the Secretariat for having presented the report *on FAO's response to COVID-19, building to transform*. The COVID-19 pandemic is still causing havoc as many countries in the region are now experiencing second and third waves. The cost and availability of nutritious food is resulting in an increase of persons suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Economies continue to deteriorate due to national lockdowns and border restriction, resulting in declining national Gross Domestic Products (GDPs) as resources earmarked for specific budget items are continuously having to be redirected for social protection programmes to provide for the vulnerable among us.

Many countries in the Caribbean Region found themselves having to create policies and initiatives to ensure an effective agri-food supply chain to deal with the current situation and rebuild post-pandemic. Fortunately, farmers and workers involved in the agri-supply chain were amongst those who were deemed essential workers and were able to move around uninhibited. Governments actively supported local agriculture and food production through the distribution of subsidies and agricultural imports, promotion of home gardening and facilitation of access to credit for farmers and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Under the guidance of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat a COVID-19 risk management framework and action plan was developed to protect member states' incomes, livelihoods and ensure access to affordable foods and maintain stable food supply chains. As it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic, member states have all developed COVID-19 national production plans based on CARICOM's COVID-19 framework.

I wish to pause at this time to mention the peoples of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, St. Lucia and Grenada. I ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers. As you are aware,

St. Vincent and the Grenadines experienced a volcanic eruption. As a result of this, ashes have covered the other island nations mentioned.

The greatest impact of the volcanic eruption was caused on the island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Currently St. Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of Agriculture, the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI), FAO and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) are currently assessing the damages. Further, I have been informed that FAO and CARDI are preparing to assist with St. Vincent and the Grenadines recovery efforts.

Given our Region's present state as it relates to COVID-19 and as we aim to build back better, it is our hope that FAO will consider providing the following assistance.

1. Technical and financial support to member states in need of assistance to implement action plans.
2. Innovative approaches to build inclusive and sustainable agriculture and food systems using science and technology.
3. Continues to support member states in designing, implementing and assessing recovery policies and programmes for the economic and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Facilitate the mobilization of public and private investments and public and private partnerships for food system recovery and production of crops, livelihood, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry and other non-agricultural rural activities, including those that drive demand for products derived from agriculture, such as tourism, including but not limited to the hand in hand initiative.
5. Support the introduction of new digital technology, e-agriculture and productive assets to better member states' capacity to meet the growing needs of their population.

It is the Region's goal to develop strong economic growth, reduce poverty, improve quality of life and reduce environmental vulnerability.

I thank FAO on behalf of the Caribbean Region for the work it has done thus far, particularly as it relates to the rebuilding process post-COVID-19 in the areas of regional meetings, webinars and bulletins and we look forward to working together in the future to build greater resilience to withstand pandemics.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco, en primer lugar, la intervención de Bahamas en representación de los países del Caribe. Creo que es una perspectiva muy importante de los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID) que, creo, debemos tener mayor consideración. La pandemia por COVID-19 ha impactado fuertemente en la economía mundial acentuando las ya acuciantes cifras de pobreza, hambre y malnutrición.

A pesar de que para algunos la luz al final del túnel está más cerca, para otros las duras consecuencias de la pandemia aún siguen haciendo estragos a las economías, a las sociedades y a las personas, sobre todo en los países en desarrollo. Y algunos pensamos que todavía no llegó lo peor. Por ejemplo, mi región, América Latina y el Caribe representa el 8.4% de la economía mundial. Y, sin embargo, concentra el 30% de las muertes por COVID-19. Además, sufre la peor contracción del producto bruto interno en 120 años, con una caída promedio del 7.7% en 2020. Debemos reconocer esta realidad en el mundo. Nadie se salva solo.

Si se mantienen las condiciones desiguales en términos de acceso y producción de vacunas, pocos países en desarrollo alcanzarán la inmunidad de rebaño en 2021. Y, de esta manera, estarán en peores condiciones de enfrentar otras crisis, sea esta económica, político-social o climática. La recuperación sostenible con igualdad requiere acceso equitativo a las vacunas, pero también recursos financieros que aseguren la inclusión de todos los países en vías de desarrollo en el esfuerzo de reconstruir mejor, independientemente de su nivel de ingresos.

Mitigar el impacto de la pandemia en las cadenas alimentarias y acrecentar la productividad y resiliencia de los sistemas de producción y distribución de alimentos resulta central para morigerar el agravamiento de la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición y, además, motorizar en un escenario pospandemia un crecimiento inclusivo, fuerte y sostenible.

En cuanto a las cadenas de suministros mundiales, la pandemia demuestra una vez más que el comercio internacional es decisivo para garantizar la sostenibilidad de los medios de vida de millones de personas y, también, para aumentar la resiliencia de los sistemas alimentarios, ya que contribuye a mejorar la disponibilidad de alimentos y a estabilizar localmente los precios. El comercio agrícola internacional aún está marcado por fuertes distorsiones estructurales cuyo impacto negativo se ve agravado por la proliferación de barreras sanitarias, fitosanitarias y técnicas que no se basan en evidencia científica.

Por ello, si queremos reconstruir mejor, estos obstáculos para el desarrollo deben ser considerados y enfrentados y no escondidos bajo la alfombra. En un momento en el que proliferan los *game changers*, recordamos que existe un compromiso ya de muchos años de otorgar a los países en desarrollo la oportunidad de competir de manera eficiente, clara, justa y sin distorsiones.

En cuanto a las respuestas al COVID-19, la Argentina agradece a la FAO todos los informes que ha realizado y puesto a disposición de los Miembros desde el inicio de la pandemia y alentamos a que se mantenga siempre el rigor científico de ese tipo de evaluaciones. A su vez, el Sistema de información sobre el mercado agrícola (SIMA) y el Sistema mundial de información y alerta sobre la alimentación y la agricultura (SMIA), desempeñaron un rol crucial en la pandemia para tomar decisiones fundamentadas en datos oportunos y valiosos, incluidos en el G20.

La Argentina está convencida de cara a la recuperación pospandemia que la innovación y la tecnología deben utilizarse para impulsar el desarrollo, promover la utilización de herramientas y enfoques innovadores en pos de la agricultura sostenible, reduciendo a la vez las brechas en el acceso a estos instrumentos será central para asegurar la producción sostenible.

Permítame, Presidente, compartir una pequeña nota familiar. Esta mañana durante el desayuno en mi casa, mi hija, preocupada por el tema de la pandemia, me dice, "Considerando el 75% de las vacunas se concentra en 10 países y que, más de 130 países no han recibido aún ni una sola dosis, ¿cómo puedes ser, papá, optimista respecto a que se pueda terminar con el hambre y la seguridad alimentaria para el año 2030?" Sinceramente, me puso en mucha dificultad. Fue muy difícil responder. Mi respuesta fue que estaban apareciendo algunas acciones positivas de algunos países con ciertas acciones solidarias, cité el caso de la promesa de España en la Cumbre Iberoamericana y de otros países, pero, claramente que había que seguir trabajando para impulsar mayor conciencia sobre la necesidad de una acción internacional coordinada y solidaria.

Para terminar, como hemos expresado en otras reuniones, la Argentina aplaude la elaboración del Programa de la FAO de respuesta y de recuperación del COVID-19. Este esfuerzo que deben plantearse de manera conjunta entre los Estados y los organismos internacionales ofrecen un terreno fértil para aprovechar las buenas prácticas existentes y buscar, al mismo tiempo, soluciones innovadoras con miras a asegurar que los sistemas alimentarios sean sostenibles, contribuyan a proveer dietas saludables y sean también resilientes a las perturbaciones económicas, sociales y ambientales.

Ms Vincenza LOMONACO (Italy)

I totally align myself with the European Union statement delivered by Portugal and I would like to add some national comments.

Exactly one year ago when we suggested to launch a coalition among Members to face the new global emergency and we proposed the Food Coalition we were urged to do this with the same spirit at the foundation of this Organization. Multilateralism is a key Strategy to solve global issues. I would like to thank the Programme Committee for having mentioned the Food Coalition in its final report and for having requested more details about this initiative. Those details have been provided during the informal briefing about the Food Coalition and its contribution to G20 meetings held last 14 April by

Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol and the Chief Economist Mr Máximo Torero Cullen and the Italian Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Minister Marina Sereni.

We hope that the virtual hub that has been presented during the informal briefing will help the membership to better interact within the Food Coalition framework. Starting from the G20 Ministerial meeting to be held in Matera next June and from the G20 Ministerial Agriculture meeting, we are ready to go on with this initiative that is complementary to the FAO COVID-19 response. In order to be always aware of the relevant progress made by FAO and all involved stakeholders and on the basis of the principle of a transparency, we will be pleased to have a periodical update during the FAO Council on the implementation of the Food Coalition programme. Having this in mind, we would suggest to put an item dedicated to the Food Coalition in the framework of the COVID-19 response on the agenda of the next 167th Council and we hope to have the support of other Members of the Council.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

España apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea (EU) en nombre propio y de sus 27 estados Miembros al tiempo que desea hacer hincapié en los siguientes aspectos en relación con este punto. Primero lugar, reconocemos con satisfacción que el Programa de la FAO de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19 y sus siete áreas de trabajo están contribuyendo a reducir los negativos efectos de la pandemia sobre los sistemas políticos y sociales, especialmente a nivel de los países que ya se enfrentaban a crisis alimentarias previamente.

Felicitamos, por tanto, a la FAO por su importante y eficaz labor en este ámbito. No obstante, debemos continuar incidiendo en la importancia de que las medidas adoptadas contribuyan a mejorar la resiliencia de los sistemas alimentarios, garantizando una recuperación inclusiva, sin dejar a nadie atrás y reforzando la cooperación internacional para evitar actuaciones unilaterales que distorsionen el acceso a los mercados, en particular, de los más vulnerables.

Agradecemos el seguimiento realizado por la FAO de las políticas relacionadas con la disminución del impacto de la COVID-19 e instamos a que se mantenga con el fin de extraer lecciones clave de cara al futuro que ayuden a construir para transformar, reduciendo los posibles efectos de cualquier otra pandemia de origen animal. Hacemos un llamamiento a la FAO para que se coordine dentro de su mandato con otras entidades del sistema de las Naciones Unidas, iniciativas y órganos relevantes incluidos, cuando proceda, el Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) y la Coalición Alimentaria.

Finalmente, en este contexto, destacamos la importancia del enfoque “Una sola salud” y acogemos con satisfacción el establecimiento del Panel de Expertos de Alto Nivel sobre Una sola salud, en el que participarán la FAO, la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE), la Organización Mundial de la Sanidad (OMS) y el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD).

Quisiera finalizar recogiendo con agradecimiento las palabras del Embajador de Argentina, Señor Cherniak, en relación con la solidaridad obligada, entendemos desde España que se tiene que tener en cuestión tan relevante como lo de las vacunas. Efectivamente, en la reciente Cumbre Iberoamericana, España donará a sus países hermanos del otro lado del Atlántico 7 millones y medio de vacunas, que es el 10% de las que necesitará, se calcula, España en su conjunto. Así que, es todo un placer por supuesto poder contribuir a ello.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

As many have explained and demonstrated, COVID-19 has tested the resilience of our food systems like never before and food supply chains, as well as people’s livelihoods have been disrupted, threatening food security around the world. Like others, we praised FAO’s continued efforts to seek to keep those supply chains and markets functioning well at the global, regional and local levels.

In response to this challenge, Canada was pleased to have contributed to the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme to proactively address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure nutritious food for all, both during and after that pandemic. Particular attention is given to how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting women and men differently and

activities are adapted to help ensure equal access and control to productive resources as well as the equal participation of women and men.

Canada recognizes that recovering from the pandemic and the oncoming recession will likely affect livelihoods and access to food for the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected and as custodian of indicators under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 it is critical that FAO's response and recovery to COVID-19 be gender responsive, including with respect to technology, innovation and data.

We also urge that analysis going forward continue to be as fact-based and neutral as possible. Canada continues engaging with the FAO and other partners to respond appropriately globally, regionally and at the country level and we commend FAO's efforts to promote coherence through the establishment of its comprehensive programme with both short and long-term focus on seven priority areas of work.

Finally, we support comments made by others on the importance of real-time data collection and analysis and on the One Health approach and collaborative efforts under the tripartite agreement in United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Mr Barend Jacobus LOMBARD (South Africa)

At the outset, South Africa aligns itself with the statement made by the Africa Regional Group on this item.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will remain for the foreseeable future.

FAO's implementation of its COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its report thereon is highly appreciated.

The valuable work FAO undertook in terms of the Task Force on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition in Africa, significantly contributed to mitigating the impact of the pandemic on agriculture and hunger in Africa.

The momentum created by the work of the Task Force in terms of its four work streams, needs to be sustained.

We need to continue to monitor the food security situation on the African continent and identify emerging emergencies to undertake pro-active interventions.

South Africa agrees with the reference in the FAO Response to COVID-19 Progress Report to the impact of inadequate supplies and inequitable access to vaccines.

South Africa believes that the recovery and reconstruction from the pandemic's impact requires closer international cooperation and solidarity to ensure the universal availability, accessibility and affordability of COVID-19 vaccines without delay.

The production capability of vaccines would enable developing countries to access COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics, equipment and technologies, efficiently and on a fair cost basis.

This will require a Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO), which South Africa and India, and supported by other States, is pursuing.

On the state of food markets during the pandemic, it is encouraging that the resilience of the agricultural sector has been demonstrated.

This is largely attributed to the early decisions by governments to declare agriculture and agribusinesses as essential services to remain open.

In this context, South Africa recorded in 2020 record production and export figures for agricultural products, including for citrus, grapes, wine, maize and nuts, among others.

In conclusion, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan has also prioritised agriculture and the Government is committed to provide an agricultural policy environment that would be conducive for all agricultural sectors to prosper.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the statement of Asia Group delivered by the Republic of Korea. We highly commend FAO for its timely response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its efforts in supporting Members to mitigate its impact.

We highlight the swift response and the results achieved by FAO through the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priority areas of work, in particular in informing timely and valuable data through the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS). We further stress the importance of continued efforts to be made for data collection and analysis, to support Members in making better informed policies addressing the impact of the pandemic.

Lastly, we encourage FAO to implement a more geographically equitable distribution of the Response and Recovery Programme, with a view to help more Members develop context specific recovery programmes.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Es la primera vez que intervengo. Quiero personalmente agradecerle y felicitarle por la conducción que tiene usted, Presidente, en esta reunión. En segundo lugar, agradecer al Embajador de Argentina, Señor Cherniak, que ha hecho una reflexión completa de la situación en relación al COVID-19 y no solo. Nosotros queremos reconocer, efectivamente, que el problema del COVID-19 nos ha distanciado de otras emergencias. Mi región tuvo el año pasado dos huracanes de categoría 5. Una cosa nunca antes vista en Centro América y pasó desapercibida hasta un cierto punto porque estábamos concentrados, precisamente, en esta pandemia que nos está poniendo a una gran prueba y haciéndonos reflexionar de que sobre esto nadie se salva solo. Nadie puede vivir en una burbuja aislado de toda esta situación que nos está sucediendo.

En segundo lugar, quiero agradecer a España por su empeño con nuestra región y, en particular, a la delegación de Italia por su propuesta de la coalición de la que seguramente nosotros vamos a participar efectivamente. Queremos felicitar a la FAO por su pronta y oportuna respuesta ante la pandemia por la COVID-19, cuya secuela ha generado fuertes perturbaciones en los sistemas alimentarios evidenciando cambios en los hábitos de consumo. Hoy la población más vulnerable tiene menor disponibilidad y capacidad de compra de alimentos y su derecho a la alimentación saludable se encuentra en entredicho.

Reconocemos el rol central de la FAO y alentamos a que siga implementando medidas prácticas, innovadoras y seguras de estímulo a la producción local. Es allí donde tenemos que arrancar. A la agricultura familiar, en apoyo a los pequeños y medianos productores y productoras agrícolas, quienes garantizan, y esto lo reconocemos a nivel de FAO, la mayor disponibilidad de alimentos frescos y saludables en un contexto de fuerte vulnerabilidad.

Acogemos con satisfacción el Programa de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19 y sus siete esferas de trabajo prioritarias, potenciando que es necesario seguir evaluando la situación país por país y región por región, identificando las amenazas que afectan la disponibilidad de alimentos en todas sus variables, a la vez aumentando la capacidad de respuesta de los países en desarrollo para una recuperación sostenida que permita avanzar hacia el modelo inclusivo y sostenible.

Respaldamos y acogemos con agrado el aumento progresivo de las contribuciones voluntarias en el marco del Programa de la FAO centrada en intervenciones a medio y largo plazo, con un nivel de flexibilidad para adaptar la mejor a las necesidades de los países.

La consecuencia socioeconómicas de la pandemia resaltan con mayor urgencia al llamado a la solidaridad, al multilateralismo y la cooperación internacional en todas sus formas, incluida la cooperación norte-sur, sur-sur, así como las asociaciones entre los sectores público y privado centrada en las personas, en el respeto de los derechos humanos y la libertades fundamentales y como bien lo indica el documento, adoptando enfoques que permitan evitar medidas unilaterales.

Finalmente, acogemos el Informe de la FAO valorando sus esfuerzos y el apoyo de las oficinas en los países, solicitando a que se siga presentando periódicamente información actualizada sobre el Programa de respuesta y recuperación, en particular, sobre la movilización de recursos y el nivel de contribuciones voluntarias.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end our list of Members. I have one request from an Observer.

Sr. Luis Gerónimo REYES VERDE (Observer) (Venezuela)

Un saludo para todos los Miembros del Consejo. La República Bolivariana de Venezuela le agradece el excelente trabajo realizado en su gestión como Presidente Independiente del Consejo y felicita a la FAO por el presente documento que demuestra los esfuerzos de la Organización para enfrentar este flagelo. Asimismo, deseamos subrayar, tal como señala el documento en examen, que una nueva ola de pandemia traerá consigo una nueva ola de restricciones y, por tanto, más dificultades económicas en el marco de una situación de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional ya, de por sí, frágil.

Como lo expresó nuestro Ministro para las Relaciones Exteriores, Excmo. Sr. Don Jorge Arreaza, en la reciente Reunión especial de alto nivel del Consejo Económico y Social (ECOSOC) de las Naciones Unidas, nos preocupa el grotesco desequilibrio existente en la distribución de la vacuna a nivel mundial. Diez países han acaparado el 75% de las vacunas, denunciaba el propio Secretario General de las NN.UU. en el Consejo de Seguridad. Y lo recordaba ahora el Embajador de Argentina en su intervención. En este contexto, el gobierno bolivariano realiza importantes esfuerzos para enfrentar la pandemia y garantizar el acceso a los medicamentos, insumos y vacunas necesarias en el país, en medio de la aplicación de medidas coercitivas unilaterales que violan derechos fundamentales como la salud, la alimentación y constituyen obstáculos para el desarrollo.

En ese sentido, hacemos un llamado a tomar en cuenta este asunto y actuar en concordancia con el derecho internacional. Para finalizar, Venezuela ratifica la voluntad de seguir cumpliendo responsablemente su compromiso con el combate del COVID-19 contribuyendo con las Naciones Unidas y sus Miembros en el fortalecimiento de una respuesta integral y coordinada.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, followed by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee to take the floor and make some remarks should they wish. I invite Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen to take the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer) (Netherlands) (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

Thank you very much, Independent Chairperson of the Council. Great to see you so fresh so late in the evening. I think it is crucial what we are discussing now, although it is late in the evening. I think we all have witnessed that COVID-19 has plunged the world in a crisis which we did not see for the last decades. We know that only with solidarity we can overcome this crisis. I think, therefore, it is so important, although it is not the direct responsibility of FAO, that in the Report of the Joint Meeting we underlined the importance of having equitable access to vaccines for all regions and especially developing countries in the world because only when you have the vaccines, you can start rebuilding broken food systems.

I really would like to applaud the Director-General of FAO. I really would like to applaud the Management of FAO. In addition, I really would like to applaud all the staff members of FAO, not only in Headquarters, but especially in countries which have seen them in worse situations. They stand ready all the time to support those countries in very difficult circumstances. Let us not forget and let us also reflect it in the recommendations and conclusions of the Joint Meeting, the important work FAO is doing in building back better for all the countries, the food systems in the COVID-19 crisis.

I think it is also very important when we speak about solidarity and rebuilding food systems that we use every system and every tool we have available. Is it the Hand-In-Hand initiative, is it the South-South Cooperation, or North-South Cooperation, or Triangular Cooperation, and certainly the Food Coalition.

We are also having to collaborate closely with the private sector to rebuild the broken food systems. That is why it is so important to show that together in solidarity we can support countries all over the world, especially in developing regions. Is it Africa? Is it Latin America? Is it Asia or is it the Small-Island Developing States? I think that is crucial to support the work of FAO in those regions and that

is why I think we should give a clear and strong signal of the Council to the Conference to support FAO in this important endeavour.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Hans Hoogeveen. Thank you for your comments, and particularly those about Staff. I now give the floor to the Chair of the Finance Committee. Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, you have the floor.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

En primer lugar, quisiera dado el tema expresar mi solidaridad personal con los miembros del personal y las familias que han perdido la vida por la enfermedad y por todos los pueblos que han sufrido y que sufren por la pandemia. Sabemos que en este momento y que, desde el comienzo, desde el país anfitrión hasta este momento todos han sufrido y hemos sufrido de distintas maneras y en distintas proporciones, este flagelo. Estamos tratando de sobrellevar este momento y todavía no sabemos. Sabemos qué tanto nos afecta pero las consecuencias globales las estamos midiendo todavía. En ese sentido, va mi sincero sentido de solidaridad.

En vista de los comentarios de los Miembros, repito, entonces, que así como lo he dicho en las anteriores ocasiones, destaco que los comentarios de los Miembros reflejan las discusiones que hemos mantenido durante las discusiones en la reunión conjunta, en la cual se destacó la rápida respuesta y los resultados logrados por la FAO a través del Programa de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19 y sus siete esferas de trabajo prioritarias.

Se felicitó a la FAO por sus esfuerzos que apoyó para continuar promoviendo y respaldando el buen funcionamiento del comercio y los mercados agrícolas en el contexto de la pandemia. Se elogió a la FAO por su respuesta oportuna a la pandemia de COVID-19 y se reconoció el apoyo de la Coalición Alimentaria del Programa de la FAO de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19. Se recalcó la importancia del enfoque “Una salud” y se exhortó a la FAO en el contexto de la asociación tripartita a mantener su colaboración con el PNUMA y otras organizaciones internacionales pertinentes.

Se respaldó el trabajo de la FAO para adoptar los programas de emergencia y resiliencia en marcha, con miras a atender mejor las necesidades surgidas a raíz de la pandemia. Se encomió la función activa y de liderazgo de la FAO en el proceso de formulación de recomendaciones y medidas sobre políticas dirigidas a sus miembros teniendo en cuenta las enseñanzas extraídas de experiencias pertinentes. Se acogió con satisfacción el fortalecimiento del apoyo en materia de asistencia técnica y para las políticas prestados a los países más necesitados. Y se hizo hincapié en que los Miembros y las organizaciones internacionales debían realizar esfuerzos conjuntos.

Hasta aquí es lo que tengo para informar.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers. I now invite the Secretariat to respond to Members' comments. I give the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Let me start by thanking all the Members for their encouraging comments, which I will transfer to all the teams across the world of FAO who are working extremely hard in very adverse situations.

Let me second that the situation we are facing is not over at all, and is a very complex situation with a lot of differences among regions and a lot of consequences which are extremely serious. The situation that we are going to be reporting in the following months about the results of our various food insecurity experiences and data collection are pretty dramatic in certain regions and in some regions it is getting even worse at this point.

In this type of environment, I think everything you have been mentioning is central and is a priority for us. We need to worry about inequalities, which have been exacerbated. Inequalities of gender, which are being exacerbated because the major areas being affected are normally gender intensive. Inequalities with the smallholder farmers as it was mentioned by some of your countries.

So, COVID-19 has shown us two things in my perception. First that agriculture is a resilient sector. Exports of food have even increased and the import bill has maintained. Agriculture has shown to be extremely resilient. However, despite that, inequalities have been shown as ever and these are being exacerbated substantially by the crisis.

Under this situation, we believe that we need to increase our synergies and cooperation. It was mentioned several times that we need to increase our cooperation and we are doing all that we can in terms of cooperation with the United Nations Agencies, Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and partners. Please understand that cooperation has to be efficient and effective and that is where we are aiming. It is not just cooperation for cooperation. It is to obtain and maximize synergies. That is what we want, and to minimize trade-offs. That is what we are trying to do across the world because as you have seen, our resources are extremely limited. 18 percent of our core resources have been collected up to now so our resources are extremely limited.

An initiative like the Food Coalition helped us doing this because it helped us to bring countries together to cooperate efficiently without duplication. We have been very clear across the Board that the Coalition is not duplicating our efforts. On the contrary, we are trying to coordinate and gain efficiencies through the Coalition, through the activities we do on our COVID-19 recovery plans. We have a hundred action sheets in our COVID-19 recovery plans which have been developed bottom-up, and we need to get support to be able to implement that because that is what the demands of the countries are. This is why we need to enforce and increase coordination and cooperation without any potential duplication.

There are elements that were mentioned that are extremely important. Solidarity, of course, is essential. Cooperating with countries, Hand-in-Hand, through the Food Coalition or through all the mechanisms is what we are looking for, South-South, North-South, Triangular Cooperation.

Data is central But let me say and be honest, it has been extremely difficult for FAO to raise the resources we needed to be able to implement the phase. There was complete support from the institutions with the limited resources we have, to be able to achieve what we have achieved, in terms of collecting of this information real-time to assess the impacts, and to help decision-making in terms of what to target interventions to be more efficient.

We have also been working intensively on trade and improving our information on trade and to help to promote trade. We are especially putting significant emphasis in promoting intra-regional trade and minimizing any potential barrier because of food safety issues but also improving food safety information to accelerating the regional trade with a special emphasis of what we are working on in sub-Saharan Africa. We believe inter-regional trade could be a good coping mechanism for the future and there is a lot of space to work on that.

We also believe that building resilience is the way to move forward, and building resilience has two components. We have to minimize risks, vulnerabilities, and we have to cope with risks when they occur, and to minimize risks we need these early warning systems that you were referring to. FAO has early warning systems and we need to keep improving them so that they have more predictive power.

We also need to push the One Health approach as you all mentioned and we need to increase access to insurance on different types of insurance and access to financial services. However, to cope with the risks, we need to keep supporting our emergency plans and social protection mechanisms as was mentioned by Belgium. That is central, especially given inequalities we have. We need to align incentives and improve trade, and boost farmers' productivity but also linked to innovations in infrastructure and especially in digital technologies. That is where we can build back better and try to improve what we are doing. Finally, we need to increase the effectiveness of our interventions.

Chairperson, let me stop there. I thank you enormously for all your positive feedback, but we have a lot to do. The situation is not over at all and what we are observing in certain countries is dramatic. We need to keep accelerating our effectiveness and efficiency to be able to help these countries.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now read out my conclusions for this Item, Item 5, which is *FAO's Response to COVID-19: Building to Transform*.

1. The Council welcomed document *CL 166/5, FAO's Response to the COVID-19: Building to Transform*, and:

- a) commended FAO's timely response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its efforts for preventive actions, collection of data, analysis, and humanitarian response, noting the crucial role played by the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS);
- b) encouraged FAO to build on lessons learned and best practices, keeping a strong focus on One Health, data collection, food safety standard, open trade, humanitarian response, gender-based solutions and policy assistance for well-functioning food supply chains;
- c) welcomed FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priority areas, the support provided to it by the Food Coalition as well as its contribution to the G20 process;
- d) recognized the importance of trade for contributing to the availability, accessibility and affordability of food, as well as the stability of markets and the limitations of extreme food price volatility;
- e) noted that a comprehensive response to the pandemic by FAO has facilitated the work from short-term response to medium and long-term plans and actions, including recovery at the national level; and
- f) looked forward to regular updates on FAO's response to COVID-19 as well as its work on inclusive recovery planning, including lessons learned from the process, and on associated resource mobilization efforts.

That is the end of my conclusions so I open the floor for Members' reaction.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo creo que es muy importante empezar este Informe con un mensaje muy claro de la FAO alineado, incluso, con una resolución muy importante del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, la Resolución S/RES/2565 (2021) y que, yo pido que sea incluida como primer subpárrafo (a) de este Informe. Voy a proponer leyendo en inglés a velocidad de dictado.

Continues in English

"Emphasized the urgent need for solidarity, equity and efficacy, inviting donation of vaccine doses from developed economies and all those in a position to do so to low and middleincome countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as other countries in need, particularly through the COVAX facility a global mechanism for pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines."

I only need to include in the first line, after "efficacy" I put in "efficacy, to fight against COVID-19."

CHAIRPERSON

As we go subparagraph by subparagraph, so I invite Members to start with new subparagraph (a).

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Respectfully to my distinguished colleague from Argentina, we feel that the addition of this subparagraph far exceeds the FAO mandate and the Item that we were considering.

All of us in our interventions discussed FAO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its after-effects, but I think that this paragraph goes far beyond that discussion and this should not be a place for FAO to prescribe what should be done on vaccines.

I say that representing the United States, which has been generously contributing to COVAX, and certainly we fully understand the point our colleague from Argentina is making. It is just that we feel that the addition of this paragraph far goes beyond the mandate on this particular Item.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo para fundamentar algo que creí que no era necesario fundamentar que la *rationale* de plantearlo aquí es que hemos dicho miles de veces en la FAO que tenemos que trabajar por tener una sola Naciones Unidas y, por lo tanto, si vamos a hablar de COVID-19 y las respuestas, es muy importante tener claro que hay un punto de conexión muy fuerte en la FAO con este mensaje que es nuestro agricultores, nuestras agricultoras, nuestras jóvenes campesinos en las diferentes comunidades locales, cada uno de los miembros de las estructuras, de las cadenas de producción locales, regionales e internacionales, necesitan las vacunas porque si no están vacunados vamos a tener un problema de no poder producir alimentos.

Vamos a tener que frenar la producción de alimentos y la seguridad alimentaria va a crecer aún más. Entonces, creo que un llamado de atención en el cual se pueda alinear claramente que estamos con un solo mensaje que proviene, repito, del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas, muy recientemente, y en el cual no es específicamente para una agencia de las Naciones Unidas determinada. Esto fue en febrero de este año. Febrero de 2021. Por lo tanto, estamos hablando de una cosa muy reciente y que, además, es imprescindible que sea capturado como mensaje moral por todas las agencias del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas.

Entonces, yo acepto que, si alguno no está de acuerdo que lo justifique, pero no porque no es un mandato de la FAO, porque nosotros ya hemos escuchado a varios colegas planteando temas que no son del mandato originario de la FAO pero que tienen una transversalidad. Este tema es pertinente, directo y, creo que, incluso, y yo agradezco mucho la pregunta de mi querida colega de Estados Unidos de America porque me dio la posibilidad de explicar estos fundamentos.

Además, sobre la base de que Estados Unidos también es parte del Consejo de Seguridad y que apoyó esa Resolución. Por lo tanto, creo que sí es pertinente. Tiene fundamento, se conecta con los actores centrales de la producción de alimentos y, por lo tanto, es un mensaje que da la idea de la unidad de Naciones Unidas en un contexto global de pandemia al cual nadie, nadie puede mirar por otro lado.

CHAIRPERSON

It is already 23:00 hours, so we need to move on. What I would suggest is that we keep this subparagraph in abeyance and we come back to it. I would like to move forward to see if we can agree on the rest of the subparagraphs and then we will come back to this subparagraph. May we move to subparagraph (b)?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We are not talking about subparagraph (b). We would like to add a new subparagraph. As for the location of the subparagraph, we are flexible, we can take up other Members' suggestions and we can also use wordings that are suitable for all. However, we would like to express the following meaning, which is we hope that at the 167th Session of the Council we would like to add an Item which on the Food Coalition.

As in the interventions, the Italian delegate had made similar points and we think it is quite important.

CHAIRPERSON

China, did you have a suggestion for the subparagraph?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I do not have the specific wording, but if you need I can try to draft one subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

We would need the wording, so please could you have an attempt? We will move on.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

Thank you very much, Chairperson. I was on subparagraph (a).

CHAIRPERSON

No, we have kept subparagraph (a) in abeyance. We will come back to subparagraph (a) later.

We go to subparagraph (b).

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just a quick one on subparagraph (b), where there is a reference to collection of data, I just wondered if we could add in here “based on FIES.” That is the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES).

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment on subparagraph (b) and the United Kingdom’s amendment?

I see none, so we can agree to subparagraph (b) and move on to subparagraph (c).

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to propose a small suggestion, a small change from “gender-based solution” to “gender-responsive solution.”

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We would like to propose to add at the end of the subparagraph (c), after “food supply chains,” what the European Union and its Member States said in its statement regarding the food systems, which is, and I will read it at dictation speed: “and take an holistic approach to accelerate the transformation of food systems towards more sustainable and resilient models that can be implemented at country level.”

As I said, this is based on the statement we delivered and is related to the resilience and to the prevention of the zoonosis, and going against pandemics.

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just a small point again. In the first line when we talk about One Health, rather than “keeping a strong focus,” “further strengthening its focus on the One Health approach, including through the Tripartite partnership.”

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, on the amended subparagraph (c)?

Mr Naoki HAYASAKA (Japan)

Just a small suggestion. Line three, after “open” according to the last discussion, please add “and rules-based trade.” “Open and rules-based trade.” That is all.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En este mismo subpárrafo (c), voy a leer a velocidad de dictado en inglés, después de la palabra “transformation”. “That should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, according to, and dependent on, national contexts and capacities.”

En la tercera línea, agradecemos a todos los colegas que enriquecieron el texto, pero en donde dice “open and rules-based trade”, yo usaría la misma expresión que hemos utilizado en anteriores Informes, que sería: “open, transparent, non-discriminatory, and predictable.” En todo caso el orden de como está puesto, lo vea el Comité de Redacción. Era solamente para que el concepto esté reflejado en el subpárrafo.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

First of all, thank you, Ambassador of Argentina, for taking the words out of my mouth regarding the “transparent, open, non-discriminatory and predictable rules-based trade.”

The second one, I just wonder regarding the “gender-responsive solution.” We have no problem with that, but the thing is the solution here I think is not only based on gender responsive solution, but also the poor and marginalized. I think the solution developed here not only also has to come from those poor because in our case, for example, the poor smallholders in rural areas are also having their say in this regard. However, I do not have the concrete suggestion because it will be too long. I just wonder whether it is possible to give it to the Drafting Committee to reflect that.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just to be coherent with the language we use. In the second line, I would like to insert after “partnership”, the words “and UNEP”. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Please bear in mind that there is a suggestion for this subparagraph to go to the Drafting Committee so, if there are any refinements, we leave that to the Drafting Committee. Just concentrate on the concepts.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

In the penultimate line, it may look for you as if it is just a language change, but we would like to talk about the transformation and then what Argentina proposed is fine. However, then to say not “of food systems” but saying “towards more sustainable and resilient food systems.” We do not want to see “models” being reflected here.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Only to suggest after “UNEP”, “and other relevant United Nation’s Agencies.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment from Members?

M. Carlos AMARAL (Angola)

De manière générale je suis d'accord avec cet alinéa, mais je vois qu'on parle de santé, de statistiques, des gens, du commerce; je pense qu'il manque quelque chose, surtout pour l'Afrique, parce que le problème du covid-19 et de l'après-covid, c'est l'action sur la production et l'organisation en termes d'alimentation.

Pour cette raison, après «One Health», je propose d'inclure «la croissance de la production et productivité de l'agriculture familiale», parce que ce qui est le plus important en ce moment, c'est la réactivation économique du pays et de la productivité.

CHAIRPERSON

Maybe if we make an addition, would you have a suggestion? Since the refinement can be left to the Drafting Committee. Would you have some suggestion for rewording?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿Estamos en el subpárrafo (d)? Presidente, ¿estamos en el subpárrafo...

CHAIRPERSON

We were trying to see what Angola has suggested, whether Angola had a suggestion for some wording, this could be refined by the Drafting Committee, but what exactly did he want included here?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No tengo objeciones respecto de la propuesto de Angola ni de la suya, Presidente, está perfecto que el Comité de Redacción haga la sintonía fina del párrafo. Yo iba directo al subpárrafo (d), para tratar de utilizar el tiempo. Usted dígame lo que debo hacer.

CHAIRPERSON

Just one moment, Argentina. Angola, you do not have a suggestion to include what you were suggesting as a concept? Which then could be refined by the Drafting Committee.

M. Carlos AMARAL (Angola)

Ma suggestion serait après «One Health» ou avant «data collection» de mettre «la croissance de la productivité de l'agriculture familiale».

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, we will move forward and the Drafting Committee will refine this subparagraph. So, we move to subparagraph (d).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La idea era tratar de que el subpárrafo incluyera lo que cada uno de los Miembros pensamos para tratar de mejorar este subpárrafo. Mi sugerencia es luego de

Continues in English

“COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priorities areas,” “the potential support” – we need to delete “the support,” obviously – “that could be provided to it by the Food Coalition, while looking forward to its discussion and analysis within the G20 process.” We need to delete, “as well as its contribution” because we need to discuss and to have an analysis.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

I suggested to add a paragraph and I suggest to add it here. We can consider to put it here. I already sent my message through the chatbox. We can either add to (d) or have an (e).

[in English] “Recommended considering to put the Item on Food Coalition in the next Session Agenda.”

This is what I wrote in the chatbox. The concrete wording is flexible. It is just an idea to suggest to add it here.

CHAIRPERSON

So, first we will deal with subparagraph (d) and then Argentina.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Iba a referirme a la propuesta de China, pero espero a que usted culmine con el subpárrafo anterior. ¿O prefiere que me refiera al subpárrafo de China?

CHAIRPERSON

Should China’s proposal be incorporated in subparagraph (d)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No, lo que quería decir que estoy de acuerdo con la propuesta de China, lo único que me parece que sería pertinente poner el 168.º período de sesiones del Consejo porque según tengo entendido, en todo caso podemos consultar, el 167.º período de sesiones del Consejo se va a referir a los Órganos rectores.

CHAIRPERSON

I agree, Argentina.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Okay, so 168.º período de sesiones del Consejo. Y, además, eso permitiría porque podríamos capitalizar todas las conclusiones que se van a obtener de la reunión del G20 tan importante que tendremos aquí en Italia.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Members States.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We do not have a particular point on this text. This is a very good one, thank you very much. Our point is we want to suggest to the Council to add a new subparagraph. Let me know if you consider it appropriate to do it now or, if not, please, with your indulgence, we will return when you consider it appropriate to add a new subparagraph here.

CHAIRPERSON

The subparagraph would be related to which topic? One of the paragraphs already in existence or...?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

No, in fact, it is a new subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

We will come back to it. Let us finish these and we will come back.

Members, we are okay with subparagraph (d) and (e)? We can move to subparagraph (f)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Después de "volatility", sugiero agregar lo siguiente

Continues in English

“and recalled and underlined the importance that, in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and in keeping with their commitments under the WTO agreements, Members correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions as well as eliminate and not create unnecessary and unjustified barriers to trade in agricultural markets.”

Only to take into account that this proposal was agreed and it is coming from the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP).

CHAIRPERSON

Members any comments on subparagraph (f) as amended? I see no request for the floor. Subparagraph (f) we agree and we move to subparagraph (g).

Subparagraph (g), I see no request for the floor, so we agree on subparagraph (g).

Subparagraph (h), I see no request for the floor, so subparagraph (h) is agreed.

Now I request Portugal. You had a suggestion for a subparagraph.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I also think that we will return to subparagraph (a) because I think that we have a lot of sympathies for the proposal on subparagraph (a). I think it is very good, a very important message and we need to put it in the context of FAO. Anyway, our proposal for a new subparagraph will be to put it between the subparagraphs (e) and (f).

I will read it out at a dictation speed. “Recalled the importance of the One Health approach and urged FAO to continue its collaboration with the Tripartite and UNEP to ensure that the One Health approach is included in the work of the Organization, with a special focus on preventing zoonotic diseases.” This is our proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

We will deal with this subparagraph and then we will go back to subparagraph (a). Members, your comments on this new subparagraph proposed by Portugal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería confirmar mi apoyo a lo expresado por el representante de Portugal, mi estimado amigo en representación de la Unión Europea sobre el nuevo subpárrafo. Creo que está repetido en un subpárrafo anterior. No quiero prejuzgar. Me gustaría que lo analice mi estimado colega y él decida cuál es la propuesta, porque sinceramente estoy de acuerdo y no quiero polemizar con esta cuestión. Pero, lo invito a que observemos el texto y veamos cuál es la mejor alternativa. Lo que mi colega sugiera yo lo voy a apoyar.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you very much for the flexibility and the support from the distinguished Ambassador from Argentina. My dear friend, thank you very much for your wording. Yes, in fact, we have the same reference here. I think that the context is different. In the first paragraph we are going for a list of references to lessons learned and best practices, and then on subparagraph, the one we supported, we are calling for action. However, as you said, Chairperson, we will be in the hands of the Drafting Committee to streamline the text and find the best solution once the messages are kept. I think that from the plenary we support these two ideas and if the Members can go along with it, I think that the Drafting Committee can find the best possible solution. This is our proposal and, of course, we will be flexible once the message is kept.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, I agree that we can leave this to the Drafting Committee. Now we can go back to subparagraph (a), because we have not agreed.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

En mi intervención anterior mencioné las gestiones que nuestro Presidente estaba haciendo en los organismos multilaterales. En las Naciones Unidas lo hizo hace algunos meses y en otros organismos, declarando el Repositorio de los derechos del COVID-19 como un bien donde la salud se convierte en un bien global y accesible para todos y todas. Desde ese punto de vista, avalando la intervención de mi colega de Argentina, me parece que es importante que la FAO se involucre en la accesibilidad de las vacunas para todos y todas. No hay distingo aquí de países ricos y países pobres.

Y, ¿por qué digo esto? Y no quiero crear polémica con la colega de Estados Unidos de America, pero la FAO en el momento en que el virus o la enfermedad, al no tener vacunas afecta la seguridad alimentaria de los pueblos y afecta la producción de los alimentos de los pueblos, desde ese momento involucra a la FAO.

Porque el mandato que tiene la FAO es luchar contra el hambre, luchar para la producción de los alimentos y que no se quede nadie atrás. Así que, yo sí creo que la FAO debe involucrarse en el tema de las vacunas, no es que sea la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS). La OMS es otro organismo que lo ve de otra manera, pero la FAO al momento que va a escasear la alimentación, que habrá gente con hambre, que la producción de todo el mundo se va a ver afectada por el virus, pues, obviamente sí tiene que ver cómo solucionar ese problema.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

[No interpretation]

CHAIRPERSON

There is no interpretation, China. There must be some technical problem. Let's look into that.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

Is interpretation available now? I will just make it briefly in English. We think the proposal made by the Argentinian representative is a very important issue. Also, in the discussion many delegations [poor audio 00:22:34] and talking about the distribution of vaccines [poor audio]. China supports this.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is again to ask you to pass the floor to Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

As we said, and we confirm now, this is a very important idea. What we have in this subparagraph, indeed it is a United Nations Resolution. It is very important. It is supported by many Members. I think it is a very important message from here. We also have this very good point made by the United States of America about the FAO mandate.

I think that we need to accommodate these two ideas and in this context, with this idea to support this, our proposal is to add at the beginning of the paragraph the following, “encouraged FAO to coordinate with other United Nations entities” and then continue with what we have in the paragraph. This is the proposal, as I said, in order to accommodate two very important messages received from Argentina and supported by others, and from the United States, about vetting this in the context of the FAO and its role in the United Nations system.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Muchas gracias a la delegación de Portugal por la presentación de la propuesta. Durante todos los documentos que hemos revisado, estamos hablando de “Una salud” y una salud pasa también por la salud de la persona. Creemos que este párrafo tiene que quedar reflejado de alguna manera porque la salud está especialmente relacionada con los temas de seguridad alimentaria y todo lo demás.

Durante nuestra declaración hicimos algunas reflexiones sobre la necesidad de mayor solidaridad, la importancia del multilateralismo y la cooperación internacional en todas sus formas. La cooperación, norte-sur, sur-sur y el tema de las Asociaciones. Creemos que este párrafo tiene que quedar reflejado en este Informe porque uno de los mandatos de nuestra Organización tiene que ver, también, con la nutrición, tiene que ver con la seguridad alimentaria. Y creemos que el tema tiene que estar específicamente aclarado en nuestros Informes y nuestro trabajo.

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

First of all, I wanted to be clear. We certainly understand and appreciate the need for this subparagraph and so our suggestions are merely to change some of the language. I do have a suggestion. I would like to propose that maybe can help us find a way forward. First, I do feel that it is important for everyone to realize that some of the language originally proposed was taken from United Nations Security Council Resolution 2565. That resolution was specifically targeted or discussing COVID-19 and vaccine access in conflict.

I just want to make sure that is clear. What I would suggest is that we build on what is here, the excellent suggestions from our colleagues with the European Union as well as our colleague from Argentina and, if I may suggest, we build on that and then use the language that we all had agreed to in the Joint Meeting. So what I could do, Chairperson, if that is acceptable, is read it at dictation speed as an alternative subparagraph (a).

We can keep the first part “encouraged FAO to coordinate with other UN entities and emphasized the urgent need for solidarity, equity and efficacy to fight against COVID-19 and acknowledged that an effective COVID-19 response should go hand in hand with equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination, taking into account the UN Secretary-General’s appeal that vaccination is a public good.” So, again, what I have hoped to do there is to combine the previous suggestions with the accepted language with the Joint Meeting in hopes that we still fully capture the spirit that was intended with this subparagraph while also keeping faithful to the mandate of what we are supposed to address with this Item. I hope this may be acceptable to the other Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Eritrea, so please address (a bis) as well.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I really appreciate the path put forward by Argentina. It is very pertinent. It looks like as if it is the mandate of other United Nations (UN) Agencies. My previous idea was to modify it. Actually, it has been already modified by Portugal.

If we say “encouraged FAO to coordinate” maybe we can add “and work with other UN relevant and responsible entities” and then you can go as it is, “and emphasized the urgency for solidarity” and so forth. If we modify the first phrase, I think, we can accept this one.

Sra. Julia VICIOSO VARELAS (República Dominicana)

Quisiéramos unir nuestra voz en apoyo a la propuesta de Argentina, Costa Rica y otros países. Entendemos que es relevante en vista de la realidad que viven algunos países en desarrollo por el escaso acceso a las vacunas, en particular, en los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID).

CHAIRPERSON

Members, we have two suggestions in subparagraph (a). Could I have your comments? So, there is no comment. Should we leave this to the Drafting Committee then, both subparagraphs? Since nobody is commenting for one option or the other. Would you agree that we send this to the Drafting Committee as well? Could I have a reaction to that?

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

This time only to help you, my dear Chairperson. I only wanted to break the ice.

Continúa en español

Creo que lo más importante para mí es que el mensaje que la FAO tiene que dar en este tema debe estar claro y capturado en este texto. ¿Cuál va a ser finalmente el *wording* que va a surgir del Comité de Redacción? Debería ser sumamente generoso en capturar las preocupaciones manifestadas en particular por los países en desarrollo.

Y mi responsabilidad aún sin haber consultado a cada uno, sé que es el sentimiento y el pensamiento de los países en desarrollo. Mi planteo y mi propuesta no es algo *out of the blue*, está en una Resolución del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas que puede ser perfectamente aplicado a cualquier contexto porque está básicamente basado en la lógica de una crisis global que empieza como una crisis de salud pero que está provocando una crisis alimentaria y está provocando también una crisis económico-social.

Dicho esto, creo que no tengo intención de complicarle la vida, Presidente, y si usted considera que hay que llevar estas alternativas al Comité de Redacción, no voy a presentar objeciones sobre ello, pero sí que quede claro que la intención es que este sea el mensaje más importante, como mensaje de la FAO en este tema porque es un deber moral.

CHAIRPERSON

I agree. Here I wanted to get the view of the United States on their proposal of (a bis). I see the last line says “taking into account the UN Secretary-General’s appeal that vaccination is a public good.” The reader should know what that appeal is by amplifying a bit more on what the Secretary-General’s appeal is. Maybe it may facilitate the idea of subparagraph (a) and they sound similar. Is it possible to include what exactly the UN Secretary-General’s appeal is?

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We just want to state our preference to work on subparagraph (a), and probably we can put some elements from (a bis), but the basis will be on subparagraph (a) and I agree with you to put this to the Drafting Committee.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Again to ask you to pass the floor to Portugal.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Just to support your guidance and your view and what you just expressed about the merging and going for a new draft text of these two subparagraphs regarding the idea that was clearly stated by the Argentinian Ambassador and others that are urging about the importance of this theme. Yes, it is fully recognized, I think, no doubt for all of us but also they need to put this in the context and FAO's mandate, of course, regarding the role of One Health as was repeatedly said.

So, again, Sir, we are supporting your approach and your guidance on this and especially your last words about a possible alternative and a way out.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En primer lugar, agradecer la propuesta de la delegación de Estados Unidos de America. Creo que ya están bien cercas las posiciones. Naturalmente, me someto a su sabia consideración. Creo que esto podría pasar al Comité de Redacción porque leyendo las dos propuestas estamos muy cerca y en aras del tiempo podríamos, si usted lo considera, pasarlo al Comité de Redacción.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

With thanks to the colleagues who have spoken before me, we too are completely okay with your suggestion to send this on to the Drafting Committee and in asking the Drafting Committee, to consider that we just want to make sure that that context was there for the UN Security Council Resolution, the fact that it was particularly dealing with conflict and just to say that our preference is to go with the language that we had previously agreed on. But, nonetheless, there is a lot of common ground here and we are happy for the Drafting Committee to sort it out.

CHAIRPERSON

I think now there is sufficient support and we can send these subparagraphs to the Drafting Committee as well. The way I see it, all the paragraphs marked in yellow would be considered by the Drafting Committee for refinement. That means we have concluded on this Item. Sorry, I have European Union requesting the floor.

Ms Renate HAHLEN (European Union)

I would just ask that you also put into yellow this paragraph where we have a lot of trade language because I am not able now to consult my trade experts as it is midnight. If this goes anyhow with a number of yellow paragraphs into the Drafting Committee, I would request that this also goes there because I need to consult with them. I will not get guidance tonight.

I am not saying that we have for sure a problem with it, but I need to find this out. For that reason, I kindly request this also goes into yellow. I have taken a long time to wait for you to conclude on the other issues.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Es increíble, pero no me deja de sorprender mi querida colega de la Unión Europea. Siempre tiene la capacidad de sorprenderme, pero yo le puedo facilitar todo porque tengo sobre mi escritorio lo que acordamos con la Unión Europea en CCP. Por lo tanto, lo que yo puedo hacer es, simplemente, mostrárselo para que no tenga necesidad de tener que molestarse en tener que hacer consultas a ningún técnico, porque así ganamos tiempo. Pero si la cuestión es demorarlo hasta mañana, yo no tengo problema, pero si quiere se lo puedo mandar por mail.

Porque como es un tema acordado en el cual la Unión Europea estaba presente en la reunión y también acordó, me imagino que, no creo que haya que consultar a los técnicos si quienes estuvieron en las reuniones y acordaron, hay que preguntarles a los técnicos a ver si estaban de acuerdo con los que estuvieron en la reunión. Un poco extraño la manera de reflexionar, pero no solamente en una reunión sino en dos, 73 and 74.

Continues in English

In both meetings European Union was a Member of this Committee and agreed to this text. If you want to go to ask the technicians about that, great, but I can send you by mail what you, and I and all Members agreed at the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP).

Ms Renate HAHLEN (European Union)

As we still have 15 minutes, if perhaps you can just tell me which paragraph this is in the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) report. I will look it up myself. Okay?

CHAIRPERSON

With that I think we have agreed on this Item. We can conclude this Item and move on to Item 6.

Item 6. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Point 6. Initiative Main dans la main

Tema 6. La Iniciativa Mano de la mano

(CL 166/6)

CHAIRPERSON

Item 6 is *the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*. The relevant document is CL 166/6. The introduction of Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, has been circulated to you.

This Item was discussed during the 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

Introduction to Item 6: The Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

In response to requests by Members of the Programme Committee (PC 129) and FAO Council (CL 165), a summary of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative's implementation progress between November 2020 and January 2021 has been prepared (CL 166/6). This note provides additional detail, following a comprehensive stocktaking exercise conducted in February 2021.

As of 24 March 2021, 36 countries have confirmed their interest to participate in the Initiative: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Syria, Tajikistan, Tuvalu, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Most countries joined the initiative after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and follow-on economic shocks. They have demonstrated diverse entry points, objectives and metrics. Twenty-four countries are in the process of defining their programmes with the participating Governments and beginning donor matchmaking. Financing has been identified in 12 countries and is expected to be completed by 30 June 2021.

HIH Implementation: Country Experiences

The HIH Initiative unfolds in three phases: inception, operations, and impact analysis. The inception phase covers the start-up period from the initial agreement with the beneficiary country to the development of the comprehensive Program Investment Plan for the specific areas identified together with the country for HIH initiative. The main challenge in the inception phase, where nearly all country programmes are so far, is to develop and sustain a shared vision between the government and its partners about the nature and objectives of the programme, arriving at a common set of objectives, territorial focus, milestones and roadmap for implementation, and key operation and SDG metrics. Highlights:

Bangladesh, despite having made remarkable SDG progress, still faces major challenges, with 20 percent of the population living below the national poverty line. The Government has committed to moving the farming sector to a more commercial, mechanized and diversified sector. In this context, the Government and its partners have identified key goals for HIH: support further agro-mechanization, agro-processing, post-harvest processing, cold chain and safe value chain strategies;

engage private sector associations, international finance partners, national banks and investors; and promote adoption of climate-smart agricultural systems to build resilience.

Ecuador was severely affected by the pandemic, with a devastated economy and an influx of refugees, straining agriculture and food systems. Having joined the Initiative under the criteria of food crisis, the Government quickly took ownership of HII, prioritizing national investments in order to revitalize the agri-food productive sectors. The Government considers HII a key support to help implement the National Agricultural Plan 2020-2030 — the main policy instrument focused on the implementation of agricultural policy at the national and territorial levels. Maps of public finance and multilateral development bank activities are being updated, highlighting main investment areas and gaps. HII has provided opportunities to engage multilateral donors, international financial institutions (IFIs), central and local governments, and private companies. There is technical and operational progress for implementing national FAO programmes in selected territories. The Ministry of Agriculture has developed a HII proposal for approval by the central government.

El Salvador's HII has combined the efforts of stakeholders, including IFIs and the central bank, to support the Government's Green Climate Fund (GCF)-backed Upscaling Climate Resilience measures in 2 the dry corridor agroecosystems of El Salvador (RECLIMA) project and its development framework. Officially known as "Territorial Rural Development Strategy 2019-2020," the combined programme points to high- and medium-priority areas with agricultural opportunities. The first round of consultations has already taken place, including with the central government, donors, local government and civil society. Maps have been developed that layer economic, social and environmental criteria, HII typologies, and prioritization of municipalities. This is part of a broader effort to support the Government with the implementation of "Agricultural Transformation Plan for Food and Nutritional Security (SAN)," which aims to kickstart post-COVID-19 recovery and transform the country from a net importer of agricultural commodities to self-sufficient producer of food using territorial-based approach.

Ethiopia's agro-industrial strategy adopted in 2009 is a key to transforming the country's agricultural sector and boosting the economy. For the next phase, the Government has selected four pilots out of the country's 17 proposed agro-industrial parks (AIP), and prepared a development framework and investment plans. The aim is to strengthen agricultural supply chains, attract investment in food and agriculture, stimulate small and medium enterprises, and create off-farm employment, especially for women and young people. A special government agency, the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), provides a variety of supports and helps to scale up innovation and agricultural investment; it also ensures that the process of upgrading is inclusive and ensures that measures are in place to monitor and improve benefits for smallholders and the poor. At the request of the Ethiopian Government, FAO evaluated the ATA, found that it was effective in its mission, and made recommendations for further strengthening. Under the HII Initiative, FAO is mobilizing international technical experts to review the investment plans and undertake analyses on poverty eradication, inclusion, and food and nutrition security, so that transformation and inclusion are pursued in tandem in the prioritized territories. HII is working toward enhancing risk management for the poorest through policy guidance and local economic development programmes.

Lao People's Democratic Republic considers the Initiative as a way to mobilize technical, financial and human resources to unlock the agricultural potential and eradicate poverty and malnutrition along the China-Lao railway corridor currently under construction. Activities have been ongoing for more than six months, including territorial-level analysis to identify agri-economic potential in the target territories, assessments of suitable production, value chain analysis (rice, maize, cassava, fruits), donor mapping, the launch of a joint task force with the Government on railway territory development, and informal engagement of partners, including with IFIs, the European Union, Charoen Pokphand (conglomerate), USAID, Asian country ambassadors, Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), and China Railway Company. A concept note for the programme is being prepared. The programme vision has developed to the point of Cabinet decision, and the Government has requested FAO and World Bank to work together to finance the HII Initiative.

Nepal is using the HII framework to bolster the development and implementation of its “Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP)” for building inclusive and resilient agriculture sector. Much progress has already been made, with a CSAIP study being prepared by the Government, the World Bank and FAO. Mapping of agricultural zones, welfare maps and data for defining priority investments are in progress. A subsector analysis (of best practices of investment opportunities and economic modelling in four provinces) also links to a GCF project preparation. Likewise, the benefits of stakeholder consultations and close coordination have spilled over to a food systems assessment initiative funded by the EU. The Government has identified seven investment packages, including staple crops, horticulture, irrigation, agroforestry and aquaculture in different territories.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face extraordinary development and resilience challenges due to climate change-driven natural hazards, and the impacts of the pandemic and its global economic shocks. Nonetheless, important progress has been made.

- Solomon Islands has used a national agricultural investment plan as an entry point to implement HII. FAO and IFAD are working together to support the Ministries of Agriculture and Livestock on their agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sector investment plans for 2021-2030. The draft plan has been well received during stakeholder consultations, including by Permanent Secretaries. FAO has identified strategic technical partners to enhance data availability and analytical methods to better identify risks, mitigation strategies and opportunities. Donor matchmaking for the plan is underway.
- Kiribati faces challenges that include paucity of agricultural land and limited capacity for local food production, except fisheries. Most food is imported, having a negative effect on household diets. Reliable recent data are limited, and currently the post of FAO Representative is vacant. Priority areas for HII are being explored, including conservation, fisheries value chain, resilience and humanitarian work in the atolls. Household surveys, including information on nutrition, from Solomon Islands and Kiribati are complete. FAO is gathering geospatial data and working with the statistics division to collate information from coastal communities. The University of Southampton has been identified as data partner to help identify climate risks and also implement and extend the analytical framework for HII.

Syrian Arab Republic has entered its tenth year of war. The country faces serious food insecurity due to sanctions, economic collapse, currency devaluation and inflation. Recognizing that the agriculture sector has become fundamental for employment and for national food availability, the HII Initiative focuses on restoring local water supply and irrigation. The Government is committed to reviving the agriculture sector, and the HII framework is being used to help identify some of the main priorities for national investment. These include a focus on promoting sustainable use of natural resources, especially water, in areas of high agro-economic potential.

Tajikistan is the first HII country in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. FAO has responded to the Ministry of Agriculture's request under an EU-funded project to help prepare the National Investment Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture Development (NIP) 2021-2030. The main text for NIP, comprising five main areas/pillars and 17 working papers, have been produced. Other progress includes the development of a Geospatial NIP Atlas for multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) to support sustainable investments toward achieving the SDGs. Donor mapping and donor matchmaking efforts have resulted in seven concept notes, leading to the design of joint World Bank-IFAD-GCF projects.

Yemen needs to expand, prioritize and fill gaps in the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. Specifically, HII is supporting the development of a comprehensive national policy and investment framework for sustainable agriculture, food and nutrition security, and resilience. To this end, it is contributing to the government's 2030 National Agriculture Sector Strategy and the 2025 National Agriculture Investment Plan. Nine investment-oriented diagnostics to inform policy and investment frameworks were carried out. Efforts to identify HII priority-area typologies and define focus territories and engage stakeholders for implementation of the plans are ongoing.

Zimbabwe's HIH programme builds on the Government's agri-food systems transformation agenda through an extension of the "AgrInvest" programme. HIH strengthens AgrInvest with the stochastic profitability frontier analysis to identify territorial hotspots to accelerate programme implementation and impact, and with complementary work to reduce food losses and improve sustainable management of water resources, among others. Efforts are underway for inclusive value chain development, supporting the formulation of "Sector Development Plan Agreements" between the Government and the private sector. Instruments to lower risk and guarantee loans for the country's Agriculture Development Fund are also being developed, along with draft investment proposals for key infrastructure – irrigation, markets, 4 etc. — in the microregions. The Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Water and Rural Resettlement is in the process of aligning some of the strategies of AgrInvest with those of HIH.

Design of Multi-Partner HIH Dashboards

The HIH dashboards are essential to the effective delivery, management, governance and impact of the Initiative. The dashboards provide the following services:

- a) A simple checklist system for reporting progress in the inception phase against key programmatic milestones for developing a tailored Hand-in-Hand Program Plan, including both an anchor investment and the diverse contributions of multiple partners.
- b) A knowledge management system for all shareable programme work-related products, including donor and partner mappings, welfare maps, baseline georeferenced data for the country programme impact analysis, and stochastic profitability frontier analysis "heat maps".
- c) Regular reporting of progress against primary programme operational objectives and milestones, as well as SDG objectives, all with visualizations providing a guide and touchstone for the Government and partners and with links opening to more detailed programme pages — the main mechanism for ensuring transparency.
- d) A communications platform for partners to promote coordination to achieve programme milestones. This module enables information-sharing and coordination among partners in connection with regular progress reviews, supports plan revision when necessary, and provides selective public access, all strengthening national capacities and ownership.
- e) Reporting of impact on a rolling basis (traffic light system), with detailed quadrennial reporting against programme metrics prior to Sessions of the FAO Conference in 2023 and 2027. An important innovation of the HIH Initiative, aligned to new UN development system priorities, is to link FAO-supported activities more closely to national SDG-level targets and indicators.
- f) A system for aggregating and analyzing progress and results across HIH programme country experiences. This service extracts information from other services and allows programme-wide tracking against overall expected progress and further analysis.

I will open the floor to Members. May I please appeal to Members to be concise in their interventions? Since we had a three-hour session and we just managed one item and at this rate the Council will go back to what the Conference objected to, when it was two weeks and we reduced it to one.

The way we are going, we are heading for two weeks because if we take three hours to do one item. May I request you to be, please, concise and deal with the concepts when we are dealing with the conclusions? Let the Drafting Committee refine language, otherwise there is no use having one. I am going to put this on the Agenda of the next Informal Meeting and would like details of what exactly the Drafting Committee does because there have been times when the Drafting Committee finished in two hours and we cannot even finish one item in three hours. So, there is something odd about the work of the Drafting Committee and the work we do here.

Ms Ruth MALLET (Australia)

Australia appreciates the information presented on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. In particular, we welcome the update on the countries that are participating so far in our region, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

The summary of the challenges facing these countries is not surprising to us, including logistical, resource, infrastructural and communication constraints, and we note the on-going challenge of addressing these issues due to a lack of data in the region. To this end, we are pleased that work being conducted by the FAO under Hand-in-Hand has been able to link in with the Pacific Data Hub, which was launched late last year.

As a collective initiative led by the Secretariat for the Pacific Community, with support from a number of partners including the New Zealand and Australian Governments, the Pacific Data Hub has been designed to improve evidence-informed approaches to Pacific development. We are confident that the partnership between the Pacific Data Hub and Hand-in-Hand Initiative will serve to maximise the benefit to Pacific communities of both of these important initiatives.

Sr. Jose Teofilo ESONO ASANGONO (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial hace esta intervención conjuntamente con la República del Congo, en nombre de los países del Grupo Africano, los cuales agradecen a la Secretaría por la información. Estamos satisfechos de la iniciativa Mano de la Mano y sus repercusiones en el marco estratégico de la cooperación de la FAO para el desarrollo sostenible y el análisis común sobre los países. Es el resultado de un proceso de reflexión conjunta: los gobiernos, la FAO, la sociedad civil, el sector privado y los socios internacionales. Este marco de cooperación constituye un mecanismo basado en la solidaridad y colaboración que orienta los esfuerzos hacia los compromisos adquiridos a través de la Agenda 2030 y sus Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

Apreciamos los esfuerzos realizados por el Programa en el proceso de la aplicación de los últimos avances, trabajando en estrecha colaboración con los coordinadores residentes y con la totalidad de los equipos de las Naciones Unidas en los países para incrementar su eficiencia y eficacia en la labor en el terreno. Animamos el proceso de descentralización y los progresos realizados en materia de las oficina de los países.

Deseamos, entonces, el reforzamiento de las capacidades de las oficinas regionales y de los países por la dotación del personal de alto nivel. Pedimos un esfuerzo en la capacidad de movilización de recursos para apoyar el programa sobre el terreno y una mayor visibilidad en su implementación. Recomendamos al programa ser más flexible en la participación de los países y de continuar acordar la importancia, la cooperación sur-sur y la cooperación triangular haciendo una colaboración más estrecha con las agencias con sede en Roma.

Invitamos, por lo tanto, al programa a seguir con este instrumento de planificación estratégica, diálogo y cooperación, teniendo en consideración los principales desafíos de los países, las prioridades de los gobiernos, el valor agregado que la iniciativa puede proporcionar en la asistencia técnica, en particular, la situación actual de pandemia del COVID-19 y sus consecuencias en el conocimiento de experiencia compartida y de buenas prácticas para fortalecer las capacidades del sector público y la sociedad civil, en aras de garantizar el máximo impacto de las agendas de desarrollo de los países.

Señor Presidente, con esto comentarios el Grupo Regional Africano toma nota del Informe de la iniciativa Mano a Mano.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIOGHIS (Eritrea)

Eritrea appreciates and thanks FAO, especially the Programme Committee and the Secretariat, for issuing a comprehensive document.

Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statement made by Equatorial Guinea and Congo on behalf of Africa. FAO has facilitated the exchange of knowledge and policy dialogue between Members which is very pertinent and important to all stakeholders. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative is also part and parcel of the required development and is very commendable. It is a country-led and country-owned

programme to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development, which could help to eradicate poverty, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, and end hunger in all its forms of malnutrition, SDG2.

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative had a specific thematic focus as well as specific principles, objectives and technical support which makes it important as an approach. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative is a dynamic and collaborative approach at global and regional which is very supportive and can deliver in a clear and transparent approach. On the other hand, while facilitating and accelerating experimentation and learning among all partners, it is also a service to strengthen national ownership of the sustainable development process which all Member countries benefit from the development.

Therefore FAO has to make progress on the efficient and effective implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and provides guidance and deem it appropriate, in particular with the emphasis on building capabilities and strengthening national ownership of the sustainable development process.

To that extent, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is pertinent and important on achieving Member countries' priorities and objectives, including the One Health approach which could possibly avert animal origin pandemics such as COVID-19 and associated impacts.

Therefore, last but not least, Eritrea would like to stress the need to be considering the different ways the Hand-in-Hand approach, platforms, tools and mechanisms are being expanded, applied, and adopted, and provide fuller access and benefits for all Members.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Cuatro minutos a las doce, ha sido una jornada muy, muy larga pero queremos hacer esta declaración de todas formas. Acogemos con satisfacción los avances en la aplicación de la Iniciativa, no obstante las circunstancias extraordinarias abnegadas por la pandemia del COVID-19. Reconocemos el nivel de su alcance logrando apoyar a 36 países en los diferentes procesos orientados a la recuperación y desarrollo en una fase de recesión económica mundial sin precedentes.

Nicaragua reconoce que la iniciativa Mano de la Mano tiene enorme potencialidad aún por explorar. En los diferentes ámbitos relacionados con la alimentación, la agricultura, la salud, el medio ambiente, el uso de la tecnología y la innovación para una efectiva transformación y desarrollo sostenible de los sistemas productivos, en especial el de los territorios rurales.

Señor Presidente, mi delegación aprecia que la iniciativa sea dirigida en primera instancia por los países miembros y bajo la responsabilidad, que es un punto de fuerza que permite la debida apropiación y su desarrollo en base a las líneas estratégicas de cada país.

La FAO, en ese sentido, tomando en cuenta las ventajas comparativas como reservorio de conocimiento debe funcionar como catalizador y facilitador de las diferentes iniciativas para lograr que la cooperación, la complementariedad y la solidaridad en ámbito multilateral y con la participación de otras partes interesadas logren alcanzar los objetivos concretos. Reiteramos nuestro deseo de que Mano de la Mano, como iniciativa global, incorpore cada vez más a un número creciente de países que así lo requieran ampliando la platea de partes interesadas y permitir una adecuada movilización de recursos.

Acogemos con satisfacción, también, el diseño de los tableros de control de los programas de la iniciativa, los cuales van a permitir un mayor control nacional de los mismos, dando la posibilidad de reajustar y corregir las iniciativas si es necesario en aras de mejorar la eficacia y la eficiencia. Para finalizar, señor Presidente queremos agradecer a la FAO por el apoyo recibido a través de la división de economía agroalimentaria en el apoyo de evaluación nacional sobre la contribución del sector agroalimentario a la reactivación de la economía fundamentado en nuestro plan estratégico.

Con estos comentarios, Señor Presidente, felicitamos a la FAO por los esfuerzos realizados hasta la fecha. Esperamos contar en un futuro con mayores colaboraciones y recibir información sobre los avances de la iniciativa y su resultado sobre el terreno.

CHAIRPERSON

It is midnight, I have got five more speakers. I am told there is interpretation, so if Members want to finish this Item, we could continue, but if you want to break, we will break. As I say, we have five more speakers and we could easily finish this Item. What do you say? I see bright smiles. That means you agree. Thank you, we will carry on and we will finish this Item. Thank you so much.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

We wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the progress made today with respect to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. The United Nations' commitment to leave no one behind has led to the creation of an evidence-based country-led, country-owned programme designed to eradicate poverty and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

The programme taps into the undersupported potential of agriculture and agri-food value chains to transform rural territories, highlighting the incorporation of technology, innovations as drivers of change by gathering market, agro-ecological and farm level information to identify agricultural areas where there are opportunities for farmers to achieve their potential income and move out of hardship. The Caribbean is made up of many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and have experienced crippling impacts of national disasters that has left rural and periurban economies of our islands devastated.

We have all been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and once again at this time I wish to extend prayers and thoughts to the Island of St. Vincent and Grenadines. We acknowledge and congratulate Haiti with respect to the progress made with the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and note that the country has successfully identified national and international partners. Poverty maps and geospatial data have been combined in order to identify areas where the greatest impact can be felt with the greatest potential made in eradicating poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

We also note that the Bahamas, Jamaica and Belize have begun to work on developing the social and solidarity technical incubators for enhancing agro-business growth to support agro-food systems in peri-urban territories. The Bahamas will begin its first cycle of training of trainers in May. Jamaica and Belize will follow suit in the successive months.

As these countries advance in implementing the initiative, it is hoped that more countries in the region would, in the near future, be able to sign on to the programme to begin reaping the benefits of this unique initiative and transform food systems into more suitable, inclusive and resilient ones. The region recognizes the importance and benefits of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and we are encouraged with the progress that it has made thus far.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la presentación del informe sobre los avances en la aplicación de la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano, que nos permite a los Estados miembros comprender más ampliamente el alcance de esta iniciativa.

El Perú acoge con agrado que la Iniciativa esté comprendida dentro de las esferas programáticas del marco integrado de la FAO, como un componente para la aceleración de la transformación agrícola y el desarrollo rural sostenible, bajo una orientación específica hacia las personas más pobres y que padecen hambre, la diferenciación de territorios y estrategias, así como la integración de todas las dimensiones pertinentes de los sistemas agroalimentarios, a través del análisis y el establecimiento de asociaciones.

El Perú acoge los principales componentes del marco de participación de la Iniciativa bajo un esquema innovador que incorpora un planteamiento unificado de la FAO. Dichos componentes están permitiendo la adopción, adaptación e innovación de enfoques, herramientas, conocimientos y formas de trabajo, haciendo posible la integración y coordinación de las entidades del estado participante, de los organismos de las Naciones Unidas y de otros participantes asociados.

Como país parte de la Iniciativa, hacemos un llamado a todos los Miembros de la FAO y a todas las partes interesadas, a colaborar en la movilización de apoyo en todos los niveles y modos posibles, al

constituirse en una importante herramienta que puede lograr mayores impactos para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) y cumplir la promesa central y transformadora de la Agenda 2030 de no dejar a nadie atrás.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal for the European Union statement?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of San Marino aligns itself with this statement.

The EU and its Member States take note of the progress report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, including its Engagement Framework, and the state of play on the implementation of the Initiative in several countries.

We appreciate the flexibility and adaptability of the Initiative to enable broader access of Members to the major components of the Engagement Framework, including the methods, the analytical tools, training, the donor and partner mapping and investment support.

We furthermore welcome the aim to ensure that the Initiative is fully in line with the UN Development System reforms set out in General Assembly Resolution 72/279. We encourage FAO to continue to closely coordinate its work on the Initiative with other relevant agencies and to build on the assets of the UN Country Teams.

We recognise the Initiative's potential for joint action in tackling complex issues towards sustainable development. We wish to underline, however, the need to ensure that in the future the Initiative will have no further impact on the regular budget.

Furthermore, we underline the need for the Initiative to be country-led and country-owned, associating all active partners since the inception phase. We also stress the importance of strengthening national and local capacities, according to government priorities, for improved data integration and analysis. The Programme Dashboards are critically important for ensuring the overall leadership of the host country and achieving transparency. They are also instrumental for adapting the implementation when needed, for reporting on progress and accountability, and for enabling impact analysis.

Furthermore, we look forward to discussing in FAO's governing bodies the crosscutting data policy and privacy mechanisms, including the protocols governing the handling, governance, use and protection of data, also in relation to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Furthermore, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative being defined as one of the Programme Priority Areas, it is essential to ensure full transparency on its implementation, including through the effective circulation of information to Members. In particular, we would like to seek assurance that it will be possible for all Members to access information about the selection criteria of partners and the nature of partners' contributions in each country where the Initiative is implemented.

To conclude, we thank FAO for further shaping the Initiative as an additional means of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within FAO's mandate and request regular updates on the progress made in implementing the Initiative and the results achieved.

Mr Munyaradzi Amon Benedict TUMBARE (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe associates itself with the statement delivered by Equatorial Guinea on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. Chairperson, we welcome the progress report from the Hand-in-Hand Initiative which outlines the ongoing work in implementing the Initiative. For Zimbabwe, the initiative builds on the pre-existing AgriInvest Programme, which is a government-led, FAO-facilitated programme to support the Zimbabwe National Agriculture Investment Plan.

With the assistance of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the AgriInvest Programme has been strengthened by frontline mapping that identifies territorial hot spots to accelerate programme implementation and impact, and by complementary work aimed at reducing food losses and improving sustainable

management of water resources. Efforts focussing on responsible investment, promotion in agriculture and food systems as well as developing data systems to enhance agricultural policy, decision making and implementation have also been enhanced.

In this regard, we thank the FAO which facilitated training and capacity-building on the effective use of the geospatial data platform. The government is now familiar with these features and functions and this tool will enable effective targeting of the most critical regions.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation has delayed implementation of some aspects of the Initiative. However, some progress has been made. Through the partnership aspect of the programme, Zimbabwe has partnered with the United Arab Emirates which has offered a grant to accelerate the implementation of the initiative through support to value chains in the horticultural sector.

Zimbabwe is also working with the Netherlands on a food loss and waste programme. Further, the country is in the process of setting up an agricultural development fund that aims to de-risk and, therefore, attract private sector investment in the agri-food state.

In terms of the creation of inclusive value chains, preparation of sector development plan agreements for horticulture, wheat and soya are at an advanced stage. Zimbabwe highly appreciates how the Hand-in-Hand Initiative adapts to country needs by enhancing existing programmes whilst providing governments with the capacities to fine-tune them. We also appreciate inclusion of the programme dashboards which we believe will ensure a results-orientated approach throughout the implementation of the initiative.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Esapaña apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea en nombre propio y de sus 27 Estados Miembros al tiempo que desea hacer hincapié en los siguientes aspectos en relación con este punto. Uno. Acogemos con interés la participación creciente de los países en la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano, así como el desarrollo en los avances logrados. Dos. Acogemos también con beneplácito la elaboración de los principales componentes del marco de participación de la iniciativa, incluida la plataforma geospacial, el centro de datos y los paneles de control del programa que permiten formas de trabajo potentes, integradas bajo el enfoque emergente de una sola FAO garantizando la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas, así como facilitando al análisis de impacto.

Tres. Valoramos la capacidad de la iniciativa para permitir un mejor acceso a los métodos, las herramientas analíticas, la capacitación, el mapeo de donantes y socios y el apoyo a la inversión. Cuatro. Destacamos la importancia de asegurar vínculos estrechos entre esta iniciativa y otras existentes para evitar duplicaciones y crear sinergias. En este sentido, resulta necesario especificar debidamente los mecanismos de colaboración con otras agencias de Naciones Unidas. Cinco.

Además, resaltamos la importancia de que la iniciativa esté en consonancia con el Marco de Cooperación de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Sostenible y se integre en la programación conjunta del Sistema de Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo y la Agenda 2030. Seis. Quisiéramos asimismo evidenciar la importancia de debatir en los órganos rectores del 2021 la política de protección de datos y los mecanismos de privacidad de la FAO, así como el desarrollo de protocolos que rijan el manejo, el uso y la protección de los datos, incluida la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano.

Siete. Subrayamos el interés de potenciar el principio de la transparencia en todas las etapas de la Iniciativa, informando sobre el progreso y la rendición de cuentas y permitiendo el análisis de su impacto. En aras de esta transparencia, nos preguntamos si será posible que todos los Miembros accedan a la información sobre los criterios, selección de los socios y la naturaleza de sus contribuciones en cada país donde se implementa la Iniciativa. Ocho. Finalmente, reiteramos la importancia de que aún siendo la Iniciativa una de las 20 esferas programáticas prioritarias del Marco Estratégico, no conlleve un incremento del gasto en el presupuesto ordinario de la FAO.

Mr François CLOUTIER (Canada)

Canada appreciates FAO's Hand-in-Hand Initiative and its six guiding principles and stresses the importance of the country-led and country-owned nature of this initiative. Canada is proud to

announce that it will be granting the FAO geospatial platform CAD 165 000 for the fiscal year of 2020-21. We are glad to offer our help towards this critical initiative, supporting the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Ms Xi LI (China)

China would like to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We thank the Secretariat for the informative update on the progress of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. The progress made in the Hand-in-Hand reflects the solidarity of all FAO Members and their willingness to collaborate in mobilizing support to end poverty and hunger, particularly during the extraordinary circumstances of the simultaneous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic recession and climate change.

We take note of the progress made in the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in supporting 36 participating countries. We appreciate that the inception process for a majority of country programmes is nearing the milestone of agreements and that the match-making efforts will soon achieve formalization of the programme investment plans.

Can the translator get me? Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON

It keeps coming and going. We cannot hear.

Ms Xi LI (China)

I am sorry, Chairperson. I just want to clarify, do we need to close this topic tonight?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, we are close to it and I thought that is what we agreed, that we close this Item tonight. That is why please be concise because we cannot keep making very lengthy statements on this. Especially when not so much you, but there have been regional statements that, again, are very lengthy and speakers keep getting...

Ms Xi LI (China)

I am sorry, I am speaking on behalf of our Regional Group. Shall we continue it tomorrow morning?

CHAIRPERSON

No, please continue because if we continue tomorrow, we will never finish the Council because the items outstanding is a huge list. I would appeal to Members to continue with this Item and we finish this Item. I know it is getting late but, despite that, the Members keep adding to the list and that is why I am requesting to be concise. Do not repeat, particularly when this Item is not the first time it is coming before the Council but some of the statements I hear are as if this Item is here for the first time before Members. Please be concise. Go ahead, carry on.

Ms Xi LI (China)

Asia Regional Group would like to echo the important role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) among countries in enhancing the achievements of Hand-in-Hand Initiative objectives in the regions, due to similarity in geographical conditions, stage of development and culture in order to deliver relevant, targeted and cost-effective development solutions. Within the broad framework of collaboration in the form of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the developing countries can share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts.

With regard to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative Engagement Framework, we support the One FAO Approach in line with the repositioning of the UN development system, to bolster the collaborative responses and the efficiency of the Organization in delivering of programme support to the country level. We encourage the efforts to intensify collaboration, more closely integrated normative and technical work, including relevant Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products, into country

support within the Hand-in-Hand Initiative Engagement Framework and to enable faster knowledge-sharing and learning.

With regard to the implementation at the country level, we request that FAO Regional and Country Offices to engage in close consultation with governments to identify the priorities of the participating country for more concrete bottom-up learning from the country itself and to provide global networking, including the development of mechanisms to ensure the delivery of support and the achievement of operational objectives to the beneficiary country in due time. Sorry for the connection. We will send our original correspondence to the Council, if it is allowed.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Thailand, and may I request, we just heard the Asia Group statement so please ensure that the same arguments are not dealt with and there are different aspects. If they have not been covered by the Regional Group statement, to concentrate on those and avoid any repetitive aspect of the statement.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

I would like to address our statement, which is aligned with the regional statement delivered by China. We appreciate FAO for this update on the progress of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. We welcome the progress made in the implementation and also we acknowledge that the initiative supports the countries and also to ensure that these activities are country-owned and country-led, which is very important.

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative also emphasizes the importance of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation among the countries, especially the countries in the regions. It is very important. We also encourage the efforts of FAO to integrate the normative work and also the technical work and also to ensure that the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products have been used and utilized at the country level within the Hand-in-Hand Initiative framework and also to make sure that we enable the knowledge-sharing and learning and also the experience sharing among the countries in the regions.

We also would like to encourage FAO to continue providing the regular updates on the implementation of Hand-in-Hand Initiative to make sure that all the countries get benefit from this Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Sra. Julia VICIOSO VARELAS (República Dominicana)

Queríamos solo dar nuestro total apoyo a la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano y resaltar, sobre todo, el trabajo para Haití como también resalto Bahamas.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Cooperación sur-sur y triangular, sí, firme apoyo. La necesidad de incluir iniciativas en el terreno a países UMIX, para el desarrollo, transferencia de capacidades, conocimientos, porque lo que los países necesitan es justamente este tipo de elementos fundamentales para salir del subdesarrollo. Con respecto al tema de datos, transparencia de la información, sí, pero la divulgación de los datos de cada país o entre países de acuerdo al principio de la soberanía de los países a los efectos de no afectar la soberanía de los mismos.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

It is a bit difficult situation in this part of the world. It is already 07:30 hours in the morning. I hope that for the next Council, I think there should be some kind of reform on how to proceed with all the discussions.

Japan aligns itself with the statement made by China on behalf of the Asia Group. I would like to very briefly just point out some of the factors that were not covered by the regional statement.

In general, we appreciate and welcome the Initiative and hope that will contribute to better matching and improvement of the transparency and mutual accountabilities. Also, the work should be based upon the discussions made by the contracted parties that will be continuously required. Just some

remarks about the data collection and the analysis. First of all, the reliable and the free flows of the data is important and the fair access to those data and flows should be ensured. Data and analysis tools should not be monopolized or should not be in the hands of particular countries, particular enterprises and particular groups.

When it comes to the data collection, the appropriate attention should be paid to the information management, including the adequate consideration paid to privacy and of course the analysis process should be transparent in order that a contracting party can monitor how the analysis is made.

The data collection and match-making is quite important, so we request that the periodical reporting on these works [inaudible 00:26:05 – 00:26:06] was the very first purpose of the projects and the Initiative.

Last but not least, on the investments. We believe that it is important to invite and to give incentive to the various partners for the investment, especially from the private sectors. In that case, we should promote responsible investment. In order to do so, the necessary information will be provided to donors. At the same time, and more importantly, the adequate consideration to environment protection, human rights are also quite important, but also the adequate protection of intellectual property rights is also important so those should be reflected on the particular project and work within the framework of this new Initiative.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Japan. That brings to an end Members of the Council. I have one Observer, Sudan. I give you the floor. Please be concise.

Ms Sadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Observer) (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

I am making this statement on behalf of the Near East Group on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. We commend the efforts made by the Organization to support agricultural development through mechanisms and initiatives that can ensure sustainable development and we appreciate the Hand-in-Hand Initiative that can accelerate progress towards sustainable development in the rural context and address poverty and hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

Our Group also welcomes the specific nature of this initiative because it enables countries to be not only beneficiaries but to have a role in which they have more responsibility in this Initiative and we appreciate very much the innovative approach to participation in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. However, the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative must involve the Regional and Country Offices and these Offices must be an integral part of the Initiative. We welcome the global approach also to resource mobilization, including also resources in kind, in particular relating to technology.

We welcome more efforts to make available the necessary technology and technical innovation in the countries that do not have this capacity with a focus on smallholder agriculture and family farming in developing countries.

We welcome also all efforts that are being made to implement this Initiative and to expand its coverage, stepping up the exchange of information. Of course, there are huge divides among countries relating to this technology and therefore we call on FAO to strive to fill this gap, to reduce this divide.

Our Group focusses very much on the development of national capacity in areas such as statistics and data collection and this is very important, to have policies in place that make it possible to take the necessary decisions and implement priority initiatives. Countries must be able to access GIS systems to be able to carry out analyses in common, to share information and monitor this way the implementation. It was very important that this initiative be expanded to cover more countries in our region. Many of our countries are experiencing food insecurity and chronic malnutrition and therefore it is very important.

CHAIRPERSON

I think the list of speakers is exhausted. I now invite the Chairperson of the Programme Committee to make any remarks they may wish to. Ambassador Hans Hoozeveld, you have the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer) (Netherlands) (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

As you have seen also from the interventions, we had a very rich and positive discussion in the Programme Committee about the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. Despite the extraordinary circumstances prevailing due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hand-in-Hand Initiative is supporting now 30 participating countries and has achieved significant progress on the implementation.

Members appreciate the flexibility exercised to enable border access with their consent to the Hand-in-Hand methodology piece, data platforms, training, partnering mechanisms and investment support. Members of the Committee welcome the design of the proposed Hand-in-Hand Programme dashboards which will serve as a means of ensuring national ownership of the supported programmes while also enabling sustained alignment, communication and, when necessary, adjustments among the partners throughout the multi-year period of the national programme implementation and support.

They also recognize that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative has become a catalyst and key support to strengthening the Organization's capacity to deliver integrated evidence-based technical policy and investment support and noted that this will build benefit to all interested Members by increasing the quality, the benefits, the skill and impact of FAO support at the national and regional level as well, of course, as FAO's global normative work.

To conclude, the Programme Committee was more than positive to see the progress made, especially on the corporate data policy and look forward to its implementation.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen. Thank you for this statement. I now invite the Secretariat. Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, you have the floor.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

First, Hand-in-Hand is a country-led, country-driven initiative in all its dimensions and I am very happy to hear from the beneficiary countries that they are getting very positive results from what we are doing. That is the best thing of how this initiative has been successful. All the data in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is public. As of last week we have 37 countries. In the report we mention 36, we have now 37 countries involved in Hand-in-Hand, 12 countries which already have investment plans being finalized and 12 where we are completing the initial studies of the investment plans.

We are working in all the regions of the world, as it has been reported and reported also by the Director-General. We want to thank enormously Canada for the contribution to the special platform. This is really valuable, and we also want to thank Australia for the link with the Pacific Data app. That is essential because it provided a universe of new data that will help us enormously to make decisions in the Pacific Islands.

Hand-in-Hand has at its core transparency in all its dimensions and that is why we are also developing the dashboard that will increase the level of transparency. All protocols of FAO and regulations are followed for any partner selection for any contact arrangement that we do in the Hand-in-Hand.

Finally, we of course protect human rights, data privacy, data access to everybody, property rights and we will implement the data policy as it was requested and is being developed by the legal department of FAO.

In summary, I want to thank all the positive comments and I just wanted to reference that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is an extremely productive and efficient initiative, given that we do not use resources of FAO Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) resources and I hope at some point we will align properly the incentives towards this initiative.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Colleagues, now I will read out my conclusions on this Item 6.

1. The Council welcomed document CL 166/6, *The Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, and:

- a) commended the tangible progress made on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative in supporting 37 participating countries despite the extraordinary circumstances prevailing due to the simultaneous impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic recession, as well as more localized impacts of extreme weather events, pest infestations, conflict and food emergencies which affected the Hand-in-Hand countries;
- b) welcomed the commitment to achieve similar objectives in all 37 countries by the end of 2021;
- c) appreciated the flexibility exercised to enable broader access of FAO Members to Hand-in-Hand methodologies, geospatial data platforms, training, partnering mechanisms and investment support, working within existing resources and structures;
- d) welcomed the Organization's new way of working to more closely integrate normative work, including technical and policy work, to country support within an emerging One FAO framework;
- e) recognized that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative has become a catalyst and key support to strengthening the Organization's capacity to deliver integrated, evidence-based, technical, policy and investment support and noted that this will benefit all Members by increasing the quality, relevance, scale and impact of FAO-supported national and regional programmes, as well as FAO's global normative work;
- f) appreciated FAO's commitment to national ownership of Hand-in-Hand programmes, while enabling an open, inclusive and accountable approach to expanded partnerships with a range of qualified actors at local, national and international levels, including the private sector, to deliver essential means of implementation for the programmes;
- g) welcomed the design of the proposed Hand-in-Hand programme dashboards, which will serve as a means of ensuring national ownership of the supported programmes while also enabling sustained alignment, communications and when necessary adjustment among the partners throughout the multi-year period of national programme implementation and support;
- h) recalled the need for the Initiative to be coherent with the objectives and actions outlined by the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and to be fully integrated within the joint programming of the UN development system and the 2030 Agenda; and
- i) requested regular updates on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, including progress reports and results achieved.

That ends my list of conclusions and we can take the text subparagraph by subparagraph and the floor is open.

Subparagraph (a), any requests for the floor? I see none, so we agree on subparagraph (a).

Subparagraph (b).

Ms Xi LI (China)

On subparagraph (a), should it be 37 countries? And also subparagraph (b).

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, 37, that is what Mr Máximo Torero Cullen just informed us, that it is 37, so it should be 37.

CHAIRPERSON

We are on subparagraph (b). I see no requests, so subparagraph (b) is agreed.

Subparagraph (c). I see no requests for the floor, so (c) is agreed.

Subparagraph (d).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sugiero en el subpárrafo (d), eliminar “work”

Continues in English

“integrate normative, technical and policy work, to country support within an emerging One FAO.” It is necessary to delete “including”.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thank you, the Ambassador of Argentina, for his work. In subparagraph (d), I would like to add after “policy work,” “including CFS products”.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco la constructiva y positivo aporte de mi querido amigo, el Embajador de Tailandia. Solamente preferiría que luego de “including CFS”, “non-binding products”.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment from Members from subparagraph (d) as amended? I see no requests, so subparagraph (d) we agree.

Subparagraph (e). Any request for the floor? I see none. Subparagraph (e) is adopted.

Subparagraph (f).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En el subpárrafo (e), mi sugerencia es poner “science-based”. Esa es mi propuesta, “science-based.” Yo no propuse “science and evidence-based”. Yo propuse “science-based”.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal but, to make it short, it is very late, I also have a suggestion here. Keep it “science and evidence-based” as we have done throughout the document, and in the first line I think we should not overdo it. “Key support.” Call it “important support.” It is 37 Members out of 194. So, I understand that it is important to many people and it is an initiative of the Director-General but I think “catalyst and important support” reflects the reality better than “key support.” Thank you.

If you now could please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer)(Portugal)

I would like to propose at the end of this subparagraph adding the following sentence, which I will read, “and ensure that the initiative will not have further impact on FAO’s regular budget in the upcoming years.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Donde dice “and impact of FAO-supported national, regional” “and sub-regional programmes”.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We disagree with the new words from the European Union. We would like to adopt the previous expression on the previous Council, which reads, “no further impact on FAO’s regular budget in FAO’s PWB 2020-2021” and delete “in upcoming years”.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Chief Economist.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Very briefly, just to clarify so that we do not use numbers improperly. Thirty-seven are beneficiary countries of the countries which are eligible, which are not Members of FAO, plus this does not include the countries that collaborate with beneficiary countries. It is extremely important activity in that sense.

CHAIRPERSON

What should we put there? 37 or 36?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

No, what I am saying, because it was mentioned, that this only was 37 countries affected by Hand-in-Hand. I am saying, which is improper use of the numbers because it is 37 countries of the eligible countries for Hand-in-Hand, which is not all the Members of FAO. The 37 does not include the countries which support these 37 beneficiary countries. I was just clarifying the use of the numbers.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. So, we are on subparagraph (e).

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I echo the words from our colleague from Argentina that please do not delete our proposals before we have the opportunity to return to these. Please if the Secretariat is so kind, we want to return to the previous wording we have here from our proposal. If you want to do that.

I am really sorry. We are all very tired. Tomorrow will be, again, another long day.

What we understand from the beginning of the proposal of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is that it will be absolutely financed by voluntary contributions. That is what was promised to the Members and we already know that there is always the regular budget to do this but, anyway, that is why we are using the word “further”. However, we should keep, and it is clear from what was proposed to Members.

Now we have another proposal that came from China in full respect of Members and all people here and we are very keen to understand but regarding what was proposed in the Initiative and regarding what we have in the document that supports the Initiative, we would like to understand why our proposal cannot be accepted and, again the reasoning behind going for the Programme of Work and Budget that is almost finished. We have six months until the end of the year, and why we want to prevent that the regular budget should not finance an Initiative as it is designed and as it is presented to the Governing Bodies of the FAO.

Thank you, and, as you can imagine, we stick to our proposal.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We really want to make it brief. First of all, this Item has already been discussed in the Programme Committee, which is in paragraph 12. This is the rationale behind that. Since it is quite late at night, so we would tend to adopt the expression that has already been accepted previously.

Also, we do not think that it is appropriate to use “upcoming years” which is quite ambiguous and it is not okay for the Council to use such a term that has no limits on the specific years. We do not think that is okay, so we prefer to use a more specific expression which has already been accepted on the previous Programme Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor on this paragraph? May I suggest we send this paragraph to the Drafting Committee? Because it is matter of words.

We move on to subparagraph (f). The Drafting Committee will deal with what it should be.

This should be the Council’s opinion. What the Programme Committee has decided, as I pointed out in earlier discussions, the Council considers those and gives an opinion of its views. So, let the Drafting Committee work out the wording. The concepts are there, so it means refining the wordings. So, let the Drafting Committee do that. Every region is represented in the Drafting Committee, so we will refer that.

We go to subparagraph (f).

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Subparagraph (f), we would like to propose to add some words here. “Appreciated FAO’s commitment and support to country-led and country-owned programmes of Hand-in-Hand Initiative.”

CHAIRPERSON

So, subparagraph (f) with these amendments.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Yes. And also after subparagraph (f) I would like to add an additional subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

First let us deal with subparagraph (f). Any comment from Members on amended subparagraph (f)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En principio, estoy de acuerdo con la propuesta de mejora de texto por parte del Embajador de Tailandia, lo único que no tengo claro, pero por allí puede clarificarlo la Secretaría, es "qualified actors". No entiendo qué quiere decir "qualified actors". No comprendo esa expresión, "with a range of qualified actors". ¿Qué quiere decir, "qualified"?

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, would you be able to help?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

No, this was not written by me but the intention, I think, is actors that comply with the regulations of FAO. I assume that is what we are looking for here. For example, private sector companies have to go through the process of the private sector and so on and so forth. So, range of actors that comply with FAO regulations at local, national and international level.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, is that helpful?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Está bien para mí lo que sugiera en este tema el Economista en Jefe está bien. Simplemente lo consulté porque no entendía el concepto.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Argentina. So, if there are no further comments on amended subparagraph (f), we agree with (f), and I give the floor to Thailand for the additional paragraph.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

We would like to add an additional subparagraph: “highlighted the important role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation among countries in enhancing the achievement of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative objectives in the region due to similarity in geographical conditions, state of development, and culture.”

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

I would suggest to add after “development”: “, specific needs, priorities, context and culture.”

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Solo para apoyar la propuesta de Tailandia con el agregado de Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor? On new subparagraph (g), I see none, so (g) is agreed.

Subparagraph (h). Any requests for the floor for subparagraph (h)? I see none, so subparagraph (h) is agreed.

Subparagraph (i). I see no requests for the floor, so subparagraph (i) is agreed.

Subparagraph (j). Japan, is it for subparagraphs (i) or (j)?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

It is for subparagraph (j).

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, go ahead.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I agree with this concept so I would like to add some components that we believe important, after “achieved”, “, taking into consideration the importance of free and fair access to data and analysis, appropriate management of data and information and privacy, as well as adequate protection of environment, human rights and intellectual property rights.” I am flexible with the wording.

Sr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Qué difícil a esta hora seguir el debate, pero, la verdad es que agradezco la creatividad y la capacidad de propuesta de Japón, pero aquí en este párrafo tenemos una cantidad de conceptos y de elementos complicados para discutir ahora.

La verdad, creo que lo mejor es mantener el párrafo como estaba propuesto por la Secretaría, porque si entramos a analizar hay incluso mezcla de conceptos que, creo que, quizás no sería lo mejor, ni siquiera tenerlos juntos. Por ejemplo, hablar de environment, human rights, intellectual property todo en el mismo nivel, me parece que entraríamos en un debate complicado y la verdad que valoro la proactividad de Japón pero, lamentablemente, en este tema no lo puedo acompañar.

En este caso, lo menos es más. Preferiría mantenerme con el párrafo tal cual fue presentado por la Secretaría.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, would you reflect on this and could we stick to the original wording?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I fully agree with your comments about our tiredness, it is the right time. I sympathise with what you said in that we cannot spend much time on the components I just proposed. I will not stick to the wording, but I would like to have some kind of the essence of these elements. Maybe we can say good governance or something, but, again, it is a difficult time to discuss the wording.

I would leave this concept. If the Drafting Committee can have very concise explanations and proposals, that can be the way forward. Is that a good way forward? I will not stick to each component, but good governance or, especially, how to deal with data and information, is quite important for us. I just wanted to have this short reference, but I fully agree with Argentina. We should not be spending time discussing those elements or the wording and so on. I will just leave it to the Committee.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We highly respect our Japanese colleague's proposal, but we do not think that this is an editorial issue. We prefer the position of the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina to delete this part and stay clean and short with the original expression prepared by the Secretariat.

We would like to call your attention to one more thing. Thank you very much for proposing that subparagraph (e) be sent to the Drafting Committee. However, we are quite afraid that this is not an editorial issue about the decision. It is about a budgetary decision: whether the Council can decide the budgetary issue of future years and upcoming years, or it can only limit its mandate on these two years

of the Programme of Work and Budget. We believe this is quite a vital issue; so, we prefer to solve it right now with the consent from the Members of the Council.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quizás sería mejor escuchar primero a Japón. En función de eso, yo hablaría, pero sí quiero dejar sentado una cosa que me preocupa. Me preocupa, en solidaridad con los Miembros que van a ser parte del Comité de Redacción, porque yo estoy de acuerdo con usted, Presidente, en que no hay que discutir acá el rol que tiene que cumplir el Comité de Redacción, pero, a veces, hay cuestiones conceptuales que son complicadas porque va a ser muy difícil que el Comité de Redacción haga lo que no podemos hacer acá. Me parece complicado. Creo que, en el caso del subpárrafo E, allí estamos en un tema conceptual y creo que va a ser difícil que eso lo pueda resolver el Comité de Redacción.

En relación a la sugerencia de mi estimado colega de Japón, yo creo que el tema de data ya está capturado en otro párrafo y las demás cuestiones yo las sintetizaría como good practices, por allí, pero no más que eso, porque si empezamos a incluir conceptos, vamos a convertir el párrafo en un Christmas Tree, en un árbol de Navidad. Creo que mejor, en este caso, insisto, en reducir a lo menos, pero si tuviera que sugerir un párrafo alternativo, solamente a los efectos de tratar de comprender lo planteado por mi colega de Japón. Diría, en el último párrafo. Podemos ir en la pantalla a ver el último párrafo. Luego de “results achieved” “, taking into account the importance of applying internationally-agreed standards in data management”.

Pero en todo caso, preferiría igual que hubiese una consulta técnica con la Secretaria, si la propuesta que hacemos no tiene una incompatibilidad técnica que por ahí a mí se me escapa a esta hora de la noche.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

What I suggest to bring to the Committee, it might be that it is not the technical issues. In the response of the Chief Economist, he mentioned that FAO is very much considering the management of data privacy and the environment, a similar kind of thing. I thought that they can technically come up with one concise word to capture all the elements that fit this paragraph. My suggestion was not mature, but I am just slow in my ideas and the concept. If the Committee can come up with better wording, that will be quite good for me. That was my intention. But being in this situation, I would appreciate the Argentinian colleague’s proposal if that is okay with other parties.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, could you react to the suggestion made by Argentina?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

Yes, if it is okay with others, I will be fine.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes. Then, if there is no other comment on subparagraph (j), subparagraph (j) is agreed.

Now, we come back to the subparagraph (e), with China’s comment.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to make a statement?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We are all tired, this is a late hour at night. For the sake of compromise, we can go along with saying “no further impact on FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-23”, as I said, given the late hour and for the sake of compromise.

I should remind Members of the Council that this was written by the Secretariat in the proposal of the Hand-In-Hand Initiative. It has all been financed by voluntary contributions. We are just pointing out what we have in the documents that are supporting our work here.

I am begging the indulgence of Members, we are only sticking to what we have on the table regarding the Initiative. I think that this is a fair request from our side, from the European Union and its 27 Member States. We are involved in the 37 that are already supporting the Initiative. In our humble view, it is a fair request from our side. With your indulgence, this is our proposal to you.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We really appreciate the European Union's flexibility and spirit of compromise. We would like to give our reason. "Upcoming years" is ambiguous, that is why we cannot accept it. We think that, because the budget needs to be approved by a specific governing body, like the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC), especially the FC, and the PWB will be reviewed by the Council every two years, instead of being reviewed by the Council in the so-called "upcoming years". Therefore, we cannot agree that the Council makes a decision that has such ambiguity.

CHAIRPERSON

China, "upcoming years" has been deleted now.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We just wanted to appreciate the European Union's flexibility and give our rationale. We would also like to show our flexibility in wanting to change the wording into: "appreciated that the Initiative would not have further impact on PWB 2022-23". We will put this in the chat box.

CHAIRPERSON

So, okay, then, with that, I think we can agree, but I give the floor to the United States and then Germany.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I was going to offer support to the European Union's proposal, but perhaps we should go to the European Union, Germany, first to see their reaction to this.

In general, we support ensuring that the Initiative does not have further impact on FAO's regular budget, but we can be flexible on whether we word it "PWB 2022 to 2023", or more generally "the regular budget".

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

For Portugal, please.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am not a native English speaker, as you and all the people in the room probably already noticed. I have doubts about the adequacy of "appreciation" in this proposal by our distinguished colleague from China. I recognise that it is probably for the sake of compromise, but we want to give a clear message about what we have in the documents, what was promised to us, what the nature of the Initiative is that is already on the table and is put on the table for the next years. That is what we have in the document that supports this proposal.

So, we can go with your proposal, go to the Drafting Committee and probably the United States of America which are much better with English than what I can understand here. But, from my point of view, from my limited knowledge of English, we prefer to return to "ensure" instead of "appreciated", with the indulgence of our distinguished colleague from China.

CHAIRPERSON

So, your difficulties with the word "appreciated" because you agreed to delete "upcoming years" and China agreed to change the budget from 2020-21 to 2022-23 like you had suggested So the only difference seems to be the word "appreciated"?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Yes, indeed. I agree with your summary of what I want to say.

CHAIRPERSON

China, so this is not a concept, it is the word, so perhaps the Drafting Committee, but I will give the floor to Japan. You wanted to deal with this wording or some other wording?

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

No, I just want to echo what the European Union and United States of America colleagues said. It is almost done between them. Just respect the decisions and work of the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

China, now it is just the word “appreciated”. So, no concept; that is a refinement of a word.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We appreciate the flexibility shown by our European Union colleagues. It is quite late, so we would like to accept the European Union’s proposal and wish everyone a good night.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we amend it? What is outstanding now? With that, I think we have concluded this Item and I want to thank Members, I know it is late, it is not only late but Members have been engaged throughout the day, so you must be exhausted. I thank you because at least we have gained two Items off our table so we can deal first thing in the morning with some of the other Items which still belong - we should have finished those, and tomorrow would have been another Order of the Day.

But I cannot ask you to stay because I see everybody is exhausted. Although I am game for continuing and I am 81 years old. I say goodnight to you and I thank you sincerely for staying on and dealing with this Item.

The meeting rose at 01:27 hours

La séance est levée à 01 h 27

Se levanta la sesión a las 01.27

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
FIFTH PLENARY SESSION CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
28 April 2021

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:31 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 31
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 09.31
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 17. Multilingualism at FAO**Point 17. Multilinguisme au sein de la FAO****Tema 17. El multilingüismo en la FAO***(CL 166/17)***CHAIRPERSON**

Let us start our Session. Our next item is Item 17, which is *Multilingualism at FAO*. Please ensure that you have document *CL166/17* before you. The introduction by the Deputy-Director General, Mr Laurent Thomas, has been circulated to you. This Item was discussed at the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee.

Introduction to Item 17: Multilingualism at FAO

Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General

Multilingualism, a defining characteristic of FAO as an international, intergovernmental agency, is essential for the inclusive, effective and efficient exercise of the governance of the Organization by its Members. Multilingualism is firmly rooted in FAO's Basic Texts, results framework and established policy. Rule XLVIII of the General Rules of the Organization establishes that "*Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the languages of the Organization*"; all six languages enjoy equal status within FAO, without the distinction of "official" and "working" languages which exists in other multilateral and United Nations institutions.

The importance of multilingualism at FAO has been significantly enhanced since the election of Director-General QU Dongyu in 2019, by being embedded across a much wider span of the Organization's products and services. This includes interpretation and translation for meetings of Governing Bodies, Statutory Bodies and other meetings; translation of flagship and other corporate publications; translation of communication products; availability of some multilingual products in non-FAO languages; and ensuring multilingualism in the human resources management of the Organization's employees.

The ambition of the Organization is to gear up multilingualism further, through a series of forward-looking approaches and measures covering all of its transversal dimensions, including through improved internal coordination, increased innovation and digitalization, and enhanced alignment with the United Nations system.

In particular, FAO is committed to implementing the recommendations of the relevant 2020 report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, especially on the strategic policy framework for multilingualism, and appointment of a corporate coordinator for multilingualism. These measures are aimed *inter alia* at increasing the quantum and balance of multilingual goods and services in FAO languages, as well as the provision of products in non-FAO languages on a demand-driven basis.

In addition, measures put in place to improve the timeliness of publication of papers and documents in all languages for meetings of the Governing Bodies will continue, including by strengthening the processes for preparation of documents in the original language in which they are drafted.

I will open the floor to Members for their interventions and comments.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, only to break the ice.

Continúa en español

Nadie está más fresco que usted, Presidente. Usted es el que está en mejores condiciones que todos. La Argentina entiende la importancia que tiene la comunicación, no solo para transmitir las cosas con claridad, sino de llegar al otro con eficacia o para crear una dinámica colaborativa.

Por ello, apoya y fomenta activamente el multilingüismo por considerarlo un principio inherente a la propia existencia de las Naciones Unidas. Reconocemos que el multilingüismo está firmemente arraigado en los textos fundamentales de la FAO. El árabe, el chino, el español, el francés, el inglés y

el ruso son los idiomas de la Organización, por consiguiente los seis idiomas gozan de la misma condición en la FAO y no se hace ninguna distinción entre idiomas oficiales e idiomas de trabajo como en otras instituciones multilaterales y de las Naciones Unidas.

De esta manera, nos preocupa la existencia a veces de un desbalance en cuanto a los servicios de interpretación, en especial en las reuniones informales llevadas a cabo en la FAO en el Marco de Procesos Consultivos sustanciales para los Miembros e incluso, en las mesas de los Órganos rectores o Comités Directivos de Días o Años internacionales.

Los idiomas deben facilitar la inclusividad y nunca deberían ser un obstáculo para la participación de la Membresía. A su vez, atento al multilingüismo es una característica definitoria de la FAO, ésta debería procurar que las personas que ocupan los puestos superiores de la Organización, se expresen en su lengua materna en tanto ésta sea reconocida como oficial.

Se recuerda que si bien, los propios méritos de las personas son fundamentales para ocupar los distintos cargos en la FAO, la representatividad geográfica y, por ende, la diversidad idiomática que ello implica, también es un factor que incide en la conformación de los altos cargos del organigrama.

La Argentina está lista para colaborar en la búsqueda de soluciones creativas e innovadoras, aportar ideas, instando a repensar viejos modelos para dar espacio a todos por igual, sin discriminaciones, adaptándose a los tiempos actuales. Aún sin contar con recursos presupuestarios adicionales y dentro de los existentes, pero sí con la equidad como criterio para hacer justicia en la escasez.

Por ello, mucho preocupa a la Argentina, todo intento de vincular el multilingüismo a cuestiones de índole presupuestaria, tal como se entiende de la propuesta de establecer un fondo fiduciario mundial para el multilingüismo. Ya la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas ha sido contundente al establecer que, en esa instancia, la cuestión debe ser resuelta mediante la distribución equitativa de los recursos presupuestarios existentes.

No puede ser más clara nuestra posición en la defensa irrestricta del multilingüismo, por ello es que nos preocupa que pueda deslizarse una peligrosa interpretación que discrimine entre supuestas categorías de idiomas oficiales con pretendidos correlatos presupuestarios a favor de unos y en perjuicio de otros.

Semejante interpretación resultaría inaceptable por cuanto el principio de la necesaria paridad lingüística impone el tratamiento equitativo de los seis idiomas oficiales en un pie de igualdad y sin discriminaciones. Las asignaciones presupuestarias no pueden ni deben apartarse de ese mismo principio, por cuanto los seis idiomas oficiales tienen igual derecho a ser atendidos con los recursos asignados para el desempeño del mandato general de la FAO.

Los recursos no deberían ser asignados a una única división, unidad y, mucho menos, a un idioma en particular, sino que integran el presupuesto general de la Organización. Por todo ello, y con esto termino, resulta primordial contar con mayor información actualizada, incluyendo estadísticas más desagregadas sobre el uso de idiomas en los diferentes productos y servicios de la FAO tal como las contenidas en Informes previos y que permitan confirmar las tendencias de uso de idiomas por parte del público y de los Miembros y detectar las necesidades y diseñar herramientas para responder a esa demanda en el marco de la transparencia que ha de guiar la FAO.

Quiero terminar agradeciéndole, Presidente, porque siempre ha hecho un gran esfuerzo por tratar que las discusiones de sustancias siempre contáramos por lo menos en la mayor cantidad de las veces con los servicios de interpretación y, eso, es la demostración de lo que significa un Presidente Independiente del Consejo. Y también quiero agradecer al personal, a la Administración de la FAO, en cabeza del Director General Adjunto, señor Laurent Thomas, por el esfuerzo, el haber capturado la preocupación de los Miembros. Por lo tanto, nuestros comentarios son constructivos en la intención de seguir defendiendo este principio y esperemos que sigamos profundizando la equidad en todos los idiomas como he expresado anteriormente.

Mme Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

En tant que pays avec deux langues officielles, le Canada est un fervent partisan du multilinguisme, y compris à la FAO, en appui également à l'inclusivité et à la diversité. Nous félicitons la FAO pour sa

réponse rapide à la demande de la 165e session du Conseil de développer des solutions pour améliorer la rapidité de publication des documents pour les réunions des organes directeurs dans toutes les langues.

Ce document souligne efficacement l'importance de garantir une traduction et une interprétation efficaces et en temps voulu des activités de la FAO dans toutes les langues officielles. Le Canada se réjouit que le Secrétariat de la FAO travaille avec diligence pour s'assurer que les Membres aient toujours accès aux documents des réunions des organes directeurs et des comités techniques suffisamment en amont des dates des événements.

Le Canada tient également à souligner qu'en raison de la place centrale du multilinguisme à la FAO et dans tout le système des Nations Unies, il est essentiel que les réunions du Conseil d'administration bénéficient d'un service d'interprétation.

Ainsi, le Canada soutient la pratique actuelle de suspendre les réunions lorsque l'interprétation programmée n'est plus disponible et recommande que les organes directeurs utilisent autant que possible les mécanismes de chronométrage, et continue à insister fortement auprès des participants et des membres sur la nécessité d'être succinct. Nous encourageons la FAO à s'inspirer des meilleures pratiques des Nations Unies, y compris des recommandations énoncées dans la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies 71-328e.

Nous demandons également à la FAO de tirer parti des progrès technologiques pour accroître l'efficacité et garantir la rentabilité. Finalement, nous encourageons la FAO à fournir des services améliorés dans les limites du budget existant.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO GUISSOU (Burkina Faso)

Ce sujet m'interpelle tout particulièrement en tant que ressortissante du Burkina Faso et membre également du Groupe régional Afrique. Je reconnais les efforts que la FAO déploie pour fournir des services efficaces d'interprétation et nous félicitons la compétence des interprètes et leur disponibilité à nous soutenir chaque fois que de besoin.

Je voudrais applaudir l'intervention de notre collègue de l'Argentine, qui a posé clairement le problème qui nous préoccupe, et je suis d'accord également avec ce que notre collègue du Canada a dit. Je voudrais surtout insister sur le fait que la FAO puisse nous fournir des services d'interprétation lors de nos réunions sous-régionales en Afrique.

Nous avons cinq sous-régions et les pays africains utilisent diverses langues, notamment l'anglais, l'arabe, l'espagnol, le français et le portugais, et nous avons remarqué que lorsque nous devons nous réunir au niveau sous-régional parce que nous avons besoin de concertation pour nous préparer et discuter de certains sujets importants, il nous est répondu que le service d'interprétation n'est pas disponible pour des concertations sous-régionales.

Nous le déplorons parce que la communication est très difficile entre anglophones, francophones, hispanophones et lusophones. C'est pourquoi le Burkina Faso insiste pour demander des ressources à la FAO afin de nous faciliter ce type de concertation, qui sont absolument nécessaires à l'échelle sous-régionale.

Ms Xi Li (China) (Original language Chinese)

China agrees with the statements made by the previous delegates. At the same time, China welcomes the efforts FAO has made on promoting multilingualism. We have noted in 2019, since Director-General Qu assumed office, the further enhancement of the importance of multilingualism at the Organization. China commends these efforts.

China agrees that multilingualism is one of the defining characteristics and core values of FAO as an intergovernmental organization. We welcome FAO's recognition that all six languages enjoy equal status and the lack of distinction between official languages and working languages that exist in other multilateral and United Nations organizations.

China notes with concern that ensuring that equal utilization of all languages there remains room for improvement, in particular in 2019 only 3 percent of publications were in Chinese. We recall the

numerous relevant decisions made on multilingualism at FAO's Governing Body meetings. China requests FAO to effectively deliver its mandate in further promoting and implementing multilingualism and ensure that all six languages are used equally expressed in particularly in FAO publications.

Ms Ida Ayu RATIH (Indonesia)

We acknowledge the importance of multilingualism to enable Members to participate in FAO's governance on an equal footing and to allow greater dissemination of the Organization's products and services. This is also a defining characteristic and a core value of the United Nations. We noted that multilingualism is firmly rooted in FAO's Basic Texts, Strategic Framework and established policy and does enjoy equal status within FAO.

We look forward to continued alignment of the multilingualism at FAO with efforts in the broader United Nations system, and welcome Management's commitment to timely implement all the recommendations accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines and the appointment of a corporate coordinator for multilingualism.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

L'Angola, le Kenya, le Cameroun, l'Ouganda, le Soudan du Sud font cette intervention au nom du Groupe Afrique. Il estime que le document sur le multilinguisme préparé par le secrétariat est bien rédigé et contient des informations importantes sur les aspects liés à l'interprétation et la traduction pour ldes réunions des organes directeurs.

Le multilinguisme fait partie du principe des Nations Unies, qui cherche à respecter l'égalité des six langues officielles, et fait également partie des textes fondamentaux de la FAO. Il est important que les documents des réunions soient disponibles dans toutes les langues à l'avance, et à cette fin, il est essentiel que les documents originaux des experts soient remis à temps aux traducteurs. D'autre part, un effort doit également être fait pour que les principales publications publiées par la FAO, qui présentent un grand intérêt pour les agriculteurs, les pêcheurs et la société civile, soient disponibles dans leurs langues locales.

Ce n'est que de cette manière que le message et les connaissances de la FAO pourront être correctement transmis et que les structures de la FAO seront plus proches des réalités locales. Nous encourageons le Secrétariat de la FAO à poursuivre la production d'autres publications dans les langues officielles et à réaliser davantage de réunions dotées de services d'interprétation, comme les réunions des Comités, du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire, afin d'encourager la participation de tous les Membres.

Nous sommes heureux de constater que certaines langues officiellement utilisées sont désormais largement entendues comme l'Arabe, le Chinois et le Russe. Nous espérons que la situation continuera à s'améliorer et que d'autres langues non officielles, parlées dans de nombreux pays par des centaines de millions de personnes seront progressivement considérées comme langues de l'Organisation.

À l'instar des études sur l'état de l'agriculture, de l'alimentation, de la pêche, de l'aquaculture, de la sécurité alimentaire, etc., qui sont disponibles dans les langues officielles de la FAO, fournissent des informations utiles à toutes les régions et dignifient la réputation de la FAO, d'autres publications et rapports d'intérêt universel ainsi que diverses informations devraient être dûment publiés dans les différentes langues et rendus disponibles sur le site web de la FAO.

Le paragraphe 22 mentionne que le personnel de la FAO au siège et dans les bureaux décentralisés est multilingue et multinational. C'est généralement le cas, mais nous devons reconnaître qu'il existe encore un déséquilibre géographique dans l'emploi de la main-d'œuvre, qui doit être réduit en faveur des régions pour qu'elles soient toutes dûment représentées.

Nous félicitons le Directeur général de la FAO pour sa compréhension de la question du multilinguisme, pour son engagement et les efforts déployés afin que les Membres puissent bénéficier de plus en plus de services d'interprétation et de traduction de qualité, tant au siège que dans les bureaux décentralisés, de manière systématique et durable.

À cette fin, et comme mentionné aux paragraphes 4 et 31, les solutions comprenant l'amélioration, la coordination interne à la FAO, la mise à profit des innovations et de la numérisation, le renforcement des ressources financières et humaines, et une plus grande harmonisation avec les services des Nations Unies.

Le Groupe Afrique approuve la réservation de fonds pour des projets d'exécution de travaux de traduction dans leurs langues locales, au niveau national, paragraphes 32 et 35, et la création d'un fonds fiduciaire spécifique pour le multilinguisme, d'un montant de deux millions de dollars, en vue d'un meilleur équilibre entre les langues officielles de la FAO, pour l'augmentation du soutien à la production de produits et services dans les langues ainsi que dans les autres secteurs de l'Organisation, et dans des programmes et projets l'exigeant. Pour cela le Groupe accepte qu'un montant supplémentaire de 0,8 millions d'USD soit considéré dans le budget 2022-2023 pour les travaux liés au multilinguisme.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

Quisiera pedir la palabra para Portugal, para que hable en nombre de la Unión Europea y sus 27 Estados Miembros, por favor.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of San Marino aligns itself with this statement.

We thank the FAO Secretariat for the document CL 166/17 entitled *Multilingualism at FAO* and welcome the will to pursue resolute action in favour of multilingualism, following the best standards in this area. We recall that multilingualism is a core value of the United Nations in general and of FAO in particular.

We support the objectives stated by FAO, noting that these are in line with the observations and recommendations made by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in its Report 2020/6, published in 2020. We also recall the - still relevant and valid - 2011 Joint Inspection Unit report with reference REP/2011/4.

We welcome FAO's commitment to swiftly implement all the relevant recommendations contained the 2020 Joint Inspection Unit Report, in particular the adoption of a strategic framework for multilingualism with administrative and operational guidelines and the appointment of an Organization-wide coordinator for multilingualism.

We stress the central importance of Human Resources (HR) policies to boost the multilingual capacity of FAO's workforce, including in the areas of recruitment, promotion and training, and the enhancement of FAO languages by its employees). We encourage FAO Management to address Members in formal meetings of the Governing Bodies in their native languages, should these be recognized FAO official languages.

We request Management to include in the HR Annual Report, data concerning the linguistic profile of the staff globally, disaggregated by grade, region and department. Such inventory of the linguistic skills of FAO staff is an essential stocktaking element on which the development of the future strategic policy framework for multilingualism must be based.

We stress the importance of ensuring that candidates for international professional positions are fluent in" one of the languages of the Organization and have an intermediate knowledge of at least another, and to envisage introducing the obligation to check the linguistic skills of staff every five years, as stated in the above-mentioned Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report.

We also invite FAO to introduce a rule that makes any promotion of professionals and officials of higher grade subject to sufficient and verified knowledge of a second language, as provided in UN General Assembly Resolution 2480 (XXIII).

In view of the increase in informal meetings, in particular due to the virtualisation of work related to the pandemic (a trend that should be reduced, given its negative impact on the participation of many delegations, especially from developing countries), we encourage FAO to ensure interpretation for these informal meetings, and to use for this purpose the budgetary savings generated by the pandemic.

As regards the proposal to create a global Trust Fund for Multilingualism in the paragraph 45 of the document *CL 166/17*, we recall that activities in FAO languages are to be funded from the Regular Budget.

Finally, we look forward to continued alignment of multilingualism at FAO with efforts in the broader UN System and request FAO Management to provide a progress report at the next Council session, including with regard to a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, HR policies and the use of digital innovations and language technologies, and further data on language products and services.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

Simplemente queríamos intervenir ahora en nombre propio de España, si me lo permite.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, go ahead.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

España apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea (EU), al tiempo que deseamos subrayar los puntos que son más importantes para nosotros.

Lo primero es que destacamos que el multilingüismo es una característica definitoria de la FAO, dado que emanan de sus normas y políticas establecidas y que permite a los Miembros participar en la gobernanza en igualdad de condiciones. Por ello, instamos a la FAO a tomar como referencia las recomendaciones de la Dependencia Común de Inspección (DCI) para impulsar el multilingüismo en la FAO en sus seis idiomas oficiales.

Por otra parte, acogemos con agrado que se aborde la necesidad de garantizar la publicación puntual de los documentos de las sesiones de los Órganos rectores en todos los idiomas oficiales, apoyamos el aumento de la innovación y la digitalización, así como el fortalecimiento de los recursos asignados siempre con cargo al presupuesto ordinario.

Desde España celebramos que sea una realidad el uso del multilingüismo en las reuniones programadas de modo virtual, pero instamos a los Órganos rectores a mejorar la gestión del tiempo de las sesiones.

Asimismo, resaltamos la necesidad de aunar esfuerzos para asegurar la puntualidad en la publicación de los documentos y aumentar el porcentaje de publicaciones no principales, disponibles en todos los idiomas. Por último, alentamos al personal de la Administración de la FAO a emplear su lengua nativa cuando sean idiomas oficiales de la FAO en las reuniones formales de los Órganos rectores.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

Je demande la permission au Conseil pour que Cabo Verde puisse prendre la parole au nom de la Communauté des pays de langue portugaise (CPLP).

Ms Elsa SIMOES (Observer) (Cabo Verde)

I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, CPLP, of which Cabo Verde has currently the Presidency *pro tempore*. We commend the document *Multilingualism at FAO* and opportunity to address this important issue at the Council. Allow me to highlight the increasing relevance of the Portuguese language in international affairs unifying over 285 million people in nine countries and four continents.

The Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries has the commitment to promote the Portuguese language in international and regional organizations including the United Nations and its specialized agency, funds and programmes. Portuguese is, for example, one of the official languages of the African Union and of the Organization of American States and of the European Union and has been a working language at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and FAO Regional Conference for Africa amongst other organizations.

The Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries has a wide-ranging cooperation with United Nations system including FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World

Food Programme (WFP) and the acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly in several resolutions. We praise the work recently developed in this field by FAO, namely the translation into Portuguese of important documents such as the voluntary guidelines for securing sustainable small-island fisheries in the context of food security and poverty, eradication and the voluntary guidelines for sustainable soil management.

Defeating hunger, achieving food security for all and making sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives these are all matters that require greater use of Portuguese as a language of work and increased access to documents in the mother language shared by the Member States of CPLP. A community that is connected by strong bonds of solidarity, friendship and cooperation and that represents in so many ways an example of a hand-in-hand multilateral approach.

This is why we praise FAO's Secretariat as well as Members drive for greater emphasis on multilingualism at FAO and look forward to a much greater role of the Portuguese language within the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

We do not have any more Members of the Council. So I will go to the Observers.

Ms Sadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Observer) (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

I have the honour of making this statement prepared by the State of Kuwait on behalf of the Near East Group pertaining to multilingualism at FAO. We commend this document, which shows the excellent measures taken by FAO in the United Nations System, in order to meet the expectations of Members regarding equality and linguistic balance as enshrined in the Basic Texts of the Organization for all official languages, including Arabic.

On behalf of the Near East Group, we wish to make the following points regarding the use of Arabic in our hallowed Organization. We express our deep respect of the other five languages, of course. The multilingualism at FAO to our mind should be tangibly felt in the following fields.

Firstly, publications on water resources and plant and animal resources among others, these are very important issues, and they should be added to the list of flagship publications published in Arabic. On the same footing as the state of agriculture, food security, forestry, fisheries and various other aspects.

The bodies created pursuant to Article XIV should also feature in the list of Arabic language documents as well as anything that comes out of the Council and the Technical Committees without any exception because the documents when they concern our Region or if they are related to our Region must be published in Arabic.

As regard information publication on the official website of the Organization, this too is something which should be produced in Arabic particularly with respect to the regional and sub-regional offices as well as the national offices through those offices' websites.

Fourthly, new terms in Arabic should be adopted and harmonised across all of the Organization's documents. This may involve communication between the Headquarters and the field offices, but it must also spill over to translation and interpretation services and be maintained on a stable basis for the future.

As regards to the regional, sub-regional and national offices there need to be requisite Human Resources with insofar as possible mother tongue Arabic speakers, because this will contribute to mutual understanding through the use of that language with the representatives for those Member Nations whether they are in Rome in the states of the region.

As for other official languages, translation into Arabic should be duly revised and edited in terms of linguistic accuracy. We also support the strengthening of functions pertaining to the presence of our Arab states in the light of the recommendation of the offices of our regions so that this is in step with the work we are requesting in our Region, in the light of modern technological developments, and the tools currently used by the Organization in this area.

By way of conclusion we support any recommendations that will bolster the use of the official languages in the future in the context of resources provided under the regular budget. As for a special fund to strengthen multilingualism in the Organization, that could be done in conjunction with the private sector in a very precise and clear-cut framework in keeping with the Basic Texts of the Organization.

Sra. María De Lourdes CRUZ TRINIDAD (México)

Agradecemos que este tema sea discutido con el Consejo. La capacidad de un Representante nacional de poder expresarse en su idioma ante colegas de otros países es uno de los segmentos definitorios del Sistema Multilateral.

En los últimos años hemos notado un retraso en la publicación o disponibilidad de documentos en los idiomas de la FAO. Esto fue particularmente notable en la pasada Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe, donde varios de los documentos en español fueron publicados con excesivo retraso. Asimismo, la distribución de documentos de trabajo en todos los idiomas no es consistente, ya que los documentos en idiomas distintos al inglés a veces se presentan con mucho retraso y esto tiene que mejorar.

La discusión en la reunión conjunta de los Comités del Programa y Finanzas fue positiva y apoyamos sus conclusiones. En particular, apoyamos alcanzar el equilibrio de los productos y servicios en los idiomas de la FAO para la traducción de publicaciones, los servicios de interpretación para los Órganos Rectores, impulsar la capacidad multilingüe de la fuerza de trabajo en la FAO, así como la asignación adicional de 0, 8 millones de USD en el Plan de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 para apoyar el multilingüismo.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO BIN ANTHONY (Observer) (Malaysia)

First of all, allow me to extend my appreciation, of course, to you, Chairperson, for your patience and leadership, for guiding us throughout this whole process, especially the late-night meeting last night. Thank you very much.

I will be brief. Malaysia supports the efforts to have multilingualism in FAO not only on innovation in the provision of multilingual products already enforced, but also for the streamlining of language service and corporate efficiency exercise. We appreciate that USD 0.8 million is included in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 proposal for these purposes as part of FAO's commitment to multilingualism at FAO.

We take the need for FAO to boost multilingual capacity including in the areas of recruitment, promotion and training and enhance the use of FAO languages by employees and at the same time reduce the geographical imbalance in terms of representation. We request FAO to enhance communication and improving overall performance and delivery of such production chains together with the proposal to establish a global trust fund for multilingualism for monetary contributions.

Finally, we look forward on the alignment of multilingualism at FAO with efforts in a broader United Nations system.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres. La France est extrêmement attachée au multilinguisme, qu'elle défend au sein de toutes les organisations internationales. C'est un principe fondamental, garant de l'inclusivité et du respect de la diversité de tous les acteurs du multilatéralisme, comme le rappelle la Résolution 73-346 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies. Nous appuyons toutes les recommandations de la Réunion conjointe et encourageons le Conseil à les approuver.

Nous saluons l'engagement de la FAO à poursuivre une action résolue en faveur du multilinguisme et de se hausser aux meilleurs standards en la matière. Nous nous félicitons de ce que la FAO s'engage à mettre en œuvre rapidement toutes les recommandations du Corps commun d'inspection, notamment dans ses rapports de 2020, mais également de 2011.

Nous notons avec satisfaction, en particulier, la volonté d'adopter un cadre stratégique pour le multilinguisme, assorti de directives administratives et opérationnelles, et de nommer un coordonnateur chargé du multilinguisme pour l'Organisation. Nous prenons note des mesures adoptées par la Direction, en vue d'améliorer la qualité des documents et la ponctualité de leur publication dans toutes les langues.

Nous appelons la FAO à poursuivre ses efforts dans une démarche d'amélioration continue des méthodes de travail. La France n'est pas favorable à l'établissement d'un fonds fiduciaire pour le multilinguisme pour financer les activités menées dans les langues de l'Organisation, qui doivent relever du budget ordinaire.

Nous rappelons l'importance capitale des politiques relatives aux ressources humaines, pour faire vivre au quotidien le multilinguisme et renforcer les capacités multilingues du personnel de l'Organisation. Il est important de réaliser un inventaire exhaustif des compétences linguistiques du personnel de la FAO. C'est un aspect essentiel de diagnostic sur lequel devra s'appuyer le futur cadre stratégique en faveur du multilinguisme. Nous souhaitons que ces données soient communiquées aux États Membres.

Par ailleurs, il est important d'intégrer le multilinguisme dans les phases de recrutement. Il faut qu'il soit adapté au contexte local et il doit également s'appuyer sur la Résolution 71-263 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, selon laquelle les avis de vacances doivent en principe indiquer qu'il est attendu des candidats une maîtrise de deux langues.

Enfin, nous appuyons la demande de la Réunion conjointe des Comités adressée à la Direction de présenter un rapport intérimaire à la prochaine session du Conseil, dans lequel seront abordées les questions relatives au cadre stratégique pour le multilinguisme, les politiques relatives aux ressources humaines et l'utilisation des innovations numériques et des technologies linguistiques. Il devra également contenir des données supplémentaires sur les produits et les services linguistiques.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of speakers. Before passing the floor to the Secretariat, I will give the floor to the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee for any comments she may have. Mr Imelda Smolcic Nijers, you have the floor.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Con respecto al multilingüismo, la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su

130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º período de sesiones reafirmó la importancia del multilingüismo, agradeció las medidas introducidas por la Administración con miras a mejorar la calidad y la puntualidad de la publicación de los documentos para las reuniones de los Órganos Rectores en todos los idiomas. Acogió con beneplácito la asignación adicional de 0,8 millones de USD en el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 y recalcó la importancia crucial de las políticas de recursos humanos que impulsa la capacidad multilingüe de la fuerza de trabajo de la FAO.

Básicamente es esto lo que tengo para destacar. Señor Presidente, solamente para su recaudo, me voy a tener que retirar un momento. Me traslado desde aquí hasta mi Embajada donde voy a retomar la conexión completa, en caso de que usted vaya muy rápido con este tema y retomemos con el tema 8 que es el de Informe de la reunión conjunta, en caso de que yo no esté conectada, enseguida se va a dar cuenta cuando tenga que hacer mi informe. Pero simplemente lo dejaré saber a la Secretaría, le agradezco. Le quería informar en caso de que no me encontrara.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the Secretariat. I believe it will be the Deputy Director-General Mr Laurent Thomas.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur Général Adjoint de la FAO)

Quel plaisir d'entendre toutes ces langues! Nous sommes au cœur de ce qui fait la beauté des Nations Unies. Vous l'avez tous dit, le multilinguisme est un des aspects de l'identité, de la culture des Nations Unies, de notre Organisation, et il est fermement inscrit dans nos Textes fondamentaux.

Nous devons faire ensemble tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour renforcer ce multilinguisme, comme une part essentielle du bon fonctionnement de la gouvernance et de l'Organisation dans sa diversité.

Nous avons pris bonne note de tous vos commentaires, qui touchent à toutes les facettes du multilinguisme, qu'il s'agisse des questions de gestion du personnel, de sélection, de renforcement des capacités ou des questions de traduction, d'interprétation, de communication. Nous pouvons vous assurer qu'en effet, comme nous l'avons dit dans le document qui vous a été présenté et dans la brève introduction que j'ai faite pour le Conseil, nous n'allons pas ménager nos efforts pour assurer le renforcement du multilinguisme dans la limite des budgets existants.

Je voudrais parler de deux points spécifiques par rapport aux commentaires qui ont été faits. Il y a évidemment une convergence de toutes les interventions sur l'importance que vous attachez au multilinguisme.

Un aspect sur lequel j'ai senti, dans les interventions, des points de vue qui pouvaient diverger, ou en tout cas ne pas converger, il s'agit de la question du financement du multilinguisme et de l'importance, comme vous l'avez tous souligné, de s'assurer qu'aucune entorse ne soit faite au principe du financement du multilinguisme par les ressources du budget ordinaire de l'Organisation. C'est très clair, et comme l'a dit l'Argentine, un financement égal dans l'utilisation de ressources limitées.

À cet effet, il est bien que vous ayez tous approuvé le principe d'une augmentation du budget pour le multilinguisme, que ce soit dans le cadre de l'interprétation ou des activités de communication. Ceci dit, je demande que vous considériez dans la poursuite de vos débats et des recommandations que vous ferez à la Conférence, le fait que dans l'esprit de ce que vous avez discuté au cours des débats sur les points précédents, en particulier le fait que nous avons un budget intégré, la possibilité, si des pays le souhaitent, de pouvoir rajouter des ressources, des contributions volontaires, pour renforcer encore ce multilinguisme.

Je ne suis pas sûr que cela représente une entorse aux principes fondamentaux que vous voulez voir respectés. En effet, des interventions ont mentionné, par exemple, l'importance de renforcer encore l'interprétation dans le cadre de réunions informelles; nous souhaitons en avoir plus, car c'est là, je pense, une bonne façon de renforcer la gouvernance et les relations de travail entre les Membres et la Direction. Malgré le fait que les ressources ne soient pas tout, tout a un coût, et à un certain moment on se trouve limité. Comme vous le savez, il peut s'avérer difficile de trouver des ressources quand elles ne sont pas disponibles.

Je veux dire essentiellement que l'établissement d'un fonds fiduciaire ne devrait pas être perçu comme une possible entorse au principe fondamental de financement du multilinguisme par le budget ordinaire.

Le deuxième point que je voudrais aborder concerne les retards dans la publication des documents dans toutes les langues pour les réunions des organes directeurs. C'est un problème auquel nous avons été confrontés et sur lequel nous travaillons intensément, en démarrant par des orientations très claires du Directeur général, qui a publié un bulletin à cet effet, il y a un peu moins de deux mois. Il s'agit de problèmes d'organisation interne, qui ne sont pas liés au financement du multilinguisme. Nous y travaillons donc et pouvons vous assurer que nous allons améliorer la situation, car il est en effet inacceptable que vous receviez les documents avec du retard dans toutes les langues officielles de l'Organisation.

Enfin, dernier point, je réaffirme que nous allons travailler d'arrache-pied pour mettre en œuvre toutes les recommandations du rapport publié par le Corps commun d'inspection des Nations Unies, qui nous donne une bonne feuille de route pour améliorer le multilinguisme à la FAO dans la limite des ressources existantes.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings the discussions to an end so allow me to conclude on this Item. I will put the conclusions on the screen. So, Item 17, *Multilingualism at FAO*. The Council welcomed document *CL166/17 Multilingualism at FAO* and:

- (a) noted the analysis provided of the status of multilingualism at FAO in all its transversal dimensions, including solutions for its further enhancement;
- (b) reaffirmed the importance of multilingualism as a defining characteristic of the Organization and the need for quality translation and interpretation for Governing Body meetings;
- (c) welcomed the improved delivery rate of Governing Body documentation in all languages by established deadlines and emphasized the importance of continued corporate attention to ensure the timely publication of documents for Governing Bodies in all languages;
- (d) noted the surge in translation and interpretation work in 2020, as a result of the greater attention to multilingualism at FAO and commended the Secretariat for its efforts in this regard;
- (e) supported management's priority to ensure a greater volume and balance in goods and services in all FAO languages through enhancing internal coordination, innovation in processes and technology and strengthening required resources;
- (f) supported the allocation of USD 0.8 million in the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 to bolster the provision of multilingualism products and services; and
- (g) requested Management to present a progress report on multilingualism at FAO to the next session of the Council, including with regard to a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, Human Resources policies, and use of digital innovations and language technologies and further data on language products and services.

That is the list of the conclusions and now I open the floor for Members to comment. The floor is open.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quisiera poder proponer un nuevo subpárrafo, el cual podría estar en los primeros lugares, pero soy flexible sobre la ubicación y que voy a leer a velocidad de dictado en inglés. "Noted that multilingualism is firmly rooted in FAO's Basic Texts, results framework and established policy. Rule XLVIII of the General Rules of the Organization established that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the languages of the Organization. Thus, all six languages enjoy equal status within FAO, without the distinction of official and working languages which exist in other multilateral and United Nations institutions."

CHAIRPERSON

I think what we will do is to facilitate the agreement of these text, we will again go quickly subparagraph by subparagraph.

I will start with subparagraph (a). If Members have any comment on (a), we will have those on the screen for others to react to. If not, we will move quickly. Any comments on subparagraph (a)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Perdón, tema técnico. Subpárrafo (b), si me permite, me gustaría agregar después de "Governing Body meetings" al final del texto, "as well as informal substantive consultations."

CHAIRPERSON

So now we go to subparagraph (b), as amended. I see no comments, so subparagraph (b) is agreed.

Subparagraph (c), which is the new subparagraph. Any comment on subparagraph (c)? I see none, so subparagraph (c) is agreed.

Subparagraph (d).

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Sí, en efecto, en los últimos meses ha habido una mejora en el ritmo de documentos, pero creo que es todavía un proceso en curso y mi propuesta es cambiar el inicio de ese subpárrafo a lo siguiente y lo voy a decir en inglés. "Requested to continue improving the delivery rate".

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (d), as amended by Mexico. Any comment? I see none, so subparagraph (d) is agreed to.

Subparagraph (e). I see no comments, so subparagraph (e) is agreed to.

Subparagraph (f).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo una consulta, que la Secretaría me informe si cuando se menciona “strengthening required resources” está haciendo referencia al fondo fiduciario.

CHAIRPERSON

Can I give the floor to the Secretariat to respond?

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur Général Adjoint de la FAO)

Non pas nécessairement. Je pense que cela inclut le renforcement budgétaire tel que proposé dans le Programme de travail et de budget. Évidemment, comme je l'ai mentionné, nous serions très heureux de recevoir des contributions volontaires, car la multiplication des réunions informelles, qui devront être interprétées dans toutes les langues, a un coût.

Sr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muchas gracias al Director General Adjunto, señor Laurent Thomas, por las explicaciones. Solo sin entrar en polémica, quiero reiterar una cuestión de principio que es importante. Nosotros insistimos que el tema del principio del multilingüismo no puede estar condicionado al tema presupuestario, es parte de la esencia de la Organización.

Y esto es un tema importante, y lo digo no solo por los servicios de traducción de los documentos, lamentablemente en las últimas semanas hemos participado de muchas reuniones en las cuales por incorporar una cantidad de temas enormes a los programas y a partir de ciertas urgencias que muchas veces no son urgencias de todos los Miembros, hemos sido forzados a tener que discutir hasta horas extremas y muchas veces sin interpretación.

Entonces, yo creo que por una parte es muy claro el principio, pero, también es muy claro que los propios Miembros responsables de diferentes Órganos rectores, tenemos que hacer un esfuerzo por ser racionales respecto de qué programas vamos a tener en las reuniones para concentrar nuestra energía en las cuestiones prioritarias para no tener reuniones interminables que fuerzan a la Organización a tener que financiar de una manera mayor servicios de interpretación.

Si tuviéramos programas más cortos, más concentrados en las prioridades, seguramente podríamos de alguna manera compensar parte de los gastos que estamos teniendo y, al final, lo que pasa es que termina la excepción de tener que trabajar sin interpretación, termina siendo la regla.

Entonces, eso es lo que nos preocupa, eso es lo que queremos llamar la atención y, lo que insisto, no estoy en contra de que haya fondos voluntarios porque eso nadie podría estar en contra en sí mismo, pero sí que haya un condicionamiento al respecto del principio del multilingüismo sobre la base de la cuestión presupuestaria.

Comprendo que hay que pagar los servicios, pero el principio no puede estar condicionado al tema presupuestario porque es parte de la esencia de la propia Organización. Diciendo esto y dejando en claro en el récord, no voy a entrar en una polémica directa con la Secretaría con esta cuestión.

Y con respecto al subpárrafo (f), me gustaría cambiar la expresión “goods” por “products”. Creo que es más apropiada, pero es solamente una sugerencia constructiva.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (f), with that slight amendment, is agreed to. I see no other requests for the floor.

We move to subparagraph (g).

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I was wondering whether it would be appropriate to add a clarification here after “services,” that would be to insert the words, “in the six languages of the Organization,” so to make sure that this USD 0.8 million are used for the six official languages and not for other languages, local languages, etc., which, of course, are important, but my understanding was that this should be used only for the six languages of the Organization. This was one point, and the other would be to ask you to kindly pass the floor to Portugal for an additional suggestion.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We would like to propose a new subparagraph here, I do not know if it is the right moment for that, I am in your hands.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, go ahead.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Following the intervention we did on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, what we want to add is the following, and I will read it out loud. “Requested FAO to implement all the recommendations of the Report of United Nations Joint Inspection Unit on Multilingualism, in particular through the adoption of the Strategic Policy Framework for Multilingualism, accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines, and the appointment of a corporate coordinator for multilingualism.”

CHAIRPERSON

We have subparagraph (g) with that slight amendment. Any comment on subparagraph (g)? I see none, so subparagraph (g) is agreed to with the amendment.

We move to subparagraph (h), new subparagraph (h). I see no request for the floor, so new subparagraph (h) is agreed to.

Subparagraph (i). I see no request for the floor, so subparagraph (i) is agreed to. Sorry, Dominican Republic.

Sra. Berioska MORRISON GONZÁLEZ (República Dominicana)

La República Dominicana no había tomado la palabra ya que nuestros puntos fueron abordados de forma cabal, pero queremos aprovechar para resaltar que la República Dominicana respalda los esfuerzos de la FAO en potencia del multilingüismo en todas sus dimensiones transversales.

La carta misma de las Naciones Unidas cita, “multilingüismo para la arquitectura del sistema internacional”, de hecho, esos términos como todos sabemos, ratificados en la Constitución de la FAO.

Simplemente nos complace que este tema ha sido abordado de manera positiva, que cuenta con el acuerdo de la Membresía como ha sido mencionado por países, tales como Burkina Faso, Canadá, España, Francia, al igual que Sudán, entre otros.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am sorry to come back to subparagraph (h). I would like to add at the end “within existing available resources.”

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (h). Any comment on new subparagraph (h) with the amendment just proposed by Canada?

M. Carlos AMARAL (Angola)

Suite à l'intervention de l'Angola en ce qui concerne le multilinguisme, nous aimerions ajouter un nouveau paragraphe. Monsieur le Président, je vais essayer de lire en anglais et compte sur votre compréhension.

“Noted that multilingualism is connected by strong bonds of solidarity, friendship and cooperation, and that represents in so many ways an example of a hand-in-hand multilateral approach in the Secretariat, as well as for Members strive for a greater emphasis on multilingualism at FAO, and looked forward to a much greater role within the Organization.”

Ms Xi Li (China) (Original language Chinese)

First of all, China would like to thank Canada for your suggested amendment. We would like to make a small amendment to subparagraph (h), at the beginning where it says “requested FAO,” we would like to change it to “welcomed Management’s commitment.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment on subparagraph (h)? I see no request for the floor, so (h) is agreed to.

Now, we go to new subparagraph (i). Any comment on new subparagraph (i)?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Frankly speaking, this sounds a bit unusual in a Council report. “Friendship represents in so many ways an example of a hand in hand multilateral approach in the Secretariat.” This is not defined, so what is all this? I have some difficulties to go along with this, maybe we can tidy this up a bit. But, I mean, there are now these terms in which...

We have a Hand-in-Hand Initiative, that is one thing, and now we have a hand in hand multilateral approach in the Secretariat, quite frankly, I have difficulty to understand that and would prefer not to have this in. I think the whole wording is not very appropriate for a Council report.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I want to say that we support the comments made by our German colleague, agreeing that this language does seem out of place in a Council report, and we feel that the preceding subparagraphs already capture the intended spirit of this subparagraph, so we support our German colleague’s request to remove this subparagraph.

M. Carlos AMARAL (Angola)

Je respecte l’opinion des États Unis et de l’Allemagne, mais je pense que ce genre de proposition est normal dans le rapport. De toute façon, nous pouvons retirer les mots «Hand-in-Hand» du texte si cela crée des difficultés.

CHAIRPERSON

May I suggest to let the Drafting Committee look into this rather than us spending time on the language, as it were? Would you agree that we send this subparagraph to the Drafting Committee?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

It is not that I am against generally this idea, but still I think it is not appropriate to have this language in a Council report. I see also Canada asking for the floor. Maybe we give the opportunity to others to express their views before sending it simply to the Drafting Committee.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I understand and appreciate the comments and proposal made by Angola and, at the same time, I do support as well, and agree with, the comments made by Germany and the United States, especially since it is not always clear to me what it means “in the Secretariat” and then “for its Members”, the distinction.

However, I think that what is important in the discussions, some delegations did mention that this is also in support of inclusiveness and diversity and I feel that maybe... I cannot see all the text but I feel that maybe we could add a reference to one of the first paragraphs, with the proposal by Argentina, about the importance of multilingualism, a reference that it is in support of inclusiveness and diversity, and we can add as well solidarity, and I think that could capture as well the idea by Angola.

I would support your proposal that this could then be looked at by the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Canada. Any other comment? I have a request from Angola and then the United States.

M. Carlos AMARAL (Angola)

Je voulais remercier le Canada pour la solution proposée et nous sommes d'accord avec elle. Peut-être que le Comité de rédaction peut perfectionner la rédaction. Nous sommes d'accord avec cela.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Want to thank our Canadian colleague for the reference to inclusiveness and diversity and then we too agree this is fine for the Drafting Committee to handle, but we would ask for the Drafting Committee, as it deals with this, to focus on a "Members' commitment to striving for greater emphasis on multilingualism", because the part in the middle of the current subparagraph (i) is a bit confusing about the approach of the Secretariat.

CHAIRPERSON

So, subparagraph (i) in yellow, it will go to the Drafting Committee. And so, we move to subparagraph (j). Any comments on subparagraph (j)? I see none for subparagraph (j), so this concludes the item on multilingualism.

We go to the next item, which is item 8, which is the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee*. So, what I would suggest is that we break for ten minutes and we will take up item 8 sharply after ten minutes. I adjourn the meeting for ten minutes. I thank you.

The meeting was suspended from 11:02 to 11:17 hours

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 02 à 11 h 17

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.02 a las 11.17

Item 8. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee (March 2021)**Point 8. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent trentième session) et du Comité financier (cent quatre-vingt-cinquième session) (mars 2021)****Tema 8. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º período de sesiones (marzo de 2021)**

(CL 166/8)

Dear colleagues, we can now commence our meeting and start with Item 8, which is the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee*. The relevant document before you is CL 166/8.

The following topics addressed by the Joint Meeting have been taken up under the dedicated Agenda items for this session of the Council, namely *the Strategic Framework 2022/2031*, Item 3; and *the Medium-Term Plan 2022-2025 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023*, Item 4. FAO's response to COVID-19, an item which is due to come; *the Code of Conduct for Voting*, item 14; *FAO Awards*, item 15; and *Multilingualism*. So, we have done *Multilingualism*, we have done *the Strategic Framework and the Medium Term Plan*. So, these particular items in this Report were done separately.

Members are therefore reminded, as noted in my pre-session letter, that these topics will not be discussed under this Item. This discussion will therefore focus on FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme and the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries management only. The introduction by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 8: Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee (March 2021)

Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers, Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee

Mr Chairperson, Members of Council,

I am pleased to present the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee. This Report is submitted to the Council in document CL 166/8.

The Council is invited to approve the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee.

The Joint Meeting examined the Technical Cooperation Programme, Multilingualism at FAO, and the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management. These are presented in detail in document CL 166/8. I would like to highlight the following matters for the attention of the Council.

On the Committee's review of the *Technical Cooperation Programme*, the Council is invited to endorse the request of the Joint Meeting for FAO Management to complete a strategic exercise, in consultation with Members, with the aim to refine, and possibly unify, the criteria of resource allocation, beyond the traditional one of per capita income, and taking into account the specific needs of each region, to be submitted for approval by the 43rd Session of the Conference.

On the Committee's review of *Multilingualism at FAO*, the Council is invited to request Management to present a progress report to the next session of the Joint Meeting, including with regard to a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, Human Resources policies and use of digital innovations and language technologies, and further data on language products and services.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our Report.

With these few comments, I open the floor for Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La Argentina quisiera destacar la excelente conducción de la reunión por parte de la distinguida representante de la República Oriental del Uruguay, la Señora Imelda Smolcic, en un contexto desafiante como el que nos toca vivir, incluida la modalidad virtual de los encuentros.

Fue gracias a su liderazgo que hemos logrado un informe que refleja los consensos de los miembros de ambos Comités. En este caso, quisiéramos referirnos a la cuestión del programa técnico de la FAO y las discusiones que en este sentido se mantuvieron en esa ocasión.

En la actual coyuntura marcada por la pandemia del COVID-19, se torna aún más evidente la necesidad de un cambio en el paradigma en materia de cooperación internacional. Particularmente, para los países denominados en términos generales de renta media. El presente contexto internacional, deja en evidencia la insuficiencia del criterio del producto bruto interno per cápita para evaluar las necesidades de cooperación, mostrando las brechas de desarrollo en distintos sectores de la salud, en lo social, en lo macroeconómico para poder hacer frente a este tipo de crisis.

En este sentido, la Argentina apoya la hoja de ruta propuesta por la FAO para la realización de un proceso estratégico dirigido a refinar los criterios de asignación de recursos y reinventar el Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT). Dicho proceso deberá realizarse en estrecha consulta con los Miembros y deberá dar cuenta de los criterios de distribución indicativa entre las regiones y de conformidad con la decisión adoptada por la Conferencia de la FAO en su 35.º período (extraordinario) de sesiones.

Asimismo, a los criterios para la asignación de recursos a proyectos para el terreno dentro de cada región, la Argentina considera que es importante que estos recursos sean gestionados por las representaciones regionales aunque, por supuesto, con criterios claros y no basado únicamente en un criterio unidimensional como la renta per cápita.

Por ello, y para ir terminando, celebramos la sugerencia de la reunión conjunta de realizar un ejercicio estratégico a fin de unificar los criterios de asignación de recursos más allá del criterio tradicional de los ingresos per cápita y teniendo en cuenta las necesidades específicas de cada región.

Finalmente quisiéramos, una vez más, destacar lo importante, que el PCT es esencial para la consecución del mandato de desarrollo y universal de la FAO porque los países en desarrollo, queremos desarrollo, deseamos iniciativas para prevenir futuras emergencias y el PCT es una herramienta importante para ello.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Le Congo, Monsieur le Président, vous prie de bien vouloir passer la parole à Son Excellence Monsieur Aly Coulibaly, Ambassadeur du Mali, qui a été désigné par le Groupe régional Afrique pour présenter ce point.

M. Aly COULIBALY (Observateur) (Mali)

La République du Mali et la République démocratique du Congo prononcent cette déclaration au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le rapport de la Réunion conjointe de la 130e session du Comité du Programme et de la 185e session du Comité financier.

Les huit points du rapport ayant déjà fait l'objet d'analyses pointues au niveau du Conseil ainsi que de la Réunion conjointe sont tous aussi d'actualité et pertinents les uns que les autres. Ce faisant, vous avez bien fait de signaler certains aspects du dossier qui ne seront pas abordés parce qu'ayant déjà été suffisamment analysés et approuvés.

Cependant, concernant le Programme de coopération technique de la FAO, le Groupe régional Afrique est conscient du caractère universel dudit Programme ainsi que de la proposition d'aligner les activités financières au titre de ce dernier sur le nouveau Cadre stratégique, les priorités régionales et nationales, les objectifs de développement durable et le repositionnement du système des Nations Unies pour le développement.

Aussi, le Groupe régional Afrique approuve la proposition de création du Sous-comité de la gestion des pêches. Ces deux aspects sont les points qui intéressent et doivent faire l'objet de développement au niveau du Groupe régional Afrique pour ce qui concerne les points restant à examiner au niveau du Comité.

Pour conclure, sur cette note, nous soutenons les conclusions et recommandations de la Réunion conjointe, ainsi que les observations pertinentes formulées par le Conseil à l'endroit de la Conférence.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Mi intervención será breve ya que la mayor parte de los temas que debatió la reunión conjunta han sido abordados de manera independiente. Me focalizaré en el Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) de la FAO.

Este Programa es de gran importancia para países en desarrollo, ya que dará un sentido práctico al trabajo de la FAO en nuestros países, aplicando los conocimientos especializados de la Organización para promover el desarrollo. Apoyamos la revisión a profundidad de los criterios de asignación de recursos entre las regiones, así como dentro de las regiones y el proceso de consulta con los Miembros para que en el 43.º período de sesiones Conferencia de la FAO, se presente una versión revisada de los criterios de asignación de recursos entre regiones.

En este trabajo, queremos enfatizar la naturaleza de desarrollo del PCT. En la revisión que se haga, apoyamos se sigan usando la división por regiones geográficas de países y, de gran importancia, utilizar criterios adicionales al ingreso per cápita como se menciona en el párrafo 12 (f) del Informe de la reunión conjunta. De tal manera que se refleje la realidad en el terreno, utilizando criterios adicionales como por ejemplo, niveles de desigualdad y pobreza rural, vulnerabilidad al cambio climático y degradación de la biodiversidad. Asimismo, apoyamos que se mejore la calidad de las actividades realizadas bajo el TCP así como el seguimiento de su desempeño.

Con estos comentarios endorsamos el Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º período de sesiones.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to deliver a statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of San Marino aligns itself with this statement.

We welcome the Report of the Joint meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and the 185th Session of the Finance Committee.

On the items addressed by the Joint Meeting, we consider that the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability should be addressed in a more balanced way and should be better reflected in the cross-cutting issues. Moreover, we would like to highlight the following:

We attach great importance to the One Health Approach, the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with UNEP, as underlined in the Strategic Framework and FAO's response to COVID-19 items. We expect that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) joins the Tripartite during FAO's Tripartite Chairmanship, in line with FAO's announcement of 18 February 2021.

We recognize the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and we emphasize the need to follow up on the evaluation, including considering the possible increased allocations for emergency and resilience programmes within the current allocation for TCP.

On the Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget item, we welcome the proposal for maintaining the increased level of funding for normative work for 2022-2023, including for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme. This is a first important step that needs to be anchored and developed in the longer term.

With these remarks we endorse the findings and recommendations included in the Joint Meeting Report.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I will be very brief in my statement on the Joint Meeting Report because, as you and others have explained, we have discussed a lot of the agenda already. In fact, I will just focus my comments on the joint meeting discussion on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

We had a very good discussion and I know on previous occasions the TCP has been an issue that has caused some controversy between Members. But I was really pleased that we have come together in the Joint Meeting and agreed on the priorities for strengthening the TCP looking ahead. My request is that the Council can endorse all of the recommendations the Joint Meeting has made on the TCP.

I do think they are all important, both the revision of the criteria as well as the recommendations to strengthened performance management that Mexico also mentioned. I do hope that in our conclusions we can endorse all of the recommendations the Joint Meeting made on the TCP because they come together as a package.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, United Kingdom, for your constructive intervention. I give the floor to Thailand.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand express our appreciation for the work of the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC) and also for the leadership of both Chairpersons of PC and FC.

With specific regard to efficiency savings, we kindly request for some additional information from the Secretariat. We know that the situation of the COVID-19 restricted the travel and also reduced the access and use of the office premises at Headquarters in Rome and also at decentralized offices.

We would like to know whether the situation of the COVID-19-related travel restrictions and reduced access and use of the office premises have given way of savings. If the saving has been already quantified, we would like to know how much the savings are expected to amount and how much we can save.

In addition, we would like to know as well to make sure that the COVID-19 will not reduce the efficiencies and effectiveness of the work of the Organization that has to be delivered according to the plan. At the end of our statement, I would like to also endorse the recommendations of the Joint Committee.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

España apoya en su integridad, las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea (EU) en nombre propio y de sus 27 estados Miembros, al tiempo que desea resaltar brevemente los siguientes aspectos en relación con este punto.

Primero. Acogemos con satisfacción y respaldamos el Informe de la reunión conjunta de los Comités del Programa y de Finanzas.

Segundo. Para ello se ha de trabajar siempre bajo el enfoque de un tripe sostenibilidad social, económica y medio ambiental correctamente equilibrada en sus tres dimensiones.

Tercero. Más concretamente en lo relativo a los puntos abordados por la sesión conjunta, quisiéramos destacar la importancia del enfoque “Una salud”, en perfecta coordinación con la asociación tripartita constituida por la FAO, Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE) y Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y en estrecha colaboración con el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA).

La evidente interconexión entre sanidad animal, salud ambiental, seguridad alimentaria y sanidad vegetal con la salud pública humana, nos empujan indefectiblemente a abordar este enfoque holístico en nuestros sistemas agroalimentarios, pesqueros y acuícolas. Asimismo, aplaudimos la creación del Subcomité de Ordenación Pesquera del Comité de Pesca.

En definitiva, con estas observaciones España respalda las conclusiones y recomendaciones incluidas en el Informe de la Reunión conjunta del Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 185.º período de sesiones.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

First of all, China would like to thank the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee for their efforts as well as presenting the report. With regard to the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23, we fully affirm these efforts. We support FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan and commend the progress achieved since the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

We encourage FAO to continue to promote the importance of TCP and take full account of the realities and priorities of Members in the field of food and agriculture, recognizing the characteristics and nature of TCP and provide the necessary technical support to developing countries.

We stress that the code of conduct for voting should achieve consensus on the basis of thorough consultation of the Members and submit the text to the Governing Body for review.

China requests FAO to take concrete steps to implement multilingualism and we commend FAO for the achievement in this area thus far. We support the Joint Meetings proposal to continue consultations on the proposal to establish a subcommittee on fisheries management.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of Council Members. Now I go to the Observers.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

La France s'aligne sur la déclaration de l'Union européenne et ses 27 États membres. En complément, et puisque la France a participé à cette Réunion conjointe, je souhaiterais évoquer les éléments

suivants. Nous souhaiterions tout d'abord féliciter et remercier la Présidente de la Réunion conjointe, l'Ambassadrice de l'Uruguay, pour sa patience et la manière excellente dont elle a mené les travaux.

Nous approuvons les recommandations du rapport de la Réunion conjointe. Nous nous félicitons de l'importance donnée à l'approche «Une seule santé» dans les travaux de la FAO, Nous encourageons la FAO à renforcer sa collaboration dans le cadre de l'association tripartite, mais également avec le PNUE, pour une meilleure prise en compte de la dimension environnementale. À cet égard, nous nous félicitons de la mention dans les recommandations de la Réunion conjointe du Conseil d'experts de haut niveau «Une seule santé» et de l'implication de la FAO dans l'initiative PREZODE. Ce sont deux initiatives importantes qu'il importe que la FAO continue.

Deuxièmement, nous souhaitons rappeler l'importance d'une coopération efficace et concrète avec les autres organisations romaines, mise en lumière par la Réunion conjointe. Il convient que les activités de la FAO soient pleinement intégrées et alignées avec les objectifs du système des Nations Unies pour le développement, et en particulier qu'elles soient intégrées dans la programmation conjointe au niveau des pays.

Troisième point, la lutte contre le changement climatique et ses effets sur les systèmes alimentaires doit être une priorité pour la FAO, notamment cette année, mais à plus long terme. À ce titre, nous soutenons la recommandation que la FAO facilite en priorité l'accès aux États Membres les plus vulnérables au financement vert et climatique.

Nous nous félicitons également que la Réunion conjointe ait encouragé la FAO à adopter dans son Cadre stratégique un langage et des concepts agréés, y compris sur les technologies, et qu'elle ait adopté l'expression: «*agriculture and food systems*».

Nous nous félicitons également que la Réunion conjointe ait souligné l'importance du multilinguisme. Je l'ai souligné précédemment, nous serons attentifs à la mise en œuvre des recommandations de la Réunion conjointe.

CHAIRPERSON

I now would give the floor to the two Chairpersons, first Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and then Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee. Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, you have the floor.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

En principio, agradezco a los distinguidos representantes permanentes de Argentina, Francia, y Tailandia por las amables palabras dirigidas a mi persona.

Con respecto a la reunión conjunta, haré referencia solamente a los temas que no han sido tratados ya de forma independiente. Con respecto al Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) de la FAO, el Comité Conjunto solicitó a la Administración de la FAO que en consulta con los Miembros realizará un proceso estratégico encaminado a refinar y posiblemente unificar los criterios de asignación de recursos más allá del criterio tradicional de los ingresos per cápita y teniendo en cuenta las necesidades específicas de cada región con vistas a someter una propuesta a la aprobación de la Conferencia en su 43.º período de sesiones.

Con respecto a la propuesta de establecimiento del Subcomité de Ordenación Pesquera, respaldó la continuación del proceso de consulta transparente e inclusivo llevado a cabo en relación con la propuesta de establecer ese subcomité.

En líneas generales, quisiera agradecer a los miembros de la reunión conjunta por la incansable cooperación que brindaron durante las discusiones, las que, en algunos momentos se tornaron difíciles.

Asimismo, brindo mi aprecio a la Administración por su disponibilidad e interés al responder a las inquietudes de los Miembros y también a mi copresidente, ya que juntos pudimos llevar adelante una sesión por lo demás difícil.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Chairperson of the Programme Committee. Mr Hans Hoogeveen, you have the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer) (Netherlands) (Chairperson of Programme Committee)

Good to see you so strong, even after a very long evening and still smiling. That is the spirit we need. Of course, I really would like to echo the words of my co-Chairperson who did, I would say, the most lifting work to get to an agreement. I must say, it was, of course, a heavily loaded Agenda of the Joint Meeting. However, I would also echo her words about commitment and solidarity of the Members.

We managed to successfully conclude our deliberations, sometimes after long negotiations, but there was a good spirit in the room, lots of spirit of flexibility and at the end the spirit of compromise prevailed and I think that is what we need within FAO to elevate, I would say, the profile of the Organization.

Also, I would like to thank and compliment Management for their participation, also the Director-General, and efforts made to clarify and respond where needed to help us find a compromise, often in an open dialogue and in a constructive discussion. With that we set an excellent example.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I will give the floor to the Secretariat. First I will give the floor to Ms Beth Bechdol and then Ms Beth Crawford.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (FAO Deputy Director-General)

It is a pleasure to be with the Group again today on this day. I must say, I very much agree with the comments that were provided around the very constructive and very positive conversations that have been taking place during the Joint Meeting and in other discussions with many of you as Members on the improvements and the enhancements to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

I just want to underscore that you have Management's full support in navigating, as has been fully outlined in the summary report of the Joint Meeting. The objectives of the new proposed road map for the strategic exercise to refine the criteria of the resource allocation and to reimagine the TCP.

We have committed and will hold ourselves accountable to ensuring that this is done in very close, consultative and transparent consultations with Members between now and the November Programme and Finance Committees, working towards, as we have stated, the delivery of potentially new proposals by the time we approach the 43rd Session of Conference.

I would also indicate to all of you that we do also continue to ensure internally that we streamline, that we better communicate and that we deliver on the operational aspects of TCP, including the approvals and the monitoring of the appropriations of existing programmatic support for the TCP programme in all of the regions.

We believe that this is, as you, a very important catalytic and very strategic programme delivered by FAO. It is our commitment to work in a consultative fashion with all of you to ensure that the catalytic impact continues to be delivered on well, and that we can all together measure the very important progress and the very important impact that comes from this programme.

Thank you, again, for the support. We fully agree and concur with the conclusions of the joint meeting and look forward to working again closely with all of the Members in the upcoming consultative sessions.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Beth Bechdol. I now give the floor to Ms Beth Crawford.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I will just briefly respond to the question from Thailand that was related to the impact of COVID-19 on the expenditure of the net appropriation resources. Just to note that there were two documents that

have been issued to the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee. That is the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report for 2020.

This document reports back on achievements in 2020 and how we are moving forward on the implementation of the work plans. This is a document that eventually becomes the full programme implementation report. Then we have a full section on the impact of COVID-19 and how we have adjusted our work plans, repivoted our priorities to continue to implement the programme of work and respond to the rising needs.

Then, there was the Annual Report on Budgetary Performance for 2020, which was reviewed by the Finance Committee, and in that document we have, indeed, indicated that we are expecting full expenditure of the regular programme resources this biennium.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Beth Crawford. Colleagues, this brings us to the end of the discussion. So, I will now make my conclusions. We will put the text on the screen. Item 8, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee*.

1. The Council endorsed the report of the Joint Meeting and in particular:
 - (a) Endorsed its observations and recommendations relating to the proposal for the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management; and
 - (b) Endorsed its observations relating to the Technical Cooperation Programme and requested Management, in consultation with Members, to complete a strategic exercise, with the aim to refine, and possibly unify, the criteria of resource allocation, in addition to the traditional one of per capita income, and taking into account the specific needs of each region, such as rural poverty and inequality, and vulnerability to climate change and biodiversity degradation, and to enhance performance management to be submitted for approval by the 43rd Session of the Conference.

That is the conclusions on this item. I will open the floor and Members can go subparagraph by subparagraph, just to facilitate.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

My point is on subparagraph (b).

Just to come back to the point I made in my intervention, was that I do think the Council should endorse all of the recommendations the Joint Meeting made on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). Here I would suggest that we edit subparagraph (b) so it says “endorsed its observations and recommendations relating.” And then on the next line where it says “and requested Management”, you could just say “underlined the recommendation to Management”, which, of course, is one of the recommendations that the Joint Meeting made.

I would also like to add a line, perhaps to this subparagraph or perhaps in a new subparagraph, you might advise what would be more appropriate. It acknowledges Management, and thank you very much to Ms Beth Bechdol. Ms Bechdol did, in fact, say that they would be implementing all of the recommendations that the Joint Meeting made and it would be great if the Council could acknowledge this as well. Perhaps subparagraph (b) could read “endorsed its observation on recommendations relating to the Technical Cooperation Programme”. Then at the end of that line we could say “and welcomed Management’s commitment to implement them.” That would be at the end of the first line.

Then that would work perfectly. I hope that is agreeable to Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I just wanted to perhaps draw attention of Members, because we have been using a particular wording for the Reports of the Committees in previous texts. We did not use the word “endorsed” when referring to the Council and I think Members had agreed to words like “the Council considered the Report”. Perhaps I can ask my team to fish out the wording and so, just for consistency’s sake, it would also facilitate the work of the Drafting Committee because it should be consistent.

In paragraph 1 we have used the word “considered”, which we have used consistently before. In the interest of consistency, we are putting back the word “considered” there. United Kingdom, do you still want to speak?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am content with your proposal there, but I do think it is important to retain the word “endorsed” in subparagraphs (a) and (b) because those specific recommendations have been endorsed by Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, thank you, United Kingdom. We will keep those. Any other request for the floor?

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

No, al dividir el (b) y el (c), lo cuál está bien, el (c) queda aislado porque no está ligado al tema del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT). Quizás se le podría agregar algo como “furthermore” o algo así, porque si se lee como está, el vínculo con el PCT no queda muy claro, pero quizá eso lo puede solucionar el Comité de Redacción.

CHAIRPERSON

With these amendments, could we agree on these paragraphs and the text there? I see no comments, so the paragraph 1 and then subparagraphs (a) and (b) are agreed. We conclude this Item.

Item 9. Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee (22-26 March 2021)

Point 9. Rapport de la cent trentième session du Comité du Programme (22-26 mars 2021)

Tema 9. Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (22-26 de marzo de 2021)

(CL 166/9)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to the next Item, which is Item 9, *Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee*.

Here please ensure you have documents CL 166/9, CL 166/9 Add 1 and CL 166/9 Add 2 before you. The introduction by Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 9: Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee (22-26 March 2021)

Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Ambassador. Chairperson of the Programme Committee

The 130th Session of the Programme Committee was held from 22 to 26 March and its Report was adopted 6 April 2021, which is submitted to the Council in document CL 166/9.

The Programme Committee had twenty items on its agenda, including five items for information. The session was conducted virtually on an exceptional basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee reviewed the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23 at length. Members of the Committee welcomed the strategic narrative around the *four betters* to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1, 2 and 10, as well as the twenty Programme Priority Areas that represent themes where the Organization has a comparative advantage, track record and ability to act. Members also appreciated FAO’s move to an SDG-based framework and the alignment of both documents with the repositioning of the UN development system (UNDS). The Committee recommended the Council to further review the documents before their submission to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

The Committee welcomed the findings in the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2020, noting that the 2020 Outputs were delivered in a context of unprecedented challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, Members appreciated that it is now benefiting

36 countries and that the inception process for a majority is nearing the milestone of agreement on the nature of the country programme, and the flexibility to enable broader access to Hand-in-Hand methodologies, data platforms, training, partnering mechanisms and investment support.

The Committee recommended the Council to approve both the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition as well as the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. The Committee was updated on FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights, the UN Food Systems Summit and FAO's work in food systems and the new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement.

The Committee reviewed the FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025 and the 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, and recommended further informal consultations with Members on these two action plans with their revised versions to be submitted to the 166th Session of the Council for its consideration.

The Committee also reviewed and discussed two evaluation items and their respective Management responses: FAO's role and Work on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and FAO's support to climate action (SDG 13) and the implementation of its Strategy on Climate Change.

The following topics in the Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee have been addressed by the Council under the dedicated Agenda items, namely *Strategic Framework 2022-2031* Item 3, the *Medium-Term Plan 2022-2025 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023*, Item 4, and the *Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, Item 5. Members are therefore reminded to focus their interventions on the remaining topics under the Report of the Programme Committee.

I now open the floor to Members to give their comments. The floor is open and I have a list of speakers.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quisiera agradecer especialmente el trabajo del Embajador de Países Bajos, señor Hans Hoogeveen como Presidente del Comité del Programa a lo largo de estos años. En cuanto al Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité, que sin duda puso a prueba a todos luego de largas horas de discusión e incluso en algunos momentos teniendo que aceptarlo hacerlo sin traducción, sin interpretación, quisiera destacar algunas conclusiones que a nuestro entender, son relevantes y que se aplican a todo el Informe.

La primera de ellas es que no debemos olvidarnos que son tres las dimensiones que forman parte de manera integral, indivisible y equilibrada del desarrollo sostenible, económica, social y ambiental. Estas dimensiones deben atenderse de manera balanceada, reconociendo sus interconexiones sin priorizar el logro de objetivos en una de ellas por encima de las otras. Además de este equilibrio general que debe lograrse en el conjunto de la FAO, es importante que en cada actividad se preserve tal balance también. De esta manera se evitará que eventuales, mayores progresos en una por sobre otras operen en detrimento del necesario equilibrio general.

Por otro lado, en el entendido de que existen diversos enfoques y temas y herramientas de producción sostenibles, la FAO deberá seguir actuando como una plataforma neutral y balanceada y usina de la gama completa de enfoques y sistemas agrícolas sostenibles, comprobados por la ciencia para que cada Miembro adopte la mejor decisión posible de cómo pretender alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

En tercer lugar, a lo largo de todas las discusiones se recalcó la importancia del lenguaje y conceptos acordados multilateralmente por los Miembros para promover consenso entre los Miembros de la FAO. Por ello, una vez más reiteramos e insistimos a la Organización a respetar dichos conceptos y lenguajes acordados. Yendo al particular, en el Comité del Programa tratamos varios Planes de Acción, en dos de estos como el de biodiversidad y resistencia antimicrobiana, estamos listos para apoyarlos tal como están en este Consejo, reconociendo su importancia para la consecución de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Agradecemos a la FAO y al Presidente del Comité por llevar a cabo las consultas pertinentes la semana pasada. Respecto al Plan de Acción relativo a juventud rural, aguardamos con interés su examen en el 131.º período de sesiones del Comité a fin de su posterior aprobación en el Consejo.

Mención especial merece la Visión y estrategia relativa a la labor de la FAO en materia de nutrición. El proceso de consultas llevado a cabo para su finalización, debería ser considerado como un ejemplo a seguir. Al respecto, aguardamos con interés la discusión que tendrá lugar en el próximo Comité en torno al procedimiento estándar que debiera seguirse para la elaboración y aprobación de Políticas, Estrategias y Planes de Acción de la FAO.

Por último, quisiera referirme al apoyo de la FAO a la acción por el clima. En este sentido quisiera destacar que en el nuevo Marco estratégico de la FAO, el cambio climático y el medio ambiente, sea un pilar de éste como uno de las cuatro mejoras. Asimismo, la recién creada Oficina de Cambio Climático, Biodiversidad y Medio Ambiente (OCB) es un avance positivo hacia una mayor coordinación de la labor relativa al cambio climático en la FAO. Y seguramente servirá para resolver cuestiones identificadas en la evaluación de la actual estrategia de la FAO al respecto que tiene solo cuatro años.

Consideramos que con los cambios enumerados antes, la FAO refleja completamente en el marco de su mandato y ventajas comparativas, la prioridad y transversalidad del desafío que el cambio climático presenta para todas y todos. Recordamos en ese sentido que el mandato de la FAO se concentra en los ODS 1 y 2 y que otras agencias y foros del sistema de las Naciones Unidas se encuentran abocadas específicamente al ODS 13. No debemos entonces duplicar, sí complementar sobretudo en materia de adaptación al cambio climático y al principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas.

Debemos buscar sinergias que se nutran de los intereses de todos los Miembros de la FAO no perdiendo de vista la interconectividad de los 17 ODS. Por todo ello, sin negar que en futuro se actualice la estrategia de la FAO sobre cambio climático, creemos que primero es momento de esperar cómo el nuevo Marco estratégico de la FAO y los cambios organizacionales se interrelacionan con la estrategia vigente.

Sr. Elías REYES BRAVO (México)

Mi Delegación reconoce que los temas abordados en el Comité del Programa en su 130.º período de sesiones fueron numerosos y de amplio espectro. Ello se entiende por las condiciones de trabajo generadas por la pandemia, las cuales retrasaron algunos de ellos. Mi Delegación acoge con agrado la creciente incorporación en los trabajos de la FAO del enfoque “Una salud”, la Asociación Tripartita y la cooperación con el Programa de Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA) y otras Organizaciones Internacionales pertinentes de conformidad con sus respectivos mandatos.

De igual importancia apreciamos que se enfatice la necesidad de incrementar la resiliencia y abordar las necesidades de los pueblos indígenas, de dar igual importancia a la pesca y a la acuicultura, así como la necesidad de hacer mayor hincapié en las cuestiones ambientales en el Plan a plazo medio para el 2022-25 y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2022-23 (PTP). En particular, el Gobierno de México reconoce el valor y el impacto de la acuicultura que desde 2013 marcó un hito cuando su contribución a la cantidad de pescado disponible para consumo humano a nivel mundial, superó por primera vez la del pescado capturado en el medio natural.

Sin embargo, existe la necesidad de que su desarrollo sea sostenible bajo el mandato general de la FAO de lograr un mundo sin hambre, malnutrición y pobreza mediante esfuerzos como el enfoque ecosistémico de la acuicultura, la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Acuicultura y su consenso, el Programa Mundial Integrado sobre Sostenibilidad de la Acuicultura Sostenible, así como *El estado de los recursos genéticos acuáticos para la alimentación y la agricultura en el mundo*, su registro y plan de acción mundial.

Con respecto a este informe, la Delegación de México apoya el inciso 3 (p) del Informe referido al Plan a plazo medio para el 2022-25 y al PTP en el que se solicitó se cambiara el nombre de la División de Pesca a División de Pesca y Acuicultura para reflejar mejor sus responsabilidades y Programa de trabajo.

Por otra parte, mi Delegación desea confirmar que la 11.º período de sesiones del Subcomité de Acuicultura, se celebrará del 15 al 18 de noviembre de 2021 en la Ciudad de Mérida, Yucatán, si las condiciones derivadas de la pandemia por COVID-19 lo permiten.

Mr Bommakanti RAJENDER (India)

India is honoured to pass the floor to the distinguished delegate of Bangladesh to deliver the statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

CHAIRPERSON

Bangladesh, you have the floor.

Mr Manash MITRA (Observer) (Bangladesh)

Bangladesh would like to thank you, Chairperson, for conducting the Sessions so efficiently and guiding us to reach the consensus.

Bangladesh has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We thank the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, His Excellency. Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen of the Netherlands, for his leadership, including with the great work done by the Members of the Programme Committee.

Regarding the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report 2020, we recognize the importance of the report as an instrument for describing best practices. As such, we welcome the aspiration to enhance project performance outline in the results structure, together with more coherent country reporting. We further underline the importance of balance towards sustainable agriculture approaches and systems within FAO's planning and framework and encourage FAO to report on project performance in future Mid-term Reviews and Programme Implementation Reports.

We welcome the more transparent and inclusive consultation on the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025. We noted that this action plan is not a policy and standard-setting document but an accountability tool to guide FAO's framework to assist Member Countries in developing their National Action Plans on antimicrobial resistance based on the national priorities and on the guidance from standard setting bodies.

We also welcome the integration of recommendations from FAO Technical Committees for the mainstreaming of One Health in the work of the Organization, including the efforts in strengthening national capacities to implement One Health initiatives. To enhance international collaboration and contribute within the context of its respective mandate, we support the Tripartite collaboration arrangements with other international organizations.

On the Evaluation of FAO's support to climate action (SDG13) and the implementation of FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017) and Management response, Asia Group welcomes the evaluation and recognizes FAO's efforts to foster its leadership in the global fora and the crucial role that the agricultural sectors undertake to achieve SDG13. We support the recommendation for the Council to further review the Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Evaluation of FAO's support to climate action (SDG13) and the implementation of FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017).

Regarding 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, while we appreciate the substantial consultative process performed to consolidate the inputs from various platforms including the Regional Conferences, relevant Technical Committees and the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), we also concern on the inclusion of concepts, on which no consensus emerged among the Membership.

Finally, we welcome FAO's updates on the new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement and progress on the UN Food Systems Summit and FAO's work in food systems as well as on the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture to be discussed at the Council. We fully support FAO's effort in these areas.

With these comments, Asia Group endorses the report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

Mr Barend Jacobus LOMBARD (South Africa)

I kindly request you to pass the floor to the delegation of Zambia for a statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

CHAIRPERSON

Zambia, you have the floor.

Mr Joseph KATEMA (Observer) (Zambia)

The delegation of Zambia would like to thank South Africa for passing the floor to Zambia.

Zambia and South Africa makes this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. We note that the Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to the programme planning and evaluation that are relevant and important to the African Region.

Among others matters, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and the Rural Youth Action Plan require attention of the FAO Council and FAO Conference.

We note that the FAO's strategic narrative around the four betters, that is, better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, appropriately balances economic, social and environmental dimensions of agri-food systems.

We recognize our responsibility in a closely connected global space and the need to strengthen our agri-food systems to maintain food supplies for our societies. We also recognize that utilising emerging technologies that support the aim of advancing national capabilities in digital solutions are of great importance in achieving sustainable agriculture. Today's challenges are the key drivers for development opportunities of tomorrow.

The Africa Group looks forward to continuing to work with FAO to make the joint vision of eliminating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition a reality. We endorse the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as the recommendations on the matters within its mandate.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States would like to start out by congratulating the Members and the Chairperson of the Programme Committee for completing the difficult task of comprehensively reviewing FAO programming. We are not members of the Programme Committee. However, we would like to take this opportunity to comment on a few substantive items in the Report. I will do so as quickly as I can but I do ask for your patience, Chairperson, if I exceed for a minute or so.

First of all, we want to applaud the FAO for showcasing the important role that transparent markets and trade play in strengthening food security. The United States agrees on the need for FAO to better reflect trade and agriculture and food systems and we encourage Management to consider that accordingly.

We have two very important concerns in this Programme Committee report that I would like to highlight. First, regarding the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, we thank FAO for the progress made on improving Member oversight and seeking to avoid duplication with other international organizations.

We also welcome the platform's focus on information sharing, deliberating and providing summary reporting and recommendations on policy frameworks. However, we continue to take issue with the platform's proposal to develop voluntary guidelines and we will not be in a position to approve the terms of reference unless that function is removed.

In FAO Technical Committee discussions, as reflected in the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI) reports, the United States stated that the development of voluntary guidelines should not be a function of that platform. This has not yet been reflected in the proposed terms of reference. Throughout these technical meetings, no members opposed our request to remove the voluntary guideline development from the platform.

During the drafting of conclusions for this item, we will propose language that accounts for this requested change in order to be able to join consensus.

Secondly, on the Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), the United States echoes fellow Members in emphasizing the FAO Action Plan is not a policy document but rather a guide for FAO to support capacity-building. The FAO Action Plan provides flexibility to respond to Members' requests and Member participation in these action plan activities is voluntary. We support implementation of capacity-building in the plan to help minimize risk and we appreciate the emphasis on science and risk throughout the plan.

The United States recognizes that the AMR Action Plan is a living document and we noted that some of the text used, such as use of antimicrobials for growth promotion is currently being deliberated in other bodies. Thus we welcome FAO's continued consultation with Members and opportunities to provide feedback.

I would like to comment briefly on the climate strategy as well. Our government is committed to collaborating on the instruments in the multilateral toolbox to address the climate crisis and to create shared opportunities for economic growth and so, like other Members we heard here today, we welcome recommendation 2 for undertaking a renewed effort to assess the extent to which FAO emphasizes climate change. We look forward to the opportunity for revision of FAO's climate change strategy with a view to transformative work on climate action and complementing it with a five-year action plan and targeted communications strategy.

To summarize our question on this, we would like to ask when this Council might expect a new draft climate change strategy for review and discussion.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

We support the statement delivered by Bangladesh on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. China also thanks the Chairperson of the Programme Committee who played a leading role in our discussions at the Programme Committee. We also would like to thank the work done by the Secretariat. They have provided us with excellent documents and services during the meeting.

China endorses the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). China appreciates the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2020 and the progress and the results achieved in implementing the PWB 2020-21 by FAO.

China fully supports Hand-in-Hand Initiative and recognizes its important role in strengthening FAO's performance of its functions. China encourages FAO to further enhance its digitalization level and the protection of data and Intellectual Property Rights. We appreciate FAO's important contribution to mitigating the threats posed by Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and encourage FAO to inform Members on the development of AMR indicators and their implementation.

We agree to adopt the Rural Youth Action Plan, regional strategy for FAO's work in nutrition, terms of reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, 2021-2023 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO's strategy on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors.

We also encourage FAO to participate actively in the 15th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15) of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and we would like to invite you to come to the beautiful city of Kunming, which is also called the City of Eternal Spring, to discuss how to protect biodiversity.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Concerning the 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity Across Agricultural Sectors, Brazil supports the approval of the version agreed during the informal consultation that took place on 21 April.

The Brazilian delegation would like also to express its support to the draft presented by the Chairperson of the Programme Committee regarding the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-25. We formally believe that the direct involvement of Member States in the

negotiation process, especially in the third informal consultation, was critical to a more balanced outcome.

The lessons learned from both processes emphasizes the need in the future for open inclusive meetings of text negotiations be adopted as a standard and regular procedure since they have proven to be more efficient than successive rounds of written inputs and insufficient plenary time for debate.

Regarding FAO's work on climate change, specifically the recommendation contained in paragraph 23(m) of the report, Brazil is not convinced that FAO should formulate a new climate change strategy, taking into account that the first one was approved only four years ago.

Brazil believes that any revision of FAO's work on climate change or elaboration on techniques should be guided by the following principles:

1. FAO's main role on climate change should be to support countries in implementing their goals and not establish an agenda of its own.
2. FAO's work on climate change should not duplicate efforts or override mandates of other international organizations and instruments.
3. Agriculture is much more affected by climate change than it is a cause of it.
4. Adaptation and resilience of agriculture to the effects of climate change deserve special attention with the ultimate goal of guaranteeing food security as acknowledged by the Paris Agreement and the current joint work on agriculture at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
5. Countries have common but differentiated responsibilities in the face of climate change.
6. There is no one-fits-all solution since costs and benefits of each kind of response are according to local contexts and timeframes considered.

Finally, Brazil would like to draw attention to the proposal of the FAO corporate narrative on climate change, as contained in recommendation 1 of the evaluation of FAO's Support to Climate Action document PC130/12.

We believe such a proposal is inadequate since Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 is not at the core of FAO's mandate and potentially duplicative and counterproductive since the strategic framework already provides enough guidance to FAO's work with its multiple categories and elements. Moreover, we strongly disagree, I repeat strongly disagree, with the idea contained in the similar recommendation, that "a corporate narrative should give SDG13 the same importance as other SDGs FAO is prioritizing" such as SDG 1, SDG 2 and SDG 10.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 12:30 hours now and I think that is when we break. I will adjourn the meeting and we reconvene at 14:30 hours sharp. The meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

The meeting rose at 12:30 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 30

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.30

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
SIXTH PLENARY SESSION SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
28 April 2021

The Sixth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:35 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La sixième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 35
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la sexta sesión plenaria a las 14.35
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 9. Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee (22-26 March 2021)**
(*continued*)
- Point 9. Rapport de la cent trentième session du Comité du Programme (22-26 mars 2021)**
(*suite*)
- Tema 9. Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (22-26 de marzo de 2021)** (*continuación*)
(CL 166/9)

CHAIRPERSON

We carry on with item 9. As it is our practice, I have the list of countries that had asked for the floor before we adjourned. I will follow the same list, which was there before 12:30 hours. Our first speaker is Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal, to deliver a statement on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer)(Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The Republic of San Marino aligns itself with this statement.

We note with satisfaction the progress and results of the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report. We commend FAO for maintaining business continuity, even under difficult circumstances, while being able to develop new initiatives. We highlight the importance of the Report as an accountability tool and recommend that FAO continuously seek to further improve project performance. Furthermore, we underline the importance of full alignment with the repositioning of the UN Development System (UNDS), and effective Rome-based Agencies collaboration.

We welcome the update on FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights, recalling the need to develop a cross-cutting data policy to ensure data governance, data integrity and privacy, as well as intellectual property rights, and to adhere to international standards and protocols.

We welcome the development of the Rural Youth Action Plan, which promotes the revitalisation of rural areas to ensure present and future generations can contribute to food production and ensure youth participation in sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We also welcome the recommendation of the Programme Committee to take into consideration the guidance from the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in its paragraph 57 in the further development of the plan.

We note that the agenda for this Council does not include several important items, reviewed and recommended for adoption by the Programme Committee. This applies to the Nutrition Strategy, the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Indicator 2020-2021. We would like to receive information from the Secretariat on why these items have not been scheduled for this Council Session and what the follow-up for those items will be.

The Programme Committee also recommended that the Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and the FAO Action Plan on AMR 2021-2025 be considered by this Council Session.

We welcome the fact that the Biodiversity Action Plan is being presented to the FAO Council and underline the importance of ensuring adequate support for countries to implement the Action Plan. We consider that a reference to the possibility for FAO to study the potential of the Geographical Indicators to preserve biodiversity would have been useful and appropriate.

As regards the AMR Action Plan, we note the plan as it stands now and encourage the Secretariat to continue the much needed work in guiding Members to improve their AMR policies and building robust systems. We are confident that the Action Plan will enable FAO to support all Members in their fight against AMR. While we very much regret that the Action Plan does not include a clear call to all Members for the phasing-out of antimicrobials use for growth promotion, we reiterate the importance

of promoting the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials, including the complete phasing out of their use as growth promoters.

The discussions in the Programme Committee showed the need to address how the Governing Bodies can further discuss a more standardised procedure for the evaluation and approval by FAO of policies, strategies and action plans.

We welcome FAO's role and work on AMR and Zoonoses and welcome the inclusion of One Health as a Programme Priority Area in FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–2031, stressing the importance of enhanced international collaboration, especially the collaboration between the Tripartite and UNEP. We also welcome the comprehensive evaluation of FAO's work on AMR and the fact that Management has accepted the evaluation's recommendations, including the proposed actions and commitments in the Management Response.

We appreciate the update on the preparation of the Food Systems Summit, recognising the substantive technical and logistical support that FAO is providing to the preparation process. We see the Food Systems Summit as a landmark opportunity for the world community to jointly address the systemic and interlinked challenges which current food systems are facing. We note the work still needed to make the Summit fully live up to expectations and call on FAO to do its utmost to make the Summit a major success.

We welcome the Evaluation of FAO's work on climate change and Management's acceptance of the evaluation recommendations. Climate action properly integrated into the new Strategic Framework should receive prominence in FAO's work and be mainstreamed systematically into all of FAO's offices and levels.

With these remarks, we endorse the report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the joint statement by Asia Group delivered by our distinguished colleague of Bangladesh and we would like to point out the following points in our national capacity.

First, Japan commends FAO's efforts to develop FAO's vision and strategy for the action of nutrition. Japan highlights the importance of promoting digitalization by FAO's work in achieving sustainable and nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems. Japan also underscores the importance of articulating the promotion of local and traditional diets in FAO's activities.

Second, Japan supports the development of the international digital platform. Now that we are approaching the stage of finalizing the Terms of Reference, Japan hopes that the platform will address the responsible public/private investment as one of its main agendas which addresses environmental concerns and human rights and contributes to digitalization and innovation for those including small-holders and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Finally, Japan would like to highlight the point delivered by Bangladesh in the Asia Group joint statement with regards to the nature of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Action Plan, which is exactly stated in the paragraph 19 (d) of the Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee. Japan requests that this aspect is duly highlighted and reflected in the Council Report.

Finally, Japan would like to support the European Union (EU)'s comment on Data Policy as well as Intellectual Property Rights.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to join others in expressing our appreciation to the Chairperson, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, for his leadership, and to the Secretary and the team for all their hard and extended work.

Canada fully agrees with the 130th Programme Committee's recommendations of underscoring the importance of women, youth, and indigenous people, in particular rural and indigenous women in FAO's activities and in the strategic framework. Canada further echoes the importance of the One Health Approach, the Tripartite Partnership, and the cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other relevant international organizations in line with their respective mandates, and in this respect.

As well as the importance of international trade for increasing resilience, addressing the needs of indigenous people, giving equal important to fish reasoned aquaculture, as well as the need to give more emphasize to environmental issues in the medium-term plan and Programme of Work and Budget.

With regards to the evaluation of FAO support to climate action as Sustainable Development Goal(SDG) 13, and the implementation of FAO's strategy in climate change, Canada appreciates the Programme Committee's request or invitation to FAO, to further mainstream the 'Leave No One Behind' principle and a more systematic consideration of women. In particular rural and indigenous women and youth, the extreme poor and vulnerable, marginalised, and discriminated groups in climate change related initiatives.

We look forward to a revised Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in this regard. Canada continues to support the creation of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, and its Terms of References, with an amendment to ensure that any deliberations and recommendations on potential voluntary guidelines, respect the due process of consultation and endorsement via the appropriate committees. Canada looks forward to the continued consultations and the Action Plan on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across all agriculture sectors and reiterate the importance of basing FAO documents on scientific evidence.

We welcome the adoption of this Plan, without the inclusion of references to geographic indicators as there is no evidence for their connection to biodiversity. The FAO Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Action Plan addresses a crucial issue for the future of food and agriculture. Canada encourages FAO to ensure the Action Plan is sufficiently ambitious in order to address the issue stemming from AMR, and we would also stress the importance of insuring FAO's guidance on AMR, is consistently based on science and evidence.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia commends the work of the Programme Committee, noting the breadth of important issues presented for its consideration. We endorse the recommendations made by the Committee and take the opportunity to highlight the following three points:

Firstly, the importance of the Organization adopting the One Health Approach and maximising and enhancing the Tripartite plus United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) partnership. In this regard, we welcome the ongoing commitment by FAO to addressing Antimicrobial Resistance and we applaud the significant efforts by FAO, in particular Dr Keith Sumption and his team, on developing the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Action Plan. We are pleased to endorse the Action Plan that has been presented to the Council in *CL 166/9 Add.2*. We do, however, highlight the on-going importance of working collaboratively with AMR experts in other fora, in particular on controversial issues, and emphasise the need for all work in this technical area to be based on science.

Secondly, Australia is supportive of FAO's work in mainstreaming biodiversity across all sectors and promoting improved outcomes across all landscape types. We are pleased to endorse the Action Plan presented to the Council in *CL 166/9 Add.1* and note the importance of FAO executing this plan in a manner which complements other international initiatives. In particular, we welcome the actions around building capacity in invasive species management.

Australia values the work of FAO to support climate action, and we would welcome FAO updating its Strategy on Climate Change in line with Recommendation 2 of the evaluation. We highlight our firm belief that cooperation and collaboration is the best way to expand sustainable and more resilient agricultural practices. However, we also highlight that there is no one size fits all approach and applying narrow indicators and metrics for a climate change strategy and action plan for agriculture has the potential to be counterproductive. To this end, we note the need for broad consultation on the development of relevant indicators and metrics, and for acknowledgement and consideration of the vast variability of agricultural systems and social differences which make up global agricultural supply.

Finally, we note the importance of FAO bolstering its climate change resourcing in the Asia-Pacific region.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En lo relativo al Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa, desearíamos destacar lo siguiente, además de manifestar nuestro total apoyo a la intervención de la Unión Europea y sus 27 estados Miembros.

En primer lugar, quisiéramos destacar la importancia que damos al Informe de síntesis del examen a mitad de período correspondiente a 2020 como herramienta fundamental para informar a los Miembros de la implementación del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP), de forma que podamos hacer un seguimiento del desempeño de la FAO, nuestra Organización, y saber si está en el camino de ofrecer los resultados esperados. Es a nuestro parecer, de especial importancia el trabajo realizado en el Programa de la FAO de respuesta y recuperación de la COVID-19.

En segundo lugar, subrayamos especialmente el desarrollo del Plan de acción relativo a la juventud rural, apreciando la recomendación del Comité para que se tengan en cuenta las orientaciones del Comité de Agricultura (COAG). Destacamos también la importancia de la FAO y de su trabajo para la lucha contra la resistencia a los antimicrobianos y las zoonosis.

En este sentido, pedimos que se profundice en el enfoque Una Salud y las relaciones entre la ciencia y el desarrollo de las políticas, prestando una especial atención al refuerzo de la colaboración entre la asociación tripartita, es decir, la FAO, la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal (OIE) y la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA) y otras organizaciones internacionales pertinentes. Tomamos nota del Plan de acción de la FAO sobre la resistencia a los antimicrobianos para 2021-25 y reiteramos la importancia de promover el uso responsable y prudente de los mismos, incluida la eliminación completa de su uso como promotores del crecimiento. En este sentido, instamos a la Secretaría a que continúe trabajando para mejorar las políticas de sus Estados Miembros sobre la resistencia antimicrobiana.

Encomiamos los avances de la FAO en protección de datos y derechos de propiedad intelectual, así como animamos a desarrollar más estas políticas en los órganos rectores y en coordinación con otras agencias de Naciones Unidas. Con estas observaciones respaldamos el Informe de este 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and my own country, Sweden. The European Union countries, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, align themselves with the European Union statement. We welcome the recommendations of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

We take note of the Programme Committee's guidance for the Strategic Framework. We commend the preparation of a changed management plan, as recommended by the evaluation of FAO's Strategic Results Framework. It is important that FAO puts in place a good reporting system, to enable follow-up on decision-taking and the Governing Bodies. We also support the vision and strategy for FAO's work in nutrition.

In this respect, we would like to highlight the collaboration between United Nations organizations and especially the role of the newly established United Nations Nutrition mechanism. The Nordic countries welcome FAO's role and work on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Zoonoses and stresses the importance of an enhanced One Health approach based on a strong science policy interface. In this regard, we appreciate that One Health is proposed to be a program priority area.

The Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) challenge can only be solved through coordinated global action, scaling up efforts to the already existing cooperation within the tripartite and UNEP is key. We note the work on the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-25 and appreciate Management's and the Secretariat's continued efforts on the Action Plan. The Action Plan will be an important tool for FAO to help guide countries in their fight against AMR.

The Nordic countries do however very much regret that the Action Plan, does not at this stage, include a clear rule for members for the phasing out of antimicrobial use for growth promotion. We reiterate the importance of promoting the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in food production.

Including the phasing out of their use as growth promoters, in line with the Conference Resolution 4/2015. We welcome the finalisation of the action plan, for the implantation of the FAO strategy, on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors.

Biodiversity is of fundamental importance to our food systems. The Nordic countries would like to emphasise FAO's unique role in advocating, promoting, and supporting the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation methods across all agricultural sectors and food systems. We support FAO in rolling out forecast based actions and building resilience to climate induced disasters.

We encourage FAO to particularly support low-income countries in pursuing project funding from the Green Climate Fund. This, in view of investing in sustainable and climate resilient land use, including agriculture and farm stream. We support the conclusion of the Programme Committee, for FAO to adopt more strategic and programmatic approaches to climate change.

With these remarks, we endorse the Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to start this afternoon by saying a huge thanks to the Chairperson the other Members, and the Secretariat of the Programme Committee for our partnership over the past four years that I have served on the Committee. I very much enjoyed it, and I think we have worked well and achieved a lot. The 130th session was the last session of the Programme Committee that I participated in, and it considered a large number of issues. I would like to highlight five of them here.

Firstly, I would like to commend the Office of Evaluation for their evaluation of FAO's work on climate change. The United Kingdom fully supports all of the recommendations made in the evaluation and we urge Council to endorse them, in particular the recommendation for a new FAO Climate Change Strategy.

I note that the Asia Regional Group, the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia, and the Nordic countries, have also endorsed this recommendation. As we said in our statement on item 3 and item 4, this is important, because sustainable agriculture and land use are indispensable in tackling green-house gas emissions and building resilience to the impact of a changing planet. However, it is also important, as we have agreed FAO needs to address the imbalance in its support to Members to access climate financing and leave no one behind.

Next, we would like to thank the Office of Evaluation for the evaluation of FAO's work on anti-microbial resistant, and we welcome the Programme Committee's endorsement of these recommendations. I would also like to thank Management for the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Action Plan, and the AMR indicator proposals. I would like to congratulate FAO Members on reaching agreement on these, and we look forward to Council's endorsement of them.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the United Nations high-level interactive dialogue on antimicrobial resistance, which is taking place this week in New York, and we'd like to thank FAO as well as World Health Organisation (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for the participation in it. The United Kingdom welcomes and will fully endorse the call to action, and we encourage other Members to do so as well. Please let the United Kingdom Permanent Representation know if you would like any information on this.

As others have said, we welcome FAO's work on One Health in partnership with WHO, OIE and UNEP, and we'd like to highlight the work that our colleagues are doing in Geneva to agree a resolution at the World Health Assembly next month. This will call for stronger tripartite plus UNEP reporting mechanisms, a joint strategy for FAO, WHO, OIE and UNEP on One Health, and a joint work plan. We call on Council to recognise FAO's role in this work.

Thirdly, I would like to turn to the mid-term review, and to note the progress that it is reported on, that it reports for 2020, despite challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the Programme Committee discussion on project performance, and we call on Council to endorse the recommendation that Management reports on project performance should be include in future Mid-Term Review and Program Implementation Reports. As we have seen for the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and a number of other evaluations, systematic reporting is essential.

Fourthly, I would like to welcome the agreement reached on the biodiversity action plan and nutrition strategy. Finally, we note that the Programme Committee has proposed a discussion on a standardized procedure for the elaboration of approval of FAO's policies, strategies, and action plans. We believe clarity on the distinction between them would be very helpful and in particular useful to know which of these required consultations will need body approval.

Lastly, I would like to support the Nordic call for a changed management strategy to implement the Strategic Framework.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

First of all, I would like to thank the Ambassador of the Netherlands for his excellent and dedicated work as Chairperson.

I would like also to thank all the other Members for their enthusiastic and committed participation. My first point is about item 9, Terms of References of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. First of all, Israel applauds the work that the FAO is doing to strengthen data protection and intellectual property rights.

We are looking forward to having debates on the progress achieved on the issue. Israel would also like to underline the importance of having digital solutions in order to achieve sustainable agriculture, recognising the importance of digital technology, Israel would like to have an update about the digital platform and about its running. Last but not least, Israel would like to request and to highlight the importance of having a more inclusive representation of the platform, in order to have more access to agriculture and digital technology.

My second point is about item 15, Progress Report on the United Nations Food System Summit, and FAO's work in Food Systems. Israel has feeling that we are lacking concrete information related to the process and results of the United Nations Food System Summit. We truly would like to have a more transparent and dynamic participation. Israel would like also to know how the G20 discussion will take place. Only 20 main countries will participate to the G20 Summit, while the food coalition is composed by man more countries. How will the dialogue among FAO's Food System Summit and Food Coalition happen all combined?

Then, my last point is about item 16, Update on the New Strategy for Private Sector Engagement. Israel would like to have some information and some more updates about the relation between the FAO and the private sector, and also could you please give us some information about the relationship between World Food Programme (WFP's) and private sector, and FAO and the private sector.

Do they work together? Do they work separately? Moreover, while welcoming the availability of a new private sector partnership, we would like to ask for qualification on how FAO approaches the private sector. Do they approach through embassies or through Members? We would appreciate really some more information on this issue. To end, Israel endorses the reports of the Programme Committee.

Ms Agnes Rosari DEWI (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the statement of Asia Regional Group delivered by Bangladesh. Indonesia commends FAO for the transparent and inclusive consultation on the FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-25. We took note that this Action Plan is not a policy and standard-setting document but an accountability tool to guide FAO's work. We would also like to emphasize the 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity. We appreciate the substantial consultative process to consolidate the inputs from various platforms, including the regional conferences.

With this emphasis, Indonesia endorses the Report of 130th Session of the Programme Committee.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Zambia and South Africa on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. I would also like to thank the Programme Committee for their hard work.

The Council has extensively discussed and expressed its appreciation for the informative documents produced by the Secretariat, including the FAO vision laid out in the Strategic Framework and the soon to be implemented Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget. Their implementation is key for, as we all know, good policies only become important and life changing when put into action. Zimbabwe supports the adoption of this important documents and Zimbabwe also supports, inter alia, the One Health Approach, which has become an imperative, given the current pandemic.

On the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, as we stated yesterday, we were among the first to embark on this programme, which is progressing well. The importance with which FAO is giving to the issue of climate change, we suffer from the vagaries of extreme climate variations which contribute extensively to the food insecurity that we experience in our country.

We also appreciate the mainstreaming gender and empowering women who comprise the majority of rural farmers and, last but not least, we look forward to the strengthening of FAO's work on youth, particularly the rural youth who face unemployment and migrating citizens beyond borders in search of non-existing jobs. Their desperation has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am glad to share a happy story for Zimbabwe. We are experiencing new trends concerning youth in agriculture and this they have done mostly on their own. They celebrate their work and encourage each other using e-communication. There is a growing trend of youth taking up farming. In the process, some of the youth have become champions and they are making it fashionable to work on the land and to celebrate rural life from their hard work, the crops they grow, the food they eat, especially the traditional foods.

Furthermore, they have realized how farming can become a source of livelihood. Speaking about all sorts of young people, some of them are trained in agriculture, others have no training at all, they are learning as they go. Some of them have university qualifications, they have put those aside and they have gone back to the land, and they work on pieces of land in the village and land that they rent. Some of them have inherited farms.

The government has taken notice of this and the Ministry of Land, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement is encouraging them to work hard, acknowledging that they are an important part of the future of the economy, especially the agricultural sector. They are growing in numbers and they are also demanding land and all sorts of support from the government.

Zimbabwe pledges to continue supporting the work that is being done by all of us and we ask FAO to continue promoting these programmes, especially those among the youth.

CHAIRPERSON

That ends our list of speakers of Members of the Council. I have one request from an Observer, so I give the floor to the observer from World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Mr Jean-Philippe DOP (Observer)(OIE)

On behalf of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) I take the opportunity of this first intervention to thank FAO for its invitation and also to thank you, Chairperson, for your valuable action as a Chairperson.

Regarding item 9 on the Report of the 130th Programme Committee, and particularly the document titled *Revised FAO Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025*, my observations are as follows.

The OIE congratulates FAO on its ambitious Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) that fully recognizes the Tripartite collaboration and the existing work conducted by partners.

The OIE further thanks FAO for its commitments to support the implementation of OIE standards and guidelines relevant to AMR and to facilitate the OIE collection of data on the use of antimicrobials in animals, as presented in our 5th OIE report published in April 2021.

Furthermore, the OIE is expecting FAO to take action on AMR surveillance and to strengthen activities and information sharing in the plant sector, in order to fill the gaps and to avoid duplication of efforts.

The AMR is part of the One Health Approach, as mentioned by many Members, gathering Human, Animal and Environment Health in one single concept. As we know, One Health is now at the top of the international agenda. In the coming months it will continue to be addressed through the Tripartite Plus mechanism, with FAO, OIE, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

As already mentioned by FAO, the four partners have already published the terms of reference and a call for experts for a “One Health High Level Expert Panel” and are currently working closely together to select the experts who are expected to be appointed in the coming weeks. This morning I participated together with Keith Sumption, the FAO Executive Secretary in a Tripartite meeting to discuss this selection.

In addition, One Health will also be discussed in several high-level multilateral fora including (a) the G20 Health process, under the Italian presidency; G7 with the UK Presidency; the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit, in particular through the work of the UN Task Force; and the first session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (COAG) Sub-committee on Livestock, scheduled in February 2022. In these different occasions, OIE, together with its partners, will continuously promote a long term political and financial commitment to make One Health, not only an internationally recognized principle but also a reality in the field.

The OIE participates actively in all these different mechanisms, highlighting the need to strengthen the capacities of our Members to better anticipate, prevent and control emerging diseases with pandemic potential, knowing that the work of the FAO - OIE agreement on the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (also called GF-TADs) contributes also to strengthen the capacities of our Members in some transversal areas such as diagnostic and laboratory capacities.

The prevention and control of the most threatening contagious animal diseases, including zoonoses, goes through such alliances between countries, organizations, and stakeholders, including public and private partners. We all know that viruses and bacteria have no borders. The COVID-19 pandemic is unfortunately the blatant proof. So, strengthening our partnerships and joining our forces are absolutely essential, and the OIE will be present by your side whenever needed.

In conclusion, the OIE reiterates its thanks to FAO and confirms its full availability to strengthen our partnership and thus contribute to improving the sanitary level of animal production chains and reducing the zoonotic risk.

CHAIRPERSON

This completes our list of speakers. Now I will give the floor to the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, and after that I will give the floor to the Secretariat to reply to some of the points raised.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer) (Netherlands) (Chairperson of Programme Committee)

It was a privilege to chair the third virtual meeting of the Programme Committee and to work with such dedicated colleagues and I would like to thank them for their extraordinary support and their hard work in these particular and often difficult circumstances.

As you have seen, the Session was heavily loaded again but with the commitment and solidarity of the Members, we managed to conclude our deliberations with consensus. It was a team effort. I also would like to thank and compliment Management for their participation and their efforts to make and clarify our response, to create an open atmosphere and to make sure that together we find a way forward.

I am not going to comment on all the issues because several already have been discussed in the Council. However, I would like to highlight and welcome the findings in the Mid-Term Review Status

Report 2020, especially because the 2020 outputs were delivered in a context of unprecedented challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important that the Committee recommended the Council to approve the Vision and Strategy on Nutrition and the terms of reference for the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. I think the Nutrition Strategy is very much needed when we look to our challenges, not only for food security but certainly also for children. I think, as we have heard already by the Members, we had in depth discussions under of the One Health Approach in FAO's work on zoonosis and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). It was an extensive discussion where we touched upon many issues and I think last week it was very positive that we could arrive with consensus during the informal consultations on a consensus for the Action Plan on AMR. Of course, we know one issue when it comes to the, I would say, phasing out of antimicrobials. We know that further work and policy discussions are needed. But I think the important step has been set by, hopefully, approving by the Council the AMR Action Plan.

We also, on the request of the Programme Committee, had informal consultations on the Action Plan on Biodiversity and, again, with support and a constructive approach of all those involved we reached a consensus during the informal consultations and I do hope that the Council can adopt this Action Plan, certainly with the many important meetings that are going to take place this year, while biodiversity and sustainable use of network resources.

The Committee also reviewed and discussed the evaluations of FAO's role and the work on AMR and FAO's support of climate change action and the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy. I think, again, we have shown that comprehensive evaluations and Management response are not only important but also all the recommendations were appreciated and will be implemented by Management.

Last but not least, I would like to bring your attention, of course, to what was already said by several Members, to further evaluate Recommendation 2 of the Evaluation of the Climate Change Strategy, which refers to FAO's needs to have a new climate change strategy.

As mentioned also already, we were updated on FAO's policies on the Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights, the Rural Youth Action Plan, the Programme Implementation and the Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, United Nations Food Systems Summit and, last but not least, the new Strategy for the Private Sector.

It was my last session as Chairperson of the Programme Committee, a four-year term which I am proud, honoured and privileged to have held with the dedicated Members of the Programme Committee. It was an honour for me to serve the Membership. We can see with the teamwork effort of all the Members of the Programme Committee, together we can unite, together we can be productive, we can be flexible, constructive and show results.

I think certainly if we step out of the ordinary setting, we did our utmost to find a consensus on all issues. I would like to thank also the Vice-Chairpersons in those two term years, Vice-Chairperson, Mr Marc Mankoussou of Congo, and Vice-Chairperson Mr Carlos Bernardo Cherniak of Argentina. I think together we made it happen and we also found a way forward to new endeavours, to work even harder when it comes to finding a more inclusive approach with the Membership, having more inclusive informal consultations with the Membership and Management to make sure that we have the broader support for the policies of our so beloved FAO.

Of course I would like to thank the Director-General, as well as Management, for their hard work and for their support to make FAO the best Organization within the United Nations. Certainly, last but not least, I would like to thank the Secretary of the Programme Committee, Jiani and her team for their unbelievable hard work. They were always like her with with her laugh, her smile, her music and her sweets during the meeting. Without her we would not have got here.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to inform you that there is a technical issue with the connection of the Independent Chairperson of the Council which is being resolved at the moment. We shall resume as soon as possible in a matter of minutes. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

CHAIRPERSON

I am back, we had some technical problems. Colleagues have sorted them out. Now I give the floor to the Deputy Director-General, Ms Maria Helena Semedo, for her response to some of the points raised.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (FAO Deputy Director-General)

Let me start by thanking all the Members of the Council for their contribution. Let me also thank the members of the Programme Committee for their contribution and their guidance throughout the process, particularly for the discussions on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and the Biodiversity Action Plan and the leadership of the Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen as Chairperson of the Programme Committee.

I would like to comment on some of the questions and the comments raised on areas under my coordination and I will start with the AMR Action Plan, reaffirming that this is not a policy or standard-setting document, as it has been said, but is rather an instrument which will support countries at their request to implement their national action plan for responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials.

This new Action Plan, as it has been said also by our colleague from World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), is a clear sign of commitment of FAO *vis-à-vis* our Members, our donors, but it is also an instrument of accountability, how our Members can keep FAO accountable, what we have committed to deliver through this action plan.

As has also been said, AMR is, as our Director-General says, it is a silent tsunami and we need to be together in the fight against AMR and in this regard the President of the General Assembly is calling tomorrow a United Nations high-level dialogue and an outcome document. A Call to Action on AMR, will be approved and our Director-General will be there tomorrow to show FAO's commitment but also the commitment of the Tripartite of which FAO has the chairpersonship now.

Talking about zoonosis and AMR, FAO is not working alone. Let me also thank the presence of Mr Jean-Philippe Dop here. We work on the framework of the Tripartite with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other organizations, and on the framework of the One Health approach where we have human, animal, plant and environment all together for us to make One Health a reality at the global, regional and local level.

Thank you for your endorsement of the AMR Action Plan, for your commitment and guidance. Now it is time for us to move towards the implementation of the AMR Action Plan. Another point raised was the global expert on One Health. Mr Dop provided already some of the information. We are at the last point of the process where the four organizations are screening the experts and we hope, maybe by the end of this week, we will come up with the final 20 experts who will be part of the global experts, as agreed.

The same with the Biodiversity Action Plan. I do not think I need to reaffirm that it is not a standard-setting document. It is not a policy document. However, again, as the AMR Action Plan, it has been an inclusive process and it will be important to show how biodiversity is fundamental for the food systems and how FAO can provide adequate support to countries and what we can bring to the table and how agriculture can contribute to biodiversity protection and for a very important milestone we will be having this year, is the COP15 and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which will be adopted, as it has been said by the delegate of China, in the City of Eternal Spring.

We think we received the support from all the countries. Bangladesh referenced the use of non-agreed language. It was not clear to me. I cannot respond but if we can have a bilateral where you can explain better which language you are referring to.

The last point is regarding the evaluation of FAO's work on AMR and climate change where the Organization accepted all the recommendations but let me maybe refer to the climate change where some Members, disagreed with the recommendations. The reason why the evaluators proposed a new Climate Change Strategy is because they believe the current Climate Change Strategy is not aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and being poorly aligned with the 2030 Agenda and not addressing key areas of FAO work on climate risk and food systems.

As Management, we accept all the recommendations but we are on the hands of the Members for their decision. On climate, what FAO does is that we mainly support the countries to formulate their national determined contributions and adaptation strategy. We work with the countries to access climate finance and we work on the global process under the Paris Agreement. Those are mainly what we do in FAO regarding climate and climate change.

With this I think I tried to reply to the comments regarding those five areas but we are available to respond to any additional questions you may have.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

Let me be brief and answer two important issues that were raised. First, regarding the comment from the European Union, it was followed on the Programme Committee Report and is in accordance with the usual processes in the sense to have the matter specifically in reference to the terms of reference of the International Platform for Digital Agricultural and Nutrition Strategy. There was no request to make it under a separate agenda item and that is why it is being discussed in the current form.

Specifically, regarding the Nutrition Strategy process, the request for the new strategy came from PC/127 and the request was to discuss the updated strategy in PC/129 and PC/130 and then we had the PC/130 request endorsement by the Council. This was the same process used for the development of approval and endorsement of the previous Climate Change Strategy.

Similarly, in the case of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. The 164th FAO Council in July 2020 endorsed the platform and requested its Terms of Reference to be reviewed by the FAO Governing Bodies and Technical Bodies. The terms were reviewed by the 27th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the 25th Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the 129th Session of the Programme Committee and it was endorsed for approval of the Council.

Now, regarding the comments on terms of the voluntary guidelines, in the case of the International Platform of Digital Food and Agriculture, are an effective instrument to promote good policy approaches to international agriculture. In the case of the Platform, such guidelines will be developed in a multi-stakeholder context, with Members, the private sector, non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), academia and the farmers. International organizations will support this discussion and the inclusion of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will warranty no duplication of activities. This is extremely important.

The Terms of Reference also are clear that such Voluntary Guidelines will be submitted to the Governing Bodies for consideration and endorsement as it was requested in the CL 165 paragraph 25 (b), which exactly said, “requested FAO to include in the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, reporting mechanisms through which voluntary guidelines from the platform on issues related to digital food and agriculture are submitted to the FAO Members for consideration through the FAO Governing Body process.”

In terms of the Terms of Reference, in paragraph 10 (e), it is very clearly stated that we will submit voluntary guidelines to the FAO Members for consideration and endorsement through the FAO Governing Body processes. Of course, they can decide if they want Technical Committees or not.

Removing the important function from the terms will weaken the platform’s potential in contributing to digital agriculture development, so we believe it is important to have them there, as it was requested by the Council. Many United Nations Agencies follow such multi-stakeholder procedures to develop guidelines and recommendations. UNESCO provides a space where norms related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) are debated in international conferences that explore the linkages between these technologies and educational learnings.

UNICEF is seeking inputs from various stakeholders on the issues related to artificial intelligence and children’s rights. World Health Organization (WHO) has established a Digital Health Technical Advisory Group and organized a series of roundtables with the stakeholders to discuss the development of global standards for digital health products and services.

All these initiatives fall within the United Nations Secretary-General's roadmap for this cooperation that will strive to ensure a comprehensive representation of all the stakeholders in the process of discussing digital technologies.

I hope this will clarify and we can move forward.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of the discussions on this Item. I have no more request from anyone to take the floor. I will read out my conclusions and we will put them on the screen. Item 9, *Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee*.

1. The Council considered the recommendations of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and in particular:
 - (a) welcomed the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2020 and commended FAO for ensuring business continuity as well as progress in delivery of the Programme of Work despite difficult challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - (b) adopted the vision and strategy for FAO's work in nutrition, commending the inclusive and transparent process that contributed to its development;
 - (c) approved the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture welcoming the inclusive consultation process that contributed to the development;
 - (d) approved FAO Plan on Antimicrobial R2021 – 2015 and appreciated the inclusive and transparent process that contributed to its development;
 - (e) welcome FAO's One Health work, including the positive collaboration within the Tripartite;
 - (f) approved the 2021 – 2023 Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural sectors;
 - (g) endorsed observations and recommendations on the evaluation of FAO's support to climate action SDG13 and the implementation of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change 2017, in particular recommendation to and stress the importance of implementing the FAO strategy and requested regular updates to be provided to the Programme Committee thereon;
 - (h) supported the Committee's observations and recommendations on the comprehensive evaluation of FAO's role and work on Antimicrobial Resistance and welcome Management's acceptance and willingness to implement them.

That ends the list of conclusions, and now I open the floor and we can take the conclusions subparagraph by subparagraph so that it is easier for Members to comment. The floor is open.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

With subparagraph (a), I would like to suggest that we add to the end of that the Council's endorsement of the Programme Committee recommendation that Management reports on project performance should be included in future Mid-term Reviews and Programme Implementation Reports. You will remember I made that comment and indeed it is one of the conclusions of the Programme Committee. Would you like me to suggest some language?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, please.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Perhaps, at the end of the sentence it could read, "and endorsed the Programme Committee recommendation that reports on project performance, should be included in future Mid-term Reviews and Programme Implementation Reports."

CHAIRPERSON

Members, subparagraph (a) together with the amendment. Any request for the floor or comment on subparagraph (a)? I see none. We agree on subparagraph (a).

Subparagraph (b), any comments on subparagraph (b)? I see none, so subparagraph (b) is agreed.

Subparagraph (c).

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

In line with my comments during this item we do have a proposed amendment to the language in subparagraph (c). We would propose to add at the end, after “agriculture”, with the removal of “any authority to develop voluntary guidelines.”

We can leave it to the Drafting Committee how they rearrange the language in that subparagraph. However, the operative change here is that we cannot join consensus to approve the Terms of Reference unless that authority to develop voluntary guidelines is removed. From our perspective this is a governance issue. The development of any voluntary guidelines in Member driven code starts with open-ended working groups that are inclusive of all Membership rather than a limited subset.

CHAIRPERSON

I should put it in yellow this is Drafting Committee. Any further comment on subparagraph (c)? For the refinement of the language, it will be the Drafting Committee. I see there is no request for the floor. We will leave it to the Drafting Committee. I have some speakers. Máximo, and then Argentina. Perhaps, the Chief Economist intervention may assist other interventions.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

Very briefly, as I mentioned, in the 165th Session of the Council (CL165), paragraph 25 (b), it was explicitly mentioned reporting mechanisms through which voluntary guidelines from the platform on issues related to digital food and agriculture submitted to the FAO Members for consideration through the FAO Governing Body process. That is exactly what was done and discussed in all the Committees that I mentioned where the United States was present in which in the Terms of Reference, in 10 (c) explicitly is mentioned, submit voluntary guidelines to the FAO Members for consideration and endorsement through the FAO Governing Body process.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comment?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Respectively though we were present in those Technical Committee discussions and as reflected in all of the reports in Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and Committee on Forestry (COFO), we stated that the development of voluntary guidelines should not be a function of the platform. Throughout all of the technical meetings no Members opposed our request to remove this mandate from the platform and, again, we feel that the voluntary guidelines, if there are to be voluntary guidelines, should be accomplished through a consensus process supervised by the Governing Bodies, and so, again, we will not be able to join any consensus to approve these Terms of Reference unless this amendment is included.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

Sorry, I repeat on this one, but what is in the Terms of Reference is that this will be going through the Governing Bodies and it was requested in the 165th Session of the Council (CL165). I honestly do not understand the difference because this will be going through the process of the Governing Bodies as it was requested.

CHAIRPERSON

Members?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Thank you very much for the clarification. I am just wondering if it would help to bring the text of the Terms of Reference that says that voluntary guidelines shall be submitted to FAO Members for consideration and endorsement to the FAO Governing Body process. If that would accommodate the comments made by the United States.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

Chairperson, if you allow, I can share my screen to show the Terms of Reference.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, please

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

I will need access to the share screen. This is the paragraph 10(e) of the Terms of Reference. "Submit voluntary guidelines for the FAO Members for consideration and endorsement to the FAO Governing Body process."

CHAIRPERSON

Members, any comment on that? Can you put the text back on the screen? United States, any further comment?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Again, a few clarifying points here. The language quoted by the Chief Economist from the Council actually that the 165th Session of the Council (CL165) occurred before the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Meeting where we made our point. Our point here is that we do not want the development of the voluntary guidelines by this platform, which represents only a subset of Members.

It is not an open-ended process such as that used for the development of other voluntary guidelines, for presentation to Members is not the same thing as developed by Members. So again, we cannot approve the Terms of Reference unless we include an amendment removing the mandate or the authority to develop voluntary guidelines.

I could suggest alternatively that we request a revised version of the Terms of Reference for the Council, by the Council incorporating Member suggestions for consideration at the 168th Session of the Council. We could go that route, but we were hoping that with this amendment we would be able to join consensus and approve these Terms of Reference during this Council.

CHAIRPERSON

What about the suggestion made by Canada?

Sra. María de los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Mi Delegación está un poco confundida. Nos gustaría que el Dr. Torero nos explicara de manera más pausada esta cuestión para que todos los Miembros podamos entenderlo cabalmente.

La propuesta de nuestra colega del Canadá parece ser una opción después de que el Sr. Máximo Torero nos explique pausadamente este asunto de llegar a un camino medio, un *half-way*, para este asunto, de ser el caso.

Por favor, si nos puede repetir, Sr. Máximo, su *rationale* y de dónde viene todo esto.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (FAO Chief Economist)

What I was trying to explain is that when the concept of International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture was endorsed by the 165th Session of the Council (CL165), in the paragraph 25 (b), it requested that FAO to include in the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture reporting mechanisms through which voluntary guidelines from the Platform on issues

related to digital food and agriculture as submitted to the FAO Members for consideration through the FAO Governing Body processes.

What we did is after going through all the process with the Terms of Reference as I indicated before, which went through all the Technical Committees, and the Report was then submitted to the Programme Committee included the final version of the Terms of Reference. I remember the governance structure of the International Platform of Digital Food and Agriculture is composed of Members being selected by each region, 25 Members if I am not wrong. But it also stated very clearly in paragraph 10 (e) that we will submit any voluntary guidelines that come from this discussion, an open platform discussion, like it exists in all United Nations Agencies.

It will go to the FAO Members for consideration and endorsement through the FAO Governing Body process. That is the point where, what exactly the United States is saying, the Members can do an open discussion and can decide if they approve it, how they approve it, and what will be the mechanisms to be followed. We tried to follow the request and that is why it is very clear in the Terms of Reference subparagraph 10 (e).

Sra. María de los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

La idea de las directrices voluntarias sería como una forma de presentar los informes derivados de esta plataforma, pero tendrían que ser autorizadas por la Membresía. Entonces, si no estamos de acuerdo en que autoricen estas directrices voluntarias, no las autorizamos o las discutimos o las cambiamos. Creo que, *a priori*, negar la posibilidad de un proyecto de directrices voluntarias suena como abrupto. Si ellos nos van a presentar un producto que tengamos que aprobar, ¿por qué no dar esa oportunidad? Creo que suena lógico y así toda la membresía está al tanto de los resultados de esta plataforma.

Es muy nuevo lo de la Plataforma, yo creo que sí necesitamos estar informados de los avances de los resultados, de cuestiones muy tangibles. Y si esas directrices nos ayudan a comprender bien a bien el uso, el efecto, el alcance de esta Plataforma, pues, serán bienvenidas. Entonces, nuestra Delegación estaría en favor de que no se cerrara la oportunidad de que haya una propuesta de directrices voluntarias.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you, Chief Economist for the explanation. We very much understand what you are saying, but in every report we have explicitly gone on record saying that there should be no policy setting function for this Platform, and we have said it in Committee on Agriculture (COAG), in Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and in Committee on Forestry (COFO), and we do not approve the mandate to develop voluntary guidelines falling under this International Platform. As I recall no other Members opposed our saying that in any of those Bodies and I am a bit confused just from a governance perspective.

I do not want to feel like I am negotiating the report language here with FAO Management. It is on the Members to decide what we put in our report and, again, we are not in a position to join consensus to approve of these Terms of Reference with that mandate included when we have gone on record consistently in our position to that.

Again, another suggestion, we can defer this to 168th Session of the Council and ask that these Terms of Reference be further updated in response to feedback with Members, but we have made this point. It was not taken into account in the draft Terms of Reference, and we are not in a position to join in consensus without this amendment.

CHAIRPERSON

I entirely agree, it is for the Members to decide. Members, any comment on subparagraph (c). The way it is drafted, and it would go to the Drafting Committee for refinement of the wording. Members, any comment?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

On this issue, I first of all, would underline the point that United States has made about we are negotiating between us as Members of Council, rather than with Management on this point. On the

substantive issue here, the United Kingdom is flexible, but we are happy to have the United States addition to this subparagraph, we have no objection to it.

I think the point that I did want to make is that this highlights the comment I made at the end of my statement, which is that the Programme Committee has recognized that there is a degree of confusion about status and the procedures required for various FAO products and, of course, you will recall that I welcomed the fact the Programme Committee is going to have a discussion about what is a policy, what is a strategy, what is an action plan, what needs to be approved by the which Governing Body.

I would suggest that we actually also add voluntary guidelines to this discussion as well because I do think it would be very helpful to have greater clarity about what is needed to trigger a voluntary guideline process and indeed what voluntary guidelines, who they need to be approved by and so on. I think this is just highlighting that point a little bit further and I hope we can conclude that in our conclusions at some point.

CHAIRPERSON

There is no doubt it is for the Members to decide and the Members to negotiate. The Secretariat is there to just provide any explanation or clarification, which again, is for the Members to decide whether they accept that explanation or not. The driving force is the Membership. We have that subparagraph (c), if there is any request from the Membership, if they have a suggestion for amending it, please take the floor. If not, the subparagraph the way it is in yellow will go to the Drafting Committee as was requested, I think the United States suggested their amendment and then said the Drafting Committee could refine the language.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Usted sabe que, en general yo soy muy constructivo y trato de ayudar. Creo seriamente que acá hay un tema más conceptual. Es complicado mandar esto al Comité de Redacción sin trabajar un poco más el consenso entre los Miembros. Porque, si no, es crear una situación para los Miembros del Comité de Redacción muy complicada.

Entiendo, por supuesto, el concepto de querer avanzar, pero yo sugeriría un poquito más de cautela y, en todo caso, seguir con el texto y ver si podemos volver y buscar algún grado de acuerdo.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We agree with Argentina, maybe we would skip the discussion of this subparagraph for the moment. We continue with the other subparagraphs and then at the end we come back to it. I think it would be too demanding sending this proposal for the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that is what we will do. We will go to subparagraph (d), and we will go right to the end and then try and come back here.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Instead we have a proposal, a new subparagraph before the subparagraph (d). "Requested that open, transparent and inclusive consultations with Members be adopted as a standard procedure for the elaboration of FAO Strategies and Action Plans."

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

On subparagraph (d), the new subparagraph (e) after 2025, we would like to add.

CHAIRPERSON

We are on new subparagraph (d).

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

Yes. Sorry, new subparagraph (e) AMR, after "2025", I would like to add.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, can we first see that Membership is okay with new subparagraph (d), which has been proposed by Brazil? First can we deal with that?

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, would you be addressing Brazil's suggestion?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Actually, Brazil is getting at the point I was making as well. I think perhaps we could include the point I was making here in this paragraph as well. I would suggest that at the beginning of the subparagraph we say, thinking on my feet as it were, so forgive me if I do not get it exactly right first time. I think we would say something like, "welcomed the Programme Committee's intention to," sorry, "looked forward to the Programme Committee discussion on a standardized procedure for the elaboration and approval of FAO policies, strategies, voluntary guidelines and action plans." Then said, "and requested," and it carries on as Brazil has proposed.

CHAIRPERSON

We have new subparagraph (d). The suggestion Brazil amended and added to by the United Kingdom. Members, please comment whether that is acceptable. If it is then we move on.

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

On subparagraph (d) this time, I think I welcome the suggestion by the United Kingdom and in my view FAO's strategies and action plans are not the policy document, but at the same time voluntary guidelines follow the policy document so it could be confusing. I would like to put the voluntary guidelines first, for example, "FAO voluntary guidelines, strategies and action plans."

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am content with the Japanese proposal. Indeed, I welcome it, but just two small points, where it says on the second line and proposal, my wording was an approval, not proposal. "The procedure for the elaboration approval for FAO policies, voluntary guidelines" and so on.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Luego de terminar este subpárrafo le pido que me permita proponer un nuevo subpárrafo.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

With regard to new subparagraph (d), I very much appreciate this addition. My question is do we intend to say Programme Committee here or perhaps we should replace Programme Committee with Council as in look forward to the Council discussion on our standardized procedures for the elaboration and approval for FAO policies, et cetera.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No sé si veo que también quiere hablar la Asesora Jurídica, no sé si es por el anterior subpárrafo o puedo empezar con un nuevo subpárrafo. Dígame usted qué hago.

CHAIRPERSON

Who is speaking? Perhaps the Legal Counsel could take the floor. It may assist Members with their interventions. Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

This is with respect to the new proposal for subparagraph (d). I see here the proposal the word "Council" has been introduced. Indeed, under the governance framework of the Organization, this matter would normally be subject to the approval of the Council, rather than the way it was worded previously, which indicated that such approval would be by the Programme Committee.

Secondly, I wanted to suggest that maybe there could be a reference at the end of this subparagraph, for example, and this is for consideration of the Members, just saying, “taking into account the Basic Texts of the Organization”.

In that regard, I am mindful, I have only just seen this text, but of course, there are other mandates here. There are the Technical Committees, which have their mandates on policies and programmes and thus, even if the Programme Committee is to take such matters up, there are other Governing Bodies, which would have an interest and indeed a role in those and by introducing a generic reference to take into account the Basic Texts may address that particular matter.

CHAIRPERSON

Now Members, you have new subparagraph (d), and there are some further amendments plus some explanations and additional information from the Legal Counsel. There is a request for the floor to comment on new subparagraph (d) as amended. There is no comment. So I assume then that subparagraph (d) is acceptable.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just a small point here given that initially we were talking about the Programme Committee and I am very content and happy to switch to Council, but perhaps we should just say, requested a Council discussion as this is the first time we have mentioned it I think. I am flexible here.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

There are two requests in this sentence here, and I understand what we proposed it is not for a specific discussion in the Council itself. Of course, we are flexible in this case, but I think we have to be careful when completing this sentence.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment, Members in reaction to Brazil’s intervention?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am flexible here, but perhaps the Drafting Committee can sort this one out because I think we all agree on the concept don’t we, it is just a question of getting the language right.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

Just a small question, we wonder whether the word “voluntary” before guidelines is necessary, the guidelines can include any kind of guidelines, not only voluntary. We wonder if the “voluntary” word could be removed?

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? Would Members agree that this subparagraph should go to the Drafting Committee?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I just wanted to respond to the point made by our Japanese colleague. We strongly feel that if guidelines is to be used we must have the word “voluntary” before it, to capture that these are non-binding and voluntary for use by Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Would Members agree with the suggestion that this should go to the Drafting Committee, that the concepts are all there, it is how to word it? Would that be agreeable to Members? I see no request for the floor. We will send this subparagraph to the Drafting Committee.

Subparagraph (e).

Sra. María de los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Regresamos al subpárrafo (c), por favor.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (c) we were going to come back after going through the other subparagraphs. So subparagraph (c) is in abeyance.

Sra. María de los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Ah, no lo va a mandar así al Comité de Redacción, ¿verdad?

CHAIRPERSON

No, we were going to come back to it.

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

On subparagraph (e), this is very much similar to the discussion on subparagraph (d). We suggested to include some language about the Action Plan, which is not the policy and the standard setting document, and I would tweak some language from the Programme Committee report. After 2025, I would read, “noting that the Action Plan was not a policy and standard setting document, but an instrument to guide FAO’s work to support Members in their national action plans.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Como había indicado, luego del nuevo subpárrafo (d), había planteado que tenía una propuesta para un nuevo subpárrafo (e). Voy a leer en inglés a velocidad de dictado. “*Stressed the need for FAO to use only bilaterally agreed concepts and language, and give preference to those adopted by FAO governing bodies when designing new: strategies, action plans, voluntary guidelines, policy recommendations and Codes of Conduct*”. La justificación de este subpárrafo se debe a que varios Miembros planteamos esta cuestión y, además, creo que es un acto que refleja la preocupación, yo diría, de la gran mayoría de los Miembros. Entonces, de alguna manera fijamos claramente qué es lo que los Miembros esperan de los procesos aquí en la FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

This subparagraph (e) is in addition to (d), is that my understanding here? Any comments on new subparagraph (e)? I see none.

We move forward to subparagraph (f). Any comments on subparagraph (f)? I see none.

We move forward to subparagraph (g).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Sorry, just a very small addition to subparagraph (f), where it says, “but an instrument to guide”, could we insert after “but,”, “an accountability mechanism or an accountability tool and an instrument.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? I see none, so we move forward to subparagraph (g).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do have some suggestions for the end of this subparagraph. I think we need to put the Tripartite and UNEP. After that I would also like to include the following phrase, “and their work to develop reporting mechanisms and a joint strategy and joint work plan on One Health.”

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

At the end of subparagraph (g) as it stands now, I am a little bit puzzled by the new addition. I am sorry, but at the end of this paragraph, we would like to add the following, that comes from what the distinguished representative from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) said and our

distinguished Deputy-Director General, to which I take this opportunity to compliment. We want to add the following, “and the establishment of the One-Health high-level panel of task experts.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En el subpárrafo que estamos conversando, en la tercera línea, luego de la primera expresión que dice Una salud, en la primera parte de la tercera línea. One Health, yes. Es, “*as well as, with other relevant United Nations agencies.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Any comment on subparagraph (g) as amended? I see none.

We move to subparagraph (h). Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Sorry, could we go back for a second to the new subparagraph on the good language that was proposed by Argentina?

CHAIRPERSON

Which subparagraph is this?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Subparagraph (e), now we have called up. Generally this is fine with me. However I was wondering whether this might be a bit overdoing it, when we are negotiating something new. There might be the need to introduce new terms that have not been agreed upon somewhere. I think we need to consider this possibility, to use only generally, just to not to close completely the possibility to do something innovative here. The way it is phrased now, whatever you do, there has to be agreed text somewhere, agreed content. If that is not the case, so you cannot go ahead. This needs to be considered, I think. We need something to accommodate this. Instead of using only “maybe” we can use “generally”, or the native speaker might help out with a more appropriate suggestion. “Only” in the first line after “use” or “generally”, but again, I am hoping for better suggestions from native speakers

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muchísimas gracias al delegado de Alemania por darme la posibilidad de profundizar la *rationale* de esta propuesta. Nosotros lo que estamos planteando, claramente, es que los procesos de discusión y de diseño de nuevas estrategias, de planes de acción, de guías voluntarias, etcétera, empiezen con un borrador que la Organización, la Administración, pone a disposición de los Miembros. Lo que estamos diciendo es que esos borradores deben respetar el lenguaje internacionalmente acordado. Luego, como lógico proceso de enriquecimiento de cualquier texto, en la medida que se produzcan consensos nuevos, no hay ningún inconveniente, por supuesto, porque es parte de la dinámica natural de la negociación entre los Miembros.

Pero, lo que estamos planteando es otra cuestión, que es que el punto de partida sea a partir de proyectos, de borradores, que no sea a partir de conceptos creativos no consensuados sino a partir del lenguaje acordado porque eso es lo que permite construir nuevos consensos, y esa es la experiencia, esas son las buenas prácticas y creo que un buen ejemplo de esto. Y me recuerdo los comentarios de Japón en la anterior discusión sobre la importancia, por ejemplo, del concepto sobre *Blue Economy* o de *Blue Transformation*, que son conceptos que no habían sido acordados por los Miembros, pero ya fueron incorporados directamente en las bases de documento borrador, a pesar de que, en los comités técnicos, los Miembros no lo habían acordado.

Entonces, justamente, creo que lo que estamos tratando de hacer es ordenar, tener una metodología para que ningún Miembro sea sorprendido y podamos trabajar de manera razonable, predecible, seria y de ninguna manera cerrándonos a que haya nuevos consensos a partir de los debates de las discusiones entre los Miembros. Por lo tanto, me permito, estimado colega de Alemania, invitarlo con estas explicaciones a no incluir la palabra “generally” en esta propuesta de texto porque desnaturaliza el concepto y la *rationale* de la propuesta. Espero haber sido suficientemente claro.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

También voy a referirme al subpárrafo (e). Creemos que es importante incorporar nuevas definiciones que reflejan avances y nuevos enfoques de trabajo en el sector agrícola. Como dijo México durante el primer día, queremos una FAO que no pierda relevancia y quede en el pasado. Varios de esos nuevos conceptos están incluidos en los documentos que analiza el Consejo en esta semana y no tenemos problema con ellos. En aras de consenso y de que debemos utilizar el mínimo común denominador, podríamos aceptar la redacción del subpárrafo (e) que se nos propone. No obstante, queremos hacer esta declaración para que quede en las actas taquigráficas que México no tiene problemas con varios de los nuevos conceptos, algunos de ellos ya incluidos en nuestra legislación y Plan Nacional de Desarrollo.

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

We question the terminology of the, “blue economy”, as stated by the distinguished colleague from Argentina. We did make that question because there was no agreement in the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting. At the same time, we understand the point made by Germany. If we use “only” then FAO may not be able to propose anything. While I am not an English native speaker, I would suggest to use, “in principle”, instead of “only”.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would like to propose something that would solve this dilemma we have here. Hearing the concerns from Argentina and Germany and now Mexico and Japan, maybe if we include, “FAO Secretariat to use only multilateral.” This would solve the problem.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I think the easiest way out would be just to delete the word “only,” not replace it with “generally” or “in principle.” Then, “to use multilaterally agreed language,” and from there, it is clear if a new concept comes up, this is not a problem. Otherwise, if you put “only”, it is really static. I think this is not what the development of new strategies is all about.

I think to use multilaterally agreed concept language is sufficient. We all know that this is what we have to start from, but if something new is coming up and that is why we are negotiating this, then of course there must be the possibility of bringing in these new concepts. To avoid any misunderstanding, I think the best way to accommodate this is to use “multilaterally agreed concepts.” The rest is inherent in the process that new concepts can also be included, if needed.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

On behalf of the Nordic countries, I would strongly support what has just been said by Germany, and what Mexico said. We would not like to see “only” in this text and I think that the text as it stands, without Secretariat here, but just the text “planning to encourage the use of multilaterally agreed concepts”. That would be sufficient in our view and we would not be happy to see “only.”

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do think it is important, as many others have said previously, that we do want FAO to be able to innovate. Of course, we want FAO to be able to innovative when it is designing new strategies and action plans and so on. Perhaps I can suggest some wording that might help reflect the point that Argentina is trying to make.

On the second line, after the word “Governing Bodies” we might include, “as a starting point,” which I think reflects the point that Argentina was making.

As I have said previously, I would also be keen to ensure that we do not use the word “Secretariat” when in fact we are talking about Management. I know you have heard me say this before, but the Secretariat is a Secretariat of the Council, not the whole of FAO Management. In fact, I would actually agree with Sweden that we could delete “FAO” and “Secretariat” in this context.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I am sorry to say I am not convinced by the explanation we just heard. I would like to remind you that we adopted something very similar, if not the same, language using “only multilaterally agreed

concepts,” yesterday. This text, the way it is right now, the Secretariat or the Management, whichever way you wish, would use that as an excuse. We tried to find a multilaterally agreed term, but we are proposing a new text as we are tired of hearing a different excuse when we remind the Secretariat that they do not have this innovative capacity.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estoy absolutamente de acuerdo con la sugerencia, la última expresión planteada por el Embajador de Brasil. Es decir, de ninguna manera la propuesta original apunta a limitar la creatividad a partir de los consensos. Lo que a nosotros nos preocupa es que, si no establecemos estos criterios, lamentablemente es muy difícil construir nuevos conceptos porque ya partimos de un punto no consensuado, no acordado internacionalmente. Creo que el proceso se podría complicar mucho más.

Si en lugar de ello empezamos “a partir”, como mencionó mi colega del Reino Unido, y agradezco a cada uno de los colegas que participaron en este debate, y que hicieron un aporte enriquecedor, estoy de acuerdo que sea desde *starting point*. No tengo problema con esa cuestión, porque es eso lo que estoy diciendo. Estoy planteando que tenemos que partir de una base de consenso, porque eso permite construir nuevos conceptos creativos, pero por consenso.

Entonces, yo creo que el texto, así como está planteado, puede ser acordado por el resto, yo creo que sería un gran avance para establecer reglas que todos, de alguna manera, consideremos y nos evite problemas de discusiones a futuro, como hemos tenido en algunas de las instancias durante esta semana.

CHAIRPERSON

The way I understood you was that subparagraph (e) could go forward without the word “only?” Argentina, did I understand your intervention correctly? Subparagraph (e) as it stands?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Nosotros creemos que, con el agregado, la propuesta de la inclusión del Reino Unido como “*as starting point*” sí deberíamos incluir “*only*” porque es exclusivamente en el momento de inicio del proceso. Y yo creo que la preocupación de los colegas sobre la idea de “*only*” es si lo dejábamos en términos generales. Pero si el “*only*” tiene que ver con el “*starting point*”, yo creo que, de alguna manera, conforma un criterio que debería, me parece, contentar o acomodar la posición de la mayoría de los colegas.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This brings us back to square one. FAO is a knowledge Organization. There should be no limitation when starting to put knowledge in these products such as strategies, action plans, and so on. Knowledge is another thing; it is at the very nature of it. To start “only with” is too limiting and is not in conformity with what FAO’s role is.

Again, “stress the need for FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts as a starting point,” I think is totally well reflecting what is at stake here and should accommodate all concerns. Of course, we do not want to see FAO go off track, but we should not open the door to the progress of knowledge to be put into the shape of strategies, etcetera, if there is no agreed language at that point. For us it is not acceptable to put these limitations on FAO. It is simply not in conformity with its role and mandate.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original Language Arabic)

I think that the proposal of Argentina is accurate and reflects the position of the majority of Members. We do not want to spend much time and we would like to allow the Drafting Committee to work on this text, to then submit it again to the Council. Once again, I agree with the proposal from Argentina.

Ms Xi Li (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We can understand the concern by the distinguished Ambassador from Argentina and we can understand also the rationale from the Ambassador from Germany, because I feel it is a knowledge Organization. If we limit our role to the previously agreed concept, it makes it difficult for us to make innovations. We can understand the Ambassador from Argentina and his concerns. If it would help to

add something like science and evidence concept and add some clarification, or qualifying element such as “science” and “evidence-based,” words like that and then we delete the word “only,” enabling FAO to make innovations to address future challenges.

CHAIRPERSON

Again, it is the use of particular words. One Member has made a suggestion of also sending this subparagraph to the Drafting Committee because the concepts are there.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Lamento mucho frenar el proceso de discusión. Me hubiera gustado poder ir más rápido, pero este tema es muy importante, es un tema sensible que la mayoría de los Miembros hemos expresado en diferentes momentos que queremos que los conceptos que se utilizan sean internacionalmente acordados. Y, de ninguna manera, plantear que hay un punto de inicio como está planteado en la propuesta enriquecida por el Reino Unido, frena ninguna creatividad futura. De ningún lado está planteado de que no se puede haber nuevos conceptos.

De ningún lado está cancelada la posibilidad de la creatividad futura. Pero el punto de partida tiene que ser de consenso; porque si no, crea muchos problemas. Ha creado muchos problemas. Sobre todo estoy hablando de las nuevas estrategias, de los Planes de acción. A ver, ¿cuánto se dilató el Plan de biodiversidad como consecuencia de la inclusión de conceptos no acordados? Lo mismo pasó con el Plan de acción de Resistencia a los Antimicrobianos (RAM). Son todos temas que podrían haber, seguramente, avanzado mucho más rápido si se hubiera partido de documentos, de borradores que tuvieran conceptos internacionalmente acordados.

Yo creo que lo sugerido por mi estimadísima colega de China no es pertinente en este subpárrafo. Si ella quiere sugerir un subpárrafo nuevo en otro sentido, no me opongo. Pero lo que nosotros estamos planteando es otra cosa. No tiene que ver con ello. Y, en todo caso, yo sugiero dejar el subpárrafo en *parking*. Me parece que todavía hay que darle alguna vuelta de conversación antes de mandarlo al Comité de Redacción y ver si podemos continuar con el resto del texto. Esa es mi sugerencia.

Yo creí que con la propuesta del Reino Unido que específicamente se refiere al “*starting point*” con ello estábamos resolviendo que no había ninguna intención de frenar la creatividad de conceptos nuevos, consensuados en la Organización. Así que, mi sugerencia es dejarlo en *parking* un poco más y ver si podemos resolverlo antes de que termine el total del documento que está en discusión.

CHAIRPERSON

That is what we will do. We will hold this subparagraph in abeyance and move on because I think just arguing over words is taking up too much time.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Quería hacer referencia a este subpárrafo. A nosotros, sí que es determinante el término “solamente” en español o “solo” porque, de facto, lo que hace es limitarlo. No podemos olvidar que muchos de los conceptos acordados actualmente existen, precisamente, porque un día se pusieron *ex novo* y se pusieron sobre la mesa por la Secretaría o por quien fuera. Por tanto, creo que efectivamente, por desgracia, es limitante este término. Y siento haber intervenido justo cuando usted había dicho que aparcamos el asunto, pero no quería dejar de perder mi oportunidad.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original Language Arabic)

I would like to address the Ambassador from Argentina directly, if I may? Excellency, what we are trying to do here is draft a text that refers to what is happening here in this meeting. The Drafting Committee may perhaps improve the quality of the draft and that text will be submitted to us once again for adoption of the report. We will then have another opportunity to review the proposal. We have many paragraphs before us and I do not think we can take so much time on this one issue.

CHAIRPERSON

We are moving forward now to subparagraph (f). We are holding subparagraph (e), as you see it is in green.

Let us move to subparagraph (f). I think we have done subparagraph (f) and (g). Sorry, we have done subparagraph (f) and (g).

We go to subparagraph (h). I see now request for the floor or any request for comments on subparagraph (h). It is agreed.

We will move forward to subparagraph (i). There is no request for the floor and we move to subparagraph (j).

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I have asked for the floor for subparagraph (i). It is not clear for me because here we mention recommendation two. If I am not mistaken, and I am talking by memory, recommendation two recommended that the Council consider, so it is somehow self-feeding this. I would like to have some clarification on this and maybe we could have a proposal after this.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tengo la misma preocupación que el Embajador de Brasil expresó sobre este tema, por lo cual voy a hacer una sugerencia de subpárrafo parcial, sugiriendo primero poner entre paréntesis, mi propuesta es cancelar desde el inicio, donde dice “*endorse*” hasta donde dice “*recommendation to*”.

Continues in English

My suggestion is just to delete from “endorsed” until “recommendation to”, that is right. Now, in English, I will suggest a new start to this subparagraph. “Recommended the Council to further review recommendation two of the report of the evaluation of FAO’s Support to Climate Action (SDG-13) and the full implementation of FAO’s Strategy on Climate Change (2-17).” I go on with my proposal because then you can accommodate it. After “2017,” “in view of the new FAO Strategic Framework to be approved by the 42nd Session of the Conference and in line with FAO’s core mandate.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, now you have an amended subparagraph (i) before you. Can I have your views on that subparagraph?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

As I said in my statement, the United Kingdom and the European Union, the North America Regional Group, Asia Regional Group, many Members of Council endorsed recommendation two of the evaluation and want FAO to get on with updating its Strategy on Climate Change. I would note that the 2017 Strategy was a four-year strategy, which has now come to an end, or is coming to an end this year. I am afraid I cannot accept the Argentinian proposal.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We entirely support the Argentinian proposal and would remind our distinguished delegates that many Members, a lot of Members, a great majority of Members, some Members are not at consensus and if everybody but one do not agree we do not have consensus.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? Members, subparagraph (i)? At the moment, we do not have consensus. Can we have more comments? There is a paragraph there. I still do not have the requests. What I suggest is we break for ten minutes and maybe we will have an opportunity to interact informally. We break for ten minutes and we will come back because we seem to be having a situation where every paragraph seems to be on hold. We will break for ten minutes, we will adjourn for ten minutes and come back. Meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 17:02 to 17:17 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 02 à 17 h 17

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.02 a las 17.17

Colleagues, we are back. Is there some possibility of Members coming together on a consensus on some of these words? We are still on subparagraph (i).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Do you think it would be helpful if we ask the Director of Evaluation to explain why a new Strategy would be so helpful? One of the points I made in my statement was that there is currently an imbalance in countries that have been able to access climate finance with FAO support. Indeed, some of the countries that we have heard from this afternoon have been very successful, but there are many African countries that have not yet been successful and that is partly why I think it is so important FAO does have a new updated Strategy. I wonder if the Director of Evaluation would be more convincing than I have been in making this point.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not mind anyone at this stage providing explanations to Members, so that Members can get a perspective. It is entirely up to Members whether they would accept that explanation or clarification. If it contributes to a better understanding of the problem I would ask the Director of Evaluation to offer us some explanation, which then it is up to Members to evaluate. Director of Evaluation,

I give you the floor.

Mr Masahiro IGARASHI (Director of the Office of Evaluation)

Firstly, the reason why our Strategy was recommended to be renewed is that, since the new Management came in and there are some obsolete aspects to it. For instance, for the implementation plans and so on. Secondly, the evaluation team considered that some of the targets and results measures could be further improved. More operational guidance for mainstreaming climate change could be in order. Thirdly, the old Strategy had some gaps in addressing relationships between climate change and food systems, as well as climate change and biodiversity.

Therefore, building a linkage through a solid theory of change will be desirable. They concluded that the current Strategy is good, but it is more incremental than transformational and not substantially in line with the global agenda. This is the view of the Evaluation Team who studied the subject matter. With that I am sure that climate change would be mainstreamed agenda in our Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

This was just an explanation, but we are discussing the Report of the Programme Committee and the Programme Committee obviously expressed a view here and obviously the Programme Committee's view has been discussed in the Council and now we are trying to portray the Council's view here.

With all these explanations and the information from the Programme Committee's Report, can we have some flexibility on subparagraph (i), considering that it is dealing with recommendations which are referred to in the Programme Committee's report and is definitely the Evaluation Report, which was considered by the Committee? Could I have some flexibility on the part of Members to be able to go forward on paragraph (i)?

You see, we have still got subparagraphs pending and we cannot agree here. Now, we cannot spend the whole time of the Council on a subparagraph trying to come together when I see there is no room for coming together because Members have a particular view. The only other option would be to go forward and say some Members view is this and other Members view is this and that is going back in history of FAO, where decisions were not so much made by consensus and it was always some Members said this and other Members said that.

I am heading for that unless I find Members coming together because it is strange that we cannot agree on one particular word. The whole subparagraph depends on a particular word. I am glad that Members are taking the floor and I hope something positive comes and there is flexibility.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero ser muy claro, yo estoy totalmente de acuerdo con usted. Normalmente intentamos que el Informe refleje las discusiones del Consejo, pero, también me parece que en este caso es importante que tanto en el Informe del Comité del Programa como en el Informe del Consejo, en ambas instancias, quede claro que no hay consenso sobre una nueva estrategia.

¿Por qué digo esto? Porque lo más importante es que todavía tenemos una estrategia, tenemos un Marco estratégico a ser aprobado y, luego de que eso pueda, de alguna manera evaluarse, luego de esa evaluación, discutiremos si necesitamos una segunda estrategia. Una nueva estrategia, pero no podemos avanzar en una nueva estrategia cuando todavía no tenemos los resultados totales de la implementación de acuerdo a un nuevo Marco estratégico que aún no fue aprobado.

Yo creo que el subpárrafo puede capturar algo que sea el mínimo común denominador. El mínimo de consenso entre los Miembros que no implique que diga cosas que no estamos de acuerdo. Eso es una solución de compromiso. Yo hice una propuesta de texto, pero soy flexible.

Sumamente flexible, en tanto y en cuanto no aceptemos que es necesario tener una nueva estrategia hasta que no terminemos de evaluarla, plenamente de acuerdo y alineada con el nuevo Marco estratégico. Por lo tanto, hay dos posibilidades que yo percibo: o un texto básico que capture los consensos comunes o que se reconoció que no se pudo alcanzar consenso respecto de la necesidad de una nueva estrategia.

Por lo cual, para ser positivo y constructivo, me parece que es mejor no tener un mensaje negativo porque si en el futuro es necesario una nueva estrategia, acordaremos de avanzar hacia ese lugar. Pero hoy, no, porque tenemos una estrategia nueva que está siendo objeto de evaluación en un Marco estratégico que va a ser aprobado en la próxima Conferencia.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We were one of the Members who did speak during this item about the importance of FAO's Climate Change Strategy and, that said, I have heard what our fellow colleagues feel should be reflected in this Report. May I make one suggestion on a possible way forward? I can read at dictation speed. Maybe we start at the beginning. "Urged an inclusive consultative process regarding implementation of," and then cut to "recommendation two of the evaluation of FAO support to climate action in the full implementation of FAO's Strategy." Keeping the rest of it essentially. But something in which the Council would urge an inclusive consultative process with Members regarding implementation of recommendation two, bearing in mind the existing Strategy and the new Strategic Framework that our Conference is expected to adopt. This is just an idea, I welcome other Members' input and thoughts.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, do you have an amendment or a suggestion by the United States. Could we have some reaction to that? Any request for the floor to comment on the suggestion made by the United States?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I think it is a good proposal, but I am not necessarily agreeing with the text coming from the United States. We are urging an inclusive consultative process, but the Strategic Framework is going to be approved by the next Conference, so when will this consultative process take place?

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Justo era la pregunta que iba a hacer a la propuesta de la delegada de Estados Unidos de America sobre en qué lapso de tiempo podría llevarse a cabo este proceso de consulta. Debemos ser propositivos y tratar de abarcar el programa, pero ¿esta inclusión cuándo sería?

CHAIRPERSON

United States, would you have a clarification for that?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Perhaps we could suggest prior to the 168th of the Council?

CHAIRPERSON

Members, now you have a further amendment that gives the timeframe.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to thank the United States for this proposal, but I do think in effect, what it is doing is delaying a decision on the need to move ahead with recommendation two. If it was to implement the recommendation before the 168th Council, I would be happy with that. What I am keen to avoid is that we delay a decision on this until the 168th Council. I am tempted, Chairperson, to go with your proposal of just recognizing that certain Members of Council did not agree with the recommendation of the evaluation. It would also be worth reiterating that Management has agreed to the recommendation.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Hasta este momento lo que no hubo es consenso. No es que ciertos Miembros u otros miembros, simplemente lo que no hubo es consenso. Eso es lo que ocurrió y lo que está ocurriendo. Creo que si pudiéramos ser capaces de no prejuzgar sobre ninguna nueva estrategia cuando todavía no está siendo finalmente, completamente evaluada la estrategia que está en este momento en funciones, podríamos perfectamente buscar una... en todo caso, el concepto central, el principio es *agree to disagree*. Si no llegamos a un consenso, en todo caso será que hemos acordado que no estamos de acuerdo. Este es el concepto, no que algunos Miembros sí, algunos Miembros no. No es esa la práctica que habitualmente utilizamos en las negociaciones.

CHAIRPERSON

Like I said, we cannot be stuck here and, as you say, there is no consensus. We have to go forward saying there is no consensus. This report is going to the Conference and Conference Members need to be told, the Conference needs to be told either there is agreement or there is no consensus and here it is pretty clear that there is no consensus. Would the Conference then like to know what the two views are? You cannot just send one sentence to the Conference and say there is no consensus. One has to explain what was the state of play, as it were, where Members could not come together? We have to give some explanation for the lack of consensus. Eritrea and then Qatar.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

This is my first time to take the floor, so good morning, good afternoon, good evening everybody, wherever you are.

I think the issue which is proposed by the United States is very acceptable and pertinent. We cannot try to agree and we do not agree. That is not appropriate. The statement which is proposed by the United States is very appropriate and acceptable because at this point in time we cannot agree and we cannot disagree because it seems the issue of this situation is something changing to confirmation.

We have to accept this “urged an inclusive consultative process prior to the 168th Session.” Let us adopt this one and then let us identify the appropriate time and discuss this issue. Otherwise, we cannot decide on whether we agree or we did not agree. That is not appropriate. The appropriate one is the phrase which is proposed by the United States. We have to accept this one and park the other phrases.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original Language Arabic)

The Director of Evaluation gave us three points. We should depend on these in order to formulate this paragraph. He said there are new dimensions to the programme and he also mentioned that there is a possibility for improvement. The third and last point he gave us is that the old Strategy has many gaps that may be improved. These are the three points that the Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee gave us. We must formulate this paragraph in accordance with these three points.

CHAIRPERSON

We have got different points of view on this issue. That is really the meaning of no consensus because there are different views. Obviously, there is a history of the discussions in the Programme Committee because this is the Programme Committee’s Report being considered by the Council. At this rate, like I was saying, it is not just this paragraph, there are other paragraphs still outstanding where we have to go back to. We have got other items on the agenda. Tomorrow is supposed to be the Drafting Committee. We cannot carry on like this. We have to inform the Conference through our Report that

this was an issue on which no consensus could be reached and in an informative way to state what the difference of opinion is, so that the Conference can appreciate why there was no consensus.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Voy a tratar de hacer una segunda propuesta y agradezco tanto a Estados Unidos como los aportes de Catar y de todos los colegas, pero es un intento para evitar que tengamos un desacuerdo. Sobre la base de la propuesta de Estados Unidos, cambiar “*urge*” por “*request*”.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

“...and we request,” I suggest to delete “urged.” and then, “is requested an inclusive and consultative process prior to the 168th Session of the Council regarding the need for the implementation.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Esa es mi última propuesta, no tengo más creatividad, Presidente. Ojalá pueda ayudarlo con esto.

CHAIRPERSON

I think everyone appreciates and I appreciate you always try to assist constructively by taking the discussions into account and making suggestions and proposals for Members to consider. No, I thank you, Ambassador, for that. United Kingdom, you have the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do really recognize the challenge that is facing us here. Indeed, we did discuss at some length in the Programme Committee whether we could postpone this discussion until November. The reason I do not think we should postpone this discussion until November is I do not think positions are likely to change.

I have listened very carefully to the positions of Brazil and Argentina and I do not think that is likely to change prior to the 168th Session of Council. In a sense, I think it would be the most accurate reflection of where Council is at, to reflect the fact that there is no agreement on this and to, as you have proposed, Chair, to set out the different views. I do think it would be helpful and I am certainly willing to propose some language. It will take me a little while to develop it, but I could send that to you in a break.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United Kingdom. Any other comments? I give the floor to Brazil and then Germany.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Of course, we support the proposal coming from Argentina. I think it would help. Again, we are ready to go for a paragraph explaining the different reasons why we did not reach consensus. I would like to react to the comment coming from the United Kingdom representative that we should be convinced about other country's positions concerning specific points. The way she is convinced in one direction, I would otherwise be convinced that her country would also reconsider the current position. This is not a point of concern moving forward.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf on the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

First of all, we would like to join our voice to what has just been said by our distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom. I think that it is a very good proposal. We see that postponing the implementation and the Strategy on Climate Change is presenting a bad signal from our side, especially when the importance of the Climate Fund is of growing importance in our voluntary contributions to the Organization. I think that it is also a question that can be taken into consideration.

Moreover, agreeing, as I just said, with the good proposal of the United Kingdom representative, for which we are very grateful, as a final proposal to try to accommodate what we have here, maybe we

can return to the original text and also recognize what has been said by our distinguished colleague from Argentina and supported by Brazil.

Maybe we can change the paragraph the way it is now. Returning to the original paragraph on the top and then continue after “and,” and then have what we have now in red and underlined. As it is now and deleting the part that is referring to the 168th Session of the Council. This is a proposal, if it is not possible to go through it in order to accommodate the two ideas at the same time we are going with what the United Kingdom just proposed.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Very frankly, I am confused. I could not understand what Portugal is proposing. He mentioned that there is a proposal, as I understood, a text proposed by the United Kingdom. I do not know this text and just reacting to his initial comment. There is a Strategy at the moment on climate change for FAO. We are not giving any bad sign that we are not considering climate change. Of course, it is an important subject. We have a Strategy, what we are doing is considering that some amendments to the Strategy.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Presidente, hice mi máximo esfuerzo con una nueva propuesta, no voló, así que paso a hacer una tercera propuesta que es la propuesta que entiendo debería ayudarlo a usted a cerrar este subpárrafo, Presidente. Si me permite, lo voy a hacer en inglés a velocidad de dictado. Nuevo subpárrafo. Nuevo subpárrafo en reemplazo de este subpárrafo. *“Acknowledged that there was no agreement among Members about the urgency on the need to implement recommendation two of the development of a new FAO Strategy on climate change, given the current Strategy on climate change has been in force since 2017 and in view of the new FAO Strategic Framework that sets environmental matters as one of the four betters, and thus a core line of work of FAO.”*

CHAIRPERSON

Maybe it may be the best course to go down this line because there is no consensus on this particular issue within the Council at the moment. I open the floor and I request comments on the proposal just made by the Ambassador from Argentina. It is in response to the thought, which I think Members share, there is no consensus. I would like some views on this paragraph to see if we can agree on this. That may be a way to move forward.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original Language Arabic)

We accept the proposal from Argentina. However, I have to add, if the Council is not capable of adopting a consensus and considering that we are 49 Members, how can we expect the Conference, with 194 Members, to reach an agreement? This is my question. I believe that we would be sending a negative message when we actually ask the Conference to take a decision in this. This is a precedent. It has never happened before. We are supposed to give clear ideas. We have to work in cooperation in order to overcome this problem.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, the practice of consensus decision making and views of the Council going to the Conference with a consensus has been the method for quite some years now. There have been times in FAO, and I know, I was there in Drafting Committees and in Councils when there was no agreement on certain issues and it had to go forward.

The wording used to be, “some Members’ view was this, other Members’ view was that,” and there were even instances when it was the majority of Members thought this and others thought that. This was the norm in FAO during a particular period of time. But then we have been fortunate to have a time period when Members have always come together and reached consensus and consensus decisions have gone forward.

Today we seem to be in a situation where we are going back in history. You have a valid point, but I do not know whether there is any other way out, considering that we have still got items. Tomorrow the Drafting Committee meets and we have spent too much time on this item and the previous items.

I would like some more Members to give their view on the proposal by Argentina. We have to go forward, either with this type of proposal or an agreement. Members must have a view on this proposal or the other.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Can I just double check my understanding of the proposal? My understanding is that this latest subparagraph would replace what is now subparagraph (j) and that subparagraph (i) would remain? Is that the proposal? If that is the proposal then I think we have got something to work on and I could accept it with a few tweaks to subparagraph (i).

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Argentina, may I ask you to throw some light on the question raised by the United Kingdom. When we go forward and say, "Acknowledged that there was no agreement." This refers to subparagraph (i)? Would you kindly clarify for us?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sí, Presidente. Quiero decir que si hay algo que usted no puede negar, es mi voluntad por buscar el consenso. Traté de buscar cuál era el mínimo consenso posible. Ese consenso no fue logrado, por lo tanto, el párrafo en el número J debe quedar fuera del texto del Reporte, porque va a ser reemplazado en la línea de lo que usted mencionaba con el mensaje de que no hay acuerdo.

¿Cómo vamos a endorsar algo que no tiene consenso? Entonces, lo que yo hice fue la propuesta en línea con lo que usted planteó, que es una propuesta de salida, clarificando que no ha habido consenso. No, no puede existir el párrafo J con el alternativo. O tenemos consenso y sacamos la propuesta de plantear que no hubo consenso o, ponemos la propuesta de que no hubo consenso y sacamos la propuesta alternativa.

Entonces, reitero Presidente. Hice una última propuesta para tratar de capturar el planteo positivo y constructivo de Catar. Cuando menciona, "sería bueno ir con algo más positivo a la conferencia", por eso hablé de "regarding the need" y que no haya una urgencia para llevar adelante una segunda estrategia.

Si eso puede ser parte de un acuerdo, perfecto, y entonces mi propuesta de salida del no consenso, queda eliminada. Pero si no tenemos la posibilidad de acordar, tenemos que tener algún mensaje que exprese que no hemos tenido consenso como usted dijo.

A mí me encantaría estar en línea con lo que dice mi amigo de Catar, yo quiero que haya consenso y para que haya consenso, todos tenemos que ceder y tenemos que buscar cuál es el mínimo común denominador para ese consenso.

Lo intenté en varias oportunidades y obviamente no tuve la capacidad para lograr convencer a aquellos que tienen otra posición. Por eso es que hice una propuesta de salida para ayudarlo Presidente, nada más que para eso.

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph (i) needs to be discussed as well because I noticed there are brackets there. In the meantime I will give the floor to Brazil and then Eritrea.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just reacting to the comment coming from the United Kingdom. We understand that subparagraph (i) and (j) are options and if we are going for the proposal coming from Argentina, "acknowledged there was no agreement," of course there is no consensus, no agreement on subparagraphs (i) and (j), both.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for that clarification.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think we have to agree, otherwise if we cannot agree within 49 Members definitely it will be very problematic in the Conference, which incorporates more than 100 Members, because the Council Members are also part and parcel of the Conference Members. Therefore, some solution has have to be proposed at this point of time. Therefore, my recommendation is to blend the phrase which has been proposed by His Excellency the Ambassador of Argentina with the phrase which is proposed by the United States and then amended by the United Kingdom.

Therefore, I propose that in subparagraph (j) we can start with, “there was no consensus among the Members and the Council requested an inclusive, consultative process.” This will give us a chance, before 168th Session, there must be a meeting or something, which can discuss and consolidate everything. Otherwise, if you send a phrase just simply, “there was no consensus,” “there was no agreement,” then what is the solution? We have to clarify that there was no solution and then we have to recommend something and that is to request an inclusive consultative before 168.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, you have got one other alternative to now react to. Subparagraph (j) is there as amended by Eritrea.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you to colleagues for their clarification and their different proposals. I would just say that the United Kingdom has not rejected subparagraph (i). In fact, I think it is just Brazil and Argentina that have. I understand that they have rejected subparagraph (i) so far, or suggested the addition that is now in subparagraph (j).

The United Kingdom could live with subparagraph (i). It is not ideal because it fudges the question of exactly which Strategy for climate change that we are talking about. My problem with subparagraph (j), or the issue with subparagraph (j) is that it postpones a decision on climate change and climate change is a really urgent challenge that is facing all of us. My fear, in postponing a decision, is that I am not sure anything will change.

Just to come back to Brazil’s point. This is not an accusation levelled at any particular country. I just think positions around the table are quite defined. I do not think our positions are likely to change before the end of the year. That is why my proposal was that we could move forward with subparagraph (i), but then also include the alternative subparagraph proposed by Argentina that would acknowledge that what we have not agreed on is the timeline.

If we were to delete subparagraph (i) and subparagraph (j) then I think I would want to include some additional language in the alternative paragraph that recognized why the evaluation had recommended a new Strategy. Part of that was very much to ensure that FAO's Strategy on Climate Change was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the other reasons that we heard from the Director of Evaluation.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just to be clear, of course we cannot accept subparagraph (i). That is why we are discussing and Argentina proposed a new subparagraph (j). There is no sense going back to discussing subparagraph (i), which is not accepted. What we have here, clearly stated, is that either we approve a subparagraph (j) with “given some time to Members to discuss the proposal coming from recommendation,” and give us a try or we “recognize that we do not have a consensus,” and we postpone this to the Conference that most probably will not take a decision.

I would like just to remind our colleagues the challenge we had with Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and fortunately we reached an agreement thanks to the efforts of the Members of the Programme Committee and mostly to the Chairperson of the Programme Committee. We are not trying a text based on subparagraph (j) and giving us a chance in order to try to reach an agreement for recommendation two. My understanding is that it is a better improvement than having nothing. This is my personal opinion.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments? Is the gap between the two thoughts so wide that some flexibility cannot be introduced to reach a consensus?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Mindful of what you have just said, what about in subparagraph (i), changing the word “endorsed” to “acknowledged” help bridge this gap a bit because we too support the language in the rest of subparagraph (i). We are trying to find a way to move forward here. I just throw that out there.

CHAIRPERSON

At the moment, I would like to inform Members that I have just received a message that we need to break for 30 minutes because they have to organize themselves. We need to come back at 18:40 hours and then work until 20:00 hours and then break again for Ramadan and come back at 21:00 hours because we have to meet on what the Drafting Committee has to discuss. Documents have to be translated, etcetera, and we have to agree. I give the floor to Argentina and then we would need to break for 30 minutes.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Primera cosa, permítame contestar a mi estimada colega del Reino Unido. Nosotros no estamos postergando una estrategia del cambio climático porque ya existe una estrategia. Porque si dejamos esta idea que no parece importante esta cuestión, pareciera que no existe una estrategia. La estrategia existe, lo que estamos discutiendo es si es necesario de manera urgente ir a una segunda estrategia cuando todavía no tenemos los análisis suficientes de la primera. Esa es la primera cuestión.

Entendemos la urgencia del cambio climático como también expresamos en varias oportunidades la urgencia de lo que significa la situación del COVID-19 y entendemos que para algunos países ciertas cuestiones son urgentes y para otros, otras cuestiones también son urgentes.

Y, en tercer lugar, la propuesta de Estados Unidos en todo caso, somos... Y lo digo desde un país en desarrollo que se considera acreedor ambiental de gran medida del proceso de desarrollo en algunos países. Entonces, yo quisiera sugerir que si de la posición, la propuesta de Estados Unidos en el párrafo I sacamos “*in particular recommendation to*” podemos quizás empezar a buscar una salida de consenso.

Yo planteo varias alternativas para tratar de ayudar, si eso nos permitiría poder avanzar y los demás colegas están de acuerdo, mi disponibilidad a buscar consenso sigue siendo la misma, pero no a partir de no respetar las posiciones que los diferentes Miembros tienen.

CHAIRPERSON

We are thankful, I am thankful for your constructive proposal, your desire to achieve consensus and the flexible approach you have just shown. What I suggest is that we have to break because I have just received a message. We need to break for 30 minutes. Perhaps this will give Members time to reflect and we come back and I hope we can arrive at a consensus position to go forward. I adjourn the meeting for 30 minutes and we will reconvene at 18:40 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 18:14 to 18:17 hours

La séance est suspendue de 18 h 14 à 18 h 17

Se suspende la sesión de las 18.14 a las 18.17

CHAIRPERSON

Good evening, colleagues. We can start. We have got your proposal of referring to the no agreement and subparagraphs (j) and (i) being deleted. We have to come to a decision. Members, can I ask for your views on this proposal? That we acknowledge that there was no agreement and there is a subparagraph there which is the proposal by Argentina, that obviously impacts subparagraphs (i) and (j), which would mean deleting those two subparagraphs.

Can we have a last go at this scenario, as it were, for your comments, because we have to have one way or the other. I need some views. Can I have some comments?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was going to suggest that perhaps we leave this subparagraph and try and finish the rest of our Report and maybe come back to it perhaps tomorrow morning when we have all had a chance to sleep on it for a bit?

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, we could hold this subparagraph in abeyance and come back, since we have got only one subparagraph. There is just one subparagraph (k), and then we can go to the other subparagraphs. We cannot postpone it to tomorrow morning because the Drafting Committee has been programmed and documents have to be translated into the various languages. Therefore, it has to be done today. However, we can hold this subparagraph in abeyance, as well, and go to subparagraph (k).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, perhaps we could come back to it then after the Iftar break.

CHAIRPERSON

We are on subparagraph (k). Any suggestions on subparagraph (k)? Any comments? I see none, so subparagraph (k) is agreed with.

Now we go back to subparagraph (c), it is one of the subparagraphs which we had said we would come back to.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

CHAIRPERSON

Portugal, please go ahead.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you for your guidance during the day today. It was very helpful. Before going to subparagraph (c), with your indulgence, we want to return to the end of subparagraph (k) in order to propose a new subparagraph.

Our proposal is to add a new subparagraph following (k), so it would be (l). I will read it at dictation speed. “Welcomed the update on FAO policies on protection of data and intellectual property rights, recalling the need to develop a cross-cutting data policy to ensure data governance, data integrity and privacy, as well as intellectual property rights, and to adhere to international standards and protocols.”

CHAIRPERSON

We have a new subparagraph (l). Members, any comment on subparagraph (l)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

. Solo acompaño y estoy de acuerdo con la sugerencia del Representante de la Unión Europea, Portugal, lo único que pediría que después de “*international*” incluir “*agreed standards*”. Siempre en la misma línea de que nos manejemos con elementos que están acordados.

Si para mi colega de la Unión Europea está okay, para mí está okay.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment and, Portugal, is this fine with you?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Absolutely fine and, moreover, many thanks to our Argentinian colleague.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, this paragraph is fine with us. I have just picked up a slight issue on (k). I wondered if we should start subparagraph (k) with “endorsed” or whether we are trying to distinguish our view of this in a different way. I am happy for the Drafting Committee to consider that rather than get into a debate on it now. Nonetheless, I just wanted to flag that we have used “endorsed” in other situations.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments on (l) or (k)? There are none, so these two subparagraphs are okay with the Members.

We go back to subparagraph (c). This is one of the subparagraphs on which agreement could not be reached. There is some text in brackets. I give the floor to Mexico and then the United States.

Sra. María de los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Volviendo al tema de la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales y, entendiendo que tiene que haber una forma o una guía para que la podamos utilizar los Miembros, no sé si para Estados Unidos de América pudiera ser aceptable que no se hablara de “*voluntary guidelines*” sino de un “*borrador*” de lineamientos para que siga el curso de aprobación de todos los Órganos rectores de la FAO.

O sea, es un borrador que correría a cargo de la Administración de la FAO y ya estará en nosotros saber si es un documento aceptable o es un producto aceptable para la utilización de esta Plataforma.

Creo que tiene sentido porque la Plataforma sí reviste una herramienta, creo yo y mi Delegación, importante para los trabajos en todos los países, en los temas que nos ocupan de agricultura y alimentación.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you, very much, to our colleague from Mexico for your suggestion. During the time I did come up with an alternative suggestion that I would like to propose and see if that might help with this subparagraph. I will dictate it out slowly and then I can explain our rationale.

It would be, after the word “agriculture”, “with the amendment that any authority to initiate voluntary guidelines must come from Members through the FAO Governing Bodies.” Then I would propose bracketing the rest of that.

Here is our rationale. Just for clarity, we are not seeing to ban or limit this Platform from making recommendations. We want to have the benefit of its dialogue, analysis and advice. However, we then expect the Platform to come to the Technical Committee with their Reports and then the Technical Committees of FAO can assess and give the authority under the Governing Body oversight to create the voluntary guidelines.

What we do not want to do is to give blanket authority to the Platform to decide on the issue, then create voluntary guidelines, develop them with only 27 Members, and then bring them back for approval. We feel that deciding to create policy documents, in this case voluntary guidelines, should fall strictly within the Governing Body authority, and then Members can make that recommendation to the Platform.

I am hoping that with this clarity the authority would come from Members, via the FAO Governing Bodies, and might move us forward because, frankly, Chairperson, I did not hear vocal opposition to this. Just to remind again, we were very clear and I would like to spare everybody, but I can read all of the statements that we made in every single one of the technical meetings where we made this point. I would like to spare everybody from that, so perhaps we can use this and move forward.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like to thank the United States for their proposal. I was hesitating to take the floor on this subparagraph, but I have checked the Report of the 165th Session of the Council, and the last Reports of the Technical Committees; Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Committee on Forestry (COFO). I did not find any objection from the United States on the recommendations of these Technical Committees regarding the voluntary guidelines or any kind of

policy that this Platform will develop in close consultation with Members. And also that any kind of these draft voluntary guidelines or policies will be considered by Members in the Governing Bodies of FAO.

I think it will be very hard for us to accept the proposal made by the United States. We may have some new language. I do not know, the problem maybe that we approved the Terms of Reference of the International Platform for the Digital Food and Agriculture will of course develop some policies, some voluntary guidelines. This will be discussed through the Members in the Governing Bodies of FAO and so I think with the amendments made by the United States it will be very hard for our delegation to accept it.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I am taking the floor to note that I have been in a lot of the Drafting Committees and a lot of the discussions where the United States has raised the concerns repeatedly. I can definitely vouch for that without them having to repeat all of the statements they have said. I do understand the point that they have made. I would like to support the proposal they have put in there, recognizing that this is a compromise on their part. It does reflect their consistent concerns that they have raised and will hopefully allow us to progress forward.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Vraiment, j'ai hésité à intervenir sur ce point, mais comme l'a souligné l'Égypte tout à l'heure, c'est un point de divergence. Après consultation des rapports des Comités techniques, notamment les Comités des forêts, de l'agriculture et des pêches, on constate qu'ils n'ont pas émis d'objection à ces termes de références, bien au contraire, ils sont pour.

Je remercie également les États-Unis de la proposition qu'ils ont formulée, mais, par rapport à ce que j'ai lu dans les rapports des Comités, qui sont allés dans le sens de ces termes de références, je voulais faire une proposition, qui pourra peut-être nous aider à sortir de l'ornière, car en effet le cœur du problème est qu'il faut que les États puissent avoir un contrôle sur ce processus.

Je vais donc lire la proposition suivante en anglais à vitesse de dictée, si le Secrétariat veut bien me suivre: "Recalling the guidance from the Technical Committees, emphasized that the draft voluntary guidelines should be developed by a Member-led, open, transparent and inclusive process for consideration by FAO Governing Bodies."

Voilà Monsieur le Président, je pense qu'avec cette proposition notre collègue des États-Unis pourrait s'y retrouver; j'ai rassemblé ce que les Comités techniques avaient souligné, ainsi que l'élément à propos de la conduite par les Membres d'un processus de transparence à soumettre aux organes de décision afin que nous puissions avancer.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Congo, for your helpful proposal.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would also like to thank the distinguished delegation of Congo for this constructive wording that we can support.

CHAIRPERSON

United States, would you have a reaction to the proposed text of Congo?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you, very much, to our colleague for his suggestion. May I propose a small modification to it? "Recalling the guidelines from the Technical Committees, emphasized that the draft voluntary guidelines should be developed by a Member-led open, transparent and inclusive process," and my suggestion is, "under the authority of the FAO Governing Bodies."

While our colleagues consider that, I just wanted to point out we did make our request for this change to the Terms of Reference through the written procedure and, in particular, I am referring to

Committee on Fisheries (COFI). We made suggestions for the changes to the Terms of Reference and no one opposed those changes that we proposed, but the resulting Terms of Reference did not include any of our suggested modifications.

This is where it is really a governance issue. As a Member of FAO, we have proposed changes through various bodies. There was no opposition to the changes that we proposed and those changes were not incorporated in the Terms of Reference. Therefore, again Chairperson, I do go back to the other suggestion, which is that we could withhold from approving these Terms of Reference today, if this is not going to be acceptable to our other colleagues, and simply continue discussion on them because we cannot just approve them with confusion over who has the authority to develop policy documents.

Again, I have all of our statements. I can read them all out loud and in every one we said that such a Platform should not be drafting or developing policy documents. I put that out for consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment or reaction? Congo, what do you think of the amendment which the United States is proposing to your proposal?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Nous sommes là pour construire et sommes en train de chercher une voie de sortie. Je suis d'accord et puis accepter la proposition des États-Unis dans un climat de consensus, pour avancer et parce que la question est capitale pour le travail de la FAO, j'agréé donc à la proposition.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, so much Congo. This is the clean version of the various amendments and it is the version with the amendments suggested by the United States and Congo. Does it have the consensus of Members to move forward?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Can I just check, in the first line where it says, "the draft voluntary guidelines," are we talking about a specific proposal for voluntary guidelines on something in particular or are we referring to any draft voluntary guidelines? I wanted to check the meaning.

I just also wanted to double check that what we are proposing in the first part of this subparagraph is not at odds with what is currently in the Terms of Reference, because then there might be some challenge about which had more authority. I just wanted to check if we could have a reminder about what the actual language is in the Terms of Reference and check there is no contradiction. That would be helpful.

CHAIRPERSON

May I request the Secretariat, perhaps Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, to respond to the point raised by the United Kingdom?

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Could the United Kingdom be so kind to repeat the point, sorry?

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom, could you kindly repeat your intervention?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, of course. I know Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, you kindly put the draft Terms of Reference on screen earlier and we were able to see the specific point that referred to voluntary guidelines. I wonder if you could do that again so we could just check that there was internal consistency in this subparagraph.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Sure. This is paragraph 10 in the Terms of Reference. This is the paragraph that it was referring to, “submit voluntary guidelines to the FAO Members for consideration and endorsement through the FAO Governing Body process”. Our intention there is that if the Members can decide whatever at that point, they can decide to go through all the Committees, they can decide to restart the process or they can decide that they do not approve it. That was the logic of that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist. United Kingdom?

Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think it is consistent, but I would defer to the United States, who are the experts on this issue, and if they are content then I would be content that there is no contradiction here.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I agree and am glad our colleague from the United Kingdom raised this point. In fact, yes, it could lead to some confusion. The issue here is the authority to propose the voluntary guidelines and so a slight change or amendment is needed to the text of the Terms of Reference themselves and I see it said “submit” guidelines. Perhaps, that could be altered to “advice on guidelines.” I defer to you, Chairperson, on how we go about clarifying that in this Report’s language – so there is no confusion over whether the authority lays to develop these guidelines. Instead of “submit” guidelines to Members and Governing Bodies, “advise on.” That might do the trick.

Perhaps this is something that can be sorted by the Drafting Committee, as long as all of us are in agreement about the content of the subparagraph. However, I guess it would probably make more sense to reverse the order there, about the Terms of Reference. I agree with the, “adjusted according to reflect the guidance from the Technical Committee and emphasized that any draft voluntary guidelines”, etcetera. Again, maybe this is something the Drafting Committee can clarify – the order and the language exactly, as long as we are agreed on the general concepts.

CHAIRPERSON

The concepts are there, so the refinement of the words can be left to the Drafting Committee.

We have subparagraph (c) and subparagraph (d) also for the Drafting Committee.

Subparagraph (e) is the one we need to have a look at again, the one in green.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I was following the discussion on this earlier this afternoon and I note the importance of maintaining the word “only” in the subparagraph. I also register the concern about the strength of the language being used, which may prohibit innovation by FAO.

In the beginning part of the sentence I see there are two particularly strong words. The first one is the word “need” and the second is the word “only.” Recognizing we want to maintain “only”, I have two suggestions I would like to put on the table to amend the beginning of the subparagraph and I am hopeful one of them might work.

The first would be that we commence the subparagraph saying, “Expressed a preference for FAO Management,” and the second option would be commencing the subparagraph saying, “encouraged Management to use only”. There are two options there and I am hoping one of them might solve our problems and hopefully we can move forward.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Australia for your suggestions.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La verdad que yo le agradezco mucho a mi colega de Australia, pero había hecho un esfuerzo durante el *break* de conversar con algunos otros colegas a los efectos de tratar de encontrar una solución de compromiso, por lo cual preferiría volver al subpárrafo como estaba. Y la idea, la solución de

compromiso que encontré dialogando con mis colegas, fue mantener la propuesta que nosotros hicimos, sacando la palabra “only”. Es muy difícil el texto cuando está todo puesto al mismo tiempo, no sé. A ver, por un lado la palabra “only”.

CHAIRPERSON

Because he wants to delete “only” there.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No, no es así el... ¿Cómo estaba originalmente?

CHAIRPERSON

They are having difficulty in retrieving the subparagraph.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

If you do not have my original proposal I can do it again.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, please.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

“Stress the need for FAO Management to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies when designing new strategies, action plans, voluntary guidelines, policy recommendations and codes of conduct.”

Continua en español

O sea, volvemos a la propuesta original, sacamos “only”, “starting point” y todas las otras sugerencias porque si el concepto “only” era el que provocaba la dificultad de construir este consenso de acuerdo a lo que me manifestó mi colega de Alemania y algunos otros. Hemos buscado una manera de llegar a un acuerdo entre varios colegas y esta sería la solución de compromiso. Como para poder tener una salida constructiva y rápida de esta discusión.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, can we go ahead with this new wording of subparagraph (g)? Any Member requesting the floor to comment on the new text, which has just been put on the screen? I think there is no request for the floor, so I think we have agreed on subparagraph (g).

I would like to congratulate Members for that. There is always a process for getting together. Thank you very much to the Argentinian Ambassador for the proposal and for his discussions during the interval.

That leaves us with just two subparagraphs going to the Drafting Committee or is there another? There is one more subparagraph, which we will come back after the Ramadan break.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Could I request that the language in green on our screens now is circulated by e-mail to Council Members so that we can consider it during the break?

CHAIRPERSON

It would be in English only.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think it would be helpful, even if it were only in English.

Item 10. Reports of the 184th (28-29 January 2021) and 185th (22-26 March 2021) Sessions of the Financial Committee

Point 10. Rapports des cent quatre-vingt-quatrième et cent quatre-vingt-cinquième sessions du Comité financier (28-29 janvier et 22-26 mars 2021, respectivement)

Tema 10. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 184.º (28 y 29 de enero de 2021) y 185.º (22-26 de marzo de 2021) del Comité de Finanzas
(CL 166/10; CL 166/19)

- Item 10.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears*
Point 10.1 Situation des contributions courantes et des arriérés
Tema 10.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos
 (CL 166/LIM/2)
- Item 10.2 Scale of Contributions 2022-23*
Point 10.2 Barème des contributions 2022-2023
Tema 10.2 Escala de cuotas para 2022-2023

CHAIRPERSON

I think now we can move to our next Item. The next item is Item 10, *Reports of the 184th and 185th Sessions of the Finance Committee*, held on 28-29 January and 22-26 March 2021 respectively. The Council is invited to note that the Report of the 184th Session of the Finance Committee deals with World Food Programme (WFP) matters and has been considered by the WFP Executive Board. This Item has two sub-items, namely Sub Item 10.1, *Status of Current Assessments and Arrears*, and Sub-Item 10.2, *Scale of Contributions 2022-23*. The documents before the Council are CL 166/10, CL 166/19 and CL 166/LIM/2.

I draw your attention to document CL 166/LIM/2 that sets out the status of contributions and arrears at 19 April 2021. Members owe to FAO USD 278.94 million and EUR 197.01 million for 2021 and prior years, which represents 103.02 percent of current assessments.

As at 19 April 2021 the Organization had collected USD 79.02 million and EUR 43.97 million in respect of 2021 assessments. This represents 28.79 percent of USD assessments and 23.36 percent of EUR assessments; 26.32 percent consolidated. During 2021 USD 1.39 million and EUR 0.30 million was received from Members in full settlement of arrears and USD 33.95 million and EUR 22.15 million was received in partial payment of arrears.

As of 19 April 2021, 73.68 percent of 2021 assessed contribution still needed to be settled. This represents and deterioration when compared to the same period last year, which was 70.75 percent.

Based on the latest information from Members about their expected payment dates, the Regular Programme cash level is expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs through the end of December 2021, 76 Members still had arrears outstanding from 2020 and previous years and 30 Members owed arrears in such amounts as to jeopardise their right to vote, in accordance with Article 3.4 of the Constitution.

The introduction to this item by Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers, Chairperson of the Finance Committee has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 10: Reports of the 184th (28-29 January 2021) and 185th (22-26 March 2021) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers, Chairperson of the Finance Committee

Mr Chairperson, Members of Council,

I am pleased to present the Reports of the 184th and 185th sessions of the Finance Committee. These Reports are submitted to the Council in documents CL 166/19 and CL 166/10 respectively. The Council is requested to approve the Reports of the 184th and 185th Sessions of the Finance Committee. While the 185th Session dealt with FAO issues, the 184th session was a special session convened to deal with WFP matters. Our report on WFP matters has been submitted to the WFP Executive Board for its consideration.

The 185th session of the Finance Committee examined the financial position of the Organization, budgetary, human resources, oversight and other matters within its mandate. These are

presented in detail in document CL 166/10. I would like to highlight the following matters for which action is requested by the Council.

On the Committee's review of the *Financial Position of the Organization*, the Council is invited to urge Members to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions.

On the Committee's review of the *Scale of Contributions 2022-23*, the Council is invited to endorse the Draft Resolution for adoption by the Conference of the proposed Scale of Contributions for the biennium 2022-23 as presented in paragraph 16 of document CL 166/10.

On the Committee's review of the *Annual Report on Budgetary Performance and Programme and Budgetary Transfers in the 2020-2021 Biennium*, the Council is invited to note the Finance Committee's approval of the forecasted budgetary transfers arising from implementation of the 2020-21 Programme of Work.

Finally, the Council is invited to note the Finance Committee's guidance to Management on all other matters within its mandate and covered during the Committee's considerations at its 185th Session.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our Reports.

With this, I open the floor for Members interventions on this Agenda Item. The floor is open.

Mr Toru HISAZONE (Japan)

I will kindly ask you to pass the floor to the Philippines in order to give a joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group and I myself will ask for the floor again to make Japan's national comments at a later round.

Mr Lupino Jr. LAZARO (Observer) (Philippines)

Thank you to Japan for passing on the floor to us. Chairperson, allow me first to join in complementing your perseverance and outstanding stewardship of the Council during the past four years. The Philippines has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Group.

We highly commend the excellent work carried out by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers of Uruguay, and the Members of the Finance Committee, particularly in managing the time efficiently with the support of the FAO Management and Secretariat. The Asia Group supports the views and recommendations in the Report of the 185th Session of the Finance Committee and would like to highlight the following points.

With regard to the financial position of the Organization, the Asia Group encourages all Members to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full, while noting that the percentage of 2020 assessed contributions paid to the Organization as at 31 December 2020 was sufficiently lower than the previous year.

Considering the financial health of the Organization, the Asia Group supports the recommendation of the Committee to defer to the future biennium the proposal of incremental funding of the after-service medical coverage past-service liability and replenishment of the working capital fund. We would like to ask the Secretariat to continue to review options to address the under-funding of the after-service medical coverage liabilities in coordination with other United Nations Organizations to find unified solutions on this issue. We welcome FAO's scale of contributions for 2022-2023 to follow the United Nations scale-up assessments and endorse the Resolution for its adoption by the 42nd Session of the Conference.

The Asia Group welcomes the additional information on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) approval and expenditure rates and puts a strong emphasis on Management to ensure full implementation of the TCP appropriations as approved by the Conference and also appreciates the confirmation that the target of 100 percent delivery of TCP projects against the 2018-19 appropriation would be achieved by the end of 2021.

On the Human Resources Annual Report, the Asia Group highly commends the format and content of the Report and the progress made towards the implementation of the Human Resources (HR) Strategic

Plan, despite the challenges of COVID-19. With a request to include more information on workforce statistics in its future Report, particularly on the geographic distribution of the young professional programmes and outreach efforts, we would like to encourage Management to increase the coverage of the Young Professional Programme in the developing countries, particularly, more in indigenous communities. The Asia Group strongly encourages Management to reduce the current vacancy rate of 20 percent throughout the Organization.

The Asia Group welcomes the 2020 Annual Report of the Inspector-General and the 2020 Annual Report of the Ethics Office, which are very satisfactory and comprehensive. In this regard, we would like to echo the Committee's appreciation of the overall support and cooperation provided by the Management towards the oversight works of the Organization, while noting its usefulness and relevance for both the Management and Governing Bodies of the Organization. At the same time, we would like to request Management to pay high attention to take timely actions and the implementation of the recommendations of these Annual Reports.

With these comments the Asia Group endorses the Reports of the Finance Committee.

Ms Fiona PRYCE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom thanks the Finance Committee for its work and Report of its Session in March. First, we would like to underline the importance of the Human Resources (HR) Strategic Plan and appreciate progress made, particularly in the challenging context of COVID-19. We also fully endorse the Committee's recommendation that FAO should step up its implementation of the plan, including through improving workforce planning and reducing FAO's vacancy rate with timely, transparent, merit-based recruitment that also takes into account gender parity and geographic representation of delegated authority, preferably to department heads, recognizing that senior posts would still need to be approved by the Director-General. We look forward to an update on this.

We encourage FAO in its commitment to ensuring that comprehensive organization-wide risk management is mainstreamed through the Strategic Framework. We would like to ask Management how this will be monitored and evaluated and for an update on progress with strengthening the Organization's enterprise risk management and the development of a risk appetite statement.

On the Medium-Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-23, we join others in welcoming the flat nominal rate and strongly support the allocation of additional resources to the Office of the Inspector General, and underline the importance of keeping this under review to ensure that the Office is fully resourced to deal with an increasing workload. We also support maintaining at least an increased level of funding allocated for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme. We look forward to the further information to be provided on the voluntary funding included in the budget proposals.

On the Office of the Inspector-General Report, we would welcome an update from Management on how the Organization is addressing systemic weaknesses and gaps in internal control highlighted, especially in fragile contexts at country office level, including in procurement management.

Finally, we confirm that the United Kingdom endorses the Committee's recommendations, including on the proposed Scale of Contributions for the 2022-23 biennium.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We will provide only some comments on the Report of the 185th Session.

Overall, we welcome the report, which addresses a great number of important topics.

Specifically, we would like to align ourselves with the appreciation expressed by the Committee on the new Human Resources Annual Report. The reporting in this new format provides an excellent overview on the most important areas of human resources management that need to be addressed.

In this regard we particularly stress the need for appropriate delegations of authority in line with the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in General Rule of the Organization XXXVIII (5).

Furthermore, while acknowledging the manifold reasons that have slowed down the recruitment process, we firmly support the Committee's request to substantially reduce the vacancy rate, both at Headquarters and Decentralized Offices.

We highlight the activities carried out by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) during 2020 and support the proposal to allocate additional resources in order to strengthen FAO's delivery, governance and Human Resources. However, we share the concerns expressed by the Committee regarding the systemic control weaknesses and gaps in internal control in the Decentralized Offices that are repeatedly reported in the Annual Reports of the Inspector General. We urge Management to remedy these shortcomings expeditiously.

Finally, we second the Committee's urgent request to Management to submit the overdue joint feasibility study on the integration of administrative functions among the three Rome-based Agencies prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

With these remarks, we fully endorse the reports of the Finance Committee.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia commends the efforts of the Chair and Secretariat of the Finance Committee especially for their execution of an effective, efficient and valuable 185th meeting. We endorse the recommendations made by the Committee at the Session and take the opportunity to highlight the following two points.

Firstly, the efforts of the Human Resources Division. The positive progress that has been made in recent months has been notable and this is reflected in the quality of the new Human Resources Annual Report. We do, however, highlight the need for ongoing efforts to substantially reduce the vacancy rate, both in Headquarters and Decentralised Offices.

Secondly, the significant efforts of the Office of the Inspector General and the Ethics Office. Australia welcomes the proposal to allocate additional resources to these important areas. We also highlight the concern expressed by the Committee about the high number of recurring findings pertaining to systemic weaknesses in the management of Decentralised Offices.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

La Guinée et le Congo interviennent sur ce point de l'ordre du jour au nom du Groupe régional Afrique. Le Groupe régional Afrique félicite le Secrétariat pour l'élaboration et la brillante présentation du document intitulé «États des contributions courantes et des arriérés au 31 décembre 2020».

Nous avons noté avec satisfaction que ce document donne des informations complètes sur l'état des contributions des Membres au budget ordinaire de l'Organisation à la date du 31 décembre 2020. Malgré la pandémie mondiale de covid-19 et son impact sur l'ensemble des pays, le Groupe régional Afrique se réjouit que le taux de recouvrement des contributions soit de 70,29 pour cent. Cependant, nous sommes préoccupés par le fait que 17 États Membres aient accumulé des arriérés, de sorte qu'ils pourraient perdre leur droit de vote et de siéger au Conseil.

Dans le même contexte, nous notons que le nombre d'États Membres redevables d'arriérés a légèrement augmenté, passant à 58 au 31 décembre 2020, contre 49 à la même date en 2019. Nous notons également que le montant total des arriérés au 31 décembre 2020 représentait 12,2 pour cent des contributions courantes.

À cet effet, le Groupe régional Afrique invite les Membres à payer ponctuellement ou graduellement leurs contributions ordinaires dans des délais favorables afin de permettre à l'Organisation d'exécuter son programme de travail. Nous encourageons le Secrétariat à poursuivre le processus de mise à jour régulière de l'état des contributions et des arriérés et de transmettre à chaque Membre la situation le concernant.

Monsieur le Président, avec ces commentaires, le Groupe régional Afrique invite le Conseil à prendre note des informations contenues dans le document.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Inicio agradeciendo la Presidenta del Comité de Finanzas, Sra. Imelda Smolcic Nijers, por la conducción de los trabajos de este Comité durante los dos últimos años.

Algunos temas que abordó el Comité de Finanzas ya los abordamos en otros temas, por lo que permítame enfocarme en lo siguiente:

En materia de supervisión, vemos con agrado que los informes del Inspector General y de la Oficina de Ética fueron de alta calidad y de gran utilidad para el Comité de Finanzas en sus labores de supervisión. Respecto del trabajo del Inspector General, nos complace que su trabajo, su oficina no tuvo ningún tipo de interferencia. No obstante, nos preocupa el incremento de su volumen de trabajo. La Administración respondió incrementando los recursos para esta Oficina, lo cual agradecemos, y quedamos a la espera de determinar si estos recursos son suficientes o si requerirán un incremento ulterior. Por otra parte, preocupan las referencias a observaciones recurrentes sobre deficiencias y lagunas sistémicas en las oficinas descentralizadas, detectadas por la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG), por lo que apoyamos lo expresado en el párrafo 13 del informe para que la Administración atienda esta cuestión.

En materia de recursos humanos, apoyamos los esfuerzos realizados por la Administración durante el año 2020 para mantener la continuidad de operaciones bajo el contexto de la pandemia. Asimismo, nos complace el inicio de la aplicación del Plan de acción estratégico sobre recursos humanos. No obstante, el informe señala que quedan lagunas en materia de paridad de género en puestos de alto nivel y la alta tasa de vacantes sigue estando ahí, tanto en la Sede como en las oficinas descentralizadas. Esperamos que con la aplicación plena del plan sobre recursos humanos estos dos problemas se corrijan rápidamente.

En asuntos financieros, estamos de acuerdo con la escala de cuotas para el bienio 2022-23 y aprobamos transmitir el proyecto de resolución correspondiente, para la aprobación por la Conferencia.

Con estos comentarios, endosamos el Informe del 185º. período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas.

Mr Toru HISAZONE (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the joint statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asian Regional Group. I have some additional comments.

First, with regard to Human Resources (HR), I thank HR Director and her team for developing comprehensive Human Resources Annual Report. I think we share the broad view that staffs are most valuable assets for FAO. To keep FAO as a knowledge-based UN specialized agency, Japan asks Management to ensure staffs' technical expertise while considering gender and geographic balance.

With regard to gender representation, Japan is concerned about the low percentage of female staff in senior level especially in decentralized offices. Based on the "FAO Action Plan for the Achievement of Equitable Geographic Distribution and Gender Parity of FAO", Japan encourages Management to achieve gender parity at the professional level by 2022, and for senior positions by 2024.

Regarding geographic representation, HR Annual Report shows that percentage of Non-, Under- and Over-represented countries are increased and percentage of equitably represented countries decreased by six points in 2020. While the merit is the most important criteria, Japan encourages FAO to achieve equitable geographic representation.

Finally, regarding oversight, Japan welcomes the three annual reports, namely the Annual Reports of Oversight Advisory Committee, Inspector-General and the Ethics Office. Japan asks Management to address recommendations and observations in those reports to ensure governance and oversight of the Organization.

I would like to highlight two points regarding the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG). Japan encourages Management to prioritize financial and human resources to address increasing workload.

As previous speakers have already pointed out, OIG Report shows high number of recurring observations relating to systematic weakness and assistance gaps in internal control and Japan encourages Management to address the gaps identified by OIG in order to ensure governance of the Organization.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

España apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea en nombre propio y de sus 27 estados Miembros, al tiempo que desea hacer hincapié en los siguientes aspectos en relación con este punto: en primer término que sí vamos a agradecer el nuevo formato del Plan de acción estratégico sobre recursos humanos, dado que resulta más legible y permite identificar con mayor facilidad aquellas áreas que requieren un análisis más pormenorizado como por ejemplo, el equilibrio de género.

Además, instamos a la Administración de la FAO a continuar impulsando su aplicación, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la necesaria colaboración con los Órganos de representación del personal y a la delegación de la autoridad.

Apoyamos al Comité de Finanzas en su petición de que se reduzca de forma sustantiva la tasa de vacantes, tanto en la sede como en las oficinas descentralizadas, en que se mejore la información sobre los desafíos previstos para optimizar la gestión de los recursos humanos en nuestra Organización.

Destacamos la labor realizada por la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG) durante el año 2020, pero compartimos las preocupaciones expresadas por el Comité de Finanzas en relación con las debilidades observadas en los informes anuales del Inspector General en el control interno a nivel de las oficinas descentralizadas.

Finalmente, reiteramos a la Administración de la FAO la importancia de presentar el estudio sobre la valoración de la viabilidad de integrar funciones administrativas en los tres Organismos de Naciones Unidas con sede en Roma (OSR) antes de la Conferencia.

Con estas observaciones, España respalda los informes del Comité de Finanzas.

Mr Fei HUANG (China) (Original Language Chinese)

China would like to align itself to the joint statement delivered by the Asia Group.

We support the recommendations in the Finance Committee Report and urge Members to pay their contributions in a timely fashion. China supports the scale of contributions, the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget. We share the observation that was made regarding the importance of an innovating financing mechanisms and we encourage FAO to expand funding channels.

We believe that we need to maintain allocations at 14 percent for Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), especially in developing countries. China would like to encourage FAO to improve the geographical distribution. In other words, we believe that it would be necessary to solve the problem of under-representation and increase the number of under-represented countries. We are very much in favour of the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of speakers. Now I give the floor to Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, and then I will give the floor to the Secretariat to reply to some of the questions.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC NIJERS (Observador) (Uruguay) (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

En la introducción al tema 10 publicada en el sitio web del 166.º período de sesiones del Consejo, he resaltado los puntos de interés que requieren la adopción de medidas por parte del Consejo e incluí las recomendaciones del Comité sobre el pago puntual de las cuotas asignadas y sobre la escala de cuotas propuestas para el bienio 2022-2023.

Quisiera ahora resaltar otros puntos de interés general para el Consejo. En cuanto al seguimiento de la situación financiera, el Comité examinó la situación financiera de la Organización y observó que la

cuantía global del déficit de los fondos general y conexos, correspondía fundamentalmente al pasivo no financiado relacionado con el personal.

El Comité alentó a la Secretaría a seguir examinando opciones para hacer frente a ese déficit en coordinación con otras Organizaciones del Sistema Común de las Naciones Unidas. Tomó nota de la información adicional proporcionada sobre las tasas de aprobación y gasto respecto del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) e hizo hincapié en la importancia de mantener unos niveles de aprobación y gastos que permitieran garantizar a plena ejecución de la consignación para el PCT aprobado por la Conferencia.

En cuanto a los asuntos presupuestarios, el Comité examinó el *Informe de síntesis del examen a mitad de periodo correspondiente a 2020* y observó que de los 36 indicadores clave del rendimiento de procesos operativos correspondientes a los objetivos funcionales y a los capítulos especiales, 26 se ajustaban a lo previsto y se esperaba cumplir con todos los indicadores clave del rendimiento para el final de 2021.

El Comité acogió con satisfacción el anuncio de la Administración de que se harían esfuerzos para acelerar el empleo de los recursos del presupuesto ordinario en 2021 a la luz de las repercusiones que la pandemia había tenido en determinados ámbitos.

En cuanto a los recursos humanos, el Comité vio con satisfacción el formato, el contenido del nuevo Informe anual sobre los recursos humanos, en particular la información brindada acerca de las estadísticas de la fuerza de trabajo. Apreció los esfuerzos realizados por la Administración para cumplir su deber de custodia respecto de los empleados de la FAO en todo el mundo y así asegurar la continuidad de la actividad durante la pandemia.

Acogió con agrado los progresos realizados en la aplicación del Plan de acción estratégico sobre recursos humanos pese a las dificultades presentadas en el contexto de la crisis de la COVID-19 y la necesidad de proseguir con un enfoque flexible para fomentar las capacidades en materia de recursos humanos.

Reiteró también su petición de que redujera sustancialmente la tasa de vacantes tanto en la sede como en las oficinas descentralizadas. En cuanto a la supervisión, el Comité envió con satisfacción el Informe anual del Comité Consultivo de Supervisión de la FAO correspondiente a 2020 que incluyó conclusiones positivas sobre el funcionamiento de la Oficina del Inspector General. Y quedó complacido con la garantía continua de la plena independencia de sus funciones.

Alentó la celebración de un debate más profundo en el seno del Comité Consultivo y otros Comités de Auditoría y Supervisión sobre la función de realizar exámenes de rendimiento periódicos externos e independientes, en particular opciones rentables para llevar a cabo esos exámenes.

Apreció la calidad del Informe anual del Inspector General en el que se ofreció un panorama general completo e ilustrativo de las actividades de la oficina del Inspector General durante 2020. El Comité reiteró la necesidad de seguir priorizando los recursos con arreglo a la actual consignación neta para afrontar el creciente volumen de trabajo, permitir la plena aplicación del Plan de Trabajo de la Oficina y reinstaurar el puesto de Inspector General Adjunto.

Reiteró su preocupación por el elevado número de observaciones recurrentes planteadas en relación con deficiencias y lagunas sistémicas en el control interno incluido en la gestión de compras y contrataciones, en particular, en las oficinas descentralizadas e instó a la Administración a especificar las medidas que se estaban adoptando para colmar las lagunas detectadas.

El Comité apreció la alta calidad del Informe anual de la Oficina de Ética correspondiente a 2020 y la información, estadísticas y análisis de las cuestiones expuestas y solicitó que en futuros informes se incluyera una sección sobre los desafíos y oportunidades para seguir mejorando con miras a fomentar una cultura de la ética apropiada en el lugar de trabajo.

En conclusión, en términos generales los periodos de sesiones de Comité de Finanzas han sido fructíferos y altamente eficientes. Considero que se han podido tratar una serie de cuestiones cruciales a las que se ve enfrentada la Organización sobre la situación financiera de la Organización, los asuntos presupuestarios, los recursos humanos y la supervisión.

En nombre de los Miembros del Comité, quisiera expresar el aprecio a la Secretaría por la asistencia prestada a nuestras deliberaciones y la gratitud por brindarnos la oportunidad de contribuir a la labor de la Organización.

Desde el punto de vista personal, agradezco el constante apoyo de los miembros del Comité en los trabajos y en la forma eficiente en la conducción. Agradezco a la Secretaría y a los miembros su constante compromiso y a los Miembros del Consejo que se han dirigido a mí por los conceptos vertidos hacia mí trabajo.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Imelda Smolcic Nijers, for your comprehensive Report.

Members, we are just past 20:00 hours. We need to break for Ramadan and come back at 21:00 hours because the schedule we had every day so far foresees this break.

I adjourn the meeting and we will take up questions which the Secretariat would need to address, the questions from Members. Then I will conclude on the Item and move forward that way.

The meeting is adjourned. We reconvene at 21:00 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 20:07 to 21:03 hours

La séance est suspendue de 20 h 07 à 21 h 03

Se suspende la sesión de las 20.07 a las 21.03

CHAIRPERSON

Colleagues, we can resume our meeting. I will give the floor to the Secretariat to answer some of the questions. Mr Laurent Thomas, Deputy Director-General, you have the floor.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (FAO Deputy Director-General)

We have agreed with my colleague Deputy Director-General (DDG), Ms Beth Bechdol, that we will share the response to the number of queries raised by the Members of the Council, with due attention to conciseness, knowing what time of the day we are at.

I will start with a number of specific comments. The first one is to express the appreciation for the support and guidance we are receiving from the Members of the Finance Committee and under the able leadership of the Chairperson. We really value this guidance and the quality of the Report that will help us to make FAO a better managed Organization.

With this said, I would like to focus on three points: risk management, Human Resources (HR) and the challenges of the capacities and systemic weaknesses acknowledged in Decentralized Offices.

First, risk management. The Director-General's vision is really to instil a culture where risk management is embedded in all aspects of the work of the Organization.

This starts with his vision where he has established a very strong relationship with the Oversight Advisory Committee, participating himself in all the meetings, and also actions such as installing a regular briefing between Senior Management and the Inspector-General. You will also have noted from the previous discussion on the Strategic Framework, Medium Term Plan (MTP), and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) that risk management is now an integral part of the new Strategic Framework. Operating in increasing risk and uncertainty is one of the six elements of our reinvigorated business model and risk is being embedded at every level of the Framework. For example, you have noted that for each of the priority areas for action, there are some risks and mitigating actions being proposed. This is something we will continue to work on.

Another important aspect that I want to highlight with regard to risk, is that for the third consecutive year the Director-General will deliver, together with the Financial Statement for the year 2021, the Statement of Internal Control, in which he is declaring in a public document, that after review of the Report received from his Managers of the Report of the oversight bodies, such as the Inspector-General, the Oversight Advisory Committee, he is satisfied that to his knowledge the Organization is managing properly the risk it is facing. We are right now in 2021 updating our risk log, taking into

account the new risks that exist in our environment and the lessons that we are drawing from the COVID-19 crisis.

To sum up on risk: it is very much at the heart of the managerial culture that the new Administration wants to put in place at all levels of Management.

Second point regarding Human Resources (HR). HR is very gratifying to hear all the positive comments from the Members of the Council. We could draw many lessons from this. HR was an area with some challenges over the past years and in matter of a short time the Organization has been able to completely redress or go towards redressing the situation. We have a completely new team in HR. A very competent Director of Human Resources, a new Deputy-Director of Human Resources appointed and a new team of Senior Managers in all areas of HR management. You have seen also from the proposal for the PWB that we intend to strengthen further the HR Division. This is just natural for an Organization which allocates more than 75 percent of its budget to HR.

On the points raised, we will continue to ensure that we focus on them, be it in terms of recruitment, reducing the vacancy rate, being in terms of the delegation of authority, be it in terms of gender - particularly on higher level positions, geographic representation to remain one of the priorities. We believe that with this type of action we should be able to demonstrate with the new Human Resources Strategy in the coming months and year that FAO is becoming one of the best managed Organizations in terms of HR management of the United Nations System. At least this is our vision and we would like to attain it.

Last point is regarding procurement and the capacity of Decentralized Offices. That is a point that was much discussed during the Session of the Finance Committee. We acknowledge that there are some recurring weaknesses, in particular in terms of internal control that have to be corrected. We hope that we are able to demonstrate to you in the coming months that the actions that are being taken by the different policy owners, be it from the Finance Division, be it from the newly established Logistics Support Division, be it on the HR side, will allow us to redress this problem.

We benefit from a very strong dialogue with the Inspector-General, who will be on this role as a third line of defence, together with his team, providing very important advice on how to improve this. Many actions are being taken. I will not go into detail, I will spare you this since it was already explained to the Finance Committee, but we are confident that with the ongoing action we should be able to report a much better situation at the occasion of the next Council.

I will stop here and pass the floor now to Ms Beth Bechdol.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (FAO Deputy Director-General)

Let me just make three very brief points to everyone, knowing we still have a number of items ahead of us. First, I simply want to reinforce the point that Mr Thomas made about the incredible progress that has been made in our Human Resources (HR) strategic planning area.

I have had the opportunity first hand, to work alongside Ms Greet De Leeuw and the new HR team, Mr Thomas and others, with our employee engagement work. It is really transformational and needs to be acknowledged and supported from a new leadership team, that there is major change and very important progress being made here. I just want to make sure that we all go on record as senior leadership of supporting the work that the Director-General is leading and that Ms De Leeuw and her team is bringing to support that. Thank you for your continued support to be able to ensure that this change is coming.

Two other quick points that were raised in areas that Members mentioned. One, Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). I know that this comes up in a number of other areas, but in the context of this particular discussion the Philippines raised a very important point about ensuring that we make sure that there is continued oversight of TCP approvals and expenditures and I am pleased to inform you that as of just last week, our 2018 and 2019 expenditures, so for the previous biennium, are currently at 77 percent and full delivery is expected by the completion of this biennium. Also approval and expenditure against 2020 and 2021 is high compared to the previous biennia, largely due, I believe, to the simplifications that we have been able to introduce since 2019. That is despite the COVID-19 pandemic and other challenges that we have faced regarding implementation.

The last point that I would like to just comment on, two comments raised by Representatives from the European Union and Spain regarding the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) Feasibility Study on the integration of Administrative Services. We had what I believe was a very constructive and very valuable consultation briefing with Members in mid-April about a number of very important RBA topics.

The Feasibility Study on the integration of iAdministrative Services was indeed discussed and we very directly acknowledged that we know, as the three RBAs, that more work needs to be done to adequately respond to Members' requests regarding this integration of Administrative Services. As I personally reported to Members at that meeting, we have all three RBAs indeed agreeing to reformulate the study, placing greater emphasis on collaboration, not only at the country level, but also focusing, as has been requested, on areas of opportunity for collaboration of Administrative Services at Headquarters. This Feasibility Study, as we know, has been directed to us to be reformulated.

This will be done internally among the RBAs and we also look forward to having more dialogue with a number of you, and to also have an informal Session with Members before the end of June. We recognize also the deadline to have a more complete and finalized version of that Report to all of you by Conference.

Thank you, again, for emphasizing these important points and I look forward to continuing our engagement with you on all of these.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Beth Bechdol and Mr Laurent Thomas, for your very focused responses. Now I can go ahead and read out my conclusions on Item 10. We will put the text on the screen.

Item 10, Reports of the 184th (28-29 January 2021) and 185th (22-26 March 2021) Sessions of the Finance Committee.

1: The Council considered the recommendations of the 184th and 185th Session of the Finance Committee and in particular:

- a) Urged all member nations to make payment of assessed contributions on time and in full.

I would like to just tell Members that I have seen this sentence for 52 years. It is the same sentence without any change and it does not seem to have any effect because the list of late payments remains the same.

- b) Recommended submission to the Conference of the draft Resolution on the FAO's scale of contributions for 2022-23 as set out in Appendix D.
- c) Endorsed the guidance of the Finance Committee regarding the importance of maintaining Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) approvals and expenditure at levels that ensure full implementation of the TCP appropriation as approved by the Conference.
- d) Noted that the Finance Committee had authorized the forecasted budgetary chapter transfers in favour of Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 from Chapters 6, 9 and 11.
- e) Welcomed the improvements in the format and content of the new Human Resources Annual Report and supported the Committee's guidance on information to be included in future Annual Reports.
- f) Looked forward to implementation by Management of the Human Resources (HR) Strategic Plan and enhancement of the Organization's human resource functions, particularly with regard to vacancy rates and delegation of authority.
- g) Appreciated the quality of oversight reports presented by the Office of the Inspector-General, the Oversight Advisory Committee and the Ethics Office; and
- h) Expressed concern on the recurring observations Reported by the Inspector-General relating to weaknesses and gaps in internal control and urged Management to address them.

That is the sum of my conclusions. I open the floor to Members and, as we have done earlier, we will take the conclusions paragraph by paragraph. Argentina, you have the floor.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Necesito transmitir un mensaje respecto de lo planteado en el párrafo 1 (a). Yo sé que estamos hablando de un texto que usualmente se repite después en los Informes de todos los Comités de Finanzas. Pero yo, solo, quiero remarcar la cuestión de que estamos en un escenario extraordinario de una crisis y una recesión económico global como consecuencia del COVID-19.

Y creo que merece esto ser tomado o considerado, por lo menos, preferiría que quedara adherido al texto, yo hago una propuesta para ver si esto tiene consenso entre los Miembros, pero quiero que se entienda la *rationale*, por supuesto que estoy de acuerdo en principio con el texto porque repito, es parte de lo habitual, de lo rutinario, pero permítame agregar, hacer esta concreta sugerencia luego de “*on time and in full*” comma, y voy a dictar en inglés, velocidad de dictado, “*taking into consideration extraordinary economic global recession as a consequence of COVID-19 and in context specific country circumstances.*”

Gracias y espero poder ser comprendido en el mensaje que trato de transmitir.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

While understanding the general narrative that is behind this, when it comes down to payment of assessed contributions, I think we should avoid to put language in here that somehow could be perceived as a blank cheque. Of course, we all know and recognize that there are now additional burdens on almost all countries, all Members. However, this is so general in phrase that I am a bit afraid that this is not appropriate.

This Organization, even though it is now just about 40 percent that is provided by assessed contributions, but still I think we should not weaken our appeal here. You rightly stated, Chair, that for decades now we always used this same language, which has little or no impact. Considering the little impact it has had in the past, I think it is not appropriate to weaken this language that in the past has not shown almost any impact.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I just wanted to weigh in to support the comments made by my German colleague.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Me pareció ver que Argentina había levantado su mano. Bueno, gracias Argentina por la propuesta. Pero aquí, igual, creo que preferiría dejar el texto como estaba por otra razón, porque aquí lo que vemos es ese llamado usual para que los países paguen a tiempo sus cuotas. Pero, por otro lado, la FAO tiene mecanismos para abordar la cuestión de pago de cuotas atrasadas que lo hemos usado en muchos países porque nos hemos atrasado por diversos motivos, pero aquí lo que veo es que, si todos los países tenemos problemas financieros, presupuestarios, por la COVID-19, eso no se puede negar. Pero ¿qué pasaría si todos dejamos de pagar a la FAO? Eso ya sería un problema y los tenemos que pagar en algún momento.

Creo que los mecanismos ya están ahí, hay cierto periodo de retraso antes de que perdamos los derechos de voto y muchos de nuestros países los hemos usado en el pasado. Entonces, yo creo que es mejor dejarlo como estaba originalmente porque esto puede tener consecuencias que si en este momento son justificables, puede que en el futuro se convierta en un problema todavía mayor. Por argumentar, decir no pagué en cierto año porque tenía problemas por la COVID-19, pero no sabemos qué pasaría después.

Esta propuesta podría llevarnos a tener que crear un mecanismo *ad hoc* para tratar esta cuestión y creo que esa sería una discusión de otra clase, un poco más sensible. De todas maneras, como mencionó el Presidente Independiente del Consejo, este párrafo ha estado ahí, los países se siguen atrasando en sus cuotas, en algún momento van a pagar cuando se pueda. Entonces, la FAO sigue trabajando de todas maneras. Yo creo que es mejor no entrar en una cuestión que podría tener consecuencias que no hemos pensado en este momento.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Planteé lo que planteé para que quede en las actas taquigráficas que ante una circunstancia y en un contexto internacional de nivel típico que tienen los países en desarrollo o, por lo menos, la mayoría que reconocemos que estamos en esa situación, era importante recordarlo en este párrafo.

Si no tiene consenso, yo no tengo ninguna preocupación de no insistir. Lamento que no haya habido por lo menos en mi interpretación, la sensibilidad respecto del escenario que muchos de nuestros países están viviendo en este momento. De todas maneras, queda el record y cumplí con mi tarea y mi labor como representante de países en desarrollo.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other request for the floor? I see none. Subparagraph (a) is agreed to.

Subparagraph (b)? I see no request. Subparagraph (b) is agreed.

Subparagraph (c)? I see no request for the floor, so (c) is agreed.

Subparagraph (d)? I see no request for the floor, so (d) is agreed.

Subparagraph (e)? I see no request for the floor, (e) is agreed.

Subparagraph (f)?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Very briefly, in accordance with the statement we delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, we are proposing in this subparagraph to delete the part after “resource functions.”

Delete, “particularly with regard to vacancy rates and delegation of authority,” and replace this text with the following formulation, which I will read: “reiterating the request to substantially reduce the vacancy rate both at Headquarters and Decentralized Offices, and stressed the need for appropriate delegations of authority in line with the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in the General Rules of the Organization XXXVIII.5”.

As I said, this is in line with the statement we delivered and the discussions we had in the Finance Committee.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Gracias a Portugal y la Unión Europea por su propuesta. Tenía una adición más, pero, la verdad, me gustaba más el texto simple y directo que estaba antes que creo que transmite las mismas ideas de manera más sencilla. Pero la idea que quiero adicionar es, lo voy a decir en inglés para que el Comité de Redacción la pueda insertar de la manera que mejor corresponda.

Si esta propuesta tiene aceptación, es simplemente, en inglés: “*Gender parity at senior levels*”. Habría que ajustarlo, que el Comité de Redacción lo pueda hacer, porque no es reducir la paridad de género sino cumplirla, pero el Comité de Redacción lo puede refinar.

Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)

Thank you, European Union and Mexico for the proposal. We can go along with it, but I would like to add something on the geographic representation. After the “gender parity” please add, “as well as equitable geographic representation.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other request for the floor? Any other comments from Members on this paragraph as amended?

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We support the amendments made on subparagraph (f), but we would like to propose a new subparagraph after this subparagraph.

“Requested Management to address the staffing structure of the Decentralized Offices in order to enhance the delivery of projects at the local level.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on this new subparagraph? I see none, so subparagraph (f) and (g) are agreed to.

Subparagraph (h)? I see no request for the floor, so subparagraph (h) is agreed to.

Subparagraph (i)? I see no requests for the floor, so subparagraph (i) is agreed to.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am begging for your indulgence for returning to this. We are proposing to you and to the Members a following new subparagraph. I will read it out: “took note of the ongoing work and urged Management to submit the joint feasibility study on the integration of administrative functions among the three Rome-based Agencies prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.”

Taking into consideration what the Deputy Director-General just informed us about the ongoing work, so we are flexible regarding the text and we can listen afterwards to what the Drafting Committee can say about this, but the general idea is the one we just put on the screen for your consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on this subparagraph?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Just one word to be inserted in the suggestion for the new subparagraph. I think we should insert after “submit the” the word “overdue,” because this feasibility study was due at the end of last year’s Council and still we are waiting for this, so I think this should be considered here.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I fully understand the rationale behind proposing this new subparagraph that was proposed by Portugal on behalf of the Members of the European Union and supported by the delegation of Germany. I just want to seek a clarification because here we are asking the Management to provide this study before the 42nd Session of the Conference, just a month and a half from now. Is this feasible to be addressed?

I think this is a study for the three Rome-based Agencies and it should also be discussed in our meetings. I am asking about the time frame, if it is possible to make it or not.

Second, when will we discuss this also in the three Rome-based Agencies? So we would be happy to hear any clarification from the delegation of Germany or from the Secretariat.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Yo tengo la misma pregunta porque sí, en efecto, este estudio de viabilidad está muy atrasado, pero hace un momento la Directora General Adjunta, Sra. Beth Bechdol, nos dijo, y lo tengo apuntado, que se requiere más trabajo, pero no nos dijo cuánto tiempo más. Entonces, no sé tan viable sea tener ese estudio en básicamente en un mes y medio. Y, quizá, Sra. Bechdol nos lo podría explicar.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Beth Bechdol, would you have information in this regard?

Ms Beth BECHDOL (FAO Deputy Director-General)

Thank you, for the opportunity to provide a bit more clarity. Of course, this requires continued coordination and collaboration among all three of the Rome-based Agencies and is not simply a decision point for singularly FAO to be able to provide full content on.

As we reported at the consultation and the informal briefing with Members, our intent is to make sure that we begin this work on the revised study. Currently it is underway, and we intend to have another

informal Session with Members before the end of June and be able to come back at the 42nd Session of the Conference with either a Report, some kind of update or some kind of final version of the study. Still to be determined, admittedly, given the overdue nature of this.

As this is a work in progress on our part to make sure that we take on very intently and very seriously the areas of resource integration and important areas of coordination that have been identified by Members, we continue to work jointly with World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to navigate this and make sure that we deliver on it in a very serious and a very committed way.

Currently we are working and have committed to this informal Session before the end of June to convey to all of you the existing progress that is being made with then a Report at the 42nd Session of the Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Beth Bechdol. Now I give the floor to Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We are very thankful to our distinguished colleagues from Egypt and from Mexico for the questions and for what our Deputy Director-General said before and just confirmed right now. Thank you, very much. That is why we said that we are flexible because we took note of the information, we took note of the ongoing work and that is why we request that the Drafting Committee can, with the information provided by the Secretariat, adapt the wording regarding the feasibility and the inclusiveness that we need.

I just took note of the previous version of the Report in order to inform Members, that would be very welcome. As I said before, and replying to our colleagues, that is why we stated from the beginning that we are flexible on this, recognizing, as my distinguished colleague from Germany just reminded us, that this is overdue since last December's Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor? I see there is no other request for the floor, so we can conclude on this Item. The subparagraph in yellow would go to the Drafting Committee as well for any refinements which may be needed, otherwise we go forward with an agreed text. We have concluded this Item.

Item 11. Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (8-10 March 2021)

Point 11. Rapport de la cent douzième session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (8-10 mars 2021)

Tema 11. Informe del 112.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (8-10 de marzo de 2021)

(CL 166/11)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 11. Item 11 is the *Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*, which took place on 8-9 March 2021. The relevant document is CL 166/11. The introduction to Item 11 by the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), Ms Daniela Rotondaro, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 11: Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (8-10 March 2021)

Ms Daniela Rotondaro, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

I am pleased to present to the Council the outcomes of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), which was held, in virtual modality, on 8 and 9 March 2021.

The CCLM had four items on its agenda:

- a) Procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution;
- b) Code of Conduct for Voting;
- c) Update on the review of the jurisdictional set up of the United Nations common system;
- d) Working Methods of the CCLM.

With respect to the Procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution, the CCLM noted that this item had been considered at the 103rd, 106th, 107th, 110th and 111th Sessions of the CCLM and had also been the subject of extensive consultations by the present Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), Mr Khalid Mehboob, and his predecessor.

The ICC presented the outcome of his consultations with the Chairpersons of the three Statutory Bodies concerned and informal consultations with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups and FAO Management.

Noting the positive updates provided by the ICC, the Committee looked forward to prompt resolution of this matter in the upcoming consultations of the ICC with the concerned Bodies and confirmed its readiness to hold an additional Session of the Committee, subject to consensus being reached on a long-term procedure, to be able to bring this issue to a closure at the next Council Session.

The Council at its 166th Session will consider the Procedures for the Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies under the dedicated agenda item 18 on the Provisional Agenda of the Council.

At the time of its Session, the CCLM recognized that the Code of Conduct for Voting was still the subject of extensive informal consultations by the ICC with the FAO Membership and, therefore, no official document was presented for its review. The CCLM appreciated the ICC's efforts to build a consensus on the contents of a draft Code of Conduct for Voting and encouraged the ICC to continue consultations.

The CCLM confirmed its readiness to hold an additional Session to consider the draft Code of Conduct for Voting, having regard to its mandate, subject to the emergence of a consensus text.

The Council at its 166th Session will consider the Code of Conduct for Voting under the dedicated agenda item 14 on its Provisional Agenda.

With respect to the Review of the jurisdictional set up of the United Nations common system, following a presentation by the Legal Office, the Committee was informed that the review requested by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 74/255B had been completed within the established timeline and that FAO – Management and its Staff Representatives – had participated at every step of the process by providing comments and observations. The CCLM welcomed the work of FAO in this context, participating in a constructive way in the review process while ensuring the Organization's autonomy as a specialized agency. The CCLM looked forward to being informed of upcoming developments in that regard.

Under Any Other Matters, the CCLM reviewed its working methods, taking into account lessons learned from the previous two Sessions held in virtual modality. It approved alignment of the format of its reports with those of the other two Council Committees (Programme Committee and Finance Committee). It also considered that its current practice, meeting twice per year – prior to the other Council Committees – should be maintained with adjustments made to the duration of the Session depending on its Agenda and reserved the possibility of holding additional Sessions when necessary.

Under the same item the Legal Counsel drew the attention of the CCLM to document PC 130/3 containing an update on FAO policies on protection of data and intellectual property rights. She

advised the CCLM that a recommendation was being made to the Programme Committee that the CCLM be updated on these matters, from time to time, having regard to any legal issues that might arise in this context. The Programme Committee has endorsed this recommendation at its last Session.

The 112th Session of the CCLM had four items on its agenda and I will remind Members that the procedures for the selection and appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies is addressed by the Council under Item 18 and the Code of Conduct for voting under Item 14. I therefore remind Members to focus their interventions on the remaining two topics in the Report of the CCLM, the update on the review of the jurisdictional setup of the United Nations Common System and the working methods of the CCLM.

I now open the floor to Members. I have Myanmar on my list.

Ms Tin Myo NWE (Myanmar)

Myanmar has the honor to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Group commends the excellent presentation of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) Chairperson, Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro, as well as the efficient work of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters Members, the FAO Legal Counsel and the Secretariat.

The Asia Group appreciates the ongoing consultations by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on the procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution and on the draft Code of Conduct for Voting.

On the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, we support the Independent Chairperson of the Council's proposal to apply the interim modalities adopted by the FAO Council to the recruitment process, in the absence of a resolution on a long-term procedure. The Asia Group looks forward to reaching a conclusion on this matter. As such, we welcome the recommendation to hold a special CCLM meeting to further consider this Item.

We welcome too the holding of a special CCLM meeting to deliberate on the draft Code of Conduct for Voting. We hope that consensus on the contents of the draft Code of Conduct will be achieved soon.

We take note of the update provided by the Legal Office on the review of the jurisdictional set up of the United Nations common system. We look forward to being informed of developments on this matter.

On the working methods of the CCLM, the Asia Group welcomes the suggestion to align its reporting format with that of the Programme and Finance Committees and to adjust the duration of it to the CCLM meetings depending on the agenda. We also support the proposal to hold additional meetings, as necessary, for purposes of efficiency.

Finally, we agree with the recommendation to apprise the CCLM of the legal issues that may arise relating to FAO policies on data protection and intellectual property rights.

With the comments above, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Council's approval of the Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Taking this opportunity, please allow me to express my sincere appreciation to you, Chairperson, for your wisdom, guidance and ultimate patience for the FAO Council meetings during your tenure of the Independent Chairperson of the Council. I wish you healthy, wealthy and prosperous years ahead.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voudrais que vous donniez la parole à la délégation du Gabon, qui va s'exprimer au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mme Chantal MOUKOUTOU LEGNONGO (Observateur) (Gabon)

Le Gabon et la Guinée équatoriale interviennent au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le point de l'ordre du Conseil relatif au rapport de la 112e session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et

juridiques (CQCJ). Nous félicitons le Secrétariat du Conseil pour son travail exceptionnel, qui permet la tenue en mode virtuel de la présente session en raison de la pandémie de covid-19.

Nous adressons également nos félicitations aux membres du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques pour l'énorme travail accompli lors de sa réunion les 8 et 9 mars 2021. Travail remarquable au regard des avis et des recommandations formulées sur des questions aussi multiples que diversifiées ayant trait à la procédure de nomination des secrétaires d'organes relevant de l'article XIV de l'Acte constitutif, au Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote, aux informations actualisées sur l'examen des questions de compétence au regard du régime commun du système des Nations Unies et des méthodes de travail du CQCJ.

Tout en saluant le travail accompli par le Président indépendant du Conseil en ce qui concerne la procédure de nomination des secrétaires d'organes relevant de l'Article XIV de l'Acte constitutif, nous prenons note du fait que la procédure provisoire s'appliquerait et encourageons la Direction de la FAO à poursuivre les consultations informelles au sein des différents groupes. Aussi, nous apprécions les propositions visant à renforcer cette procédure.

Pour ce qui concerne l'élaboration du projet de Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote pour l'élection du Directeur général, tout en mettant en avant le consensus sur cette question, nous encourageons les consultations participatives de Membres en tenant compte du droit de souveraineté des États.

Nous saluons les efforts de la FAO visant à créer des synergies d'action avec les autres organisations des Nations Unies, afin d'optimiser la collaboration avec les États dans le cadre de la réforme du système des Nations Unies.

Enfin, nous saluons la méthode de travail du CQCJ, et au nom du Groupe régional Afrique, nous nous félicitons des conclusions et recommandations dudit rapport que le Conseil est prié d'approuver.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other request for the floor? I see none, so I give the floor to the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), followed by the Secretariat if they have any remarks to make.

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Observer) (Republic of San Marino) (Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

Thank you, very much, for giving me the floor. First of all, I would like to say that it was a real privilege for me to serve as Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and I would like to thank all the Members for their open and constructive collaboration, for working in a transparent manner and an open dialogue. I would also like to thank the Secretariat and the Legal Counsel for all the support they have always provided us.

Now I would like to thank the Members of the Council and all those that have intervened for the points they have raised and for the support they have given to the work of CCLM and to its recommendations, which I think will be reflected into the Report of this Council.

As you all have pointed out, we still have two standing items that will need to be looked at by an ad hoc Session of the CCLM. The CCLM was prompt to organize this ad hoc Session on Agenda Item 18 *Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies (CL 166/18)*. We looked to a prompt solution and we welcomed all the efforts you, Mr Chair, have done until now in consultations with FAO Management and the concerned Bodies. We look forward to holding an ad hoc Session, subject to consensus being reached on a long-term procedure. I think that you will explain this to the Members of Council under Agenda Item 18.

The other standing Item is Agenda Item 14 *Code of Conduct for Voting (CL 166/14)*. Being a Member-led exercise, we know that all the efforts that you have done in trying to find a consensus on a text, but we understand that in-depth consultations are still needed, and we will have guidance from you and perhaps an *ad hoc* Session of the CCLM will be convened, probably before the Conference.

I thank all the Members for their support.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional Matters (CCLM). Now I give the floor to the Secretariat if they have any remarks.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I would be very brief I just would like to express the appreciation on my behalf and on behalf of the Secretary of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) Ms Annick Van Houtte as well as other members of the team that supports the CCLM, for the wise and able leadership of Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro. It has been a true pleasure to support the Chairperson in her guidance of the Committee in the discharge of its mandate, which assures that the actions of the Council are duly informed by the FAO legal and constitutional framework. Thus, we just wish to express our gratitude to her for her very deft and her very astute guidance and leadership.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Donata Rugarabamu. This brings me to the conclusions of this Item. We will put the text on the screen. I will read out my conclusions.

Item 11, *Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (8-10 March 2021)*

1. The Council considered the Report of the 112th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and in particular:

- b) Welcomed the work of FAO in the context of the review of the jurisdictional setup of the United Nations Common System as per United Nations General Assembly Resolution 74/255B, paragraph 8, and requested a review by the CCLM of upcoming developments in that regard.
- c) Welcomed the review by the CCLM of its working methods, taking into account lessons learned from the previous two Sessions held in virtual modality, and took note of the alignment of the format of its Reports with those of the Programme and Finance Committees; and
- d) Endorsed the view of the CCLM to maintain its current practice of meeting twice per year prior to the Programme and Finance Committees, and to adjust the duration of its Sessions according to its agenda and reserving the possibility to hold additional Sessions when necessary.

That ends my summary and I open the floor to Members for any comments they may have. We will go subparagraph by subparagraph.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

We have a small tweak to what is subparagraph (c), but I suspect should be subparagraph (b). In subparagraph (b), where it says “welcomed the review by the CCLM of its working methods,” to be clear I think it should probably say, “of CCLM’s working methods”, just to make sure that we are not talking about a review of the Council’s working methods.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments? Since this is a very short Report, could we take all the paragraphs together? Members, you can comment on any subparagraph.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal for the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

For the moment we do not have any proposals for these subparagraphs we have on the screen, but we have a small proposal for a new subparagraph.

A new subparagraph (d), which would read, “took note of the considerations of the CCLM on the procedures for the appointment of the Secretaries of the Bodies under Article XIV”.

CHAIRPERSON

We have a specific Item on Article XIV Bodies. Article XIV Bodies are not part of this specific Item. When we take up the Item on Article XIV Bodies you can make any suggestions you like.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you for your guidance. I am sorry for that.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments? I see no comment or request for the floor, so I think we can agree on this text as conclusions of the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

Item 13. Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference

Point 13. Préparatifs en vue de la quarante-deuxième session de la Conférence

Tema 13. Disposiciones para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia

(CL 166/13)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to the next Item on our Agenda. The next Item is Item 13 *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*. Please ensure you have document CL 166/13 in front of you.

Members will recall this Item was originally planned to be addressed through the written correspondence procedure and the introduction by the Secretariat, as well as the written exchange between Members and the Secretariat is available on the dedicated web pages on the website of the 166th Session of the Council.

Introduction to Item 13: Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference

Rakesh Muthoo, Secretary-General of the Conference and the Council

Document CL 166/13, Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference, contains a number of proposals regarding the arrangements and preparations for the upcoming Conference Session.

The Council is invited to endorse Management’s proposal to convene the Conference on 14-18 June 2021 in the context of exceptional circumstances surrounding the global Covid-19 pandemic, the scheduling of high level intergovernmental meetings, and in recognition of the opportunity for the FAO Conference to provide significant inputs to the UN Food Systems Summit and its pre-Summit.

The Council is also invited to decide to hold the 42nd Session of the Conference in virtual modality in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and its related containment measures. The proposed special procedures to be implemented for a virtual Session of the Conference are outlined in *Appendix A* of the document.

The remaining proposals outlined in the document are before the Council to consider recommending their approval by the Conference at its 42nd Session.

Members are invited to consider three options for alternative modalities for holding a secret ballot election in the context of a virtual Conference Session. These three options, outlined in *Appendix B* in the document, are (i) an online, electronic vote conducted through external software; (ii) an in-person vote conducted by appointment; and (iii) a postal ballot. These options were presented to Members of the ICC informal meeting with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups on 18 March 2021. During this meeting, the Secretariat provided further information on each proposed modality and responded to Members’ clarifications and concerns. The Council is invited to consider and provide guidance on the alternative voting modalities, which will be submitted to the Conference at its 42nd Session for final approval.

A tentative Timetable for the Session is included in *Appendix C* of the document and reflects the endorsement by the 165th Session of the Council to schedule meetings of Commissions I and II of the Conference consecutively, to the extent possible.

In light of the time constraints in holding the Conference in virtual modality, it is proposed to consider 5 items and 5 sub-items on the Provisional Agenda of the 42nd Session of the Conference through a written correspondence procedure. The details of such a procedure are outlined in, *Appendix A, Special procedures for a virtual 42nd Session of the Conference*. The aim of this procedure is to ensure timely conclusion of all items on the Agenda of the 42nd Session of the Conference and has been informed by the positive experience of this procedure used by other Governing Body Sessions held in 2020 and 2021 in virtual modality.

In addition, the Council is invited to recommend the Conference endorses the proposed topic for the General Debate and the Biennial Theme as “Agriculture Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action”. It is proposed that this theme is applied for both the General Debate of the Conference under Agenda Item 9, as well as the Biennial Theme for Governing Body Sessions 2022-23, in recognition of its importance.

The Council is invited to postpone the introduction of these Round Table events designed to foster senior or high level official action-oriented dialogue to the 43rd Session of the Conference, in light of the virtual modality of the upcoming Conference Session and the related time constraints.

Finally, the Council is requested to nominate Officers of the 42nd Session of the Conference, namely, the Chairperson of the Conference, Commission I, and Commission II; three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference, seven Members of the General Committee and nine Members of the Credentials Committee.

The Council is also invited to recommend the Conference sets the deadline for receipt of nominations for the election of Council Members at 12:00 hours on 14 June 2021, and for the election be held on 17 June 2021, in light of the proposal to convene the Conference on 14-18 June 2021.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

Acogemos con satisfacción el documento CL 166/13 y las propuestas al Consejo contenidos en el mismo, con relación a las disposiciones y preparativos del 42º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO. Estamos a favor de que el 42º período de sesiones de la Conferencia se celebre de manera virtual del 14 al 18 de junio de 2021. Apoyamos la propuesta sobre los métodos alternativos para celebrar elecciones de modo virtual, con carácter excepcional en vista de las circunstancias provocadas por la pandemia de covid-19, y los plazos revisados para la recepción de candidaturas al Consejo. Respaldamos la propuesta de “La transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios: de la estrategia a la acción” como tema bienal para el período 2022-23.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:56

The United States strongly prefers option II, in-person vote by secret ballot by appointment, allowing for alternate voting stations at strategic FAO Liaison Offices, and allowing for designated proxy voters, with a limit to how many proxies one person may be permitted to accept. The United States does not feel comfortable given the timeline that a secure and independent digital platform could be purchased, established, and vetted in time for voting. The United States is invested in maintaining the integrity of the voting process.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

La Argentina apoya e invita al resto de los Miembros del Consejo a aceptar que el 42º período de sesiones de la Conferencia se celebre del 14 al 18 de junio de 2021, en lugar del 12 al 16 de julio de 2021, como decidió inicialmente la Conferencia en su 41º período de sesiones, celebrado en julio de 2019. Se coincide que el referido cambio facilitará la participación de todos los Miembros en el contexto de un calendario de reuniones intergubernamentales de alto nivel muy ajustado, así como

brindar a la Conferencia la oportunidad de realizar aportaciones significativas a la denominada preCumbre de los Sistemas Alimentarios. Más allá de la fecha de realización de la Conferencia, la Argentina está totalmente de acuerdo a que el período de sesiones de la Conferencia se celebre de modo virtual por medio de la plataforma de videoconferencias Zoom, a raíz de las limitaciones derivadas de la pandemia de la COVID-19, incluidas las restricciones a los viajes internacionales y a las grandes reuniones presenciales para contener la propagación de la enfermedad. Ello, teniendo como telón de fondo, la distribución desigual de las vacunas COVID-19 en todo el mundo, que según las palabras del titular de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), se está volviendo "cada día más grotesca". Por ende, la decisión de realizar la Conferencia de la FAO a través de medios virtuales debe también leerse como un llamado a una mayor solidaridad entre los Miembros.

En cuanto a las tres opciones de métodos alternativos de votación con miras a someterlos a la consideración del Consejo, la Argentina agradece a la FAO por su elaboración y se inclinaría por la opción que contempla una votación electrónica secreta en línea mediante soporte lógico externo, con carácter excepcional en vista de las circunstancias provocadas por la pandemia de la COVID-19.

Respecto al tema general de debate de la Conferencia, la Argentina agradece la propuesta contenida en el documento. Reiteramos lo señalado en diversas oportunidades respecto de que el foco debe estar en promover y fortalecer sistemas alimentarios sostenibles en sus tres dimensiones: económica, social y ambiental. En este sentido, el grado de transformación dependerá de la instancia en que cada sistema se encuentre, por lo que no se pueden hacer generalizaciones. La necesidad de "transformación" resulta de un análisis de contexto y dependerá, además, de las prioridades y capacidades nacionales.

Asimismo, con consignas tales como "es necesario cambiar todo o transformar todo", podemos caer en la trampa de cambiar todo para que nada cambie. En consecuencia, el lenguaje debe ser más exacto y apropiado, y tener en cuenta las particularidades de cada caso, pues de lo contrario esta idea de transformación radical de los sistemas puede convertirse en un slogan vacío de contenido.

Por ende, la Argentina preferiría que el tema general de debate (y del tema para el bienio 2022-23) trate cuestiones de importancia para la membresía en su conjunto, y se encuentre en línea con la Agenda 2030 que continúa siendo el eje orientador de los trabajos de la comunidad internacional y de la FAO. Es ese sentido, se entiende pertinente que el tema se ajuste a tales objetivos y los impulse, considerando que aún no han sido cabalmente alcanzados y que resta mucho trabajo por hacer. Por ende, la Argentina propone que el tema general de debate lea: "sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios sostenibles: de la estrategia a la acción". Entendemos que esta frase es más inclusiva, en línea con el ODS 2.4 y coherente con la manera en que los informes de los distintos comités de la FAO han abordado la cuestión de la "transformación" e incluye la sostenibilidad como objetivo final de todo el trabajo de la FAO y sus Miembros. Iguales comentarios y sugerencia se aplicarían para el caso del tema bienal, dado que la "transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios" no debe ser considerado un fin en sí mismo, en tanto no todos los sistemas agroalimentarios deben ser transformados, solo aquellos que no son sostenibles, como expresado más arriba. Sin perjuicio de lo anterior, en caso no se vislumbre margen para tratar eventuales propuestas alternativas de tema general de debate y al tema bienal, se agradecerá ajustar la propuesta original para que refleje los debates que sobre la cuestión de las eventuales "transformaciones" de los sistemas agroalimentarios ya han tenido lugar en la Organización, incluyendo en la última sesión conjunta del Comité del Programa y del Comité de Finanzas, donde se reiteró que los llamados a transformar tales sistemas debe realizarse "de forma coherente, según correspondiera, conforme a los contextos y capacidades nacionales y en función de estos" (párrafo 9.h del documento CL 166/8). Con estos comentarios, la Argentina aguarda con interés demás comentarios de los Miembros y las respuestas que la Secretaría de la FAO, a fin de alcanzar un consenso en cuanto a las disposiciones y tema general de debate de la próxima Conferencia de la FAO, como así también del tema bienal 2022-2023.

BRAZIL

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia extends our appreciation to the FAO for the efforts which have been made to facilitate the 42nd Conference during the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia notes and welcomes the information presented in CL166/13 and provides the following comments:

- Australia is happy to endorse the revision to the date, and we understand the exceptional circumstances which mean that the 42nd Conference will occur in a virtual modality.
 - While we appreciate that virtual arrangements are the most inclusive way to conduct business in light of on-going pandemic restrictions, we highlight the importance of virtual arrangements remaining the exception and the need to return to in-person meetings as soon as conditions allow.
 - We also understand the need to hold virtual meetings in line with Central European Time; however, we flag the on-going challenge this timing poses to fulsome participation by South West Pacific countries.
 - We welcome the option for delegations to provide their statements for the General Debate in writing or via video.
- With regard to the voting arrangements, Australia remains amenable to any of the options presented providing reasonable assurance can be provided about the integrity, confidentiality, inclusivity and transparency of the vote being maintained.
 - We welcome advice that these arrangements are being considered on an exceptional basis.
 - We would appreciate advice on whether the FAO intends to make direct approaches to all Members to ensure suitability of the preferred voting procedure in response to the guidance received by Council.
 - We recommend that detailed guidance on the voting procedure be provided to all Members ahead of the Conference to avoid any confusion, in particular around the use of proxy votes where applicable.

PERU

Presentado el miercoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 23:10

El Perú expresa su conformidad para que el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia se celebre, del 14 al 18 de junio de 2021, de modo virtual. En ese sentido, sobre el punto B.

Cambio de fechas y modalidad de celebración de la Conferencia está de acuerdo con los procedimientos especiales que se aplicarán de manera excepcional para la celebración virtual del período de sesiones de la Conferencia (Apéndice A). Así como con el plazo propuesto de recepción de candidaturas al Consejo para los períodos 2021-2024 y 2022-2025, y el calendario provisional para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia (Apéndice C). En el punto F. Tema del debate general, párrafo 19, se propone considerar -en el 166º periodo de sesiones del Consejo, el tema “La transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios: de la estrategia a la acción”, como propuesta de tema para el debate general del 42º periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia en relación al tema 9 “Examen del estado de la alimentación y la agricultura”.

Asimismo, en el punto G. Tema bienal, párrafo 16, se pone a consideración del Consejo considerar la posibilidad de respaldar la propuesta de tema “La transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios: de la estrategia a la acción”. Al respecto, si bien se reconoce que los patrones alimentarios han experimentado una rápida transformación en las últimas décadas, también es pertinente reconocer que la “transformación” de los sistemas agroalimentarios está sujeto al contexto de cada país y que, por tanto, no todos los sistemas agroalimentarios requieren transformarse. En ese sentido los eventuales procesos de transformación de los sistemas alimentarios pueden promoverse por los miembros que así lo determinen, en función de sus contextos, prioridades y capacidades nacionales. Por estas consideraciones, con la finalidad de evitar generalidades, se recomienda eliminar o modificar el término “transformación” del tema propuesto, sugiriendo la siguiente redacción alternativa al tema: “Mejorando los sistemas agroalimentarios: de la estrategia a la acción” o “Fortaleciendo los sistemas agroalimentarios: de la estrategia a la acción”.

CANADA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 22:27

Canada supports holding the 42nd Session of the Conference from 14-18 June 2021 in virtual modality. On the alternative voting procedure for secret ballot elections at the 42nd Session of the Conference, Canada prefers an in-person vote by secret ballot by appointment.

JAPAN

Submitted Thursday April 15 2021, at 14:32

Revised dates and virtual modality of the Conference Session are acceptable for Japan. Nonetheless, we would cordially request the appropriate arrangement of meeting time in consideration of the time difference. We would also like to assure synergies between the Conference Session and the UN Food Systems Summit and Pre-Summit. Japan believes physical voting ("Option 1") is desirable and should be pursued as much as possible. However, given the perceived legal challenges of proxy voting and the procedural complexity of physical voting in several locations, including New York and Geneva, Japan is flexible to take the online voting option ("Option 2") if all the technical and procedural concerns are properly addressed and the principles of transparency, equal access, and confidentiality are ensured.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Monday April 19 2021, at 11:56

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States regarding the abovementioned agenda item for the 166th Session of the FAO Council. Considering the exceptional circumstances created by the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU and its Member States have no fundamental objection to the 42nd Session of the Conference being held in a virtual format.

In any case, it should be underlined that any suspension of the General Rules of the Organization and special procedures implemented at the 42nd Session of the Conference are to be implemented on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent for any of its future sessions. We also believe that this 42nd Session of the Conference should be taken as an opportunity to agree on a meaningful Code of Conduct for Voting within FAO aligned in line with best practices and standards in the UN system. Regarding the secret ballot elections, various options are proposed and the proposed option to conduct an online, electronic secret ballot using external software, an option that is not provided for in the FAO's basic texts and for which there is no precedent in the UN system, we have additional questions, to which we would be grateful to receive detailed answers: • How would secrecy of voting be ensured?

- How would the system certification required for online voting using external software be conducted? Moreover, what standards would be used for that system certification?
- What measures would be taken to prevent and eliminate the risk of manipulation by hackers from outside?
- How would a recount be conducted, if required?
- At what stage before the election would the code of the external software to be used for the electronic secret ballot be available for public scrutiny?
- How would the legal certainty of the election be ensured if there were to be a legal challenge?

We welcome the topic proposed for the general debate at the 42nd Session of the Conference: 'Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action'. We hope that the debate can provide significant insightful input to the UN Food Systems Summit and Pre-Summit, fulfilling the FAO's responsibilities regarding its central role in key areas related to food systems. Finally, we support the choice of 'Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action' as the theme for the 2022-2023 biennium.

SWITZERLAND (OBSERVER)

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 15:52

Switzerland welcomes document CL 166/13 that gives an overview on the arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference and would like to comment on part F. Topic for the General Debate (specifically on Para 19) and part G. Biennial Theme (specifically on Para 23). Switzerland fully supports "Agriculture Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action" as theme for the General Debate at the 42nd Session of the Conference and as biennial theme for the 2022-23 biennium. The theme increases the focus of the 42nd Session of the Conference and the Governing Bodies on the priorities and strategic global issues contained in the Strategic Framework where the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems is at the heart of all strategic actions. The theme equally relates to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 that places the

transformation of food systems centrestage in order to significantly accelerate progress towards the achievement of Agenda 2030. Switzerland understands this topic as a determination to transform and change the way our food is produced and consumed today in order to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable and resilient food systems and reminds that transformation of food systems will be achieved:

- through a systemic and holistic approach that takes into account all socioeconomic and environmental aspects;
- by working in multi-stakeholder partnerships, as challenges are complex and systemic and cannot be dealt with in a top-down and linear way;
- by promoting all innovations especially co-creation of knowledge, farmer-to-farmer innovations and prioritising systemic approaches such as Agroecology; and
- by putting young people as key agents of change in the transformation towards sustainable food systems at the centre of actions.

Switzerland calls on FAO to fully play its key role in promoting this transformational change, through the promotion of networks, strengthening its science and evidence-based work and by supporting the development of metrics. FAO's normative competence should be further strengthened.

COLOMBIA (OBSERVADOR)

Presentado el lunes 19 de abril 2021 a las 13:38

Colombia apoya la celebración de la 42a Conferencia de la FAO del 14 al 18 de junio. En cuanto el ítem 13 - Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference, sugiere que dentro de los debates centrales para la conferencia, en línea a los temas trabajados regionalmente, se tenga en cuenta el tema de "la recuperación y transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios afectados por la pandemia del Covid-19" incluyendo los siguientes temas:

- a) Experiencia de los países a nivel mundial;
- b) Recomendaciones de FAO para la recuperación y la activación económica en los sectores rurales, ambientes y sociales; y
- c) Plan de acción de cooperantes para contribuir a la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios afectados por la pandemia.

Response from Secretariat Réponses du Secrétariat Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat notes the positive response from Members with regard to the proposal to convene the 42nd Session of the Conference from 14-18 June 2021, in virtual modality. Accordingly, the Council recommended deadline for receipt of nominations for the election of Council Members will be adjusted to 12:00 hours on Monday, 14 June 2021, and the election to be held on Thursday, 17 June 2021. The Secretariat notes that the virtual arrangements are implemented on an exceptional basis.

The special procedures to be applied on an exceptional basis at the 42nd Session of the Conference held in virtual modality, outlined in *Appendix A* of document CL 166/13, shall serve to ensure the time management and smooth functioning of the Session. The hosting of the Session on the Zoom videoconferencing platform shall benefit from the experience of using this platform by both Members and the Secretariat for most Governing Body Sessions since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the use of the written correspondence procedure for 5 Agenda Items and 5 sub-items aims to ensure the Session concludes its Agenda in the time allotted, in particular in light of the scheduling of Commission meetings of the Conference consecutively, to the extent possible.

With regard to the Timetable and the time zone of the 42nd Session of the Conference, this will be Central European Time (GMT +1) or Central European Summer Time (UTC +2), as this is the time zone of the headquarters of the Organization and the location of the meeting if it was held physically. While the Secretariat acknowledges and regrets the difficulty caused by the time difference for some delegations, it is considered necessary to maintain the time zone of FAO headquarters so as to ensure neutrality as well as allow the work of the Conference to be concluded in the 5 days scheduled for the Session.

With regard to voting procedures, the Secretariat notes the comments of Australia and assures that all Members will be provided with detailed guidance on the voting procedure to be implemented at the 42nd Session of the Conference.

With regard to the questions of the European Union, the Secretariat is pleased to clarify the following:

The voting platform selected for the Conference (Onesait Democracy Elections Assemblies (ODEA), from Minsait¹) offers a Full Secret Voting mode, with the use of an industry standard encryption algorithm for ensuring the privacy preservation of the cloud data.

The voting platform ODEA has received several certifications, recently from IFAD, through a third part company, Verizone. Minsait has certifications on security methodologies (27001, 9001, etc).

All actions are recorded on a blockchain that is cryptographically protected. Any manipulation from hackers would be immediately detected and the original data can therefore be restored.

If required, an administrator can request the system to go back to recount state. Recount is possible for both open vote and full secret voting modes.

The code is protected by copyright and is not open to public scrutiny. Minsait can give full access to the code to auditors nominated by the customer. Publishing the code will only facilitate potential hackers.

With regard to challenges to secret ballots, these are provided for in Rule XII 15 (d) and (e) of the General Rules of the Organization, and are applicable to all secret ballots, including elections.

“(d) A secret ballot may be challenged at any time within three months of the date upon which it took place or until the elected candidate takes office, whichever is the longer period.

(e) Should a vote or election by secret ballot be challenged, the Director-General shall cause the ballot papers and all relevant record sheets to be re-examined and shall circulate the result of the investigation, together with the original complaint, to all Member Nations of the Organization or of the Council, as appropriate.”

A secret ballot would be open to challenge for a period of three months, or until an elected official takes office, whichever is the longer period. A challenge itself would neither invalidate nor suspend the result of a secret ballot.

An investigation would be possible in the online voting system. Minsait has a Blockchain based audit log that ensures every transaction is recorded. It allows the auditing of the source code and verification at any given moment that the code being executed is the audited one, thus ensuring the possibility of an investigation.

With regard to the theme for the General Debate and the Biennial Theme, the FAO Secretariat would like to maintain the theme with the proposed title to read: “Agriculture Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action”, with the following arguments for Members’ consideration. The word Transformation is not an absolute term but a term that draws attention to and calls for urgency, therefore used in a specific context such as the one we are facing today. The word Transformation is used for “Food Systems”. We use Food Systems in plural terms in order to refer to all the systems, among which some might need to be transformed to achieve SDG 1 and SDG 2. Food Systems Transformation does not suggest a change in or transformation of each individual food system, but is an overall concept to look at all Food Systems, among which some would require transformation for the desired results to be achieved, and it is used to stress the importance and urgency of the matter.

The FAO Secretariat fully agrees that not each food system requires transformation but as a knowledge Organization, we are drawing attention to its importance, and we have suggested that Food Systems be used in plural terms. By using Food Systems in plural terms, FAO is taking a holistic and global approach.

The FAO Secretariat would suggest to maintain the term Agriculture Food Systems, because of the vision and mandate of the Organization which goes beyond food and includes all agricultural

¹ <http://www.minsait.com/en/industries/elections-and-participatory-processes>

activities. Agriculture encompasses activities that are not necessarily food related, therefore the FAO Secretariat strongly believes that FAO, as knowledge Organization and a specialized agency, could suggest a term that would reflect its mandate. More importantly, the term agri-food Systems or Agriculture Food Systems is consistent with the Organization's Strategic Framework and its priority areas of work.

CHAIRPERSON

Members' written inputs indicate that the Council supports holding the 42nd Session of the Conference from 14-18 June 2021 and in virtual modality, in light of the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Members have also supported the special procedures and arrangements to be applied to the virtual Session as outlined in *Annex A* of document *CL 166/13*, as well as the tentative timetable for the Session and the revised deadline for receipt of nominations for Council Membership.

However, as agreed, this Item is now open for deliberations, given that there is a divergence of views on the options presented regarding the alternative voting modalities for a virtual Session of the Conference. It is necessary for the Council to make a recommendation to the Conference at its 42nd Session on the preferred alternative voting modality to be used on an exceptional basis.

I will now open the floor for Members to see whether we can identify a consensus view in order to make the recommendations to the Conference. The floor is open for Members.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just before we give our view on the issue of voting modalities for the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council, could I ask that a member of Management confirm that it would be feasible to arrange an electronic ballot at this point, given that Conference is six weeks or less away from now? Is it actually a feasible option? It would be good to have some reassurance on that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United Kingdom. I give the floor to the Secretary-General, who will provide that response.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, as per the update that was provided at the Informal Meeting of the Independent Chairperson of the Council with the Regional Groups last Friday, 23 April, the Secretariat has been working full pace on two alternative modalities for voting by secret ballot at the 42nd Session of the Conference in a virtual setting, from 14 to 18 June.

In terms of a secure online system, as we had apprised the Informal Meeting on Friday, subsequent to the measures outlined in document *CL 166/13 Appendix B*, we have made inroads in terms of the supplier. We have learned lessons from the modality that had been selected and the procedures and suppliers for IFAD and its intended use at its General Council earlier this year.

We are very much down the road on that option, as well as on the other option for an in-person ballot under strict health and safety conditions imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Ahora, el Presidente de la Junta es mi querida colega de Israel. Hemos discutido y conversado este tema bastante tiempo y conversando con algunos colegas de manera informal antes de esta sesión, también pensamos que quizás una alternativa que quisiera saber si técnicamente es posible, es imaginarnos también un sistema híbrido que permita la posibilidad de que, los representantes que estuvieran en Roma lo pudieran hacer físicamente, pero que también quienes no pudieran garantizar su presencia aquí en Roma pudieran hacerlo de manera electrónica.

Simplemente quería que la consulta que hizo mi colega del Reino Unido a la Secretaría, quería verificar si la Secretaría podría dar una respuesta también para que podamos tener diferentes alternativas que conjuguen dos principios que, yo imagino, todos estamos de acuerdo. El principio del voto secreto, por un lado, y el principio de inclusividad, que son las dos cosas que, en definitiva,

estamos todos preocupados por sostener y defender. Entonces, creo que sí me gustaría consultar primero a la Secretaría si usted Presidente, está de acuerdo.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I go for the other speakers, since this is a clarification, I will ask the Secretary-General to provide that clarification.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, it would be feasible from a practical point of view, given as I explained earlier, we are working full steam on two alternative modalities, a secure online secret ballot on one hand and on the other hand, a physical secret ballot. There will be no difficulty to continue those two parallel processes and merge them into one, should that be the guidance of the Council.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I also had a question for clarification before we discuss the alternative modalities. Given that the Council is only making a recommendation and that the decision will be taken by FAO Conference, does that mean, I take it from the Secretary-General, that up until the Conference these two options will need to be open and operational and that Member States will have to be fully prepared to adopt either of them?

If it is a hybrid system, then they have to be fully prepared to understand how these two function, including possible testing and dry runs. It would help to understand what the practical steps are that are required to be absolutely fully prepared to conduct the voting when FAO Conference is held.

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Canada is absolutely right from the governance procedure point of view in that the Council makes a recommendation which would have to be approved by the Conference itself. We would, in the Secretariat, continue the processes for the alternative modalities, and including a third for a hybrid, should that be the guidance from this Council, including testing and engagement with Members, as we will require preparation to be ready to deliver one or the other system at Conference.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

We are still very much in favour for in-person by appointment secret ballot voting at FAO Headquarters during the Conference. I would like to remind all of us that there has not been a secret ballot election conducted electronically across the United Nations Systems. We have a very short time, six weeks, before the Conference.

Again, I beg to differ with the Secretary-General because I do not IFAD can set as an example for us because there was only one candidate there. Now we are facing three candidates, so it is a totally different ball game in my opinion.

I would like to suggest something. We think that most FAO Members, every representative here in Rome, either as a representative of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) or as Ambassador to Italy, or as Ambassador to the Holy See, I think if we combine all the various representatives of those three Embassies that I mentioned, we will find very few Member states that are not represented in Rome.

If we have very few, six to eight, then I think we can go with the Argentinian Ambassador's suggestion to have for those countries that do not have any representative in Rome, an electronic voting procedure for them. Again, I think if we combine all the various representatives that are based in Rome for all three Embassies, bilateral for Italy, for the Holy See and for the RBAs, we will have very few Member Nations that are not based in Rome.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Le Congo vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun qui a été chargé par le Groupe Afrique de le représenter sur cette question.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

It is late, I feel a little affect to come at last and say something. This is a very tricky one. We are trying to see whether the prerequisite is met legally because, as Canada mentioned and the Secretary-General confirmed, the decision is a decision of the Conference, and because it is the decision of the Conference, it is the Conference to try to organize it in the best possible way.

I was trying to find out if there is a way to at least involve the Conference ahead of time, as we did for IFAD, because we need the testing time, a dry run. If the decision is to go to electronic modality, there are some prerequisites, which with the time remaining to the Conference we are still trying to understand if it is feasible. The Secretary-General has confirmed that it is feasible. We want to believe that he is right and that we can along with it.

Nevertheless, the big issue here to resolve is, do we have the possibility of liaising today with those who supply IFAD with electronic instruments? I do not think that the idea of bringing all the representatives to come and vote is a good one. In my view, you have all those countries in the Southwest Pacific, the Caribbean, mainly in Africa, for whom today to travel is very difficult. Africa, we will be able to see that we want to have a quorum here.

We are still in the very difficult situation to understand how effectively this should be done if we want to apply the principles of inclusiveness, integrity, consistency with the Basic Texts, secrecy of the vote, practicability, transparency and so on, then we have to think twice.

I have no solution. In Africa, we have no solution now, but what we believe is that we want to have full confidence in the Secretary-General to manage that and give us confidence that it is doable. Thank you, for now, and I may come back later on if we have more information.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I want to go on record and say that the United States prefers strongly option two, which is the on paper, in-person by appointment vote by secret ballot at FAO headquarters. We appreciated the information note and the clarification that proxies may only represent one vote per proxy.

Our country is invested in maintaining the integrity of FAO's voting process and we see an in-person by appointment vote as the most secure means, especially given that we only have six weeks to go to prepare for the Conference, it is the modality that most closely aligns with the FAO Basic Texts and consistent with the United Nations best practices, both for secret ballot elections and for pandemic mitigation measures. I note we have a precedent here. This has been the repeated practice of the United Nations General Assembly throughout the pandemic. This is a method that is inclusive, effective and secure and so I fail to understand why our conditions here in Rome are so different from those in New York.

As our colleague, the Israeli Ambassador said, no United Nations Agency has yet conducted an electronic secret ballot election and so we want to express caution against a rushed first trial here.

I will conclude my comments there, but I may again join the conversation later.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Firstly, I would just like to bring to the attention of the group of the written comments Australia submitted. I would like to highlight two of them. One of them is a question to Management, which was whether or not the FAO intended to make direct approaches to all Members to ensure suitability of the preferred voting procedure in response to the guidance received by Council.

The second point was a recommendation that FAO issue detailed guidance on the voting procedure that it be provided to all Members ahead of the Conference to avoid any confusion, in particular around the use of proxy votes, if that is indeed the direction we take.

Finally, I would like to respond to the comments made by my colleague from Israel, just to highlight that the Southwest Pacific has very minimal presence in Rome across all of the missions. I believe out of all of our Members there are only two of us here. We do need to take that into consideration.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I have been listening with very much attention to the discussion. Of course, we did not participate in the previous discussion, but we were following. Somehow, I am astonished by the mixture of interest on one side and principles on the other. Of course, all the principles are important, but, in my opinion, the main one is that a vote has to be democratic: every country has the right to vote. This is the basic principle, the first one I understand, and should be respected.

If we go for the physical voting, as many countries already mentioned, some regions are not going to be able to exercise their right. Southwest Pacific and most of the Caribbean countries are not represented here, and even some countries that are present in Rome, are not accredited to FAO. They are accredited to the Vatican or to the Italian Government. Frankly, I would caution everyone that we stick to the only one option of a physical vote.

On the other hand, if we go for the physical vote, what would happen to delegations that would, if they manage to reach Rome, be forced into a quarantine or lockdown before exercising their vote? They would have to be here two weeks before the vote?

I would ask the Secretary-General if a trial would be feasible in the next week or two, with three or four candidates in order to test the system and compare it to the one used at IFAD.

I will have a comment at the end of this discussion concerning this subject.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

Just to briefly say our basic notions on this issue. We are in an unfortunate situation because of COVID-19. We are facing the dilemma we have never before had to face. We need to find practical solutions.

On one hand there are the principles of integrity, transparency and so on, but I think the secrecy of the ballot is quite important. Of course, inclusiveness is the basis for that, as the Brazilian colleague said, that it is the basis for the democratic operations of international organizations. But at the same time, if we do not have the endurance of the secrecy in the ballot, then we would lose our confidence in the democratic operations and it will undermine the legitimacy of the Organization.

Having said that, we strongly prefer the physical, in-person vote. At the same time, the few cases with no representative here in Rome should be addressed, no alternative and so on. It is something that we should be considering.

When it comes to electronic votes, we believe we should be very cautious with that. We haven't got much experience in that, and from the various experiences, some of the guarantees by the producers or a particular manufacturer, I do not think that is enough for enduring the secrecy as we look at the reality of the current world in cyberactivity and so on. We only have a very short time for the preparations, so it could be difficult to have confidence on such system.

Unfortunately, I do not have a solution to address everything that we face as a dilemma, but for this moment Japan would strongly prefer the physical vote, but of course we have to acknowledge the necessity to address a limited number of cases where Member Countries would not be able to exercise their rights because of the situation. That should be somehow addressed, but we should not go to the electoral system in a hasty manner.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muy atento a cada uno de los comentarios que mis colegas han hecho y durante todos estos días con un espíritu constructivo como el que habitualmente trato de mantener, he tratado de ver cómo promover un esquema que respete todas las preocupaciones de los diferentes Miembros. Hay algunos Miembros que han hecho mucho énfasis en el tema del voto secreto. Y asocian el voto secreto solamente con el voto presencial. Otros Miembros también creen que el voto debe ser secreto y ese es un tema muy importante, pero al mismo tiempo consideran que para que podamos tener un esquema democrático es necesario garantizar no solo el voto presencial, sino que los países que los Miembros puedan votar.

Existen problemas hoy en el mundo que no garantizan que todos los Miembros estén en condiciones de estar en Roma al momento del día del voto. Parece ser que algunos países tienen garantizado sus

vacunas para sus funcionarios y otros no. Por lo tanto, el proceso de poder garantizar que funcionarios que habitualmente están en sus capitales y que viajan para votar, no estoy hablando de Ministros, estoy hablando de cualquier funcionario que cada gobierno decida, no lo van a poder hacer.

Por lo tanto, no importa si el 80% lo puede hacer y un 20% no lo puede hacer o un 85% lo puede hacer o un 15% no lo puede hacer. O un 90% por lo puede hacer o un 10% no lo puede hacer. Porque el principio de inclusividad es el 100%. O sea que el 100% pueda hacerlo, si después no quiere votar, no vota. Pero que, *a priori*, todos lo puedan hacer.

Entonces, si uno va juntando cada uno de estos elementos y hay un elemento adicional para tratar de completar un poco lo planteado por mi querida colega de Israel, porque con ella hemos conversado mucho este tema informalmente, como ella lo sabe bien. Es un tema que hoy en la mañana me lo plantearon otros colegas. Es que no siempre la votación o el que vota es un representante del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. No siempre en los países lo que votan son parte del cuerpo diplomático o que dependen de las cancillerías. En algunos casos son los Ministerios de Agricultura. Por lo tanto, hay Ministros de Agricultura que no creen y no se sienten que le corresponda a un funcionario diplomático del país sea quien lo represente.

Por lo tanto, yo creo que hay que ser muy respetuoso de la soberanía de cada uno de los países. Cada país va a tener que decidir quién va a ejercer el voto. Por lo tanto, si todos estos elementos los colocamos sobre la mesa con el mismo nivel de importancia, para ser respetuosos de las preocupaciones de todos. Sobre todo, con un elemento fundamental, que yo no lo sabía, y es que la Secretaría garantiza dos cosas, que se puede hacer el voto electrónico y, segundo, que también se podría hacer el esquema híbrido.

Si esas dos cosas están garantizadas y cada uno de los elementos que expresé también pueden juntarse, yo creo que queda claro que el esquema híbrido en el cual podría, por un lado garantizar que quienes puedan hacerlo físicamente, lo puedan hacer. Y quienes no lo pueden hacer físicamente, que puedan hacerlo electrónicamente.

Qué más queremos todos sino garantizar un esquema que todos digan que es una elección democrática, el voto se garantiza porque es secreto, que toma en cuenta la problemática de la salud en la cual estamos viviendo y que nadie pueda decir que no hubo o que hubo restricción o algún mecanismo que excluyó la posibilidad de participar en las elecciones por parte de ningún Miembro.

Entonces, yo no quiero expresarme en favor de una alternativa, porque para mí la alternativa es aquella que logremos como consenso entre los Miembros, pero incluyendo las preocupaciones de todos y garantizando los principios de inclusividad, de voto secreto y de democracia. Entonces, también podemos volver a años anteriores donde los votos se hacían por correspondencia. De hecho, todos sabemos que, en muchas cuestiones, los Miembros votamos cuestiones por correspondencia. Podemos establecer un mecanismo.

Por lo tanto, hay formas y también hay otra alternativa que creo que hasta ahora yo no la escuché y que me gustaría consultar a la Secretaría y, sobre todo, a la Asesora Jurídica. Si habría posibilidades en el contexto de la pandemia en la cual estamos, de postergar las elecciones. Digamos, podríamos perfectamente también preguntarnos si eso viable, si el Consejo tiene la soberanía para plantear, por ejemplo, la necesidad de postergar las elecciones a tal fin que tengamos un escenario global, más tranquilo y que garanticemos el voto presencial. Entonces, si podemos garantizar que todos puedan, quizás eso podría respetar el principio también de la inclusividad.

Por eso me gustaría hacer esa consulta, si está dentro de las opciones la posibilidad de la postergación de la elección. Entonces, creo que de esta manera tendríamos todas las opciones sobre la mesa y con un espíritu de consenso trataríamos de buscar cuál sería la mejor salida.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Antes de entrar con mis consideraciones, quisiera traer a colación el hecho de que apenas el 24 de abril de 2021 se conmemoró el Día mundial del multilateralismo y la diplomacia para la paz, ocasión para la cual el propio Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas, Señor Antonio Guterres, lanzó un mensaje más que contundente que aplica para el caso que hoy nos ocupa. “La pandemia de enfermedad de coronavirus COVID-19 es un trágico recordatorio de la profunda inconexión que existe

entre nosotros. Hay una necesidad clara y urgente de adoptar decisiones multilaterales concretas basadas en la acción común a través de las fronteras por el bien de toda la humanidad. Necesitamos un multilateralismo más interconectado y con una mayor coordinación entre las organizaciones regionales e internacionales”.

Con esto es claro que no podemos ahora venir a hacer diferencias entre los que sí cuentan con los recursos económicos y sanitarios, llámense vacunas, para apersonarse hasta Roma y los que definitivamente no cuentan con esos recursos. Hay países como Costa Rica, por ejemplo, cuyos gobiernos tuvieron que hacer serias modificaciones en sus presupuestos institucionales justamente para poder obtener recursos financieros para hacerle frente a la compra de vacunas. Porque ha sido difícil la compra de las vacunas.

Uno de estos recortes, es lógico, se refiere a los gastos de viaje de los funcionarios de gobierno. Además, no podemos obviar que los actuales protocolos sanitarios vigentes para la movilización aérea impiden que ciudadanos de la mayoría de los países de ingresos bajos y medios puedan trasladarse para llegar hasta aquí. Hoy por hoy, ningún costarricense puede entrar a Europa debido a estas medidas sanitarias. No sabemos a ciencia cierta cuándo serán levantadas estas restricciones. Además, como bien sabemos los países en desarrollo muestran un gran rezago en comparación con los países desarrollados en materia de vacunación de la población. Por lo tanto, es totalmente incierto poder programar una reunión presencial en estas condiciones.

Nuestra Delegación entiende el multilateralismo como un maravilloso mecanismo por medio del cual todos podemos participar. Entonces, todos y no solo unos pocos deben de gozar del mismo derecho del voto. Existen antecedentes de votaciones electrónicas que se han dado en otras agencias de Naciones Unidas, como se dio recientemente en el Fondo Interamericano de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), quedando demostrada una total transparencia en dicho proceso. También se eligen presidentes en todo el mundo y la gente vota en otros Estados, en otros países, todo esto electrónicamente y en secreto. Y nos acaba de confirmar el Secretario que eso es posible.

Coincidió con el Embajador Carlos Cherniak, de Argentina, que esta modalidad híbrida me parece interesantísima, no la había considerado y, ¿qué más inclusión hay que eso? Allí todos los que están a favor y los que están en contra podrían votar de una u otra manera. Así que me parece que esa solución de la votación híbrida, y comprobado que tecnológicamente es posible, me parece una buena solución.

Para terminar, debo decirles que los diplomáticos somos ejércitos pacíficos, pero no silenciosos. Debemos alzar la voz allá donde observemos desigualdades de oportunidades y, por eso, Costa Rica aboga y apoya para que el derecho del voto sea electrónico o híbrido, libre, legítimo y, por ende, democrático.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would also like to express our strong preference for the in-person voting and the normal procedure envisaged in the Basic Texts for the vote by secret ballot. We have listened very carefully to the discussion tonight and we feel it is very difficult for us at this time to envisage alternative modalities in such a short time without fully understanding how it works, and without having had the opportunity so far to test it. I understand that in the IFAD case there was an opportunity to test it. There was a period of a few months before the Executive Board even recommended that option and then of course it was for the Governing Council to approve it at the end, which was not necessary because there was no resort to any vote for the election.

I do understand very much the importance of participation, inclusiveness and democracy. This principle existed before the pandemic, and the Basic Texts had envisaged that the alternative modality in the case of not being represented or being able to vote in-person was the proxy. It was deemed that that was the secure and most pragmatic arrangement for those who were not able to vote in-person.

I understand that the pandemic is complicating matters because you do not have the option to travel and vote in person, but I think we need to be very careful about adopting alternative modalities when, as others have pointed out, our global context has evolved. We live in a more digitalized world, and the risks, in general, to the integrity and secrecy of the secret ballot have changed accordingly. Other

organizations, whether in Rome, in New York, Geneva, Vienna or other United Nations organizations have not yet adopted electronic alternative modalities, and some have specifically rejected it.

At the United Nations General Assembly in New York, they have considered it and not deemed it appropriate. They may have better representation, but I do not know that we should say that because they went with the normal procedure, that they would be less democratic than another one because they have more representation or not.

I think it is a very complex issue, especially since, personally, we have no clue how this online voting is working. For us, we feel that if it has been tested in the pandemic tht the normal procedure can work.

It would be good to have clarification of how many Members are not represented in Rome and would not want to prevail themselves of the proxy arrangement to see what could be considered as alternatives. I think that before we go to alternative modalities, such as a complex one like the online voting, we need to be very careful.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I completely agree with Canada, and I would like just to elaborate on two issues. First of all, there is no doubt that the right to vote for everyone is a must. This is basic. We do not have any argument with that. I somehow find it quite difficult to understand the Brazilian and Costa Rican position because, since everybody knows that the Conference is going to be digital, via Zoom, no Minister, whether he can enter to Rome or he cannot, will come to Rome just to vote and then go to his hotel room and participate in the Conference from his hotel room via Zoom.

That is why all the Ambassadors or Representatives that are based in Rome, will be asked by their governments to vote on behalf of their governments and states. There is no question of whether some country can enter Rome or can enter Europe or not. Even those who can enter, they will not bother to come to Rome if the Conference is digital and via Zoom.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUNEZ (Perú)

Consideramos que la mejor alternativa en este caso es la opción dos del sistema de votación en línea en el escenario poco previsible de las condiciones sanitarias en las fechas de la Conferencia. Además, en base a la evaluación efectuada por la Secretaría de FAO y a las consideraciones jurídicas y prácticas expuestas en los documentos y a la integridad y a la seguridad del sistema que ha sido ya aprobado por el Fondo Interacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), y el que sería sometido a nuevas pruebas por la FAO.

Estamos hablando de una situación extraordinaria. Por supuesto, preferiríamos que la votación se realice en persona, pero la pandemia y las medidas adoptadas no permiten asegurar la participación de los representantes de los países en la Conferencia. Debemos ser flexibles y viabilizar la representación de todos los países a través de cualquier mecanismo posible para que ejerzan su derecho al voto y secreto, en igualdad de condiciones para todos los Miembros. Porque es claro que las circunstancias para todos los países no es la misma. Hay países que en forma presencial les será muy difícil trasladar a sus delegados a votar, sea cual sea la sede.

Para nosotros los principios de integridad y el secreto del voto son fundamentales, pero la inclusividad y equidad para todos los Estados Miembros también lo es, por lo que invocamos a la flexibilidad, sobre todo, para alcanzar un consenso. Como se ha mencionado por varias delegaciones, si hay alguna nueva fórmula que asegure inclusividad y confianza, la estaremos apoyando.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

De las primeras intervenciones que escuchamos, la única cosa que nos queda claro, es que no hay nada claro. En ese sentido, comenzamos con las propuestas de hacer votaciones a través de las representaciones permanentes y vimos que hay grandísimas dificultades porque no todas, sobre todo las pequeñas representaciones, las delegaciones no están representadas en FAO o en Santa Sede o ante Italia.

Y ya eso nos limita en gran cantidad la posibilidad de hacer las elecciones presenciales. Pasamos por otras posibilidades de hacerlas presenciales, pero, Señor Presidente, mire el año pasado nadie esperaba el COVID-19. Estábamos preparando miles de reuniones en este período y, de repente, nos cayó la pandemia y tuvimos que reprogramar y reajustarnos y cambiar nuestras formas de trabajo. Tanto es verdad que estamos reunidos virtualmente en este momento.

Yo no sé si alguien me puede asegurar que dentro de 15 días o dentro de un mes antes de la Conferencia la situación del COVID-19 estará bajo control. Si alguien puede entonces, podemos hacerla presencialmente si es posible.

En lo que respecta al Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), la elección del FIDA es verdad que había solo un candidato y que fue electo por aclamación, pero en esa elección hubo un período de casi 15 días de preparación para los técnicos de los Ministerios o de los Gobernadores para que estos pudieran ejercer su voto. La elección en este momento es que nosotros estamos llegando en retraso. Estamos atrasadísimo. Seguimos hablando de innovación, de digitalización. FAO está llegando muy tarde en este proceso. No estamos listos. La Secretaría apenas confirmó que aún está en conversaciones con los proveedores. Este tema de la comunicación y estos sistemas es lo que nos estamos encontrando este momento. Teníamos que haberlo preparado mucho antes este tema.

Por lo tanto, Señor Presidente, quiero decir que la opción que podemos considerar, porque de verdad no hay una opción efectiva en este momento, podría ser la opción híbrida. Podría ser considerada la opción híbrida, siempre y cuando se garantice obviamente la participación efectiva de todos los Miembros en el ámbito multilateral.

Consideramos que el sistema de votación en línea instalado en el FIDA podría ser un ejemplo. Podría haber otros ejemplos, pero podría ser un punto de partida para hacerlo de manera híbrida. No veo cómo pueda hacerse presencialmente. Como decía el Embajador, hay Ministerios que llevan la cartera de la FAO, hay otros en los que no hay uno. No hay nada homogéneo en ese sentido. Así que, pienso, seguiremos conversando, pero, bueno, no tenemos hasta el momento nada claro.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sigo escuchando a los Miembros y sigo oyendo algunas cosas que me parecen importantes tratar de llamar la atención. La primera, creo que fue muy claro lo que dijo mi hermano Junior de Nicaragua. Hoy justamente tuvimos varias discusiones sobre que no había que restringir la capacidad creativa de FAO, que había que promover la innovación, la creatividad conceptual en FAO.

Ahora, cuando hablamos de innovación tecnológica parece que allí no le vemos. Entonces, yo quiero tratar de que tengamos una conversación lo más franca posible. ¿Cuál es el miedo que existe respecto de la posibilidad que exista un voto electrónico? Un mecanismo híbrido. ¿Cuál es el problema? ¿Tenemos desconfianza de que se puede alterar la voluntad de los Miembros? Bueno, yo propongo que haya sugerencias de mecanismos de control externos o algún tipo de mecanismo de control al cual esos miedos puedan ser satisfechos. Pero tenemos que ser considerados que debemos de respetar el principio de la inclusividad.

Por otro lado, hay dos preguntas que yo formulé y que, creo, no fueron contestadas y quizás sería bueno que la Consejería Legal pudiera expresarse y que, repito [unintelligible 0:57:03]. Presidente, quisiera insistir en saber si es tan importante para algunos Miembros que lo único que garantiza el voto secreto es el voto presencial, entonces, empecemos a evaluar la posibilidad de postergar la elección hasta que el mundo nos permita a todos los países estar de manera presencial. Para lo cual quiero saber: ¿si existe un mecanismo previsto? ó ¿si es posible que el Consejo tenga la soberanía de plantearse esa hipótesis?

Ahora, si no es posible, entonces, habrá que ver cómo conjugamos el tema la posibilidad del híbrido. Por otro lado, la otra opción que yo también sugerí y en lo cual también le pido opinión a la Consejería Legal es si también podría existir el mecanismo de voto por correspondencia, para poder, en definitiva, garantizar que todos los Miembros puedan ejercer su voto.

Creo que sería bueno saber si la elección puede ser postergada. Segundo, si el voto por correspondencia es también algo que pueda existir como en muchos de nuestros países. Y si todo eso no es posible, creo que tendremos que ser generosos y ver, porque por lo que yo interpreté, la

Secretaría dijo, quasi el Consejo se pone de acuerdo en que el modelo de elección sea híbrido, es absolutamente posible que llevemos adelante esa metodología. Pero mi intención no es pretender imponer ningún método que no sea consensuado. Entonces, por eso estoy abriendo el menú de opciones para que todos estemos de alguna manera satisfechos.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

First of all, I totally agree with Argentina. We have to submit all the possibilities and we have to be flexible. It is hard to understand why some countries insist in only the physical or in-person vote. It is hard to understand why they do not consider any other possibilities, and a hybrid system that some countries are pretending is something feasible, or an attempt to go ahead with this election.

Reacting to the Israelian representative, maybe I was not clear enough. I did not mention that any representative or Minister who would come to Rome only to vote. On the contrary, I mentioned it was impossible at this moment for many countries, either for health reasons or economic reasons, to come to Rome to vote.

Frankly, I repeat myself again, it is hard to understand why some countries insist only on one option. We are open, we have to be as open as possible. Some countries, including Brazil, are privileged to have a representation here. We are not considering our own interests, but we have to consider those countries that are not able to come to Rome in order to vote. What would be the legitimacy for the election where, let us say, 60 or 50 percent of the Members have voted? How about the rest? Is this democracy? Is this multilateralism?

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Muy brevemente, para responder al cuestionamiento que me hiciera la colega de Israel. Yo quiero, respetuosamente decirle que la designación de la persona que emita el voto de cada país es una decisión soberana de cada país. Es decir, yo estoy seguro que, si yo le digo al Estado de Israel que solo Yael puede votar, no les va a gustar para nada. Cada país puede definir quién va a votar.

Yo no sería capaz de decirles a mis Ministros que no pueden votar ellos, que solo yo puedo votar porque no lo van a aceptar. No es una decisión soberana de cada país. Cada país, independientemente de la organización en que esté, decide quién es el que ejerce el voto. Así que, por favor, no me malinterprete, pero no puede ser limitado a las delegaciones que están en Roma el derecho al voto. Cada país tiene sus políticas y tiene sus personas que soberanamente pueden decidir.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

We are following carefully these discussions regarding the voting mechanism. Egypt is open and flexible towards any voting mechanism that guarantees the principle of the sovereign rights of each and every Member Nation to vote.

The second principle is inclusiveness, namely guaranteeing the participation of all Members Nations. The third principle, the secrecy of the ballot, we need to ensure this. The fourth principle is the integrity of the vote.

Therefore, we do support the efforts to find an appropriate mechanism that will allow for these four principles to be safeguarded. The best mechanism in my opinion is to factor in the hybrid mechanism that will be based on in-person voting for representatives in Rome, and the electronic voting procedure for countries that cannot come to Rome.

However, we need to make sure that all votes are secret and are not affected by any external factors.

As regards to the possibility to postpone the voting process, I believe that it is something difficult to envisage, because we have the election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and of the Membership of the Council, in addition to the votes for the biennium 2022-23.

Therefore, we need to ensure that these three elections are done during the Conference. If we are planning to postpone these elections, we need to postpone the Conference as a result. This option is almost impossible and since we have agreed on the dates for the Conference, I believe that we need to guarantee these elections according to the timelines set for the Conference.

We look forward to constructive comments from other Members as this topic is being discussed on every occasion. We need to find the appropriate solution, or we leave this to the Conference.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I just wanted to respond to the colleagues that asked about why any countries would want an in-person vote. I just wanted to help explain that a bit. It is quite simple. We are following the precedents set by the United Nations system. The best practices of the UN system, the voting for UN General Assembly (UNGA) was done this way the ECOSOC elections that recently took place were done this way, and it has been shown that it is the most inclusive and secure manner in which to conduct voting.

To the point I heard about the sovereignty, about each Member being able to say who cast their vote. Indeed, I took note of the wonderful Information Note prepared for us, which actually goes through that in very explicit details. It says that Members without a permanent physical presence in Rome, could be invited to include persons in their delegations, who were able to be in Rome physically. It goes on, but it explains how exactly under the rules, Members may select someone else as their proxy to cast a vote in Rome.

Just to make sure everyone is on the same page here, we are not talking about people flying in here, specifically just to cast a vote. We are talking about the vote being cast here in-person, at FAO Headquarters, as explicitly outlined in this Information Note, by the delegations in Rome, and for those Members who do not have a delegation, there are modalities provided for in this Information Note. It clearly spells out how someone can cast their vote on their behalf here.

We fail to understand why we would go and try and start some new system that has not been tested, that is going to cost money, when we have here a best practice through the United Nations system, that is working in New York, and I must say the time that the UNGA elections took place, in New York, the pandemic was at a very bad state.

We just fail to understand what is wrong with the precedent set already in the United Nations system, why should we suddenly go and up hand all that, and decide we need an expensive, untested system hastily put into place, within six weeks. I just wanted to clarify that point.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Por enésima vez voy a pedir la opinión de la Consejería Legal respecto de las dos cuestiones que he mencionado ya en varias oportunidades, pero me gustaría reaccionar a lo planteado por mi querida amiga, Jennifer, de los Estados Unidos.

Yo conozco perfectamente que la delegada de Estados Unidos no debería personalizar porque es una reunión institucional, pero es una amiga, tiene un compromiso con la idea del voto secreto y yo sé que es así. Y tampoco está en contra de la inclusividad. Yo eso lo sé porque la conozco, pero el problema es que el mundo no es Nueva York. En Nueva York están todos vacunados. La situación es distinta, no podemos comparar. Esta es una organización específica y yo no le puedo pedir a mi Ministro que nombre un proxy para votar. Digo a mi Ministro y lo hago en mi país para no dar ejemplos de ningún país.

Es casi una intromisión en el mecanismo interno del Estado decidir que debemos imponerle a un gobierno cuál debería ser el método de votación interno. Es decir, definir que haya un proxy que vote. Yo igual no es que estoy en contra de que si un gobierno decide designar a alguien que vote en su representación. Perfecto. Pero es que ni siquiera de esta manera garantizamos el 100 por ciento de los derechos de todos los Miembros. Y como dije al principio, con que haya un caso que no será solo uno, obviamente, en el cual no estemos garantizando ese derecho, no estaríamos respetando el principio de la inclusividad.

Ahora me gustaría también reaccionar frente a lo que expresó mi hermano, Haitham de Egipto. Yo creo que él señaló correctamente los problemas que podría traer aparejado postergar la votación. Pero son problemas que pueden resolverse o, al menos, me gustaría saber por parte de la Consejería Legal ¿si eso es una hipótesis?, ¿si eso es posible? No porque yo crea que es mejor postergar, pero si nos mantenemos en que hay una sola forma que garantice el voto secreto, entonces, quizás habrá que

buscar un esquema de postergación para garantizar que el escenario cambie, que todo el mundo pueda estar o al menos tengan la posibilidad de estar.

Siempre hay una primera vez, Presidente, para todo. Si no, el hombre no hubiera llegado a la luna. Siempre hay una primera vez. No se puede promover la innovación conceptual y después no ser innovadores, si es necesario, frente al derecho más importante que es el de la soberanía popular que, en el caso de esta Organización, es el derecho de los Miembros a poder votar. Espero que podamos encontrar un consenso.

Sería importante que la Consejero Legal nos explique, por favor. Y lo digo nuevamente, ¿si se puede votar por correspondencia?, ¿si es una hipótesis posible? ó ¿Si se puede postergar la elección?. Solo para que tengamos todo el menú de opciones en la mesa.

CHAIRPERSON

I got three speakers. Perhaps, I can give the floor to the Legal Counsel to provide some clarification or explanations on the questions asked, which may even facilitate the three countries who have asked for the floor. Legal Counsel, I give you the floor to address some of the questions raised, and you can provide clarifications. The Members then can make more informed interventions.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I think at the outset, what is important to note is that, by definition, this Conference will require flexibility as some of the Members have indicated, and will require the adoption of some sort of new processes. How far those maybe depart from the established provisions of the Basic Text, while maintaining integrity with the Basic Texts would, of course, depend on the specific approach taken and of course, the matter at issue. Here, we are concerned, I think more specifically with the question of the secret ballot.

I believe the first place to turn to, and here I put the query specifically raised by the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina, can there be a postponement of elections? Here, I would refer you to the Note before you, it is document CL166/13, page 11, where under paragraph 11 it sets out, "Where the secret ballot is envisaged for elections that shall be taken place at the conference." As you will see there are four elections that will take place. Of those, at least the first three are time-sensitive.

The appointment of the Independent Chairperson of Council, where as indicated here under Article V, paragraph 2 of the Constitution, the Independent Chairperson of the Council is elected for a specific duration. It is not an election from Conference to Conference, it is specifically a term of two years. Consequently, a decision would need to be taken in that context. With respect to the election of new Members of the Council, similarly, there is a need for some new Members to take office in July 2021.

Thirdly, of course, and obviously, the election of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Council, Members of the Credentials and General Committee need, by definition, to be elected at the beginning of the Session. Indeed, in normal practices followed though, the new Members of the Council, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference, those may well end up being decisions by general consent, so may not need a secret ballot.

However, as we do have more than one candidate for the position of Independent Chairperson of the Council, *ipso facto*, there would also need to be an election. With respect to the second question that was raised by the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina, regarding a correspondence vote, and here I understand the references to a postal vote. There I would point you again to this Note, where option 3 was presented, which was a vote through ballot paper sent by post. As observed in the document, this does raise some complexities.

As I had noted earlier, of course, special procedures can be put in place to try and maintain, to try and establish a mechanism for voting. However, there would be certain needs to conduct a postal ballot, in order to be able to have, say the scrutineers, the tellers, and indeed, where you will have a vote or you are likely to have a vote which has more than one round, the practicality of conducting a vote, within the period of the Conference, is somewhat limited, I would consider.

Those were the considerations and as noted, I mean, each option presented has been reviewed with a hope to try and align as closely as possible with the Basic Text, but I return to the original premise, that there would always be a need for some form of adaptation in this context.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je remercie la Conseillère juridique de toutes ces explications en réponse aux questions que l'Ambassadeur de l'Argentine a posées au nom du Conseil.

Je voudrais aussi vous demander, Monsieur le Président, de passer la parole au Cameroun, qui parlera au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

At the outset, let me thank Ms Donata Rugarabamu. We have been listening to this debate, and we believe that probably we might conclude well. But, let me address a few issues. The first issue that I would like to address is that of the postponement of the vote and how realistic it is.

Today, we have more or less endorsed the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), and we need to give that budget to FAO Management to operate, and this is done in the Conference. This is what probably Ms Donata Rugarabamu means to say: it is crucial that the vote takes place, because of the budget. You cannot adopt the budget in any other way than by vote. Thus, the vote has to take place at least for the budget, it is crucial. Those other elements that are time-bound, is true, as she said it. How realistic is it today, to postpone the Conference?

FAO will be blocked unless there is a mechanism by which we can approve the monthly budget until the time when we can have another Conference. It makes this a little bit difficult. And I want to ask now, whatever process or option we might agree on, will there be a need to suspend some rules or procedures? We would like to hear from the Legal Counsel what are those rules which need to be suspended, given each option that we would take.

Now, I listened to the hybrid option that was presented by the Ambassador of Argentina. It looks exciting, but we need to have it well-written, so that we know what are the consequences if we apply that hybrid system. Something must be written somewhere, about the hybrid system, which are the pros and cons of that hybrid system. Since some of us need to take an informed decision, we need to have that written and well-clarified.

We are still in a very difficult situation today to decide which one is the best, but I can assure you I have witnessed what happened in IFAD: we had all the tests, the electronic votes seemed to be working perfectly. But, we cannot say: only in presence, that is the option, and that is it. We need that you are side-lining. We intend to not understand what the problems of every single country are. We do not have the same problems.

All the countries do not have the same problems of representatives, availability of people, trusting the country where they want them to vote and, later on, the credentials. We have to issue the credentials for the Conference, and mind you, that is also another very difficult situation with which every country has to deal with.

These are things that I bring on the table, Mr Chairperson, for consideration of our colleagues so, by the time we are taking the decision, we know perfectly that this is the best decision we are taking.

Mr Fei HUANG (China) (Original language Chinese)

This is the first time that we have taken the floor regarding this issue. We have listened very carefully to all the delegates, and we would like to appreciate and thank the Legal Counsel for her explanations. There is one point, that I think we have already achieved consensus on, is that the vote has to be inclusive. We need to ensure that every Member can exercise their right to vote. We cannot choose one method that may compromise another Member's right to vote.

Since the beginning of 2020, all of our meetings have been held virtually, and this has ensured the efficiency, with which we carried our work, and particularly against the backdrop of the pandemic. We have been successful in carrying out our tasks. As I recall in many online meetings, we have always

attached importance to how we can carry out our work in the safest manner. I believe the vote is an opportunity for us to adopt more creative, innovative measures.

With regards to electronic voting, we have seen that it is done at IFAD, and this is a unique opportunity for the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to adopt a new innovative method. China has representation here in Rome, we are able to vote in person. However, if voting in-person means that other Members will not be able to vote, or that a lot of Members from developing countries are not able to attend the vote, this would be truly a shame. As far as we see at this moment, electronic voting, or hybrid voting, can ensure that every Member can exercise their right to vote.

FAO belongs to every Member, every country should enjoy the right to vote, as the Ambassador of Argentina and the Ambassador of Brazil have expressed, whether a country wants to vote, this is the sovereign right of every country. The method that we choose to vote, should not limit the countries' right to vote. Every two years, we hold a Conference, it is to ensure that every country can exercise its right to vote.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I have listened to the interesting discussions. I have got some general notions that I would like to ask. First, we are in a unique situation, an unprecedented situation. I would attempt to understand that we need to be flexible to find a way to address the situation. But at the same time, once we did that, once we do one example, we will set a precedent.

We have not exhausted any discussion of what kind of future our voting system should be. When it comes to hybrid, how do we distinguish between those who would like to vote in person, and who is going to be voting electronically? Is it a free choice for all the Members? Should there be some kind of clarification, or criteria that this country should vote in-person, the other countries are able to vote electronically? Or is that the case that every country can choose whether they prefer to vote in person or electronically?

Is that only for this time? Or are we in the direction for the future, that every international organization, or at least the FAO voting system, should be going forward the electronic system unless you particularly wish to make a vote in-person? We have not discussed these things yet, and we should be very careful with what kind of system, mechanism, a methodology we should adopt. Not only in this particular moment, though we have to address the unique challenge that we face, but also that it can be the precedent, or it can affect the future way of our work. Of course, we should be flexible.

It is nice to be creative, but also the tradition cast down exist for the reasonable rationale. Then, why we have not exhausted the discussion on these matters, which are not going forward, the very hasty directions. As the distinguished colleague from China said, we have got the consensus that vote should be inclusive, but also have got the consensus that the secrecy of the ballot should be ensured in order to preserve our confidence in our voting system, and administration and operation of our Organization. In this context, when we have some way to address the particular country who do not have possibility to vote in-person, if there is a good practice and precedent way to solve this dilemma.

As the colleague from the United States or the Canadian colleague have pointed out, we had a historical precedent, and it has worked so far. Why we should be going for the hasty way, untested system in a very short time or period? Have we not attempted any discussions on how we establish a new system, or what kind of mechanism, or the administrative, or the democratic international organisation should be in the future? I prefer, I think it makes more sense that we stick to what we already agreed, what we already exercises as long as it is well addresses the particular necessities, which is unique, stems from the particular situation due to COVID-19.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am aware that it is almost midnight, and I do remember you saying that we would be finishing our Session at midnight. I am afraid we are going to reach any sort of consensus on this issue this evening. I note there are some key pieces of information that we do not have, and indeed, colleagues have mentioned this several times; first of all, out of 53 countries that are not represented in Rome, and I think Australia raised this point, has anyone asked them for their views? I am not sure they have been

consulted, but clearly, given that we are all concerned they are to be included in this election, it might be useful to consult with them and seek their views.

Secondly, there has been a proposal and some support for the idea of a hybrid voting system, but again, we have no real understanding of how that might work. I think my colleague from Cameroon set that point out. There is another piece of information that we think will be useful that we do not have.

Thirdly, I think there is another point that others have mentioned, it is that while I sort of accept the reassurance from the Secretary General, that it is possible to arrange an e-voting in six weeks time, I do not think any of us have seen any evidence of that. We have not been involved in any trial runs or anything like that. It seems that that would be another missing part of our experience before we might make a decision.

I wonder whether we can really reach consensus on this this evening, and indeed whether it would make sense this evening to take a decision on bringing forward the date of the Conference from July to June, given the current situation that we are in. I would welcome your views on how we can take this forward. I am just not convinced whether we are going to be able to take it forward tonight.

I do also welcome your guidance on how we might tackle the rest of our Agenda. Presumably tomorrow at this stage, as it is almost midnight.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, I am quite worried about the Agenda. We have got two Items and then, we still got a paragraph or so outstanding from the Programme Committee's Report. That worries me, but you have a point when you say that there is so much difference in the views expressed and there is some information which may not be there.

I wonder whether a way forward would be to send all three options to the Conference, and in the meantime, if there are points on which additional information is necessary, if Members feel it is necessary, one could gather that.

The Council will not be recommending one specific option, but putting all three options to the Conference. In the meantime, as I said, if there is any information necessary that can be gathered, and this will be done in no time.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo quisiera tratar de tener claro un punto que fue clarificado en la última reunión informal que hemos tenido sobre este tema. Habíamos dicho, y creo que eso fue con una consulta de algún colega en esa reunión, que, si no llegábamos a un consenso en este Consejo, la solución era a través de la votación.

Y, según lo que tengo entendido en el artículo 12, inciso 6 del Reglamento General de la FAO, tenemos allí un mecanismo de votación nominal que puede perfectamente hacerse aquí en el Consejo. Y lo podemos hacer ahora, incluso. Entonces, lo que trato de decir es, que quizás podamos pensar, Presidente, en encontrar alguna alternativa mañana, si es que usted considera que hoy no es el momento, para tratar de no llevar a la Conferencia a los Ministros una situación indefinida. Y acá, en este lugar, entre todos si no logramos construir un consenso, votemos y entre todos decidamos porque está previsto en el reglamento, Presidente.

Yo, la verdad, desde el primer momento, y lo saben varios de mis colegas que incluso tenemos posiciones distintas, preferí evitar todo tipo de votación que divida las posiciones de los colegas, porque creo que si podemos evitarlo siempre es mejor. Pero, también es cierto que, si no hay flexibilidad no tenemos muchas maneras de resolverlo, porque ya tenemos experiencias de otros ejercicios que cuando no hubo flexibilidad, terminamos quedándonos con nada.

Entonces, como necesitamos un instrumento y lo necesitamos cuanto antes y está previsto en el reglamento, entonces creo que la alternativa está. Yo sugiero, Presidente, y la Consejero Legal supongo que podrá corroborar lo que yo estoy diciendo, que en el artículo 12, inciso 6, está prevista la posibilidad de la votación nominal en el Consejo. Yo digo, podemos resolverlo ya, podemos votar ahora. Podemos votar mañana, cuando usted lo decida, Presidente, pero sí creo que debemos encontrar

un deadline dentro del consejo para que invitemos a todos, nos invitemos a nosotros a ser flexibles para buscar una solución constructiva.

Tratemos de evitar dejar cuestiones abiertas y veamos la posibilidad hoy o mañana, yo soy abierto a esto, pero busquemos una solución concreta porque no sé si es positivo dejar esto abierto. Quizás sabiendo que tenemos la opción del voto, quizás eso ayude a que todos seamos más flexibles y encontremos un mecanismo de solución consensuada.

CHAIRPERSON

As I said, there is so many diverse views on this issue. Members were quite definite in what they were suggesting, and obviously were giving reasons, and I now have a long list. We have got the Agenda Items still outstanding. We have got the Drafting Committee tomorrow. I think it is a difficult situation. Not only this Agenda Item, but what I am scared is there is another one coming, where the differences in opinion are just as much as under this Item.

That is why I was suggesting that, like the United Kingdom said, and I think Cameroon also mentioned, there is information which needed to be gathered. That is why I thought we could put all three options, and in the meantime, gather all of this information. However, that is just a suggestion on the table with so many other suggestions. Members can react, we just heard you. Now, I give the floor to the other Members because I think they need to give their views.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We have been listening to the conversation, which is very rich in our view. The pros and cons are on both sides, and I think that the Ambassador of Argentina and other colleagues have also tried to think outside the box, to propose a creative and innovative solution, that are still in line with the Basic Texts and the Rules that we followed so far.

We always want to reach consensus, because it will provide a strong legitimacy, not only for us, but also for all the Members of the Organization, but we are prepared for any scenario.

However, I just want to ask the Chair if the point raised by some other delegations regarding the clarity of the third option, the hybrid, how fast the Secretariat can prepare something written on this one? If that can it be discussed in what kind of situation or condition? I am talking about discussing just a bit beyond the time limit of the Council. Probably, we can find a way to agree on that one, so that can keep all on-board on one option.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I will start first reacting to the proposal coming from Argentina. Maybe, it would be a solution, not the best one, but a possible one in this moment of an impasse we are facing.

The second comment, and that is why I asked the floor, it is reacting to your proposal. I guess we would solve our problem, or the Council's, or the Report's problem as you can call it if you wish. However, we are not going to solve the problem itself. Because you are just going to transfer it to the Conference, and the Conference is not going to solve this, because they will not be able to, and we have to be ready at the Conference to either vote electronically or physically or in a hybrid system.

It is wise, that if we wanted to solve our problem, I totally agree with you, but we are not going to solve the problem itself.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Efectivamente, sobre la última intervención de Brasil, exactamente en esa línea, nosotros no creemos que debemos de remitir a la Conferencia un trabajo que tenemos que realizar nosotros en el Consejo. Y si nos tocará trabajar hasta más tarde, un poco más de lo debido, tenemos que tratar de encontrar un consenso entre nosotros.

En segundo lugar, la observación del querido delegado de Indonesia, a mí me parece una buena idea, tal vez, escuchar la opinión de la Secretaría sobre cuál es el estado, cómo está preparada la Secretaría en este momento para implementar esta posible o probable posibilidad de hacer la elección en

modalidades híbridas. Entiendo que seis semanas es poco tiempo, pero me gustaría saber cómo está preparada la Secretaría antes de, probablemente, continuar a debatir.

Y la última observación que quería hacer, Señor Presidente, muy brevemente, es sobre la posibilidad de no remitir absolutamente este tipo de decisiones a la Conferencia. Nuestros Ministros, nuestras autoridades no lo van a entender. Va a ser bien complicado también explicar estos procedimientos. Es mejor tratar de resolverlo en la medida de lo posible. Aquí estamos hasta las cinco de la mañana, Señor Presidente, si es necesario.

CHAIRPERSON

I think before I give the floor to the two speakers who have asked for the floor again. I will ask the Secretary-General of the Conference to answer one or two questions. Also, the Legal Counsel. You will have more information with you before you intervene again. Mr Rakesh Muthoo, you have the floor. Perhaps you can answer the question which Nicaragua has just posed about the hybrid.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Now from purely a practical point of view, as I have mentioned, we have been operating and preparing the two options which are in the paper, Option 1 and 2, and we will continue to do so, as we move forward to the Conference in June. We will reach out to all Members with information on the different modalities. We are already planning to carry out, for the online option, tests runs over the next two weeks.

Yes, the timeline is tight, but we have learned from the experience of colleagues at IFAD for the online modality, for example, and throughout the United Nations system, generally, on the other modalities too. Of course, delivering the system will be contingent also on active engagement of the Members themselves between now and the Conference in June.

Now, we in the Secretariat can prepare something in writing, it would not be comprehensive overnight, on further information on Option 1 and 2, and information on a potential hybrid of Options 1 and 2, by tomorrow morning, if that would be of help.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

Very much along the lines of the Secretary-General insofar we can prepare a document, but I believe the main question was to what extent rules would have to be suspended or amended? As I had noted earlier, there will need to be a suspension of certain rules, *ipso facto*, for the convening of the virtual session. With respect to decision-making, as has been noted, there is provision in the rules for an electronic vote in replacement of the standard roll-call vote. That is already contemplated in the rules.

For elections as such, there would need to be rules set out, which would set the processes where Rule XII and relevant parts would replace by either electronic or hybrid. Indeed, of course, there would need to be a definition of the criteria as many Members have raised, as to how or would it be decided that it would go forward with either selection, of whether or not a country chose to use hybrid, or chose electronic or physical.

There would need to be an entire framework not limited indeed, to showing how the rules would be paralleled but also how do you address then those new elements which would not apply in the standard situation where you have one mechanism for decision-making. Those would be the primary ones. Indeed, there would be the standard rules as well, which would have to be reviewed in the context of the deposit of credentials, for example, and for the transmittal or confirmation of voting rights. These, I do believe, would probably be in a paper that we would prepare. We would have to maybe explain how the electronic system works.

I believe I have been fortunate enough to see the demonstration. I believe many Members here are aware of the International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD) one, where there is an equivalence for some of the criteria that is in the rules, which are then translated into electronic format, but we need to then very carefully go through and identify where a rule was substituted,

maybe by an electronic process or by a physical process, say conducted in New York, as well as here. Essentially, a replacement of Rule XII, or not a replacement, but a document which would show where Rule XII needed to have some amendment, depending upon which process and which procedures were being followed, insofar, as by definition, we could not apply Rule XII necessarily in its entirety, either if we were doing the vote physically in Rome or if we were doing it electronically.

CHAIRPERSON

Could you also comment on the point which was raised by Argentina about a vote in the Council?

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

Yes, I may. My apologies for not responding to that. Yes, indeed, the Council normally operates, as you will know, by consensus. There is always, of course, the possibility of the Council turning to a vote, and here I would refer to Rule XII, 3(a), the vote would be a simple majority, the required majority for any decision shall be more than one half of the votes cast. It would be conducted by roll-call, if this was to be held during this virtual Session.

CHAIRPERSON

I just want to say to Members, I have got three speakers on my list, two Council Members and one Observer. Council Members, because it is a particular topic, keep coming back to participate in the debate. It is already midnight. I do not think we have made much progress, but what we know is a lot of information and good points have been raised by different Members.

The problem we have is that tomorrow Drafting Committee is supposed to meet, documents have to be translated, etc. Obviously, we will have to do some work tomorrow as well. Would Members be agreeable to carry on a little, or would you like to break up now? We have got interpretation, if we carry on. I see Members quite willing to carry on, so I am in game for it as well. I see some nodding as well.

It is midnight, my recommendation would be that, because we are in a situation which we are in, in terms of time, we should, since we have interpretation, perhaps we can carry on for some time.

As I say, Members, because it is an important issue, based on Secretariat's input, all other Members' input, they come back and join the discussion. That is why it is carrying on.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Thank you for willing to continue. I wanted to thank you for your proposal to consider bringing these options to Conference, and I would add that another option could be to consider having an extraordinary Session of the Council closer to the Conference, to allow ourselves to make a recommendation, based on taking our responsibility well.

There was a lot of points and questions for clarification asked, we had partial answers, but just for the democratic process we really welcome the Secretary General's information that they will reach out to each Member. Having the preferences of Members, especially those who cannot be present, would be important.

Also, this is not a matter to be taken lightly, I think that the information that we will have about the rundown, as well the testing and the dry-runs, in the paper, they say that it is written that in May there will be the customising, not the testing, and then in June, two weeks preceding the Conference, would be the testing.

There are a lot of things that we need to understand to make a recommendation, a responsible one. Also, another question that we would like to know, with respect to the third option that has emerged in terms of hybrid method, is what are the implications for the secrecy of the ballot, meaning that from the moment that you introduce two different supports of voting, how is that jeopardizing or not the secrecy of the voting?

Suppose that few Members will use the online voting, it means that someone knows who is voting online and who is just voting in person with a paper ballot, and just by this fact, there are risks to

identifying and tracing in a way maybe the way you voted. I think this is something that should be as well explored when you are introducing hybrid options for voting by secret ballot. \

My last point would be that we very much support consensus as much as possible, given that this brings legitimacy to important matters, like elections.

There are some procedures that are provided for decisions by vote, on these matters, and that can also go to a decision by Conference, which means that practically the three options will have to go to Conference in any case, in terms of being prepared because we won't know what the ultimate decision will be. If it is by vote, in any case, and if by consensus, well, I think that you may have laid out a process whereby we could come to Conference with an informed decision and hopefully consensus on the best way forward.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, you have raised some important points. One thing I would like to mention to Members, and I think the Secretary-General referred to it again, there have been quite a few questions raised which need more information, and we could, together with the Legal Counsel, prepare notes to answer those questions, so that you have a written form of an answer to some of the valid questions that you are raising.

We will do that and we can do that. Canada has raised the question of perhaps a special Session of the Council. I would be interested to know the views of Members. The advantage of that is that if you need to put together a set of information to be able to reach a consensus on the way forward, whether it is one option or the other, but I tend to agree with Canada where she said, in any case, the Conference would need to know all three options. Perhaps in your interventions, you could address some of the points which have been raised by Canada as well.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Creo que una de las cosas que he intentado es, a partir de haber hablado con varios colegas, tratar de traer a esta reunión los diferentes elementos que terminaron por convencerme. Si bien, en lo personal creo que el mejor método para poder ser sumamente inclusivo y respetar el secreto del voto es el método electrónico.

Respeto que algunos colegas tienen otra visión. Entonces, la manera de llegar a un punto de consenso y, sinceramente, por lo que he escuchado por lo menos quienes se han expresado, aparece una voz mayoritaria en favor de la posibilidad o, por lo menos, una disponibilidad a pensar en el sistema híbrido.

Por supuesto que, cualquier información que los Miembros requieran o necesiten, bienvenida sea y está muy bien, pero leyendo los textos fundamentales que en este momento lo tenía sobre mi escritorio, también tenemos la solución de poder resolverlo aquí. Y, la verdad, Presidente, es que mi vocación es buscar siempre el consenso. El problema es que no percibo, no observo ninguna actitud de flexibilidad respecto de aquellos que solamente plantean la posibilidad del voto presencial.

Entonces, ante la no flexibilidad, mientras que algunos partimos del voto electrónico y terminamos aceptando un esquema híbrido para buscar en esa flexibilidad incorporar a quienes están preocupados y que parten de una posición en favor del voto presencial. La verdad es que lo que me preocupa es que yo no percibo ninguna flexibilidad. Entonces, si no aparece esa flexibilidad, claramente vamos a seguir insistiendo y vamos a repetir en cualquier reunión que tengamos, la misma situación.

Yo creo que, hacer nuevas reuniones, Presidente, aunque para mí es un placer que usted conduzca este Consejo y cada vez que voy a una reunión que usted conduce es un gran aprendizaje, es mucho gasto de dinero el seguir manteniendo otras reuniones. Para las delegaciones chicas, tenemos otras negociaciones en la próxima semana. O sea, es muy complicado, sobre todo, repito, porque no percibo ningún tipo de flexibilidad.

Entonces, si no hay flexibilidad, no tenemos mucho tiempo para seguir con esto y tenemos que decidir. No hay ningún problema si se vota y la opción presencial, a pesar del contexto en el que vivimos, es la que triunfa, yo la voy a respetar y está bien, pero creo que hoy por hoy, lo que yo percibo, al menos en términos de consenso es que hay mayor disponibilidad al esquema híbrido. Por lo

tanto, creo que podemos hacer una consulta entre los Miembros en este Consejo híbrido sí o híbrido no. Porque las posiciones extremas ya están, entonces, quizás esto nos permitirá poder tener claro, si pudiéramos llegar a un consenso.

Yo estoy tratando todavía de limitarme a no proponer una moción de orden, porque aspiro a percibir, Presidente, algún grado de flexibilidad, pero no lo veo. Entonces, creo que hoy o mañana, vamos a tener que ir a la moción de orden para que se vote de acuerdo al esquema de la propuesta del voto híbrido, que entiendo cuenta con la mayor cantidad de colegas disponibles a aceptarlo, que nos permita poder tener una solución y llegar a la Conferencia sin incertidumbres. Pero, repito, estoy en sus manos, Presidente, no voy a complicarle a usted la tarea. Sabe que no lo hago nunca, no lo voy a hacer ahora. Pero eso es lo que yo creo. Es difícil creer que uno lo lleve las cosas para adelante va a aparecer lo que no está apareciendo, en ningún momento, en esta discusión.

Y, por otro lado, Presidente, me gustaría decirle que me preocuparía que demorar esta decisión complique a la Secretaría la posibilidad de organizar el esquema de votación porque cada día que perdamos es un día menos que tiene la Secretaría para poder trabajar en tener el mejor mecanismo de votación. Entonces, creo sinceramente que este es el momento de votar y creo que, en todo caso, me gustaría ver, Presidente. Estoy tratando de no proponer la moción de orden. Estoy esperando que usted me diga, Presidente, cuál le parece que es la mejor vía de salida. No es la vía de salida llegar a la Conferencia sin definición. Eso seguro que no, Presidente. Después, esperaré su sugerencia.

CHAIRPERSON

I think this is a decision for the Members to make. The Members have to come together, even if they cannot agree on the way forward. The Members have to decide on the vote. It is the Council's decision, not the Chairperson's decision. You have argued very effectively for a vote at this Council. Legally, the Legal Counsel has said that under the rules, the Council can have a vote. It is for the Members now to come forward and give their views on this proposal, which you have made, and supported it with good arguments.

Members, in your interventions, can you address this issue of having a vote on the grounds that this diverse opinion and there is no possibility that there would be consensus on what way forward? In your interventions, please could you address this issue of the vote, whether the Council should take vote, because this is a decision which you all have to make?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Indeed, when you were asking us all if we would be prepared to go on beyond midnight, I was shaking my head on the camera and I do think it is very late at night, and it is very difficult. We are all tired. We have all been here since 9:30 this morning, and I just do not think this is the right atmosphere in which to be taking decisions. I think we are tired and I would ask you to suspend the Session so that we can reconvene tomorrow having had some rest.

I do think it is important and I certainly would not support any decision to take any sort of vote this evening, after 18 hours of work, when people are tired. It seems crazy, number one point.

Number two, as I mentioned earlier, how can we take a vote on an issue for which we know very little about? It just seems crazy. I mean, a hybrid issue, I am willing to consider it, just all we have heard is a bit of discussion about it this evening.

We definitely need more information on that and on the other issues I raised. Chair, I urge you to suspend the Session and let us get some rest and reconvene in the morning.

CHAIRPERSON

I do understand. I will suspend the Session, but I would like your agreement to give the floor to the three speakers who have been waiting to speak, and then, after that, we will suspend and meet tomorrow morning. I give the floor to Japan, Germany, Argentina, and then France. France has put its name for quite some time, and because it is an Observer, it had to wait. After these speakers, we will suspend the Session and meet.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

You probably remember that I, at my initial intervention, I mentioned I would like to make a comment at the end of this subject. So, if you agree.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, I will give you the floor. After Brazil, there is no other speaker, we will suspend and whoever wants to speak after Brazil has to do so tomorrow.

Please be brief and concise. If you have made an argument before, let us not repeat the same argument.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

Thank you for your kindness. Actually, I want to give my chance to speak to France because she has been waiting for a long time, but, just to go back to echo what the United Kingdom said. First, it is not good and I must say, we need to take a lesson. I just wanted to flag that it is almost 7:30 hours in the morning in Tokyo, so it is quite a difficult situation, so we appreciate that you suspend the Session.

Another thing is that we completely agree with the United Kingdom when she said that the hybrid method is under our consideration. We need to know what kind of method it is, there is not enough information. So in order to have the flexibility, there are so many things that we need to know, such as technical information, regarding the secrecy and so on, but also we haven't got any concrete proposal against which we take a position.

Not very much there for anyone to agree that we would make the decision by vote at this stage, not just today, but in that case I tend to agree with what the Canadian colleague said that it could be a good idea to have another extra meeting, so we have time to study more on that.

Ms Susanne SCHLAACK (Germany)

This is simply to ask you please to pass the floor to Portugal for the European Union.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Mr Chairperson, with your indulgence if after me, if you could pass the floor to France, I think it is fair, because it is a Member of the European Union and is working with us as a team, as you know, and we have a common approach, but it is just a suggestion for your consideration.

Regarding our intervention, we were listening carefully to Members and our Distinguished Colleagues, we're listening very sustained and very important positions.

Regarding to my points here, I think it is inclusivity and transparency, and, yes, we do agree on this. A single Member that is not allowed to vote is a problem for the entire Organization – that it is completely true, we fully agree on that. I think, this was already addressed by the United Nations system a year ago, and I think that we can learn from the others.

There is also the question of transparency, and that's one of the questions I want to raise here briefly, because, as you know, I don't want to take a position on electronic voting or not, but just to note that we are discussing it in our own countries from more than 20 years, and as far as I know only one country in the world adopted electronic vote, and by the way it is a European Union country, Estonia, as far as I remember, and please correct me if I am mistaken.

In our questions about electronic voting, 20 years of discussing electronic voting, the question has always been transparency. We are not putting into question the transparency of the Organization, of FAO, what we are putting in question is the transparency of a system of electronic voting, and we already addressed the Secretariat some questions on it, from our written statement we sent to FAO, we got some very good replies and we are very thankful to the Secretariat.

There is also another question that came from the replies we received. I am not a specialist in informatics, and I must assure you that the question on electronic vote came from the specialist on informatics. For example, the solution that was presented to us is block chain, and the solution is very interesting because block chain records all we do in chain that is recording the movements on an electronic record.

I am wondering if block chain can ensure the secrecy and the transparency of voting. I think that our questions should be replied technically before going for one solution or another, not just for a solution. I would say I am not defending one version or another, I am just putting the question that already has been raised by Canada and by the United Kingdom. We do not have sufficient information to go for this decision, in our view, of course, we are listening to others.

The other question, and in the fact the measurement I have to share with Members and, again, Sir, we are in your hands and the hands of the Members, but the main question is as far as I remember, we are working here on the basis of consensus, which is, in our view, one of the major, if not the major asset of this Organization. Of course, we can go for a vote, we have this system, for a roll call, no problem on that, my question is and what about the future? What are we doing with our setting to go for working on the basis of consensus? I think that should be clearly addressed from our side, and thinking before going for this questions that we have here, and I am begging for Members for taking this into consideration.

Finally, in order to stop my speech and give the opportunity to others to speak, my last question is if we go for this, we are not deciding the kind of vote because the vote is clearly set in the Basic Texts. What we are discussing here in fact is the suspension or not of the Basic Texts, because the Basic Texts is quite clear about the voting systems at FAO. The real question here is until what point we are suspending the Basic Texts.

My plea is consensus, as you said, but we are in your hands. Saying this, Sir, I return the floor to you and I am very thankful for the time you allowed me to speak.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, I have got Argentina and Brazil, and then France, and I will not accept any more speakers, but other speakers would have to speak tomorrow, the meeting will be suspended after these three speakers.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quiero cederle la palabra a Francia porque entiendo que, como corresponde a lo que significa el principio de la inclusividad, el principio de inclusividad no se declama, se practica. Y la manera de practicarlo es concederle a mi colega, con la cual siempre tenemos posiciones bastante diferentes, pero yo siempre voy a respetar el principio de la inclusividad. Así que, como Miembro del Consejo le cedo la palabra a la Embajadora de Francia, si a usted le parece bien.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

Je souhaiterais remercier mon collègue de l'Argentine et l'assurer que nous nous rejoignons sur de nombreux sujets, je pense, et j'espère bien sûr sur l'essentiel.

La France soutient et s'aligne sur la déclaration de l'Union européenne et de ses États membres.

Comme les débats de ce soir l'ont montré, ce sujet est majeur. Il va bien au-delà de la FAO. C'est un sujet pour les Nations Unies dans leur ensemble et il montre d'ailleurs combien il était nécessaire de se préparer très à l'avance à ce débat.

Je voudrais à cet égard rejoindre ce qu'a dit mon collègue du Nicaragua, d'un certain point de vue, la FAO est en retard, et je me félicite que le Groupe Europe ait poussé la FAO à élaborer plus en détail, dans un document, les options sur ce vote.

En dépit du contexte sanitaire, les Nations Unies et les organisations du système commun ont jusqu'à présent écarté l'option d'un vote électronique, en raison des risques de remise en cause de la confidentialité, des possibilités de fraude ainsi que des conséquences juridiques et financières qui ne sont pas négligeables. Le FIDA, après s'y être préparé pendant un an, y a finalement renoncé.

La France est donc, comme de nombreuses délégations, en faveur d'un vote présentiel. Je voudrais rappeler quelques raisons de cette position.

Premièrement, les règles de procédure des organisations des Nations Unies, et c'est le cas aussi de la FAO, prévoient le vote en présentiel. Des solutions pratiques ont été trouvées dans toutes les villes des

Nations Unies et pas uniquement à New York, mais aussi à Montréal, à Vienne, à Genève, pour assurer la participation de tous en présentiel dans le respect des règles sanitaires. Par exemple, l'appel au vote nominal avec des tranches horaires par petit groupe de délégation. C'est ce qui se passe depuis un an à New York, à Montréal, à Vienne, à Genève, etc.

Deuxièmement, la protection de la santé des votants peut être assurée. Il suffit d'éviter que les délégués se croisent en salle. Le 20 avril dernier, par exemple, le Conseil économique et social a tenu 15 élections sans remettre en cause les principes de la démocratie onusienne, bien au contraire. Je souhaite donc rassurer mes collègues, qui s'inquiètent légitimement sur ce point.

Troisièmement le vote électronique n'est pas appliqué dans le système des Nations Unies, il n'y a pas de précédent de vote électronique dans le système des Nations Unies pour se prononcer sur un poste électif à responsabilité. Il importe donc de maintenir ce principe et d'être cohérent dans les différentes organisations internationales. Introduire le vote électronique à la FAO sur un sujet de cette importance constituerait, de notre point de vue, un précédent dommageable pour le système multilatéral.

Je voudrais à cet égard interroger le Secrétariat sur le prix du système envisagé et sur le respect des règles de concurrence, qui avaient été respectées, par exemple, par le FIDA, et je remercie par avance le Secrétariat de sa réponse.

Pour assurer la plus grande intégrité du processus électoral, le vote présentiel à Rome demeure selon nous la meilleure option.

La vraie question évoquée par plusieurs de mes collègues, c'est mon quatrième point, est celle des pays n'ayant pas de délégation, de représentation à Rome. On compte 141 délégations à Rome et, sous le contrôle de la FAO, lors de l'élection du Président indépendant du Conseil en 2017, 147 délégations ont voté. Je voudrais souligner, comme ma collègue des États-Unis l'a indiqué, que la FAO a proposé des solutions concrètes avec un vote par procuration pour les délégations qui ne seraient pas représentées à Rome.

Cinquième point, plusieurs options nouvelles ont été évoquées par mes collègues; étant nouvelles, nous ne sommes pas en état, ni n'avons la capacité de les étudier ce soir et de les discuter de manière approfondie et sérieuse. Comme mon collègue du Cameroun et du Royaume-Uni l'ont indiqué, nous avons besoin d'un document avec des informations supplémentaires et des informations sur les conséquences.

Je voudrais souligner que nous ne parlons pas que de trois options, mais de la possibilité de quatre options, car j'ai entendu parler de vote hybride ainsi que d'une option qui consisterait à repousser l'élection. Comme l'Égypte l'a souligné, repousser l'élection voudrait dire soit repousser la Conférence, soit organiser une Conférence exceptionnelle. Je rappelle là aussi que le Groupe Europe n'était pas favorable à avancer les dates de la Conférence précisément parce que nous n'avions pas suffisamment d'informations de la FAO sur cet enjeu majeur. Ainsi, nous ne pourrions pas être spécifiques dans les recommandations de ce Conseil.

Le sixième et dernier point touche aux aspects juridiques. Quelle que soit la position que prendra ce Conseil, quelle que soit son éventuelle recommandation, la Conférence aura à se prononcer à la majorité des deux tiers, en vertu de l'Article XII des Textes fondamentaux. Il nous semblerait dommage de passer en force avec une recommandation, puisqu'en tout état de cause la Conférence, à la majorité des deux tiers, pourrait revenir sur la recommandation du Conseil.

Par conséquent, il convient que la FAO se prépare aux différentes options, ce qu'elle aurait dû faire depuis décembre puisque nous connaissons les dates de la Conférence. L'option d'un vote ce soir ou demain ne serait donc, de notre point de vue, guère inclusive. Par ailleurs, nous n'avons pas suffisamment d'informations pour nous prononcer de façon sérieuse et solide sur les options en présence.

Notre recommandation au Conseil serait qu'il préconise la poursuite des consultations pour permettre à la Conférence de se prononcer en toute connaissance de cause et qu'il demande à la FAO de fournir les différentes options dans un document contenant leurs implications juridiques, financières et pratiques.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, France, for your comprehensive analysis, I think you have raised points which are food for thought for many Members, and it will contribute to a more informed discussion tomorrow. Argentina, and then Brazil, and then we will suspend the meeting.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Hay tanta inclusividad en este Consejo, que los conservadores pueden hablar, pueden plantear sus posiciones, por chat o por vía oral, aunque, claro los textos básicos indican que los que votan en caso que haya una votación son los Miembros del Consejo.

Pero eso no es que no sea inclusivo. Eso es normativo. Entonces, no es una cuestión de inclusividad. En segundo lugar, estuve tomando nota de algunos colegas que aprecio muchísimo, como Australia, Suecia en representación de los países nórdicos, Israel y, por supuesto, mi amigo Luis Coelho de la Unión Europea.

Insisto en una posición que es importante. No es la intención, creo, de nadie tratar de resolver esta situación sin consenso, pero si no hay flexibilidad, no va haber consenso. Entonces, yo, Presidente, en honor a lo que corresponde, que es que para poder votar podamos tener todos los elementos disponibles, yo estoy disponible a esperar a mañana que haya una información clara de la Secretaría, si es que la Secretaría está en condiciones de poder darla a los Miembros del Consejo, a efectos de ver si podemos llegar a un acuerdo por consenso o si, finalmente, la solución terminará siendo una votación.

No voy a entrar a discutir algunos de los puntos planteados por la colega observadora del Consejo. Solamente es un mensaje a mi estimado y querido amigo, Luis Coelho de la Unión Europea, en términos que, mis respetos por la idea de que tengan el mayor nivel de información posible, pero también considerando de que haya un *deadline*, porque si no la Secretaría no va a estar en condiciones de poder preparar el modelo de votación.

En ese esquema, por supuesto es solo mi opinión, es muy importante lo que piensen otros, sobre todo mi colega de Brasil, con el cual hemos estado juntos planteando estas cuestiones. Pero simplemente mi mensaje de mayor respeto a la inclusividad y a los códigos de buenas prácticas entre los colegas, que tengamos la posibilidad de tener la información para poder decidir de la mejor manera posible. Pero sin demorar un proceso que podría imposibilitar la votación de la manera que la mayoría aspira.

Espero haber sido claro, Presidente, y cuente conmigo para ser, como siempre, constructivo y flexible en búsqueda de todavía ganar un poco más de tiempo a ver si logramos una salida vía consenso.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I thought we were going to conclude the discussions on this Item, but we did not, so the comments I was going to do, I will do tomorrow because it is a serious diplomatic malpractice that I would like to comment and protest. I think, after the discussions, hopefully if we reach a consensus or not tomorrow, I will comment what I needed.

I would like to take the opportunity just to say that we are together with Argentina. We have the same view.

I would like also to take the opportunity to inform our Distinguished Colleague from Portugal and all the Distinguished Delegates here that much before the independence of Estonia, Brazil had an electronic vote. We have experienced it more than 40 years and more than 140 million people voted at all levels in elections in Brazil, and we are happy to say that after three hours the conclusion of the elections, we had the results.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we will adjourn the meeting and pick up this Item tomorrow. We should meet at our normal time, 09:30 in the morning. I thank everybody for participating and staying so late. I adjourn the meeting and we will meet tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 00:44 hours

La séance est levée à 00 h 44

Se levanta la sesión a las 00.44

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SÉPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
29 April 2021

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:30 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 30
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 09.30
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

CHAIRPERSON

I hope you had a good rest, and now we are all ready to go. We can start our morning Session. Good morning to all of you and welcome to the seventh meeting of the FAO Council. As you know, we still have 12 Agenda items to get through before we can conclude our Agenda and allow the Drafting Committee to meet. I would also remind Members that item 9 is still outstanding as Members asked to return to this item later, and the outstanding paragraphs of this item were circulated to Members. I believe yesterday evening.

In the interest of time management, I would like to propose a new Order of the Day and try to complete as much work as possible this morning. I should like to propose that we begin with item 23, *Any Other Matters*, and then move to the items which have been addressed through the Written Correspondence Procedure. That is items 7, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22.

Following this, my proposal would be that we return to item 9, *Report of the 130th Session of Programme Committee* to see whether we can find consensus on the remaining paragraph.

We will then move to item 14, *Code of Conduct for Voting*, and item 13, *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*. One reason for taking this item which contains the voting procedures is that I am told the Secretariat is preparing a paper — which would address some of the issues that Members raised yesterday and even asked for some information.

This document should be ready by the afternoon, which will give you additional information and it will perhaps facilitate our discussions when we come to it. That is why the voting procedures we will take last as it were.

Do Members have any comments on this sort of revised order of the day or would they agree we go forward that way?

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

I just want to have more clarification. Chairperson, can you repeat again because I think I missed some of the explanation you just mentioned.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, I will. What I was saying is that in the interest of time management, I would like to suggest to a new Order of the Day and try to complete as much work as possible this morning. I propose to begin with item 23, *Any Other Matters*, and then move to the items which were addressed through the Written Correspondence Procedure, which are items 7, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22.

After completing that, we can go back to item 9, which is the *Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee*. If you recall, there is a paragraph, which we had sort of kept pending, and now we need to go back to that paragraph. We could go back to see whether we can find consensus on that paragraph.

Then my proposal would be to move to item 14, *Code of Conduct for Voting*, and then item 13, *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*, which contains the item which we were discussing yesterday — the voting procedures. The reason for putting it last is that I have been told that the Secretariat is preparing a paper, which should address some of the issues or some of the requests for information you made yesterday.

Once you have that paper, it may facilitate the discussions, and we may hope to reach some decision there. That is why we are keeping it last because there is a document, which is being prepared, which I am told should be ready by the afternoon, and which should assist you because it would also address the questions you had raised for information.

This is the way forward. It also enables us to get through quite a lot of the Agenda. The items which take longer with the discussions, we take them after completing the items, which I do not think would cause any controversy. At least they are off the table as it were, and then we can concentrate on items 13 and 14.

If you agree we can move that way. I have two requests. One from Israel, and one from the United Kingdom.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I do not see any problem with your suggestion. The only thing I am concerned is that we will find ourselves in a night Session again discussing the Code, and I think it is a very important issue.

I do not see any problem with your offer or suggestion for the rearranging of our Agenda.

CHAIRPERSON

Sorry, I cannot hear. There is a problem. We will try again, Israel. You have the floor.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I was saying that theoretically I think it makes sense the new order of the Agenda. However, the problem I see with it is that we will find ourselves, again discussing this very important issue, which is the Code, during the night Session. I think it would be quite difficult for us to discuss this issue when we are totally exhausted after a very intensive morning and afternoon. Just for your consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

I think what we can do is follow this new Order of the Day, and we will try and avoid the situation which you have highlighted. My suggestion is let us see how we proceed, and we can always adjust. In fact, that is the most important item, and we will try and avoid the situation of a night Session on it. However, I would like to go ahead with this because I feel we may run through it very quickly because they are not controversial Items.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

We are content with the sequence you proposed. However, like Israel we are a little bit concerned about the timing of the Sessions. I wonder if you might give us your plans for the timing of our Sessions today and when you think the Drafting Committee will be able to start. It would be helpful because then I can plan my team to make sure that we can cover all of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

The Secretariat tells me that it all depends on how fast we move here. I feel yesterday there were a lot of requests for information. There was information which Members felt was missing, and I am told a document is being prepared to address that issue so that you will have that information. Perhaps that will contribute to a speedier consideration of that Agenda Item. My suggestion would be, we should give it a try. Because at the moment they cannot tell me when the Drafting Committee will be. They say it depends on how the Session goes.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Might I respond? Well, thank you for that. I appreciate it. It is hard to know how it is going to work out. However, it would be helpful, as Israel has suggested, that we sort of agree now that we are not going to go on beyond a certain time. I would be grateful if you could set the time for us.

CHAIRPERSON

The normal finishing time is sort of 17:30 hours. However, the maximum we could do is go until 19:00 hours. Is that okay with Members?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

That would be good for the United Kingdom.

Item 23. Any Other Matters

Point 23. Questions diverses

Tema 23. Asuntos varios

Item 23.1 Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension

Point 23.1 Nomination d'un représentant de la Conférence de la FAO au Comité des pensions du personnel

Tema 23.1 Nombramiento de un representante de la Conferencia de la FAO en el Comité de Pensiones del Personal

Item 23.2 Appointment of the Second Alternate Chairperson of the Appeals Committee

Point 23.2 Nomination du deuxième Président suppléant du Comité de recours

Tema 23.2 Nombramiento del segundo Presidente suplente del Comité de Apelaciones

Item 23.3 Methods of Work of the Council

Point 23.3 Méthodes de travail du Conseil

Tema 23.3 Métodos de trabajo del Consejo

CHAIRPERSON

We will take item 23, *Any Other Matters*. Two of these matters have been brought to my attention with the request that they could be addressed under this item. These are appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee, and appointment of the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee.

These matters needed to be finalised and could not be submitted for your consideration at the opening of our Session. With your agreement, I propose we take up these two as follows:

Sub-item 23.1 *Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee*,

Sub-item 23.2 *Appointment of the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee*.

What we could do is item 23.1, *Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee*., I will pass the floor to the Director of Human Resources to provide an update to the Council on the composition of the committee and the reason for this appointment.

Ms Greet DE LEEUW (FAO, Director of Human Resources Management)

I would like to provide a brief update on the Conference appointed Membership composition of the FAO WFP Staff Pension Committee. In accordance with the FAO Manual Section 341.4.31:

Members and Alternates on the committee are appointed with three-year terms to provide for continuity of experience on the committee in the terms of office of the Members and Alternate are staggered.

The FAO WFP Staff Pension Committee consists of a total of nine Members and nine Alternate Members divided as follows:

Three Members with three Alternate Members appointed by the Conference of FAO, three Members with three Alternate Members appointed by the Director-General, and three Members with three Alternate Members elected by the FAO and WFP participants.

The Acting-Secretary of the Staff Pension Committee was recently informed by the Russian Federation and Romania of a proposed seat sharing arrangement, which was formulated verbally in the 2019 Conference deliberation by which Mr Vlad Mustaciosu, Deputy-Permanent Representative of Romania to FAO, would replace and complete the term of Mr Denis Cherednichenko, the Alternative-Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO as an Alternate Member of the Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of the term until 31 December 2022.

In November 1955 the Conference authorized the Council to appoint replacements of its Representatives on the Staff Pension Committee, should any one Representative resign or be transferred. Accordingly, the Council has received requests on a number of past occasions to appoint replacements for Representatives having resigned or been transferred for the remainder of the term of office. In light of this exceptional proposed seat sharing arrangement of which an official appointment is required, the Council is accordingly invited to appoint Mr Vlad Mustaciosu, Deputy-Permanent

Representative of Romania to FAO as an Alternate Member to the Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of the term until 31 December 2022.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Greet de Leeuw. I now open the floor for any comments, which Members may wish to make.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I just wanted to say that I will just echo what the Israeli colleague said that we should discuss something contentious before we get too tired after a very late at night, especially as we are in a difficult time zone.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that was the point which was raised by both Israel and the United Kingdom, and we have addressed that. That is why we are now moving through the Agenda so that we get on, and not spend time on sort of procedural issues, which now we have dealt with. The floor is open for any comments, which Members may wish to make on this issue.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo para apoyar que el estimado colega de Rumania pueda ocupar dicha función. Y nos sentimos muy bien representados todos con su rol en la nueva función.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no other requests for the floor. I take it that the Council confirms the appointment of the Deputy-Permanent Representative of Romania to FAO, Mr Vlad Mustaciosu, who will replace Mr Denis Cherednichenko, Alternate-Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to FAO, for the remainder of the period term from 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2022. The replacement gives effect to a seat sharing arrangement that was previously agreed upon. It is so decided.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I saw that Romania was asking for the floor. I would like to ask you to give Romania the floor.

Mr Vlad MUSTACIOSU (Observer) (Romania)

I will be very brief just to thank you, Chairperson. I would like to thank also, our distinguished colleague from the Russian Federation, Mr Denis Cherednichenko, for going through with this gentleman's agreement, and I would also like to thank the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina for his very kind words.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor. We move to item 23.2, *Appointment of the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee*. Relevant information can be found in document CL166/LIM/5. I will now pass the floor to the Legal Counsel to make some brief introductory remarks. Ms HannickVan Houtte, you have the floor.

Ms Annick VANHOUTTE (Senior Legal Officer, LEG)

I am making a short presentation on behalf of the Legal Counsel.

Article XVI, paragraph 3, of the Constitution of FAO requires the Conference to make provision for the determination by an administrative tribunal of disputes relating to the conditions and terms of appointment of members of staff. The Conference decided in 1953 that FAO should accept the jurisdiction of the administrative tribunal of the ILO.

For the initial – internal – appeals phase, before the ILO tribunal phase, the staff regulations provide for an internal Appeals Committee, which advises the Director-General on individual appeals arising out of disciplinary action or administrative decisions alleged to be in conflict with their terms of appointment or with any staff regulations, staff rules, or administrative directive.

The Committee, which hears both FAO and WFP appeals, consists of two Members and five alternate Members appointed by the Director-General and two Members and five alternate Members elected by the staff as a whole. Its proceedings are chaired by the Chair or one of the Vice Chairpersons appointed by the Council.

The Chairperson of the Committee is Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro of San Marino, and Ambassador Mario Arvelo of the Dominican Republic is the first Vice-Chairperson. The position of the second Vice-Chairperson is vacant.

The Council is invited to approve the appointment of Her Excellency Jackline Yango, Ambassador of Kenya and Permanent Representative to FAO as the second Vice-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee.

The proposal is made taking into account her extensive human resources experience and qualifications, as well as her knowledge of the workings of international organizations. The appointment would take effect now for a period of three years or until she ceases to exercise functions as Permanent Representative, if this were to occur before the expiry of the 3-year term.

In concluding, I would like to acknowledge, with gratitude, the commitment of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Appeals Committee, to ensuring the effective administration of justice in the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Annick Van Houtte. Members, is the Council willing to proceed by general consent to appoint Her Excellency, Ambassador Jackline Yonga, as the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee for the term of three years to take effect immediately?

MMr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Egypt supports the appointment of Her Excellency, Ambassador Jackline Yonga, Ambassador of Kenya, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kenya, for the second Alternate-Chairperson of FAO Appeals Committee.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports the appointment of Kenya's Ambassador as the second Vice-Chairperson. I think she is very competent, and she is very professional. She will deliver on her duties.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quisiera en primer lugar decir que estas funciones a veces no tienen ningún glamour, pero son funciones fundamentales en toda la Organización, y lamentablemente, es difícil encontrar colegas que estén dispuestos a asumir la importante responsabilidad que esto significa. Por lo tanto, creo que corresponde absolutamente agradecer, de verdad, a todos los colegas que están dispuestos a asumir estos niveles de responsabilidad en favor de toda la Organización. Creo que es el momento para hacerle un reconocimiento a aquellos que han asumido ese compromiso, no con el discurso, sino con los hechos.

Permítanme agradecerle a mi querido colega, Embajador Mario Arvelo Caamaño, por su trabajo en esta función y sentir que es un honor para mí como Argentina, un honor como Presidente del G77+China que mi querida hermana y amiga, la Embajadora de Kenia, Jackline Yonga, pueda ser parte de esta nueva función y responsabilidad. Sé perfectamente que la Embajadora Yonga, no solo se compromete de palabra, cuando asume un compromiso, lo asume absolutamente de verdad en representación de todas y todos los colegas.

Para mí fue un honor apoyar la designación de la Embajadora Yonga.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Buenos días a usted y a todos los colegas, es la primera vez que hablo en esta sesión del Consejo. Quiero agradecer de nuevo su liderazgo a lo largo de estos cuatro años que ha desempeñado esta labor con tanta distinción.

El Embajador de Argentina acaba de decir varios de los puntos que yo iba a tratar en esta intervención. Voy a ser breve, pero también quiero aclarar algunas cosas. Primero, subrayar lo que ha dicho el Embajador de Argentina. Quiero extender un aplauso de todo el Consejo, solicitarlo, a nuestra Presidenta, la Embajadora de San Marino, Daniela Rotondaro, que ha venido liderando este Comité con los atributos que todos le conocemos a ella, a la Embajadora Rotondaro. Su paciencia, su atención al detalle y sus profundos conocimientos jurídicos al servicio de este Comité de Apelaciones.

Cuando yo llegué a Roma para trabajar en la misión de la República Dominicana ante los organismos con sede en Roma (OSR), me interesé inmediatamente en los órganos rectores, la Conferencia, el Consejo, Comités del Programa, de Finanza, etc. Fue años después cuando me enteré de la existencia del Comité de Apelaciones.

Ya tenía algún conocimiento del Comité de Pensiones porque una representante alterna de República Dominicana que me precedió, ya había sido parte de este Comité por algunos años. Y esto, me lleva a conectar de nuevo con lo dicho hace un momento por el Embajador de Argentina. La mayor felicitación a nuestro colega, el Señor Vlad Mustaciosu de Rumania, por dar este paso hacia adelante. Porque lo cierto es que, estos Comités de Pensiones, el de Apelaciones, no tienen, como dijo el Embajador de Argentina, el glamour de otros Comités.

Estos Comités operan en Cámara de Consejo, el de Apelaciones, en particular, tiene que ver con cuestiones muy graves, como normas laborales, de conducta, cuestiones de abuso de poder, acoso y otras faltas graves en el desempeño de funciones. Por esa naturaleza este Comité se reúne en una pequeña sala, solo están ahí quién preside, un representante de un Miembro, los otros componentes que explicó la Doctora Vanhoutte del área legal, se reúnen ahí y allí se queda todo. Allí se producen los debates, esas audiencias tienen lugar a puerta cerrada, ya había dicho en Cámara de Consejo, y los resultados siempre están ahí y se pueden apelar incluso al Tribunal Internacional en la Haya.

Hay todo un entramado que nunca aparece en pantalla y que nunca se dirige al Consejo ni a la Conferencia. Ahí está, por ejemplo, la Señora Michelle McCormack, que es la Secretaria Administrativa del Comité, ahí está el Señor Nicola Ferri que es uno de los abogados que siempre nos apoya y que ha estado acompañándonos en los últimos tiempos.

Tenemos un nuevo Secretario en el Comité, el Sr. Lalaina Ravelomanantsoa, quien ya en el pasado ha trabajado en el Comité, estuvo depuesto fuera de Roma y ha regresado. En este momento se está produciendo también, Presidente, y es bueno que todo el Consejo lo sepa, un proceso muy profundo de reforma interna, de reforma sistémica, estructural del Comité de Apelaciones.

Esto está teniendo lugar en estos días, el próximo 4 de mayo de 2021 vamos a tener una reunión para examinar los diferentes aspectos que regulan este Comité que no está discutiendo el presupuesto de la Organización, no está discutiendo el Programa de trabajo de la FAO, no está discutiendo cuáles van a ser las modalidades de voto en la Conferencia. Entonces no está bajo la lupa, no está siendo seguido por todos los Delegados con el mismo interés.

Quiero felicitar a la Embajadora Rotondaro y a todo el Comité de Apelaciones por la llegada de un refuerzo importante, la Embajadora Yonga de Kenia, como también ha dicho el Embajador de Argentina. Parece que me leyó la mente porque este era el punto con el que quería concluir esta intervención.

La Embajadora de Kenia, todos la conocemos, es una voz fuerte en defensa de la Organización, en defensa de los mejores intereses de la FAO y la llegada de ella al Comité de Apelaciones va a reforzar este Comité para el bien de la FAO, de todos sus Miembros y de todo el personal de la Organización.

CHAIRPERSON

Members of the Council, in fact, we need to move on because it was rightly pointed out that we do not want another night Session. Would the Council be willing to proceed by general consent to appoint Her Excellency, Ambassador Jackline Yonga as the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee for a term of three years? The thought behind that was to have a quick decision of the Council, and we move on. However, if we keep asking for the floor and giving individual statements, we will be back into the position of running out of time.

May I request, and I ask again is the Council willing to appoint by general consent Her Excellency, Ambassador Jackline Yonga as the second Alternate-Chairperson of the Appeals Committee, and then we can dispense with individual statements. Would you agree with that method for going forward or would you insist on having individual statements? My suggestion would be we move on. We are really short of time, and that is what the questions of Israel and the United Kingdom Ambassadors they were raising. What is going to be a way of operating today?

We have to cut time as much as possible on individual statements. Is the Council agreeable to move forward by general consent and dispense with individual statements? I see there is no request for the floor, which I take that the Council agrees. I congratulate Her Excellency, Ambassador Jackline Yonga for being appointed as the second Alternate-Chairperson for the Appeals Committee, and so this concludes Item 23 under *Any Other Matters*. We can move onto the Items, which we said were sort of dealt with under the written procedures. We will now consider the draft conclusions of the Items addressed through Written Correspondence Procedure.

Item 7. Technical Committees

Point 7. Comités techniques

Tema 7. Comités técnicos

Item 7.1 Report of the 73rd (Extraordinary) (22 January and 19 February 2021) and 74th (10-12 March 2021) Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems

Point 7.1 Rapports de la soixante-treizième session (session extraordinaire, 22 janvier et 19 février 2021) et de la soixante-quatorzième session (10-12 mars 2021) du Comité des produits

Tema 7.1 Informes del 73.º período (extraordinario) de sesiones (22 de enero y 19 de febrero de 2021) y el 74.º período de sesiones (10-12 de marzo de 2021) del Comité de Problemas de Productos Básicos

(C 2021/22; C 2021/25)

Item 7.1.1 Report on the 31st Session on the Intergovernmental Group on Oilseeds, Oils and Fats

Point 7.1.1 Rapport de la trente et unième session du Groupe intergouvernemental sur les grains oléagineux et les matières grasses

Tema 7.1.1 Informe de la 31.ª reunión del Grupo intergubernamental sobre semillas oleaginosas, aceites y grasas

Item 7.2 Report of the 31st Session of the Committee on Fisheries (1-5 February 2021)

Point 7.2 Rapport de la trente-quatrième session du Comité des pêches (1-5 février 2021)

Tema 7.2 Informe del 34.º período de sesiones del Comité de Pesca (1-5 de febrero de 2021)

(C 2021-23)

CHAIRPERSON

This is Item 7, the *Technical Committees* and the first sub-Item is 7.1, the *Reports of the 73rd (Extraordinary) and 74th Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems*. The 73rd Session took place on 22 January and the Report was adopted on 19 February. The 74th Session took place from 10 – 12 March 2021. This item also includes sub-Item 7.1.1, *Report on the 31st Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oil Seeds, Oils and Fats*.

Members of the Council have submitted their written input and the Secretariat has provided written responses, which may be found on the dedicated webpage on the Council website.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana acoge con satisfacción los informes. Reconocemos que el comercio internacional desempeña un papel fundamental a la hora de aumentar la resiliencia, mejorar la seguridad alimentaria, la nutrición y la inocuidad de los alimentos, y entendemos que promover un comercio más abierto, justo y no discriminatorio, al amparo de la OMC y sus reglas, es fundamental para el crecimiento económico y mejorar los ingresos de los más pobres, con miras a la consecución de los ODS.

Tomamos nota del informe sobre las repercusiones del covid-19 en los mercados y el comercio agrícola, y hacemos nuestras las preocupaciones sobre los efectos adversos de la pandemia en los sistemas agroalimentarios, el hambre y la malnutrición, en especial para los pequeños productores, pescadores y agricultores familiares.

En este sentido, vemos a bien el interés de la FAO en fortalecer el enfoque “Una salud” y encomiamos la labor de la Organización dirigida a mitigar las repercusiones de la pandemia, evaluar los efectos del covid-19 en la alimentación y la agricultura, las cadenas de valor, los precios de los alimentos y, en particular, la creación y puesta en marcha de su Programa de respuesta y recuperación ante el covid-19 y sus siete esferas prioritarias.

Apreciamos los informes sobre la situación de los mercados de productos básicos y perspectivas a corto y mediano plazo y alentamos a que la Organización continúe prestando apoyo a los países para mejorar sus sistemas de monitoreo y análisis de los mercados agrícolas y el desarrollo de capacidades para la creación e implementación de políticas comerciales para la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición, basadas en datos confiables.

Acogemos con satisfacción el SOCO 2020, y destacamos que los efectos transformadores que las tecnologías digitales pueden generar en los mercados agrícolas y alimentarios no pueden alcanzarse si no se colma la brecha digital que persiste entre las zonas urbanas y rurales, entre los países y entre hombres y mujeres.

De igual manera, agradecemos la actualización del Comité sobre las negociaciones de la OMC, destacando el énfasis en que se cumplan con las normas internacionales del programa conjunto de asesoramiento científico FAO/OMS del Codex, la CIPF y la OIE, a fin de que los productos básicos de los Estados Miembros puedan participar en los mercados internacionales.

Resaltamos la importancia de dar mayor visibilidad a la labor de la FAO en materia de comercio, reforzando el papel del Comité para respaldar a los estados Miembros en sus esfuerzos para la consecución de la Agenda 2030.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

La Argentina felicita a la FAO, en particular a la Secretaría del Comité de Problemas de Productos Básicos (CPPB) por la exitosa realización de dos reuniones del comité técnico en circunstancias extraordinarias, y se congratula por los resultados alcanzados en ambos encuentros, destacando la profundidad de los debates y la fortaleza de los consensos alcanzados por todos sus Miembros.

Ambas reuniones mostraron una vez más que el comercio y los mercados tienen un rol clave para contribuir a la disponibilidad, asequibilidad y accesibilidad de los alimentos para las poblaciones vulnerables y facilitar el logro de los ODS, en particular el ODS 2.

Ese rol es reconocido por los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), específicamente en el ODS 17 y en las metas de otros ODS, como en el ODS2. Asimismo, la segunda Conferencia Internacional sobre Nutrición (CIN2) también reconoció la importancia del comercio para alcanzar la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición del mundo. En ambas reuniones se reconoció el rol crucial del comercio durante la crisis por la pandemia de COVID-19. En efecto, se destacó que el comercio durante 2020 ratificó que su rol positivo en materia de seguridad alimentaria y nutrición para incluso la recuperación pos-pandemia.

Sin embargo, las cadenas de valor -no hay ninguna duda- son complejas y por ello ratificamos la importancia de un sistema comercial multilateral abierto, transparente y predecible, basado en reglas y con la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC) en su centro, para mejorar la previsibilidad del mercado, aumentar la confianza empresarial y permitir que el comercio agroalimentario fluya para contribuir a la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición.

Asimismo, la Argentina se congratula que el CPPB en sus sesiones reconociera que el comercio internacional y los mercados son un eslabón fundamental de los sistemas alimentarios como nuevo enfoque para que los productores y consumidores accedan a alimentos sanos, saludables, nutritivos y medios de vida e ingresos sostenibles. El comercio internacional agroalimentario y la posibilidad de que los pequeños agricultores obtengan mejores ingresos a través de los mercados internacionales, debería ser aún más prioritario en los canales de trabajo de la organización, en función de su mandato.

El CPPB fue claro en que no se puede ignorar el hecho de que el comercio internacional puede facilitar y mejorar la disponibilidad y el acceso a productos saludables y nutritivos, permitiendo a los consumidores ampliar las opciones de dietas saludables a precios asequibles y estables, y contribuyendo al uso sostenible y eficiente de los recursos para la producción en base a ventajas competitivas. De esta manera, el comercio internacional contribuye no solo al pilar social y económico del desarrollo sostenible, sino que también es un vehículo para la protección del medio ambiente.

Para que ello sea una realidad y no una justificación de medidas discriminatorias, la Argentina entiende primordial que cualquier medida que se aplique respete las reglas de la OMC, estén basadas en evidencia científica y que sean lo menos restrictivas del comercio y se fundamenten para alcanzar objetivos legítimos.

Por otro lado, el CPPB resaltó que el índice de precios de los cultivos comerciales de la FAO experimentará un aumento modesto durante el próximo decenio en términos nominales, pero que descenderá en términos reales. En ese marco, la Argentina se congratula que el comité haya captado la necesidad de tener en cuenta el financiamiento necesario para abordar la demanda de “transformación” de los sistemas alimentarios, acorde los contextos, prioridades y capacidades nacionales.

En línea de las relevantes conclusiones alcanzadas en el CPPB, el 74° periodo de sesiones destacó la necesidad de dar mayor visibilidad al mandato y la labor de la FAO en relación con el comercio y los mercados de productos básicos y señaló la importancia de su inclusión en el nuevo Marco estratégico para 2022-2031 en el contexto del enfoque de sistemas agroalimentarios.

Por último, la Argentina reitera una vez más que es necesaria una acción urgente para mejorar las reglas comerciales que afectan a la agricultura –reclamo que ya tiene más de varias décadas-, en especial en relación a los subsidios y el acceso a los mercados agrícolas, para posibilitar una mejor nutrición al mundo en general, y a las poblaciones vulnerables en particular, junto a una mejora de los ingresos de los agricultores. Con estos comentarios, la Argentina invita al Consejo a hacer suyas las conclusiones y recomendaciones del Comité de Problemas de Productos Básicos en sus sesiones.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the findings and recommendations of the 73rd and 74th Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP). We thank the FAO for its ongoing and important work in markets and trade and note with appreciation the number of activities that have been conducted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Australia has particularly welcomed initiatives which have been designed to ensure markets are fully informed and able to respond quickly to shocks, and those which seek to avoid counter-productive policy measures that impede trade. We respectfully provide the following comments:

We highlight the importance of maintaining open, efficient and reliable global agricultural trade, and the value of coordinating efforts to stand against protectionism which can exacerbate and prolong food supply shortages and cause excessive price volatility.

We welcome the recognition by the Committee of the importance of trade for increasing resilience, and we encourage on-going evidence-based advocacy by the FAO to help improve awareness that, in

addition to supporting food availability, agricultural trade and improved market access are important for increasing economic growth, lifting people out of poverty, raising incomes and supporting greater food access.

We appreciate the recognition by the Committee of the role of global value chains in promoting the diffusion of technologies and knowledge in support of agricultural productivity growth and we are pleased to see recognition of the role of digital technologies and electronic-based tools for facilitating trade, such as ePhyto.

We encourage ongoing efforts by the FAO on issues relating to food safety, noting with concern that some policy responses to COVID-19 have sought to question the safety of long, global food supply chains.

We welcome the FAO's commitment to an enhanced One Health approach to mitigating the risks of zoonotic diseases and support for the development of science-based international standards, guidelines and recommendations on effective risk mitigation measures for zoonosis control, and we highlight the importance of the quadripartite arrangement (FAO, OIE, WHO and UNEP) in this regard.

We note the Committee has urged Members to continue improving the timeliness and quality of data and statistics, and we highlight the importance of the FAO supporting continued strengthening of statistical capacity and delivery of data, particularly in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 23:10

I am honoured to address you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The EU welcomes and endorses the reports of the 73d and 74th sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems with the following remarks:

The EU would like to acknowledge the quality and relevance of the FAO's monitoring of commodity market developments and to welcome the information provided on issues and prospects for international raw materials and tropical commodity markets.

The EU values the role of the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook as a global consensus on medium-term trends in world agricultural markets and encourages FAO to continue its cooperation with the OECD in this area and to strengthen it, in particular in the context of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

Considering the existing uncertainties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU considers it important that the impacts of the pandemic are kept under review, even subject to sensitivity analysis. As guidance for FAO's future work, we suggest that scenarios are considered to support the follow-up to the UN Food Systems Summit and that FAO strengthens its foresight analysis in longer-term projections beyond 2030.

On the World Trade Organization (WTO) agricultural negotiations and regional trade agreements, the EU would like to thank the FAO Secretariat for the comprehensive update and to highlight the importance of an open, transparent, nondiscriminatory, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system under the WTO. We strongly believe that the WTO's central role is more essential than ever if we are to address the challenges before us, starting with the economic recovery from the pandemic. We would also recall that FAO should ensure that it remains strictly within its mandate on trade issues without pre-empting decisions to be taken at WTO.

In relation to the guidance provided on FAO's programme of work in commodity markets and trade under the Strategic Framework, the EU would like to stress the Committee's support commending the role of the Agriculture Market Information System (AMIS) and encouraging Members to continue supporting its work.

Lastly, considering the unanimous concern expressed by Members regarding the way working methods are used in the meeting leading to very long sessions, we would like to request a follow-up on the Committee's call to review the working arrangements, in consultation with the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the Chairpersons of the other FAO Technical Committees, with the

objective of improving the efficiency in the use of time, and effectiveness of the FAO Bodies' work, including the Committee on Commodity Problems.

JAPAN

Submitted Thursday April 15 2021, at 14:32

Japan welcomes the reports from the Technical Committees. Nonetheless, we would like to make the following comments.

Report of the 73rd Session of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)

- Concerning the Draft Vision and Strategy for FAO's work in Nutrition, we would like to emphasize the importance of describing more clearly the following points.
- (1) Importance of digitalization in the efforts to realize a nutrition-sensitive and sustainable agriculture and food system
- (2) Importance of "promotion of local traditional food culture" in the realization of healthy diets.

Report of the 74th Session of the CCP

- With regard to the promotion of digitization in the food supply chain, we appreciate that the importance of digitalization in each field is emphasized from the perspective of increasing market transparency and promoting the sharing of timely and appropriate information. At the same time, it should also be pointed out the importance of sound information management in consideration of privacy in order to promote the digitalization of the food supply chain.
- In parallel with the global food trade, it is important to promote local production for local consumption and to strengthen the resilience of regional supply chains based on the situation of each country.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for Members' feedback and the support expressed to FAO's work under the mandate of the Committee, and takes note of all the comments.

The Secretariat welcomes the appreciation of the importance of FAO's work on markets and trade. FAO will continue to support Members in these areas, through the provision of timely and reliable data and information, conducting and publication of analyses and studies, supporting country capacity development efforts, and facilitating and organising policy dialogue events.

Regarding the point by the Dominican Republic and Argentina on the importance of raising the profile of FAO's work on trade and the need to give greater visibility to the Organization's mandate and work in relation to trade and commodity markets, the Secretariat notes that the Programme Priority Area on transparent markets and trade under the new Strategic Framework should contribute to this.

Furthermore, consultations are taking place within the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) Bureau to explore ways to raise the visibility of the CCP's work, including through inter-sessional activities.

On the point by Australia regarding the importance of FAO supporting continued strengthening of statistical capacity and delivery of data, particularly in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), FAO stands ready to provide the required support to these countries, including through training and capacity development.

Concerning the comment by the European Union on the importance that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are kept under review, FAO would like to confirm that it will continue to monitor the impacts of the pandemic, including through the assessment of scenarios in the context of the follow-up to the UN Food Systems Summit.

The Secretariat acknowledges the comment by the European Union that FAO should ensure that it remains strictly within its mandate on trade issues without pre-empting decisions to be taken at the World Trade Organization (WTO), and reassures Members that FAO is fully mindful of this and that

its work on trade is technical and conducted within its mandate, including in collaboration with the WTO.

In relation to the European Union's request to follow up on the Committee's call to review its working arrangements, with the objective of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of sessions, the Secretariat is pleased to inform that consultations on the subject have already started within the CCP Bureau.

FAO thanks Japan for the valued comments, which were carefully noted. The suggestions were considered, together with those of the other Members, in finalizing the Vision and Strategy for FAO's Work in Nutrition. Japan's continuous engagement in the consultative process and contribution to the improvement of the language and concepts in the draft Nutrition Strategy are greatly appreciated. The Secretariat also takes note of the importance of local production and regional supply chains, in parallel with global food trade.

CHAIRPERSON

The documents before Council are: *C 2021/22*, *C 2021/25* and *C166/INF/6*. For Item 7.1.1, I will read out my conclusions. The text is projected on the screen.

Item 7.1, *Reports of the 73rd (Extraordinary), 22 January 2021 and 19 February 2021, and the 74th, 10 – 12 March 2021 Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems.*

1. The Council considered the recommendations in the Reports of the 73rd (Extraordinary) and 74th Sessions of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), and in particular:

- a) commended FAO for its immediate and concrete response to the COVID-19 pandemic including in close cooperation with other United Nations entities and international and regional organizations and highlighted the importance of international trade for increasing resilience;
- b) commended the work carried out by the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) including its Rapid Response Forum component and the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), noting the need for continued investment in market monitoring and international dialog and coordination around market developments;
- c) underlined the importance of FAO's commodity market monitoring assessment outlook and the early warning work as a global public good especially in view of the growing risks uncertainties in an effort to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets within FAO's mandate;
- d) encouraged FAO to increase its support to Members in assembling, analysing, monitoring and improving access to timely and reliable information;
- e) requested FAO to strengthen its capacity in *ex ante* risk analysis and assessment and to increase its foresight analysis going beyond 2030;
- f) highlighted the importance of continuing to strengthen FAO's analytical and capacity development activities and to enhance knowledge on the contribution of agricultural markets and trade to the economic, social and environment dimensions of the sustainable development;
- g) welcomed FAO's commitment as to One Health approach, to mitigate the risk of zoonotic diseases and support the development of science-based international standards, guidelines and recommendations on effective risk mitigation used to for zoonosis control;
- h) welcomed the collaboration with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and requested FAO to continue and strengthen this partnership;
- i) appreciated the collaboration between FAO and World Trade Organization in agricultural trade; and
- j) underlined the importance of FAO's technical assistance to Members in the areas under its mandate and competence in respect of trade policies and agreements and urged FAO to

strengthen its efforts in analysis capacity development and the organization and facilitation of dialog events.

That is 7.1. Once the Members agree, I will go to 7.1.1. I take it that 7.1 we can agree to move forward. I will read now 7.1.1, *Report on the 31st Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oil Seeds, Oils and Fats*.

The Council noted the 31st Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Oil Seeds, Oils and Fats that took place on 4 – 5 March 2021, could not conclude its agenda and that it was decided to suspend the meeting and resume discussions of pending Agenda Items at the earliest possible opportunity.

That is 7.1.1. I take it that Members agree that we can move into the next Item.

Ms Agnes Rosari DEWI (Indonesia)

I will be brief. I just would like to thank the Secretariat for cooperation with the Indonesian Government in holding the 34th Session, and we are looking forward for the resumed Session. We stand ready to work with the Secretariat for the resumed Session.

CHAIRPERSON

Item 7.1 is concluded. We go to Item 7.2, *Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries*, which was held 1 – 5 February 2021. The document before you is C 2021/23.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

ZIMBABWE

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 09:37

Zimbabwe expresses its appreciation for the document which highlights the importance of fisheries, particularly in the lives of the world's poorest populations. Fisheries are a source of much needed nutritious food as well as a source of employment. The document is rich in observations, plans, solutions and recommendations to promote sustainable, organised, registered and legal fishing on both small and large scales. Zimbabwe welcomes the Committee's request for increased support for small scale and artisanal fisheries and promoting the importance of small scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in relevant countries during the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022.

Zimbabwe commends the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) on its work in achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches with relevant stakeholders that include Member States, regional organisations, civil organisations and other initiatives. The country is a beneficiary of this invaluable cooperation. Recently, with the support of FAO, Zimbabwe launched a project for small scale fisheries to enhance community resilience and the sustainability of small-scale fisheries for communities around Lake Kariba and the Zambezi River

The ecosystem-based management project aims to utilise inland fisheries resources for enhanced food security in the country. The project is set to contribute towards poverty reduction at the grassroots level and plays a critical role in generating household incomes and contributing to food and nutrition security. Zimbabwe appreciates the technical support it is receiving from the FAO.

Zimbabwe supports the recommendations to grow blue economies in countries with this potential. It further supports initiatives to overcome challenges faced in the fisheries sector, including the reduction and elimination of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing.

Zimbabwe supports and endorses the findings and recommendations of the 34th Committee on Fisheries as outlined in document C 2021/23.

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miercoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana acoge con satisfacción el informe.

Reconocemos el trabajo de la FAO en la realización de la edición de 2020 de El estado mundial de la pesca y la acuicultura (SOFIA), que tomó en cuenta los preocupantes efectos del covid-19 en este sector.

En relación a la contribución de la pesca y la acuicultura a la aplicación de la Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible, el pasado mes de diciembre de 2020 el Consejo de Ministros de OSPESCA aprobó la Estrategia Regional para el Crecimiento Azul en los países del SICA, con el objetivo de establecer las bases para la generación de un crecimiento basado en el aprovechamiento sostenible de los recursos marinos y costeros, contribuyendo de este modo a la mejora de la calidad de vida y en línea con la agenda 2030.

República Dominicana reitera su reconocimiento y apoyo a la pesca en pequeña escala y artesanal, reflejándose en los esfuerzos que se vienen realizando tanto a nivel nacional como regional en la implementación de las Directrices PPE.

En ese sentido, expresamos nuestro apoyo a la celebración del Año Internacional de la Pesca y Acuicultura Artesanales 2022 para dirigir la atención internacional a reconocer el importante papel de los pequeños pescadores, acuicultores y trabajadores del pescado en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición.

Reconocemos como ejes prioritarios la formulación de proyectos de desarrollo rural sostenible basados en la producción y el comercio pesqueros que garanticen la creación de oportunidades de empleo en ese importante renglón de la economía.

Así mismo, agradecemos la asistencia técnica que recibimos de la FAO para desarrollar políticas contra la pesca ilegal no declarada y no reglamentada.

Elogiamos la labor que realiza la FAO con relación al impacto del cambio climático en la pesca y la acuicultura y le exhortamos a seguir apoyando las acciones hacia la adaptación, resiliencia y mitigación de los países, con particular atención a los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:56

Fisheries and aquaculture are a vital source of food and nutrition in the diets of many around the world - supplying both critical protein and high-quality nutrition to billions around the world. This is particularly true in small scale and artisanal fisheries. They are crucial components in sustainable development: key to food security, livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, supporting trade and more, throughout the world. The disruptions we have all seen from COVID-19 have only underscored this point.

They also play an important role in developing climate-resilient food systems. In particular, aquaculture with sustainable inputs can be both an additional source of seafood to strengthen nutrition and food security and a tool for economic diversification in coastal communities.

Twenty-five years after its adoption, the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries remains the gold standard for sustainably managing our fisheries and aquaculture sectors and supporting sustainable development.

To that end, the United States welcomes the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, which sets a clear path for our next 25 years of collaborative efforts under the Code for fisheries and aquaculture, while highlighting the sector's essential contributions in the fight against poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

At COFI, the United States highlighted key priorities for the Programme of Work and Strategic Framework, notably that seafood is a critical part of food security, nutrition, and sustainable development and urged FAO to further incorporate fisheries and aquaculture issues into its internal and external-facing work on food security and nutrition. In particular, we want to reiterate COFI's call on FAO and COFI Members, consistent with the COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, for the UN Food Systems Summit to recognize the unique role of fisheries and aquaculture in the global food system and promote actions to safeguard the important contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security.

Fisheries and aquaculture products represent a significant portion of animal protein consumed by humans globally (up to 17 percent in 2015, according to the FAO), and this percentage continues to rise. Although some similarities to agriculture exist, there are significant differences relative to both the challenges and the solutions to ensuring that the important contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to global food security continue in the future. These differences merit consideration and specific action in the context of the Summit.

Finally, the United States strongly supports the initiation of an open, transparent, and information-driven process to continue to explore the proposal for creating an additional COFI Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management through a Friends of the Chair process, organized through COFI Bureau.

2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors

We listened carefully to members' discussions in the 34th Committee on Fisheries on the biodiversity strategy and its use of geographical indications. Members were concerned that GIs continue to be listed as a method of ensuring biodiversity despite a lack of evidence and despite conclusions from technical and expert meetings that expressed the same.

Paragraph 17 (b) of the Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries expressed concerns with the proposed Action Plan; in particular, over actions included in geographical indications and market-oriented biosecurity. Additionally, following the 34th COFI, in two other subsequent documents, the 130th Programme Committee (PC 130/7 Inf. Note 1) in paragraph 10 (d) and the Report of the First Part of the Second Meeting of the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA/NFP-BFA-2.1/21/Report) in paragraph 19 (d) -- highlighted that there is no peer-reviewed evidence demonstrating that geographical indications contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

United States requests FAO to explain why on the conclusions of the Group of National Focal Points for Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and COFI Member requests that the four references to "geographic indications" in FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors on page 24 in FAO Core Function 7 be addressed, yet these references remained in the version of this FAO strategy that was presented to Members of the Programme Committee.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

La Argentina participó activamente del 34.º período de sesiones del Comité de Pesca (COFI) y se congratula de las conclusiones allí alcanzadas.

En particular la Argentina destaca que respecto a futuras ediciones de "El estado mundial de la pesca y la acuicultura" (SOFIA), se solicitó a la FAO que considerara información adicional y mejoras metodológicas a fin de reflejar mejor el estado regional de las poblaciones de peces, reconociendo las iniciativas para restablecer las poblaciones y aumentando el número de poblaciones objeto de evaluaciones, sin menoscabo de la integridad de las series cronológicas. Además, la Argentina se congratula que el Comité también recomendó llevar a cabo un proceso de revisión por pares más sólido y participativo y distribuir el informe SOFIA a los Miembros bastante antes de su publicación.

Asimismo, la Argentina ratifica sus observaciones en relación con las recomendaciones incluidas en diversos documentos de trabajo de COFI relativas a que todos los Estados de pabellón, del puerto, ribereños y de mercado deben ratificar y aplicar el Acuerdo sobre medidas del Estado Rector del Puerto Destinadas a Combatir la Pesca INDNR (Acuerdo MERP), aclarando que la decisión de ratificar o no un instrumento internacional es una decisión soberana de cada Estado y que por esta razón debe evitarse la inclusión de expresiones prescriptivas en ese sentido. Por ello, damos la bienvenida al lenguaje utilizado en el párrafo 67 del informe final.

Por otro lado, la Argentina entiende necesario una vez más expresar ante su mención en diversos documentos de COFI pero también de la FAO –elaborados posteriormente al 34COFI– que la referencia a "economía azul" no debería utilizarse atento no existe acuerdo a nivel internacional en relación ese concepto ni figura como tal en la Agenda 2030. Al respecto, se manifiesta que la Argentina se encuentra comprometida a continuar abordando aspectos relativos a "economías marinas

sostenibles e inclusivas", siendo este lenguaje acordado de la Declaración de Pesca y Acuicultura Sostenibles adoptado para la sesión del COFI de referencia, incorporado a lo largo del texto del informe final del Comité en reemplazo de la expresión objetada por nuestro país.

Bajo este punto de agenda, la Argentina también desea expresar su compromiso para el establecimiento de disciplinas para eliminar los subsidios a la pesca en el marco de la OMC, presentando propuestas a nivel regional, y en colaboración también con países extra-región. Asimismo, nuestro país ve con agrado y agradece el apoyo y asesoramiento técnico brindado por FAO a las negociaciones sobre subsidios a la pesca en la OMC, y aspira pronto se pueda alcanzar un acuerdo.

Con respecto a la recomendación relativa a las pérdidas y desperdicios de alimentos se recuerda que la longitud de la cadena no necesariamente es un factor sino que ello depende de las buenas prácticas que se apliquen (o no). Por lo tanto, se sugiere alentar el fortalecimiento de todas las cadenas, independientemente de su longitud, a fin de impulsar también la producción y provisión de alimentos sanos y nutritivos desde zonas más alejadas de los principales centros de consumo.

Por otro lado, la Argentina al igual que el COFI, coinciden en alertar que toda medida comercial, ya sea en la forma de una restricción a la importación, una suba de aranceles, el establecimiento de cupos o una medida sanitaria, deberá ser compatible con las normas de la OMC. Dichas medidas no deberán ser aplicadas en forma que constituya un medio de discriminación arbitrario o injustificable o una restricción encubierta al comercio internacional. En particular, las medidas sanitarias deben cumplir con lo reglado por el "Acuerdo sobre la Aplicación de Medidas Sanitarias y Fitosanitarias" de la OMC, estar fundadas en evidencia científica respaldatoria y no discriminar de manera arbitraria o injustificable entre Miembros en que prevalezcan condiciones idénticas o similares. Asimismo, cabe recordarse que los cambios de los tipos arancelarios consolidados deben respetar los procedimientos establecidos para la "Modificación de las listas" en el Acuerdo GATT.

En cuanto al Año Internacional de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Artesanales (IYAFA 2022), la Argentina reitera su apoyo a la iniciativa y señala que se está trabajando, conjuntamente con la Coordinación de Pesca Artesanal de la Secretaría de Agricultura Familiar, del Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca, en la elaboración de una agenda de eventos para incrementar el reconocimiento del sector, y profundizar el trabajo con las comunidades de pescadores. Asimismo, se invita a todos los Miembros a participar activamente en su desarrollo a partir de sus contribuciones en especie y financieras.

El combate a la pesca INDNR debe ser una prioridad para todos a fin de garantizar la debida conservación de los recursos pesqueros. La Argentina se encuentra comprometida en la lucha contra este flagelo. En ese sentido, nuestro país recibe con beneplácito el atinado y pertinente concepto de "Otras medidas de conservación eficaces basadas en zonas geográficas (OMCE)" y subraya el papel fundamental que tiene la pesca en la conservación de la biodiversidad de los océanos y en la contribución al bienestar de los seres humanos, de manera mucho más amplia que las áreas marinas protegidas.

El concepto de OMCE tal como ha sido definido en la COP/CBD de 2018, representa una oportunidad importante para que países como la Argentina, con sólido manejo pesquero, que han establecido fehacientemente y con control estricto y demostrado, vastas áreas cerradas a la pesca con el objetivo de proteger procesos biológicos relevantes a la sostenibilidad de las poblaciones que constituyen sus principales recursos pesqueros, puedan dar acabado cumplimiento a los compromisos impuestos en relación con la Meta 11 de Aichi y el ODS 14.5.

Con estos comentarios, la Argentina invita al Consejo a hacer suyas las conclusiones y recomendaciones del Comité de Pesca en su 34° período de sesiones.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia highlights the significance of fisheries issues for the South West Pacific Region, in particular the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and we welcome the FAO's on-going commitment to fisheries matters. We note the findings and recommendations of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), and we respectfully highlight the following points:

We welcome the endorsement of the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and support the calls, consistent with this Declaration, to ensure fisheries and aquaculture are fully integrated into the preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit.

We underline the importance of FAO continuing to support Members in the framework of negotiations on fisheries subsidies carried out in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

We highlight the importance of the FAO continuing to work closely with Pacific SIDS in building their statistical capacity and delivery of data, and in their Monitoring, Control and Surveillance efforts, including in implementation of Port State Measures and in the management of high seas transshipment.

With regard to the proposal to establish a COFI Sub-committee on Fisheries Management: Australia welcomes further transparent and inclusive discussion on the proposal to establish a sub-committee under the leadership of the Chairperson of COFI.

We consider that it will be particularly important to explore:

- What global fisheries issues would be best addressed at the international level, as opposed to what are regional issues or national issues.
- How issues of participation can be addressed, noting barriers of attendance (for both physical and virtual meetings) especially for Pacific Island countries.
- Budgetary implications.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 23:10

The EU welcomes the report of the 34th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI), in which the EU actively participated, promoting a post-COVID 19 recovery for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors based on enhanced resilience and sustainability.

Given the circumstances, in particular the fact that this was the first virtual COFI meeting, the EU and its Member States appreciate positively the outcome of the COFI session as reflected in its meeting report, and are resolutely engaged in the follow-up work for the achievement of its decisions.

However, the EU and its Member States take this opportunity to share their frustration that the time devoted to discussing substantial issues was insufficient in view of their importance and did not allow the appropriate involvement of observers. We hope that these concerns will be taken into account in the organisation of the 35th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, regardless of its format.

Moreover, the EU and its Member States wish to express one more time their disappointment with the late availability of the COFI session documents, although the virtual nature of the meeting made them even more necessary for an adequate preparation. We consider that this has seriously impeded the preparation of the EU and its Member States, as well as other delegations. In our view, this has also been detrimental to the quality of the discussion on certain agenda items.

We note that it is intended to hold the next session of the COFI from 5 to 9 September 2022, i.e. right after the month of August, which, for many delegations, coincides with reduced availability. Considering this, we believe that even if respected by FAO, the four weeks' deadline for circulating the COFI documents would not be enough for allowing many COFI members to adequately prepare for the meeting, be it in virtual or in-person mode. Therefore, we reiterate our wish to the FAO Secretariat to make available a detailed draft provisional agenda of the COFI meeting at least 8 weeks before the COFI 35 Session.

To summarise, although we fully subscribe to the content of the COFI 34 report and commit to supporting the implementation of its decisions, and we urge FAO to pay particular attention to improve the preparation of future COFI discussions.

JAPAN

Submitted Thursday April 15 2021, at 14:32

Japan welcomes the reports from the Technical Committees. Nonetheless, we would like to make the following comments.

Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI)

- Japan would like to express its sincere appreciation to FAO, especially the Fisheries division, and its Members for their efforts and cooperation in the preparation and organization of COFI 34 and welcomes good results of COFI 34 toward sustainable use of fishery resources. Japan however, would also like to draw the attention of the Council that the virtual format of COFI 34 was quite challenging and exposed Members to difficult situations with multiple problems. Especially, East Asian countries, including Japan, faced a lot of difficulties due to the irrelevant meeting arrangement without considering the time difference. Japan would therefore cordially request that substantial improvements be introduced to future sessions, if organized virtually, to avoid repeating such a severe situation we had at COFI 34.
- Moreover, it should be noted that a broader range of topics and agendas COFI has than other Technical Committees do has been one of the major causes for the unexpectedly prolonged discussion and the delay of schedule at COFI. In this regard, it is essential to improve the overall COFI system's efficiency, including considering the possible establishment of a new "Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management". Since the new Chairperson of COFI is appointed from Japan, under his Chairmanship, Japan intends to make its utmost efforts in securing an efficient and effective operation of the COFI system, including through the examination on the possible establishment of a new Sub-Committee.
- Like many other Members, Japan attaches the highest importance to combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and believes that the consensus at COFI 34 on further strengthening measures against IUU fishing is a significant step forward. In this regard, Japan looks forward to an earlier elaboration of effective voluntary guidelines for regulating, monitoring, and controlling transshipment, as recommended by COFI 34.
- Japan welcomes FAO to strengthen cooperation with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and commends FAO's active involvement and participation, as the sole UN technical agency for the fisheries management, in discussions at various global fora such as marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Japan would urge FAO to further strengthen its contribution to those organizations. Especially, reinforcement of the cooperation with CITES with which FAO has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is quite important. FAO has a pivotal role in providing CITES with relevant scientific and technical advice on the listing and implementing such listing of commercially exploited aquatic species. Japan believes that the provision of such advice associated with the CITES listings is a critical responsibility of FAO and expects FAO to further strengthen its activities in this regard.

ICELAND (OBSERVER)

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 15:33

Iceland takes note of and welcomes important initiatives taken by the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) in February 2021. Iceland wants to highlight the 2021 Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture which was endorsed by all members of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI). It is a milestone marking the 25th anniversary of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The declaration specifically notes:

- that urgent targeted action is needed to ensure fish and fish products continue to provide effective and sustainable pathways to reduce poverty, secure livelihoods and underpin food security and nutrition, as a prerequisite to achieving the goals set in Agenda 2030, and
- that Members need to reinforce international and regional cooperative governance mechanisms, including the UN Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the FAO Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, in order to reduce overfishing, and provide adequate protection to vulnerable ecosystems.

Iceland observes that important progress is made in fisheries management globally but notes with alarm that still more than one third of fish stocks are overfished. IUU fishing remains a persistent problem, especially to low-income Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Iceland urges all to put pressure with existing legal and agreed instruments on Members which continue this malpractice. The aim is to eliminate IUU fishing.

We support the call from low- and middle-income countries for assistance in capacity building for fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture production.

II.

Iceland supports the call of COFI and reiterates the need to bring fisheries and aquaculture (aquatic food) fully into the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

We recognize the need to promote the consumption of fish and fish products derived from sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, reminding the global community that they are among the healthiest foods on the planet. “Blue food” (aquatic) should be an integral part of the UNFSS plan of action.

III.

Iceland supports the outcome of COFI, which highlighted the importance of reaching an outcome in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations to prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Iceland likes to encourage the COFI Bureau to continue exploring the proposal for a third Sub-Committee, on Fisheries.

Finally, Iceland reminds the Director -General and Management that FAO has been given a key role within the UN System in respect to SDG 14, Life below water. Therefore, a new management strategy for FAO needs to take full note of this responsibility and duly reflect FAO’s leading role in achieving SDG 14.

Response from Secretariat *Réponses du Secrétariat* *Respuestas de la Secretaría*

The Secretariat fully appreciates the support expressed by the Members for the report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI 34).

The Secretariat also fully takes note of the issues highlighted by Members and expects to follow-up and report periodically on the recommendations and decisions of COFI 34, through the COFI 35 Bureau.

With regard to the specific request made by the United States of America with regard to the 2021-23 Action Plan for the Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, the Secretariat wishes to explain as follows: The reference to ‘geographic indications’ [GI’s] has been removed from the Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and Action Plan.

With regard to the concern and request expressed by the European Union with regard to the preparation for the future COFI session, the Secretariat fully takes note of and will do its utmost to address this request, including the earlier availability of all documents, in particular the draft Provisional Agenda.

With regard to the concern and request expressed by Japan with regard to the modality of the session as well as the overall COFI system’s efficiency, the Secretariat fully takes note of and would like to work proactively and closely with the Chairperson from Japan inter-sessionally.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusions on 7.2 are:

The Report of the 34th Session of the Committee of Fisheries, 1 – 5 February 2021.

1. The Council considered the recommendations contained in the Report of the 34th Session of the Committee on Fisheries, and in particular, subparagraph:

- a) endorsed the 2021 COFI Declaration for Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture to renew its commitment to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, recognized the transformations in the sector since the endorsement of the Code, and urged FAO to refocus priorities to secure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector;
- b) looked forward to ensure fisheries and aquaculture are fully integrated into the preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit;
- c) welcomed the further development of the voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Aquaculture in 2021 and requested FAO to consider guidance for concrete actions for this sector;
- d) emphasized the importance of support for small-scale and artisanal fisheries and to urge FAO to increase its support to Members including by promoting the importance of small-scale and artisanal fisheries and aquaculture in relevant events in relation to the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture in 2022;
- e) urged FAO to enhance technical guidance on mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation in the fisheries management and aquaculture development;
- f) urged FAO to continue supporting Members in the development and implementation of national plans of action to combat illegal unreported and unregulated fishing and make further efforts to address the challenges faced in combatting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing including the development of these technical guidelines such as the draft voluntary guidelines for the regulating, monitoring and control of transshipment;
- g) encouraged FAO to continue strengthening its work on achieving sustainable fisheries and aquaculture through collaborative approaches with relevant global and regional organizations, bodies and initiatives;
- h) urged FAO to continue to work with CITES and related fora to help ensure the decisions made in these fora in their implementation are based on the best scientific information available and relevant technical information; and
- i) welcomed the transparent and inclusive consultation process on the proposal for the establishment of a new Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management under the leadership of the Chairperson of (COFI), and looked forward to a proposal being submitted at the 35th Session of COFI.

That brings to an end my conclusions on Item 7.2. Argentina, you wanted the floor.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Por un lado, queremos avanzar rápido y por otro lado es necesario a veces parar un minuto para incluir cosas que son importantes también para que puedan ser incluidas en el Informe.

Justamente en el Comité de Pesca (COFI), hemos tenido importantes discusiones en las cuales se puso mucho énfasis en la importancia de respetar el lenguaje acordado entre los Miembros. Y lo que hemos acordado en el COFI después, sabemos que hubo algunos problemas *a posteriori*, para sintetizar, voy a sugerir un nuevo subpárrafo para incluir donde usted o a la Secretaría le parezca más apropiado y que diga lo siguiente.

Puede ser al final, al principio, o en el medio, no tengo inconvenientes. Lo voy a leer en inglés a velocidad de dictado. *“Reiterated the importance for the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Secretariat to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies in their work”.*

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I am a bit puzzled. I have to say. Should we not start with 7.1?

I would like to ask the floor for comments on Item 7.1, to clarify procedure wise, and if we go to 7.1, I would like to ask you to give the floor to the European Union.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, we have to move forward with an agreed working, and I thought the written procedure would have been taken care of. However, I will give the floor to the European Union to see what additions you have for 7.1. However, I must point out that I take the point made by Argentina that we need to move fast, but if there is an important issue, we need to include it.

Could I also draw attention of Members to please ask for the floor when we are talking of that Item? When we move forward and then we have to go back and then go forward again. That also upsets the flow of discussions of the Council.

We go to 7.1, and I give the floor to the European Union.

Mr Jörg ROOS (European Union)

I am very sorry that we came in a bit late. However, I will be very quick on this one, and I promise that it will be rather short, what we have to say. We expect that it will also be uncontroversial.

We have one comment on subparagraph (g). If you could scroll down a bit, because I do not see it entirely, where we would suggest that we add after “development of science”, = and, “evidence-based international standards”. I think this is something that has been used in many of the subparagraphs.

We would also suggest one subparagraph to be added at the end. I will read it out. It is based on the conclusions of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP). I think it is not controversial. We will make the suggestion. “Took note”, I will read out in dictation speed.

“Took note of the CCP’s call to review its working arrangements in consultation with the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the Chairpersons of the other FAO Technical Committees, and looked forward to the outcomes of this review to be considered before the next Session of the CCP”.

We just want to make that point because we think as it is related to the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the other Technical Committees it is appropriate that it is mentioned in the Council Report to bring attention to it, and that we come back to it before the next meeting of the CCP. I hope this uncontroversial and my apologies, again, for taking the floor a bit late in this discussion.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, any reaction to especially the subparagraph because the evidence-base I think is the wording, which Members always support.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)

Monsieur le Président, merci. Je voudrais réagir au point 7.2.

CHAIRPERSON

Then we can wait. I give the floor to Argentina because Argentina is reacting to this one.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Le agradezco a la Embajadora de Burkina Faso, Señora Joséphine Ouedraogo, el haberme permitido hablar primero de este tema. Quería agradecer la propuesta de mi colega de la Unión Europea. Lo único que no me parece razonable es poner énfasis en los problemas de organización o de la cantidad de tiempo dedicado al Comité de Problemas de Productos Básicos (CCP) y no tener el mismo tipo de valoración respecto de otros Comités. Hemos tenido los mismos problemas o incluso peores, no quiero ni siquiera hablar del Comité Forestal (COFO), por ejemplo.

No quiero, por ejemplo, lo dije el otro día aún siendo Vicepresidente del Comité del Programa, un Comité en el cual tenemos millones de temas para tratar, trabajando bajo un nivel de presión extremo, incluso a veces sin interpretación. Entonces, digo, yo no voy a levantar, a poner como cuestión controversial la sugerencia de mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea, pero corresponde ser

equilibrado en términos de que el problema de funcionamiento es un problema, en todo caso, que deberíamos incluir todos, todos los Comités y todas las instancias para ver cómo mejorarlo.

Entonces, creo que, si pudiéramos en todo caso incluir, capturar, las palabras de mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea, pero planteándolo como, no solo aquí sino en términos generales, creo que yo estaría más cómodo porque sería mucho más justo porque hemos todos tenido que soportar sesiones larguísimas, en horarios absolutamente incómodos y sin interpretación.

Entonces, supongo que mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea va a estar de acuerdo conmigo, de que podríamos buscar una manera en el texto, en todo caso que lo haga el Comité de Redacción si usted quiere Presidente, para no demorar, pero algo que implique la idea de que estas conversaciones informales van a ser para todos los Comités y no solamente para este Comité. Si está de acuerdo mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea, yo creo que sería muy positivo para la Organización.

Por otro lado, en el Informe del CCP en su 74.º período de sesiones, en el asunto al párrafo 9 (c), allí no está mencionada la palabra “*evidence-based*”, porque si bien en muchos informes cada vez usamos “*science-based*”, en muchas partes el lenguaje acordado, es acordado entre determinados contextos, pero en este caso que tiene que ver con un tema mucho más técnico, más científico, en general, no es “*evidence-*” sino es “*science-based*”.

Igual, repito, estoy hablando del párrafo 9 (c) del Informe del CCP, pero tampoco pretendo hacer una gran polémica por esto, simplemente marcarlo. Creo que corresponde hacerlo.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, one of your suggestions was the Drafting Committee can also look at this and refine the wording. Let us leave it to the Drafting Committee, according to your suggestion, which I support, because that would be best. Is that the end of the European Union’s comments? We can move on to, that concludes 7.2.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We wanted to support the intervention made by Argentina for the subparagraph (g). At this point, we would recommend that we just use the exact wording of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), which was subparagraph (g) and for the international standards what was used was “science-based”.

CHAIRPERSON

European Union, can we just go ahead by saying science-based, because apparently that seems to be what the Report of Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) says? You have the floor, European Union.

Mr Jörg ROOS (European Union)

Given the advanced time, where we stand with our Agenda, we do not want to be difficult on this issue. Given that the wording that we have taken so far is basically exactly from the Report. Having said that, we also want to underline that we accept it on this occasion because it is a quote from the Report. However, we obviously reserve the right in other discussions to extend the science to “science and evidence-based.”

This is really for the sake of making progress. Thanks to the Ambassador of Argentina for his proposal to generalise subparagraph (k), which is very good. The Drafting Committee can take care of that. We also wanted to use wording from the Report in order to be non-controversial. However, we will deal with that in the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

7.2 is concluded. We go to Item 12, *Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security*. I apologise to Burkina Faso, because I think the Ambassador had asked for the floor and it was on Item 7.2.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)

Je veux réagir au sous-paragraphe (e) et proposer une reformulation de la première phrase, afin de mettre en exergue les acteurs de la petite pêche et de la pêche artisanale. Ainsi, je propose qu'on dise au début de ce sous-paragraphe (e) que nous demandions à l'Organisation de poursuivre et de renforcer ses efforts, en direction des communautés dont la vie dépend de la petite pêche et de la pêche artisanale. C'est ça que je voudrais qu'on souligne. Donc, que la FAO poursuit et renforce ses efforts en direction des communautés dont la vie dépend de la petite pêche et de la pêche artisanale. Si cela est convenable. C'est la toute première, au niveau du paragraphe E. Je n'ai pas la traduction en anglais de ce que j'ai dit. Est-ce qu'il y a un souci au niveau de la traduction? Je ne sais pas si j'ai bien exprimé l'idée pour que ça puisse être traduit. C'est plutôt la première phrase. Sinon il y aura répétition. The importance of increasing or reinforcing its support the [inaudible]. Son appui aux communautés dont la vie dépend de la petite pêche et de la pêche artisanale.

Mr Jörg ROOS (European Union)

We would like to suggest an additional subparagraph at the very end of the text, which would read, “requested that a detailed Agenda for the 35th Session of the Committee on Fisheries is made available in all UN languages, at least eight weeks before the start of the Session, to give Members sufficient time for their preparations”.

If I may just explain the rationale behind it. The Session is scheduled for the beginning of September 2022. If we only respect the four weeks, it will fall into the beginning of August, and we are afraid that it may be very difficult for many of the Members, and also for the Permanent Representations here in Rome, in the month of August to properly prepare. Therefore, we want to highlight this issue in the Report, because we were facing similar issues in the preparations of the last Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Sessions, in particular with availability of documents in all UN languages.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería darle las gracias a mi estimado colega de la Unión Europea. Creo que es muy importante lo que propuso porque justamente estaba pensando, incluso a pesar de haberse pospuesto la sesión del Comité, tampoco se utilizó el tiempo para poder cumplir con este compromiso.

Lo que planteó mi colega de la Unión Europea es un tema muy importante para todos los Miembros de la Organización, por lo cual, lo respaldo.

Item 12. Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (8-11 February 2021)

Point 12. Rapport de la quarante-septième session du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (8-11 février 2021)

Tema 12. Informe del 47.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (8-11 de febrero de 2021) (C 2021/20)

(C 2021/20)

CHAIRPERSON

With these amendments, we can conclude Item 7.2 and move forward. Item 12, *Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security*. The relevant document before you is C2021/20.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

ZIMBABWE

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 09:37

Zimbabwe welcomes the Report of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which highlights the work of multiple stakeholders in identifying the challenges faced globally in attaining food security and in prescribing requisite solutions. The all-encompassing platform affords multiple stakeholder participation, which is critical, for it is collaborative action that is required to end hunger,

through the provision of sustainable, adequate and nutritious food. Efficient food systems and nutrition are essential for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Zimbabwe commends the due attention given to important issues in the Report, inter alia: the food security situation in protracted conflict, given that in most cases, conflict exacerbates already precarious situations brought on by climate induced droughts or floods and cyclones; the work of the Committee to combat the negative impacts of COVID-19; and the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and their critical contribution to the UN Food Systems Summit.

Zimbabwe particularly welcomes the ongoing work to establish Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, scheduled to be presented for endorsement by the 50th Session of the CFS. Disadvantaged women and girls play a critical role in food systems and it is important to recognize that they bear the brunt in this sector and to give them all the support they require. Zimbabwe supports the endorsement of the conclusions and recommendations of the 47th Session of the Committee of World Food Security as outlined in document C 2021/20.

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana acoge con satisfacción el informe del 47º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial y felicita a Thanawat Tiensin, Presidente del Comité, por el éxito alcanzado en la plenaria. El resultado más sobresaliente ha sido la aprobación de las Directrices voluntarias sobre los sistemas alimentarios y la nutrición, en apoyo del decenio de las Naciones Unidas de Acción sobre la Nutrición (2016-2025) que se traducirá en un aporte valioso a la Cumbre sobre Sistemas Alimentarios 2021.

Resaltamos la gran labor llevada a cabo por los facilitadores del Grupo de Composición Abierta para estos fines, y alentamos a las partes interesadas del CSA a apoyar y promover a todos los niveles, y en colaboración con otras iniciativas y plataformas pertinentes, la difusión, el uso y la aplicación de las Directrices, reconociendo la diversidad y la complejidad de los sistemas alimentarios.

En relación con la aprobación del mandato para la elaboración de las Directrices voluntarias del CSA sobre igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de mujeres y niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición, expresamos interés en continuar brindando aportes a la negociación de dicho documento.

Valoramos el acto temático mundial relativo al Marco de acción del CSA para la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en crisis prolongadas, tema que República Dominicana lideró durante su presidencia del Consejo de Seguridad de Naciones Unidas en abril de 2020, a fin de poner de relieve el Marco de acción en una sesión especial para abordar los vínculos entre la inseguridad alimentaria y los conflictos. Hacemos un llamado a los miembros y a otras partes interesadas a sensibilizar acerca del Marco de acción en otros foros, y a que se promueva su aplicación y uso.

Reconocemos la importancia global del CSA como plataforma abierta e inclusiva, sobre todo en el contexto del ODS-2, a la vez que compartimos la profunda preocupación por el alarmante incremento del número de personas afectadas por la subalimentación crónica y la malnutrición, que amenaza con revertir décadas de avances a nivel mundial.

Destacamos que el CSA puede aportar de manera positiva para lograr resultados en la lucha contra las repercusiones adversas de la pandemia de covid-19 en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición. En este contexto se hace menester situar la seguridad alimentaria en el nivel más alto de la agenda política, con lo cual República Dominicana está firmemente comprometida.

Sumamos nuestra voz a la solicitud de que los tres organismos con sede en Roma continúen dividiendo en partes iguales los costos del presupuesto de la Secretaría del CSA.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:56

The Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition are the endpoint of an enormous effort by the Committee on World Food Security to reach consensus on a set of recommendations to improve performance across food systems for nutrition.

The Guidelines lay the foundation for a “sustainable food systems” approach to food security and nutrition that recognizes the complexity of food systems and the fact that decisions made at one point in a system can reverberate throughout the system. This approach seeks to balance the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and recognizes the need to assess and manage tradeoffs. The balanced, holistic sustainable food systems approach outlined in the Guidelines provides a strong foundation for our efforts to build more sustainable food systems and for the UN Food Systems Summit.

U.S. Explanation of Position:

Paragraph 3.2.4(d) of the Guidelines: We interpret the comment on “agreed relevant international and national standards” to mean that the Guidelines should be complementary to standards adopted by international standards setting bodies and adapted to national contexts, given that national standards do not need agreement from outside parties. We emphasize that specific recommendations contained in the Guidelines should be considered as one option out of many possible tools depending on local contexts.

Paragraph 40 of the Guidelines: The Guidelines should be applied consistent with other instruments only as far as each of these instruments are relevant and applicable and as far as they have been agreed, acknowledged and/or endorsed by respective Member States and without prejudice to prevailing international agreements. The United States underscores that paragraph 18 of the 2030 Agenda calls for countries to implement the Agenda in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law. We further note that the 2030 Agenda is non-binding and does not create or affect rights or obligations under international law, nor does it create any new financial commitments. We also highlight our mutual recognition that 2030 Agenda implementation must respect and be without prejudice to the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including negotiations, and does not prejudice or serve as precedent for decisions and actions underway in other forums.

Paragraph 44 of the Guidelines: Economic sanctions, whether unilateral or multilateral, can be a successful means of achieving foreign policy objectives. In cases where the United States has applied sanctions, we have used them with specific objectives in mind, including as a means to promote a return to rule of law or democratic systems, to insist on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, or to prevent threats to international security. We are within our rights to deploy our trade and commercial policy as tools to achieve our objectives. Targeted economic sanctions can be an appropriate, effective, and legitimate alternative to the use of force

Paragraph 45 of the Guidelines: The United States would like to note that the negotiations to eliminate agricultural export subsidies referenced in paragraph 45 of the Guidelines, were finalized during the Tenth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference (MC10). The United States maintains that it is incorrect to imply that the Doha Development Round negotiations were concluded on these issues, and any reference to the Doha Development Agenda should be avoided.

Paragraph 65 of the Guidelines: It is our view that the CFS must respect the independent mandates of other processes and institutions, including trade negotiations, and must not involve itself in decisions and actions in other forums, including at the WTO. This includes calls that undermine incentives for innovation, such as technology transfer that is not both voluntary and on mutually agreed terms. The United States would also like to note that implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines should be consistent with paragraph 18 of the 2030 Agenda, which “emphasizes that the Agenda is to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law.

Paragraph 66 of the Guidelines: We note that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for action by all. We regret that language was inserted into these voluntary guidelines that seeks to selectively highlight different elements of the 2030 Agenda that are not broadly germane to the topic at hand and distract from its focus. This language should not be seen as a precedent for future

documents. We underscore here that recalling selective paragraphs from the 2030 Agenda does not change their meaning or application, and paragraph 66 of the Guidelines indicates that they are recalled only to the extent relevant. For example, by recalling paragraph 12 of the 2030 Agenda, which reaffirms all the principles of the Rio Declaration, it should not be understood that all of the principles of the Rio Declaration are applicable to the range of issues addressed in these guidelines. Furthermore, with respect to the quoted footnote language on common but differentiated responsibilities, we note that the 2030 Agenda only reaffirmed that principle as it was set out in principle 7 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, where it was explicitly limited to certain types of global environmental degradation. Recalling paragraph 12 of the 2030 Agenda in this context does not imply, and the United States does not accept, that this principle has relevance or application to the broad range of issues addressed in these voluntary guidelines, the 2030 Agenda, food security or to sustainable development as a whole.

Paragraphs 3.1.1(c) & 3.3.1(a) of the Guidelines: The United States would like to note its concern on two references to multilateral trade: paragraph 3.1.1(c) and paragraph 3.3.1(a). In both paragraphs, the language appears to blend references from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with references to multilateral trade under the World Trade Organization (WTO). We are concerned that blending voluntary commitments from the SDGs, with legally binding obligations agreed to by WTO Members, creates confusion around the scope of what has been agreed to in the WTO. For greater clarity, these two sentences should reference “...a rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, transparent, and predictable multilateral trading system...”, to reflect concepts that have been agreed to by WTO Members and are foundational principles of the multilateral trading system. These two sentences should exclude “universal” and “equitable”, terms used in the context of voluntary commitments.

Paragraph 3.1.4(a) of the Guidelines: The United States reaffirms its support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As explained in our 2010 Statement of Support, “the United States recognizes the significance of the Declaration’s provisions on free, prior and informed consent, which the United States understands to call for a process of meaningful consultation with tribal leaders, but not necessarily the agreement of those leaders, before the actions addressed in those consultations are taken.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miercoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

A.- Punto II “Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición: construyendo una narrativa global hacia el 2030”

La Argentina desea reiterar la necesidad de atender adecuadamente las necesidades de América Latina y el Caribe (LAC), puesto que se trata de una de las regiones más afectadas por el COVID-19 con efectos devastadores en materia inseguridad alimentaria y alimentación.

Como fue expresado oportunamente, los efectos de la crisis ya son visibles en los sistemas alimentarios de LAC, puesto que la vulnerabilidad de los trabajadores ha crecido y los precios internos de los alimentos, en algunos casos, han trepado abruptamente desestabilizando el acceso a la canasta de productos básicos. Esta tendencia, en consecuencia, ha generado que muchas personas no puedan adquirir suficientes alimentos y que muchas otras tengan que optar por productos más baratos y de menor calidad nutricional.

Frente a esta difícil coyuntura, nos gustaría resaltar, nuevamente, el papel central del comercio internacional de alimentos (equitativo y sin barreras distorsivas) ya que, gracias a él, se podrá facilitar el acceso a alimentos variados, seguros, asequibles y de bajo costo para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria regional y global, a la vez que se impulsará la creación de empleos a lo largo de las diferentes cadenas de valor que abastecen los mercados en distintas escalas.

B.- Punto III “Marco de Acción del CSA para la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición en Crisis Prolongadas”

Deseamos enfatizar que el Marco de Acción, a través de sus guías y recomendaciones, fundamentalmente en los Principios 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 y 10, contiene una serie de buenas prácticas y guías sumamente útiles que permiten a los Gobiernos diseñar acciones concretas, de acuerdo a sus

capacidades y circunstancias específicas, para generar resiliencia y abordar apropiadamente las causas subyacentes de las crisis prolongadas.

Vemos con preocupación que las crisis prolongadas, más allá de sus múltiples causas, aún mantienen una presencia nítida en distintas regiones y están afectando de manera diversa alguna de las cuatro dimensiones de la seguridad alimentaria, con especial énfasis en la disponibilidad y el acceso a los alimentos. Por ese motivo, insistimos en la relevancia de actualizar las consultas regionales a fin de contar con información actualizada sobre las necesidades de los diferentes países.

Luego, sobre la implementación de planes basados en contextos específicos, es importante tener en mente que para poder llevar a cabo programas que ataquen las causas de las crisis prolongadas, es crítico contar con mecanismos adecuados de cooperación internacionales y financiación multilateral para poder cambiar las realidades de los países afectados. Sin estos instrumentos, será imposible plasmar en el terreno soluciones de cambio duraderas.

C.- Punto IVb “Términos de referencia para las Directrices Voluntarias sobre Igualdad de Género y Empoderamiento de la Mujer en el Contexto de la Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutrición”

La Argentina desea reiterar su apoyo y profundo compromiso con esta línea de trabajo del CSA. Entendemos que resulta clave diseñar un documento que aborde, de forma holística, las distintas problemáticas que enfrentan las mujeres rurales. En nuestro país, la temática de género, y especialmente los aportes de las mujeres rurales e indígenas, así como el colectivo LGBTIQ+ son valorados como elementos esenciales para alcanzar mecanismos producción sostenibles de alimentos y, en consecuencia, para la seguridad alimentaria.

Como expresamos durante los debates de los términos de referencia, nosotros entendemos que el contenido de las directrices debería centrarse en el diseño e implementación de políticas públicas para el fortalecimiento de la autonomía económica y para eliminar brechas de género en la producción. Consideramos que es muy importante incorporar, en los futuros debates, la necesidad de diálogo entre los Gobiernos y las organizaciones sociales y sindicales para la articulación de estrategias para el fortalecimiento de la igualdad en contexto de los sistemas alimentarios.

Finalmente, queremos reiterar que el Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad de la Argentina está en condiciones de compartir contribuciones sustantivas sobre líneas conceptuales fundamentales para abordar las políticas de prevención, asistencia y erradicación de las violencias por motivos de género.

D.- Punto V “Directrices Voluntarias sobre Sistemas Alimentarios y Nutrición”

Creemos que las “Directrices Voluntarias sobre Sistemas Alimentarios y Nutrición” constituyen un documento válido y necesario, no sólo en materia de recomendaciones sobre gestión de sistemas productivos y estrategias nutricionales. El documento, entendemos, recoge una visión amplia, plural y consolidada sobre las diversas realidades, contextos, capacidades y prioridades nacionales que establecen los marcos de referencia dentro de los cuales funcionan los Sistemas Alimentarios. Por su puesto, el objetivo que debemos perseguir es mejorar y fortalecer nuestros esquemas de producción de alimentos, teniendo en cuenta que no existe un modelo único para abordar estos procesos y que es clave impulsar el desarrollo equilibrado de las dimensiones económica, social y medioambiental de los Sistemas, como lo marca la Agenda 2030.

Consideramos fundamental abordar el análisis de los Sistemas Alimentarios a partir esquemas conceptuales y terminologías técnicas que cuenten con el acuerdo multilateral de los Estados. Esta metodología nos permite entender los contenidos y alcances de las recomendaciones del documento, facilita la comprensión de los eventuales usuarios de las Directrices y, en todo caso, establece bases sólidas a partir de las cuales se podrán iniciar futuros debates, quizás en la Cumbre de Sistemas Alimentarios, sobre nociones o valoraciones que guardan relación con los mecanismos productivos agropecuarios.

Referencia especial merece el reconocimiento del documento al rol esencial que cumplen las cadenas medianas y largas de abastecimiento y el comercio local, regional e internacional de alimentos (transparente, equitativo y sin barreras distorsivas), en función de su contribución clave para facilitar el acceso a canastas de productos variados, inocuos y a precios accesibles. En el contexto del

COVID19, el comercio internacional ha demostrado con creces su capacidad de adaptación y resiliencia y ha sido un elemento fundamental para contener el aumento de la inseguridad alimentaria global. Por ello, celebramos su destacada inclusión.

También la visibilización que realiza el documento sobre el rol principal que tienen las mujeres rurales e indígenas, los jóvenes y los campesinos en los Sistemas Alimentarios es un elemento que queremos resaltar. Si queremos pensar la forma de alcanzar más sostenibilidad y mejor resiliencia, es primordial incluir a estos grupos en las discusiones y brindarles oportunidades para su empoderamiento, autonomía y poder decisorio en marcos estratégicos para la seguridad alimentaria.

Por último, interpretamos que es vital entender las propuestas y recomendaciones del documento en sinergia con esquemas de cooperación y mecanismos de transferencia de recursos, creación de capacidades y desarrollo de tecnologías que hagan posible llevar las Directrices al terreno en países en desarrollo. En este sentido, el principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas recogido en la Declaración de Río, los mecanismos de cooperación sur-sur y el espíritu de la Agenda 2030 juegan un papel central para que las Directrices sean realistas y aplicables y no se conviertan un documento más donde solo se recopilan buenas intenciones.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the conclusions and recommendations of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). We applaud the commitment of all CFS stakeholders, and acknowledge the significant amount of work which has been undertaken on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics. In our current operating environment, we appreciate the importance of this work in relation to managing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as supporting the UN Food Systems Summit. We respectfully highlight the following points:

- the importance and value of the data-collection and analysis work stream in the CFS Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW), noting the necessity of data to support robust evidence-based policy guidance is well understood and is instrumental in our collective efforts to deliver against the 2030 Agenda;
- the importance of not overloading the work program and the value of dedicated attention to one work stream at a time in order to encourage and maximise fulsome engagement of Members;
- the value of integrating cross-cutting issues, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, for consideration in existing work streams so as not to create additional resource burden and adverse funding implications; and
- the importance of CFS operating within its mandate and the importance of the Committee augmenting, not duplicating, existing work.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 23:10

I am honoured to address you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

We welcome the comprehensive discussions at the 47th Committee on World Food Security (CFS) plenary session in February 2021 and we take this opportunity to reiterate our support and commitment to the CFS as a unique multistakeholder platform to discuss food security and nutrition issues and an important example of multilateralism and inclusiveness.

We welcome the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN), that will contribute with valuable inputs to the preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and pre-Summit, as well as in its followup. We emphasise the need for the wide dissemination and implementation of those important voluntary guidelines.

Inclusivity is of key importance for the CFS and for the process of preparation of its products. The EU and its Member States regret Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) withdrawal at the end of Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition negotiations, not being able to endorse it during the last CFS session and expect that CSM would finally join the consensus regarding

these guidelines. We urge the CFS and its members to engage and improve the dialogue with the CSM as it represents an invaluable contribution for our discussions on food security and nutrition, including for the Food Systems Summit. We would also like to commend the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) for its important expert work and support to the CFS. In this regard we would like to emphasize its role in providing valuable science- and evidence-based inputs for the CFS discussions.

Advancing gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment is critical to achieving food security and nutrition for all and ending hunger, as well as for achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030. Therefore, the EU and its Member States welcome the endorsement of the Terms of Reference for the preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition. We look forward to engaging in the inclusive consultative process that will follow.

We welcome the updated Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2020-2023 and we stress the need to include, besides the medium- and long-term objectives, the bases for the CFS reaction and adaptation of its response to current and future crises. With these comments, we endorse the CFS 47 Report.

JAPAN

Submitted Thursday April 15 2021, at 14:32

Japan welcomes the report from the Committee on World Food Security. Nonetheless, we would like to make the following points.

We recognize that the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) will be an essential input for the discussion and following-up process of the United Nations Food System Summit 2021. Japan also would like to support the dissemination and use of the VGFSyN. Besides, since the culture and lifestyles of each country vary, it is vital to take an approach that allows adjusting to the characteristics of each region when disseminating and using the VGFSyN.

To realize a sustainable food system, it is necessary to transform to an environmentally friendly agricultural production system while maintaining and improving producer's income. For that purpose, it is important not only to introduce and strengthen regulations on production activities but also to substantially promote investment that contributes to the transformation to sustainable food systems such as smart agriculture. Also, there is no 'one size fits all' solution, as it varies greatly depending on each country's geographical and socio-economic conditions. It is important to implement various approaches, including the proper application of fertilizers and pesticides, by utilizing digital agriculture, according to each country or region's conditions. At that time, it is crucial to protect intellectual property rights adequately.

Concerning ESG investment, to build the resilience of food systems, it is necessary to look into a mechanism that can promote resource mobilization from the private sector. It should be encouraged by proactively evaluating the environmental burdens derived from production activities and applying technologies that have positive impacts on the environment, including the conservation of ecosystems and the efforts made by the food processing industry. It is also important to increase private investment, which can lead to the protection of the environment, human rights, etc., to promote innovation, such as smart agriculture. Such innovation and efforts should lead to the transformation of production forms (e.g., digitalization and application of agriculture-related technology) and GHG reduction.

THAILAND (On behalf of the Asia Regional Group)

Submitted Monday April 19 2021, at 15:01

The Asia Regional Group welcomes the Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and appreciates the continued efforts of CFS members and stakeholders towards achieving food security and related SDGs.

We commend the prompt action taken by CFS to address the challenges and impacts posed on food systems by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Asia, we have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic on food insecurity and malnutrition, and related disruptions of the global food supply

chains. The Covid-19 crisis has particularly affected family farmers, small holders, and vulnerable people that we need to build resilience for those people and bring back better livelihoods for all.

We welcome the 15th Report of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (CFS HLPE) entitled ‘Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030’ and the proposed two new dimensions of food security – namely “agency” and “sustainability”. We highlight the importance of putting people at the center of sustainable development at local level to achieve global food security and nutrition.

We welcome the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN). We underline the valuable inputs the VGFSyN will provide to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 discussions and follow-up processes. We encourage their uptake and implementation taking into due consideration different national capacities, levels of development, policies and priorities as well as individual circumstances, in particular its climate and natural environment. We encourage all members and stakeholders to share lessons learned from using the VGFSyN and to disseminate the VGFSyN to the widest possible audience.

We welcome the updated CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023 with its six thematic workstreams and request the Rome-based Agencies to honor their verbal agreement to share equally the costs of CFS Secretariat budget as a symbol of effective Rome-based Agencies collaboration.

With this statement, Asia Regional Group endorses the report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

***Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría***

Zimbabwe:

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Secretariat would like to thank the Government of Zimbabwe for its positive comments on the report, and welcomes continued strong participation of Zimbabwe and other African countries in the work and deliberations of the CFS, especially current workstreams that are especially relevant to the continent; Agroecological and other innovative approaches, gender equality and women’s empowerment, youth engagement and employment in food systems, and data collection and analysis tools.

Dominican Republic:

The CFS Secretariat would like to thank the Dominican Republic for being an active Member of the CFS Bureau, and Ambassador Arvelo, former CFS Chair, for being a strong advocate and champion of the CFS in other venues and occasions.

The CFS Secretariat wishes to congratulate the Dominican Republic for having taken the CFS Framework for Action in Protracted Crises to the UN Security Council during its presidency during 2020, and for raising attention to the food insecurity and conflict nexus at the highest political levels.

The Dominican Republic is right to point out the global significance of the CFS as an open and inclusive platform, and the importance of continued and equal RBA support to its operations.

The CFS Secretariat is looking for regional champions to support awareness, use and implementation of CFS products, including the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN), and would welcome the Dominican Republic continuing to take up such a role among GRULAC countries, including on the CFS workstream to promote gender equality and women/girls’ empowerment.

United States of America:

The CFS Chair and Secretariat welcome the acknowledgement of the United States of America of the importance of the VGFSyN, thanks it for its active engagement in their negotiation, and seeks its continued support for efforts to promote its visibility and utilization at global, regional, national and local levels, both at home and abroad, and within the context of the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit.

The CFS Secretariat, upon request of the United States, added its ‘explanation of position’ as Appendix F to document C 2021/20.

Argentina:

The CFS Secretariat welcomes the very comprehensive comments from the Government of Argentina and underlines the work undertaken by the CFS Chairperson, Bureau - including Argentina - and its Advisory Group, the CFS High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) Steering Committee, and the Secretariat for addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on global food security and nutrition, particularly for the most vulnerable, marginalized and food insecure individuals and/or communities.

The CFS Secretariat acknowledges the proposal to organize regional consultations on the CFS Framework for Action in Protracted Crises to foster context-specific ideas and plans to facilitate their utilization and address protracted crises at their roots, and stand ready to further explore this in consultations with the delegation of Argentina and the CFS Bureau.

The CFS Secretariat welcomes Argentina’s focus on rural and indigenous women for the development of Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, and takes note of its comments on the VGFSyN, in particular the role of trade, value chains, and balancing economic, social and environmental sustainability priorities. The CFS Secretariat invites Argentina to consider championing the VGFSyN within its region to promote awareness and implementation.

Australia:

The CFS Secretariat thanks Australia for serving as an alternate Bureau member to New Zealand, and appreciates its recognition of the significant amount of work undertaken on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics, including COVID-19 response and Summit preparations.

The CFS Secretariat appreciates Australia for underscoring the importance of the CFS data workstream, and highlights that on 1 July 2021, the CFS Secretariat will organize a public event with the dual objective of (i) kick-starting the discussions on this topic within the CFS and (ii) informing the CFS HLPE report on this topic expected for mid-2022.

The CFS Secretariat welcomes extra-budgetary contributions for implementation of this workstream, as well as other Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023 activities, and encourages Australia to consider making a financial or in-kind contribution.

European Union (EU):

The CFS Secretariat thanks the EU for its endorsement of the report, for its detailed comments, and for its continuous strong support to the CFS since its reform.

The CFS Secretariat welcomes efforts by the EU to support dissemination and implementation of the VGFSyN among its Members, and among its development partners.

The CFS Secretariat takes note of the call to improve dialogue with the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism (CSM), and joins the EU in calling upon CSM to join consensus on the VGFSyN to strengthen their promotion and application.

The CFS Secretariat concurs with the EU’s view on the value of the CFS HLPE and its inputs, and agrees that CFS must retain the ability and capacity to adapt its programme of work, as needed, to new and emerging Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) issues.

The CFS Secretariat welcomes the EU’s endorsement of the updated MyPoW (2020-2023) and hopes the EU will continue to contribute, both technically and financially, to its successful implementation.

Japan:

The CFS Secretariat takes note of the positive comments from Japan, and welcomes Japan’s commitment to support dissemination and use of VGFSyN, tailored to regional and national context and conditions, with an emphasis on digital technologies and increased private sector investment.

The CFS Secretariat would welcome Japan becoming a champion of the VGFSyN in Asia and beyond, including partnering with the CFS to promote use of the VGFSyN during its Nutrition for Growth Summit this year.

Thailand:

The CFS Secretariat welcomes the comments from Thailand, on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The CFS Secretariat shares the concern that family farmers, small holders, and vulnerable people are among the groups hardest hit by the global pandemic, and agrees on the need to build back better by strengthening their livelihoods and resilience to shocks.

The CFS Secretariat agrees on the valuable inputs the VGFSyN will provide to the UN Food Systems Summit preparation and follow-up processes, and encourages the Government of Thailand to take a leadership role in promoting their uptake and implementation within the Asia Pacific region.

The CFS Secretariat encourages all Members and stakeholders to disseminate the VGFSyN, foster their implementation, and share lessons and challenges with other CFS members.

The CFS Secretariat agrees on the importance of the two new proposed dimensions of food security to advance progress on SDG 2 and Agenda 2030, as presented in the CFS HLPE Report #15.

CHAIRPERSON

I will read out my conclusions on this Item.

Item 12, Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, 8-11 February 2021:

1. The Council considered the recommendations contained in the Report of the 47th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and in particular:

- (a) commended the Committee for the endorsement of Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) and requested FAO to support the development of actions that are relevant to national contexts, by promoting policy coherence, coordination and convergence across different domains, and to encourage the application of VGFSyN by its Members in conjunction with other specialised science and evidence-based standards, guidelines and recommendations;
- (b) urged the UN Food Systems Summit Secretariat and other Summits structures to make use of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, as a valuable input to the 2021 Summit discussions and any follow-up process;
- (c) reaffirmed that protracted crises are one of the most challenging contexts in which to fight hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and requested FAO to collaborate with the other Rome-based Agencies and relevant UN bodies to make additional efforts to promote a broad systematic dissemination and application of the CFS's Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, especially at national level, as a useful tool for addressing food security and nutrition concerns in protracted crisis situations;
- (d) welcomed the approval of the Terms of Reference for the preparation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, and encouraged FAO to support its development; and
- (e) requested the three Rome-based Agencies continue to share equally the cost of Secretariat of the CFS.

That is the end of the conclusions. Any comments?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tengo una sugerencia de incorporación de párrafo, puede ser en cualquier lugar. Traté de hacer un párrafo lo más general posible para que capte la preocupación de algunos Miembros sin afectar a nadie. Voy a leer, en inglés, a velocidad de dictado. *“Stressed the importance CPS Secretariat to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies when drafting documents that will be negotiated among Members.”*

La idea es de ninguna manera restringir el trabajo de tan importante Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) liderado por un maestro de la diplomacia como el Embajador de Tailandia, Señor Thanawat Tiensin. Sino es para que pueda haber una base más efectiva en los procesos de negociación, y tener una base común. Esa es la *rationale* de la propuesta. Espero que los colegas puedan estar de acuerdo.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

I would like to thank the Ambassador of Argentina for his proposal. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Secretariat is well aware of these issues, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Members and other stakeholders for your support and contribution for the work of the Committee on World Food Security, during the year. The difficult situation of the COVID-19, at least recently that you just already mentioned. We could manage to adopt the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, and that is why we also would like to encourage Members to utilize and also to promote the uptake and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines at country level.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I just have a question for clarification about the proposal by Argentina. It is more a process issue, or governance issue. I was just wondering how, I know that there is a Report of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to the FAO Council and Conference. However, I was wondering what is the link between us mandating or asking the CFS Secretariat to use or to mandate the CFS Secretariat as well in terms of the relationship between agreed language by the FAO Governing Bodies, as opposed to by the CFS? I would welcome any clarification on that.

Sr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Primero, permítame agradecer y reconocer como siempre el liderazgo del Embajador de Tailandia que está haciendo una tarea excepcional como Presidente del CSA. En segundo lugar, quiero agradecerle también a mi colega de Canadá la oportunidad para poder responder a esta propuesta. No se habla de ningún mandato, estamos solamente planteando "*express the importance*", es decir, marcar la importancia que van llamando la atención, solicitando tener en consideración.

Es decir, lo que estamos tratando es que haya básicamente una consideración a "la importancia de", nada más. No nos metemos en una discusión vinculada a los mandatos, por lo tanto, no hay ninguna acción, sino que hay como un principio, creo que esto es lo que está planteando "*express the importance*". Espero haber sido claro y que no haya ninguna duda por parte de mi estimada colega de Canadá.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no further requests for the floor, so we can consider Item 12 concluded.

Item 15. FAO Awards

Point 15. Prix de la FAO

Tema 15. Premios de la FAO

(CL 166/15)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 15. Item 15 is the *FAO Awards*. The document before you is *CL 166/15*.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana reconoce y apoya el papel fundamental de los Premios de la FAO debido al significado que han asumido en el tiempo como instrumento de visibilidad del trabajo de la FAO, como incentivo para aumentar la calidad de los proyectos rurales, así como para realzar el prestigio

global de la Organización. República Dominicana ha merecido uno de los premios de la FAO por lo que conocemos muy bien el impacto que este tipo de incentivos tiene en nuestros medios rurales y en su desarrollo.

Respaldamos todo el proceso y la propuesta estructural elaborada por la Administración para el nuevo conjunto de Premios de la FAO, destacando que estos conservan la relevancia institucional e importancia estratégica de los precedentes premios.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia respectfully provides the following comments:

- We consider that FAO Awards are useful in giving visibility to FAO's work and promoting excellence in the field, and we support the concept of the awards in general.
- We have previously expressed concern that the projected biennial costs of the existing awards program do not reflect sustainable levels of expenditure from the Regular Programme Budget.
- We have also previously expressed concern that, with the application of term-limits for Directors-General, there would likely be an increase over time in the number of awards, further questioning their sustainability.
- Noting the above points, Australia welcomes the proposal to introduce a new set of systemic and sustainable institutional awards.
- Australia also has no concerns with maintaining awards which have no financial implication on the Organisation (e.g. such as those that are funded in full by a Member).
- From a principles base, Australia emphasises:
 - the importance of the allocated budget of the awards remaining stable and not resulting in an ongoing financial burden on the Organisation; and
 - the need to ensure that the total number of awards do not dilute the overall significance of the awards program.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Management thanks the Dominican Republic for the statement, and appreciated the importance it has attached to the FAO Awards.

The Management thanks Australia for the statement and wishes to reiterate that the proposal has capped Regular Programme Budget contribution to the Awards to the current allocation of USD 125,000 per biennium. All additional requirements will be funded through a dedicated Trust Fund with voluntary contributions.

The maximum of 10 awardees in a category would be a cap set by the Conference, allowing for flexibility in situations which may call for recognition of collective efforts that involve multiple entities/individuals.

The proposed criteria and selection process, based on current good practices that have been previously approved by the Conference, provide for Member representation in the selection committees.

The proposed criteria and selection process, reproduced below, is based on previous Conference-approved texts on the processes, with no deviation. Members are represented in all the selection committees.

- a) *Eligibility for the awards: Members, institutions, individuals, international/regional organizations, academic or research entities, civil society groups, private sector entities and FAO employees can be nominated for the various awards, according to a set of specific criteria, for outstanding contribution towards advancing the overall goals of the Organization, including the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The awards will be in the categories of, i) the FAO Champion Award, the highest corporate Award for Members or their representatives for contribution to the overall achievement of FAO mandate; ii) Partnership, for outstanding cooperation with FAO; iii) Achievement, in*

various sectors and programmes related to the work of the Organization; iv) Innovation, for ground-breaking innovation in areas under FAO's mandate; and, v) Employees, for exceptional effectiveness and accomplishment in serving the Organization.

- b) Nature of the award: the award will consist of a scroll describing the recipient's achievements and a cash prize. No cash prize will be given to FAO employees, in any categories.*
- c) Selection of winners: An ad hoc interdepartmental Screening Committee, chaired by a member of the core leadership, will make a shortlist of nominations. The winners will be chosen by a Selection Committee chaired by the Director-General and comprising the Independent Chairperson of the Council, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee and the Chairperson of the Programme Committee.*
- d) Conferment of the awards: the awards will be presented at a ceremony during the Conference, Council, World Food Day or other high visibility events.*

CHAIRPERSON

I will read out the conclusions on the Awards. Item 15, *FAO Awards*.

1. The Council welcomed document CL166/15, *FAO Awards*, and:
 - (a) welcomed the Independent Chairperson of the Council consultations with Members towards defining consistent and sustainable conditions for the award of prizes in the context of his informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups;
 - (b) noted that the Management proposal for a new set of systematic and sustainable FAO Awards incorporated input from Members, and were conceptualized around topics of institutional relevance and strategic importance, aimed at bolstering the pertinence of the awards and leveraging the FAO Brand;
 - (c) noted that the existing awards, which are funded entirely by Members' extra-budgetary contributions will be maintained;
 - (d) appreciated the criteria and procedures for the nomination and selection of awards, as outlined in *Annex 2* of CL 166/15;
 - (e) welcomed the proposal to cap the current level of biennium funding of the FAO Awards at USD 125 000 of the regular programme budget; and
 - (f) recommended the Conference at its 42nd Session endorse the Management proposal for a new set of FAO Awards.

Canada, you have the floor.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am sorry. I wanted to go back again to the other item. However, I do not know if you want to first close the one on 15, regarding the proposal made by Argentina, and I am very grateful for his clarification. I still wanted to intervene on that point.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, Canada, let us go ahead and intervene on that, because I would prefer to get it off the Agenda and move forward. Go back to the Argentinian subparagraph and whatever comment you have on item 12.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am very grateful for the explanation of the Ambassador of Argentina, and I was wondering if perhaps the Legal Counsel could give an explanation as well. I do not want to either complicate the discussions, but I think at least if we would, there is a governing process within the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and with the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) as well, and a whole process to agree to some of the products.

I think that at least if you could take out CFS Secretariat, maybe just to stress the importance of using multilateral agreed concepts and language as well as remove the link to the FAO Governing Bodies,

because CFS is separate from FAO and it is broader. I would prefer not to create any precedent in terms of that kind of relationship. Then, it would also be “and give preference to those adopted” would be removed.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Nuevamente le agradezco a mi querida colega de Canadá porque me sigue dando posibilidad de que a esta hora de la mañana después de haber dormido poco, siga forzando mi cabeza para tratar de responder, así que, le agradezco.

Soy flexible, no pretendo tener una polémica sobre el tema, solo quiero clarificar que reitero, si hubiéramos intentado, por ejemplo, incluir a al Grupo de alto nivel de expertos en seguridad alimentaria y nutrición (GANESAN) hubiéramos puesto, “productos” no “documentos”. Por lo tanto, no es esa la intención, pero aceptaría a ver si podemos establecer como solución de compromiso con mi estimada colega de Canadá, mantener “*CFS Secretariat*” y borrar lo que está entre paréntesis en la segunda línea.

No tengo problemas si eso le da tranquilidad y de esa manera evitamos una discusión *in aeternum*, si estamos de acuerdo con esa solución de compromiso.

CHAIRPERSON

Canada, would you agree with this latest suggestion?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I am not sure what the proposal for the first line is, because it is still in brackets. Our proposal was to also remove, it is just “stressing the importance of multilaterally agreed language” or “to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language”.

CHAIRPERSON

It would be “the CFS Secretariat producing documents”.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

It is not always. There are technical tasks. I think that we would even prefer not to say when draft, we would just stress the importance to use multilaterally agreed concepts and language.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Insisto con el tema. No lo estamos pidiendo para los productos. Si hablamos de GANESAN, estaríamos hablando de productos. No estamos hablando de productos, estamos hablando de documentos que van a ser negociados entre los Miembros. Entonces, los borradores, los *drafts*, para poder empezar a conversar y a negociar sobre una base clara que permita tener los elementos que ayuden a construir consenso.

Estamos hablando de algo muy simple, no estamos hablando de productos. No debemos confundir respecto de lo que puede ser productos del GANESAN. Además, estamos hablando de la Secretaría, o sea, documentos que presenta la Secretaría, no estamos hablando de los productos que provienen de los expertos. Estoy hablando de otra cosa. Creo que es claro esto.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf on the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer)(Portugal)

We are recognizing the importance of using agreed language in order to facilitate our life when we start discussing, that is an important point. We also recognize that we need flexibility in order to start discussing new things that is why we have the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

Since we have a Panel of Experts, the panel of experts and the model of working of the CFS is going for new deliberations, going for new solutions for new problems and we always need new language that is one of the principles enshrined in the CFS model. We do recognize the importance for practical terms of what is here and the proposal from our Distinguished Colleague and my friend from

Argentina, thank you very much for the proposal, but we also do think that the position expressed by Canada is a very important one regarding our working methods.

In this case, I think that we can go for a compromise here, but we should stress that sometimes we need to go beyond the language we already have, we have to think anew, sometimes. We express our sympathies by the positions expressed by Canada.

CHAIRPERSON

I have now request for the floor from three Members. May I appeal to you to show some flexibility, because here it started off not in a very controversial way? I do not think there is a controversy, but we seem to be concentrating too much on vocabulary, rather than concepts.

Belgium, you have the floor, followed by Nicaragua and then Canada. Could I please ask for some flexibility, because we have got items on the Agenda which would take a lot of your energy to come together, and I would not like to be stuck on, sort of wording. Is it possible to leave it for the Drafting Committee?

Ms Lieselot GERMONPREZ (Belgium)

I would just like to express my strong support to what has been said by Canada and Portugal. We would also like to stop after “concepts” and leave the rest of the sentence, as CFS is a multistakeholder body, so it is not really all up to FAO Council to decide.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En realidad, no quisiéramos alargar la discusión. En relación al comentario que hizo nuestro colega de Portugal, en nombre de la Unión Europea, es verdad, pueden surgir lenguajes nuevos en las discusiones, pero como bien lo recordaban, estos lenguajes tienen que ser concordado.

Yo seguiría su consejo, que tratemos de encontrar una solución con el Comité de Redacción y sigamos adelante con otros puntos del Programa.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I have listened to the interventions, and as well thank you very much, Ambassador from Argentina, for your clarification and we can be flexible and have this compromised proposal, given the explanation of the Ambassador of Argentina, that it was not aimed to broadly speaking at all the products.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just reacting briefly to a previous comment, it is hard to understand how we can use only concepts without using language, unless we are using language for deaf and mute people, it is hard to express concepts without language.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo para agradecerle a Canadá la flexibilidad y también los comentarios de la Unión Europea y de Bélgica porque en definitiva juntos pudimos construir consenso. Y, por supuesto, en primer lugar, al líder del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria que fue el primero que entendió la lógica de esta propuesta.

CHAIRPERSON

Members are agreed that the wording can be refined by the Drafting Committee, so we will move forward and leave the language issue to the Drafting Committee where the points can be made, because each region is represented there.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thank you again for your suggestions in order to improve the work of the Committee of Food Security. As you can recall after the CFS reform in 2009, CFS is an intergovernmental body. One of the issues that we are discussing is about inclusiveness and also about multilateral engagement, and that is why we also have to ensure that the Committee, the work that we are doing for the Committee also pays attention to the multilateral engagement and also other stakeholders that are working with the Committees, apart from the Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no further requests for the floor, and so we conclude this Item. The wording will be looked at by the Drafting Committee.

We were on Item 15. I had introduced the *FAO Awards*, reference to *CL166/15*, and then I read out my conclusions. Any comment on the conclusions for Item 15, *FAO Awards*?

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I just had a question on sub-paragraph (e). I wonder if we could just quote the document *CL 166/15*. In this conclusion it says, “welcomed the proposal to cap the current level,” but the document indeed says “the future level of biennium funding”, and I wonder if we could make that switch just to reflect the document.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? I see none, so Item 15 is concluded.

Item 16. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 165th Session of the Council (30 November–4 December 2020)**Point 16. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent soixante-cinquième session (30 novembre-4 décembre 2020)****Tema 16. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 165.º período de sesiones (30 de noviembre – 4 de diciembre de 2020)**

(*CL 166/LIM/3*)

CHAIRPERSON

We come to item 16, which is *Status of Implementation of Decisions Taken at the 165th Session of the Council*. The document before you is *CL 166/LIM/3*.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

Tomamos nota de la información presentada en el documento *CL 166/LIM/3*.

Damos la bienvenida a los avances realizados con relación a la acción 9 sobre la participación de la FAO en la preparación de la Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios y el apoyo al proceso de preparación de esta. Reiteramos la importancia de seguir fomentando los progresos alcanzados, para que esta acción se concluya lo antes posible.

Valoramos el compromiso conjunto de los OSR para fortalecer la colaboración dentro del nuevo posicionamiento de la arquitectura de Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo.

Alentamos a que la FAO continúe los esfuerzos destinados a integrar funciones administrativas y de supervisión, en especial en lo que respecta a la planificación y programación por países (acción 34).

Hacemos hincapié en la necesidad de contar con los resultados de la evaluación conjunta sobre la colaboración entre los OSR para contribuir a la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios de 2021 (acción 27).

En cuanto a la Iniciativa Mano de la mano, vemos con satisfacción los avances registrados, en particular la ampliación de los criterios de selección a beneficio de los países en desarrollo de ingresos medianos y altos. Invitamos a la FAO a seguir desarrollando esta iniciativa, sobre todo, en cuanto a los aspectos presupuestarios y relativos a la gobernanza en el contexto del PTP 2022-23.

Sobre las acciones relacionadas con el nuevo Marco Estratégico y la nueva estrategia para la colaboración con el sector privado, apreciamos que se nos mantenga informados sobre los resultados del análisis de los costos y los beneficios, así como de la reasignación de personal y fondos en el seno de la PSR, según lo previsto.

BRAZIL

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:58

Brazil notes with concern that FAO is preparing a publication with the title "Agroforestry as a nature-based solution for sustainable food systems", as reported on pages 6 and 8 of the document CL 166/LIM/3. There is no multilaterally agreed definition for "nature-based solutions" as acknowledged by the FAO Committee on Forestry in its last session, on October 2020 (para 22. 1 of the report). The FAO Committee on Forestry, the FAO Programme Committee and the FAO Council have repeatedly called on FAO to use only multilaterally-agreed language in its publications. Brazil asks FAO to review the title and content of this publication in line with the aforementioned guidance provided by its Members.

Brazil would like to ask for further details on the "decision support framework through which countries can identify tools for managing trade-offs between the agriculture and forestry sectors", mentioned on page 6, in particular how FAO is considering different regional and national experiences in this field and when the initiative would be launched.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the information presented in CL 166/LIM/3 – Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 165th Council – and offers the following comments:

Para 2 - We welcome the prioritisation of normative and technical work and the emphasis on data in the Strategic Framework 2022-31. We appreciate the Framework's recognition of the FAO's crucial role in gathering, analysing, and improving access to data and information to address major policy and investment gaps, such as through initiatives like the Hand-in-Hand Initiative's Geospatial Platform.

Para 9 - We welcome the FAO's engagement with the Food Systems Summit and its support of the Action Tracks. We are pleased to see that FAO is supporting the Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues and Member State Dialogues, and particularly welcome its support of data provision, for example via Rapid Food Systems Assessments. Australia encourages the FAO to support sustained investments in data collection and data sharing to address food systems weaknesses, particularly in remote Small Island Developing States (including Pacific Island Countries).

Para 14 - We welcome the inclusion of a One Health Approach in Biodiversity mainstreaming and look forward to the finalisation of the Mainstreaming biodiversity into One Health study.

Para 16 - We are supportive of strengthening coordination between the Committee on Forestry and the Committee on Agriculture, and note that the Committee on Agriculture should be the lead discussant on land clearing and deforestation (caused by agricultural expansion), which have recently only been considered by COFO.

Paras 27 and 34 - Australia welcomes efforts made to improve collaboration between the RBAs in order to maximise the impact of their comparative advantages, capabilities and expertise. The importance of such collaboration has been reinforced during the current pandemic, and Australia appreciates the efforts of the RBAs to coordinate at the global, corporate, regional, and country levels across their country programming and planning, policy and analytical support, advocacy and information, and business continuity activities in response to COVID-19. Australia is supportive of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs)' joined-up involvement in the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and encourages these Organizations to foster strong interlinkages across the Action Tracks for which they are responsible. Finally, we reiterate the importance of the RBAs continuing to strengthen their collaboration with attention to the broader context of UN reform.

Para 32 - We are pleased to see the development of a proposal for strengthening the governance of statistical activities. We recognise the crucial role of the FAO in gathering and analysing data and appreciate its investment in improving these processes.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 23:10

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States regarding the abovementioned agenda item for the 166th Session of the FAO Council.

Considering the decisions taken at the 165th Session of the Council, held last December, we request updated information about when the following decisions will be accomplished:

The costs and benefits of the “FAO’s new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement”, as well as further analysis of FAO’s business model and different funding sources, and information on how these will be reported on in Council sessions.

The resources mobilized and available (from voluntary contributions and from the Technical Cooperation Programme) for the COVID-19 response.

The feasibility study of the on the analysis of integration of administrative functions and common specialized expertise regarding Rome-based Agencies collaboration.

GUINÉE (on behalf of the Africa Regional Group)

Soumis le vendredi 16 avril 2021, à 11:52

La République de Guinée intervient sur ce point de l’ordre du jour au nom du Groupe régional Afrique.

Le Groupe régional Afrique remercie le Secrétariat pour l’élaboration du document intitulé « Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le conseil à sa 165ème session ».

Nous nous félicitons des efforts fournis par le Secrétariat de la FAO pour donner une réponse à la majorité des questions soulevées par le conseil à sa 165ème session.

Le Groupe régional Afrique apprécie le modèle de présentation du tableau qui fait l’état des lieux de chacune des recommandations du conseil et note avec satisfaction que sur les 34 décisions adoptées 15 ont été mises en œuvre et 19 sont en cours de mise en œuvre.

Le Groupe régional Afrique se félicite de l’intérêt manifesté par la FAO de continuer à accorder une priorité aux activités normatives et techniques dans le nouveau programme de travail et budget 2022-2023 et ce, malgré l’impact du COVID-19.

Concernant l’initiative Main dans la main, le Groupe régional Afrique accueille avec satisfaction la révision des critères de sélection pour permettre à d’autres pays en développement de bénéficier de cette initiative.

A propos du sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires, le Groupe régional Afrique se félicite du rôle de chef de file que la FAO joue dans ce processus de préparation du Sommet. Nous considérons qu’il s’agit d’un processus en évolution constante jusqu’à la tenue du sommet.

S’agissant du Programme de coopération technique, le Groupe régional encourage la FAO à accélérer la mise en œuvre de la recommandation du conseil concernant notamment la demande faite à la Direction pour rationaliser d’avantage le cycle et les procédures d’approbation des Projets de Coopération Technique (PCT).

Avec ces commentaires le Groupe régional Afrique invite le conseil à prendre note des informations communiquées dans le document.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

In response to Brazil, the title of the document (an issue brief), still in early preparation phase, currently reads “Agroforestry as a possible solution for sustainable food systems”. It is correct that the

initially proposed title for this Forestry Division Issue brief contained the term “nature-based solution”. However, further to a comment by Argentina prior to the 130th Session of the Programme Committee, this was already revised to “agroforestry as a possible solution for sustainable food systems” in the relevant document (PC 130/7 Rev.1¹).

FAO undertook an initial review of tools that assist decision making at landscape level to reduce deforestation in 2020. In 2021, FAO is co-developing with at least two UN-REDD pilot countries a landscape tool navigator to enable REDD+ practitioners finding the right technical tool to enhance synergies and manage trade-offs between agriculture and forestry. The beta version of the navigator solution is planned to be launched at the end of 2021.

The Secretariat takes note of the comments and suggestions and is pleased to acknowledge Members’ recognition that collaboration between FAO, WFP and IFAD has improved at the global, regional, and country levels within the context of the broader UN Development System (UNDS) repositioning.

In relation to the preparations of the Food Systems Summit 2021, the Secretariat reassures Members that the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) are working together and with other UN Agencies across all the five Action Tracks and are coordinating on key crosscutting issues for the development of game changing solutions. The RBAs also continue working on the ground to support the national Food Systems Summit Dialogues, contributing to prepare the UN System for the implementation of the Summit outcomes.

The Secretariat acknowledges that the results of the Joint Evaluation on RBA collaboration may be helpful in consideration of the implementation of the Food System Summit’s outcomes. The independent joint evaluation will primarily assess the extent of RBA contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly at the country level, and will be completed by yearend.

The Secretariat would like to report that the process of developing a Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) relating to the implementation of FAO’s Private Sector Strategy is underway, and the relevant Terms of Reference are being defined with support of the Investment Center. This is a complex undertaking; while the costs of the Strategy’s implementation can be directly quantified, many of the Strategy’s desired outcomes are challenging to express in financial terms, such as for example innovation, data and knowledge sharing, or SDG-alignment and SDG advocacy with private sector businesses. Therefore, certain benefits might need to be expressed in qualitative terms.

The results of the CBA will be presented to the Council in the Spring Session of 2022 as part of the Annual Progress Report. This will allow the CBA to cover a full year of implementation since the endorsement of the Strategy. The Secretariat will inform on the progress of the CBA at the November 2021 Programme Committee Session.

Regarding the query on human resources related to the implementation of the Strategy, the Secretariat would like to inform the members that the team relies primarily on the support of the three Regular Programme Professional staff that were transferred from PSU to PSR with the approved reallocation of 1 See page 19: <http://www.fao.org/3/ne857en/ne857en.pdf> responsibilities. Punctual assistance from the rest of the Business Development and Private Sector Unit team has been used to support these. Many activities have benefited from ad-hoc cooperation with colleagues from OCC, CSI, LEG, PSU and PSS. The PSR Business Development and Private Sector Unit will be strengthened by a P-4 level professional seconded from the Swedish government in August of this year. Additional support will be provided by the Private Sector Inter-Departmental Working Group (PSIDWG) advising on, inter alia, capacity development and training, as well as key guiding documents and tools on private sector engagement. The first meeting of PS-IDWG is planned for the end of May.

With regard to the data request related to the COVID-19 response programme, it could be summarized as follows: FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme - target USD 1.32 billion; total pledged and confirmed contributions as of 19 April 2021: USD 247 million; Voluntary contributions: USD 218 million; Confirmed contributions: USD 106 million; Pledged contributions: USD 112

¹ See page 19: <http://www.fao.org/3/ne857en/ne857en.pdf>

million; TCP contributions: USD 28 million, FAO core resources for elaboration of COVID-19 data and statistics: USD 1.85 million.

Regarding the query about the feasibility study on the integration of administrative services amongst the RBAs, the study is being reformulated by the three Agencies and will be discussed with Members in an informal session before the end of June.

In relation to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the Secretariat reassures Members that, building on the substantial simplifications introduced in 2019, work is progressing to further streamline procedures during 2021. Improved approval performance against 2020-21 biennium despite COVID-19 is already showing the results of these efforts. Progress will be reported at the forthcoming Sessions of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusions on this Item are, in fact, one sentence.

Item 16, Status of Implementation of Decisions Taken at the 165th Session of the Council:

1. The Council took note of the status of implementation of decisions taken at its 165th Session held between 20 November and 4 December 2020.

That is it. I see no requests for the floor, so Item 16 is concluded.

Item 18. Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies

Point 18. Sélection et nomination des secrétaires des organes relevant de l'article XIV de l'Acte constitutif de la FAO

Tema 18. Selección y nombramiento de los secretarios de los órganos establecidos en virtud del artículo XIV

(CL 166/18)

CHAIRPERSON

Item 18, *Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies*. The document before you is CL 166/18. As a number of Members have noted in their written inputs, consultations have continued since the publication of the relevant Council document on 29 March 2021. Further updates on my consultations with the concerned Article XIV Bodies, and FAO management has been provided in the Secretariat's response under the written correspondence procedure, which is available on the dedicated webpage in all languages.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana acoge la información actualizada sobre el procedimiento de selección y nombramiento de los secretarios de los órganos establecidos que permiten a cada Presidente remitir al Director General el nombre del candidato elegido por una comisión, con arreglo a los procedimientos mencionados, a efectos de su nombramiento. Reconocemos el trabajo y los esfuerzos llevados a cabo por el Presidente Independiente del Consejo en lograr examinar y acordar el procedimiento por parte de los órganos rectores y de los órganos establecidos que han logrado el procedimiento de la selección, nombramiento y mandato de los secretarios ejecutivos de dichos órganos. Dicho procedimiento permitirá una aceleración de los procesos y por tanto una mayor eficiencia para los organismos después de un largo examen por parte de los órganos.

Apoyamos la adopción del procedimiento propuesto.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:56

The United States appreciates the Independent Chairperson of the Council's significant and long-term engagement and consultations on this matter, and efforts to resolve the appointment procedures for Article XIV Body Secretaries with concerned bodies. We support finding a consensus on a lasting agreement with these entities. We understand that since the publication of the paper (CL 166/18), consultations have continued in a fruitful and constructive manner, including with further correspondence from the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) that indicates an agreement is near. We would like to see relevant updates in this regard reflected in the document.

With this progress in mind, the United States recommends that consultations continue, with urgency, to bring this matter to a close. We further recommend that when agreement is reached with these bodies, that the updated procedures are made available to all Article XIV Bodies for adoption, for streamlined processes.

Specifically in response to a suggested Council action in Paragraph 25 of (CL 166/18), the United States cannot support the jettisoning or transitioning of the concerned Article XIV Bodies to operate outside FAO's legal authority and objects to this approach. The United States believes in the case of at least one of the concerned Article XIV bodies, transitioning the entity to operate outside of FAO's legal framework would be complex because of specific treaty language, and could involve necessary amendments to the treaty and/or FAO's Constitution.

We are encouraged by the flexibility and spirit of compromise demonstrated by all of the relevant parties and encourage consultations to continue in this spirit, in order to reach a consensus for a lasting arrangement.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miercoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

La Argentina tiene el placer de referirse en el presente tema de agenda, al punto C del documento CL166/18 que se refiere al procedimiento de selección del Secretario del Tratado Internacional sobre los Recursos Fitogenéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (TIRFAA). Al respecto, cabe recordar que la presidenta del Bureau del TIRFAA remitió con fecha del 2 de abril de 2021 una propuesta de compromiso sobre el procedimiento de selección del Secretario del TIRFAA, que tiene el aval de todas las regiones representadas en el Bureau de dicho Tratado.

Por tanto, mucho se agradecerá conocer la opinión de la FAO al respecto con miras a una finalización de las discusiones sobre este tema.

BRAZIL

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 16:58

Brazil underscores the need for a timely solution to this protracted matter, and reiterates its support to the work of the Independent Chairperson of the Council. Brazil is actively contributing to consensus building, both as a Member of FAO and as a Member of the ITPGRFA. Brazil notes that the next meeting of the Governing Body of the ITPGRFA is scheduled to take place in December 2021, and might be postponed to 2022, due to the pandemic.

Brazil would like to ask for clarification on the following:

- Does FAO Management believe it is necessary or desirable that the exact same procedures for selection and appointment of Secretaries apply to the three Article XIV Bodies engaged in the negotiations?
- Could FAO confirm that, once agreement is reached with the three Article XIV Bodies engaged in the negotiations, it would apply solely to those bodies, while the status quo would be maintained regarding other Article XIV Bodies?

Did any Article XIV Body express interest in operating as entities outside the FAO legal framework?

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the request for the 166th Session of the Council to provide conclusive guidance in order to bring this matter to a close. However, we also note that, at the time of submitting these comments (14 April 2021), consultations with these bodies is still ongoing but that, in the main, good progress has been made. We thank the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and the Legal Counsel for their efforts in this regard and we welcome the cooperation and constructive negotiation demonstrated by all parties involved.

For the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) process, Australia notes that the Commission, guided by Australian leadership, has worked diligently with the FAO and that a majority of the text has now been agreed. We also understand that the Commission is set to consider a revised compromised text in June 2021, which preserves a clear role for the IOTC Membership to participate in recruitment, but which also ensures that the Director-General's accountability and liabilities to the FAO are effectively managed.

For the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), Australia understands a revised compromise proposal has now been forwarded to the FAO by the Bureau of the Treaty for consideration. We also understand that, like the IOTC, the ITPGRFA Bureau are confident that the issue is close to being resolved, pending feedback from the FAO and final agreement by the Governing Body.

Taking the above positive progress for at least two of the bodies into consideration, Australia recommends that a final effort to conclude these discussions is made over coming months and, in the event a resolution cannot be achieved, the issue be brought to the attention of the Council in line with the request made by the 165th Session of the Council. In this regard, we take the opportunity to register that we do not support the proposal outlined in paragraph 25 of CL 166/18 to transition Bodies to operate outside of the FAO legal framework in the event consensus is not achieved.

CANADA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 22:27

Canada strongly believes in the principle that the Members of the Treaty retain a preponderant role in the selection of the Secretary of the Treaty. Canada proposes the following improvements to Annex A of document CL 166/18:

- Para.2: The text should specify that the Vacancy Announcement should be issued “to all Treaty Parties”, with enough time provided to communicate names to the Human Resources Division.
- Para.4: Canada prefers the wording that was used for the IOTC: “... the interview shortlist would contain at least [seven/ten] candidates including at least one female candidate. If there is no female candidate in the shortlist, the Panel Report must contain a justification. The list should be regionally and gender balanced;”
- Para.5: Canada prefers “The Interview Panel ... is composed of ... (c) three representatives of the Members...”

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 23:10

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, on the above-mentioned agenda item of the 166th Session of the FAO Council.

We welcome the engagement of the involved parties in trying to reach a consensus on a lasting arrangement for the selection and appointment of Secretaries of the Article XIV Bodies.

Taking into consideration the arguments listed and the evaluation conducted by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), we are looking forward to the evaluation conducted by all parties on the revised proposed procedure set out in Annex 1 to document CL 166/18. We stand ready to reach a consensus and bring the matter to a closure.

We would nonetheless like to express concern about the way parts of the CCLM report (document CL166/11) are reflected in document CL 166/18, particularly in paragraphs 12 and 25 thereof. In fact, these paragraphs give the impression that the CCLM urges the Council to bring the matter to a closure

without mentioning the fundamental element “subject to consensus been reached”. We would request that the content of the CCLM report be adequately reflected in the documents for this Council.

To better inform Members about the possible options, in case of lack of consensus, we request information on the possibility to transform these bodies into entities that operate outside FAO's structure.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

Since the publication of document CL 166/18, further consultations have been held by the Independent Chairperson of the Council with regard to the selection and appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies. In particular, further consultations have taken place with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (the Treaty).

Following the 17 March 2021 videoconference meeting between the ICC and the Chairperson and Bureau of the Treaty, the Chairperson submitted a revised proposed procedure to the ICC on 2 April 2021. This proposal contained the following adjustments to the ICC compromise procedure:

- the vacancy announcement issued for 30 days;
- the two representatives of the Treaty to serve on the Panel selecting candidates for interview and the Interview Panel to be “one from developed and one from developing countries”;
- the representatives of the Treaty on the Interview Panel to be not necessarily the same as those in the Panel selecting candidates for interview;
- the external member to serve on the Interview Panel to be selected by the Bureau of the Treaty and FAO from among three candidates proposed by CSH;
- the representative of CSH on the Interview Panel is without the right to participate in decisionmaking;
- the Panels shall make every effort to reach decision by consensus; and
- should the first candidate submitted by the Director-General to the Treaty be unacceptable to the Treaty, the second candidate proposed by the Director-General must be identified in the Panel Report.

Following consultation with FAO Management, the ICC communicated to the Chairperson of the Treaty on 20 April 2021 that the majority of the above-mentioned adjustments do not result in substantive modifications of the selection and appointment procedure in the ICC compromise proposal and, thus, have in principle been considered as acceptable.

One adjustment, however, with regard to the selection of the external member to serve on the Interview Panel, was viewed with concern by FAO Management. The selection of the external member, as an independent and technical expert, is a technical one to adhere to recruitment procedure best practices. It is believed that the external member on the Interview Panel should be selected by the Interview Panel itself, from among three candidates proposed by the Office of Human Resources (CSH). The Interview Panel is tasked with conducting the interviews and the preparation of the Panel Report and therefore should also be entrusted with the selection of the external member, in the view of FAO Management.

The ICC informed in his reply that FAO Management has accepted a proposal by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to increase the number of representatives of the Article XIV Body and FAO Management from two to three, respectively, in the Panel selecting candidates for interview and in the Interview Panel, for consideration by the Treaty as well.

With regard to the GFCM, on 14 April 2021, the Heads of Delegations of the GFCM held an ad-hoc videoconference meeting, at which the ongoing issue of the selection and appointment procedure for their Executive Secretary was discussed. The FAO Legal Counsel and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) attended this meeting to offer guidance and clarification to the ongoing consultations.

The ICC clarified the financial and administrative responsibilities of the Director-General for the work of Article XIV Bodies and its Secretaries, and noted his compromise procedure aimed to balance such responsibilities with the functional autonomy of the GFCM. The ICC informed that FAO Management has accepted a proposal by the IOTC to increase the number of representatives of the Article XIV Body and FAO Management from two to three, respectively, in the Panel selecting candidates for interview and in the Interview Panel. The Legal Counsel also clarified the legal requirements emanating from the Basic Texts of the Organization and the GFCM Framework. The Heads of Delegations of the GFCM noted their willingness to set up an ad-hoc Task Force in order to facilitate and expedite the ongoing consultations on this matter, and ensure coordination with the ICC and FAO Management in order to resolve this issue as soon as possible.

In response to Brazil, FAO Management is of the view that the same procedure for the selection and appointment of Secretaries should apply to the three Article XIV Bodies engaged in the negotiations.

Once an agreement is reached with the three Article XIV Bodies engaged in the negotiations procedure for the selection and appointment of their respective Secretary, that procedure would apply solely to those Article XIV bodies.

The Council Document 166/18 invites the Council “*to consider whether, if consensus is not reached in a timely manner, consultations should be initiated by Management with the Members of the Bodies concerned to support a transition of those Bodies to operate as entities outside the FAO legal framework, and to request Management to report thereon at its 168th Session.*” The procedures to be followed to achieve this outcome were considered in the past with respect to the IOTC where a complex and unprecedented situation had arisen. In May 2006, IOTC members expressed the view that the separation of the IOTC from FAO was necessary to make the IOTC a more effective and efficient body. The procedures were addressed, in particular, by the CCLM at its 81st Session (April 2007) and, subsequently, by the Council at its 132nd Session (June 2007). However, most Members of the Council were of the view that such separation was not necessary, and recalled that some IOTC countries present at the Eleventh Session of the IOTC held in Mauritius (from 13-18 May 2007) were not in favour of a change in status of IOTC as a Statutory Body of FAO².

In response to the European Union, regarding information on the possibility to transform these bodies into entities that operate outside FAO's structure, this is available in document CCLM 107/3, Part IV entitled Mechanisms to Establish Entities Outside the FAO Framework.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusions for item 18 are as follows:

Item 18, *Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies.*

1. The Council welcomed document *CL166/18 Selection and Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies*, and the update in the ongoing consultation by the independent Chairperson of the Council, on the long-term procedures for the selection and appointment of secretaries of Article XIV bodies, and in particular:
 - (a) commended the ICC for its continuous efforts in holding consultations with Members and Chairpersons of Article XIV bodies concerned and FAO Management towards finding a mutually agreeable solution and noted the protracted nature of this issue;
 - (b) welcomed the positive developments and spirit of compromise demonstrated by all parties in the consultations with the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM);
 - (c) reiterated the need to balance the functional autonomy of the relevant Article XIV bodies with the legal and administrative responsibilities born by the organization, as well as the accountability of the Director-General to the Secretaries of such Bodies;
 - (d) emphasized the urgency of defining a procedure for the selection and appointment of the Secretary of the GFCM in light of the end of the term of office of the current Secretary of the GFCM in 2021, and noted in this regard that should a long-term procedure not be

² CL 132/REP

found, the internal procedure amended by the Council at its 155th Session would apply; and

- (e) encouraged the ICC, including if necessary its successor, to continue consultations with the relevant Article XIV bodies and FAO management towards initially agreeable solution to the long-term procedures for the selection and appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies, and look forward to a timely solution to this matter.

The floor is now open for any comment or feedback. I see none, so Item 18 is concluded.

Item 19. Margarita Lizárraga Medal

Point 19. Médaille Margarita Lizárraga

Tema 19. Medalla Margarita Lizárraga

(CL 166/LIM/4)

CHAIRPERSON

We now have to move to Item 19, the *Margarita Lizárraga Medal*. The document before you is CL166/LIM/4.

Comments from Members Commentaires des Membres Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miercoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana apoya la nominación de Margaret Nakato del Katosi Women Development Trust de Uganda. Reconocemos el excelente trabajo que realiza la señora Nakato en el empoderamiento de las mujeres de las comunidades pesqueras, sirviendo como ejemplo a generaciones de mujeres en el sector de la pesca en pequeña escala responsable y sostenible.

Acompañamos la recomendación de que el Director General haga entrega de la Medalla Margarita Lizárraga en una ceremonia de premiación, en fecha a ser determinada.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the nomination for the Margarita Lizárraga Award to be presented before 31 December 2021.

Response from Secretariat Réponses du Secrétariat Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat fully appreciates the endorsement of the nomination and recommendation for the awarding ceremony, expressed by the Members, for the Margarita Lizárraga Medal 2020-2021.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusion on this is Item 19, *Margarita Lizárraga Medal*,

1. The Council endorsed the nomination of Ms Margaret Nakato of Katosi Women Development Trust in Uganda, and recommended that the Medal be presented by the Director-General at an award ceremony to be held before 31 December 2021.

The floor is open to Members.

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Mi Delegación hace suya la nominación de la Señora Margaret Nakato del Katosi, del Women Development Trust de Uganda, y respalda la solicitud de que el Director General haga entrega de la

Medalla Margarita Lizárraga en una ceremonia de premiación que se celebrará antes del 31 de diciembre de 2021.

Como se recordará, Margarita Lizárraga fue una auténtica campeona de la FAO, quien dedicó su vida profesional, primero en instituciones de México en materia pesquera y en la misión permanente de México en Roma y, durante muchos años, fue experta y funcionaria del Departamento de Pesca en la sede de la FAO. Y a la postre fue una pieza central en la preparación del Código de Conducta para la Pesca Responsable como un instrumento relevante en los trabajos de la Organización.

La medalla se estableció con el consenso aprobatorio de muchos Miembros que conocieron su trabajo y que en los hechos trabajaron con ella en los temas de política pesquera. Por ello, expresamos nuestro beneplácito a quienes con su contribución dan cuenta de la importancia de la pesca en la alimentación, en la nutrición y en los medios de vida y de la vigencia del referido Código de Conducta.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muy brevemente para apoyar con mucha fuerza lo expresado por mi querida colega de México porque aquí se juntan dos cosas. Por un lado, tener permanentemente presente a Margarita Lizárraga es algo que corresponde porque honra a la Organización, para los latinoamericanos, saber que vamos a poder entregar una medalla con su nombre, nos enorgullece.

Por otro lado, en particular, la persona a quién le van a entregar la medalla es un símbolo de los derechos de la mujer en África que creo que es absolutamente justificado y merecido.

CHAIRPERSON

With these comments, we conclude Item 19.

Item 20. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2021-22

Point 20. Calendrier 2021-2022 des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO et des autres réunions principales

Tema 20. Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO y otras reuniones importantes en 2021-22

(CL 166/LIM/1)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to item 20, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions*.

To avoid meetings overlapping, FAO draws up this calendar in close cooperation with IFAD and WFP, and through the web-based Rome-based Agencies (RBA) common calendar, which may be consulted by Members at any time through the FAO Members Gateway, on the FAO homepage, and on the relevant platforms of the other two agencies.

The schedule of meetings for 2021/2022 is before Council for information, and any changes made since the last Session are indicated with an asterisk.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Session 2021-22 and we remain hopeful that as the pandemic eases we may be in a position to return to engaging in these important meetings in a face-to-face capacity.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat took note of the comments received from Members on the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2021-22.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusion on this item is: Item 20, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and Other Main Sessions 2021/2022*,

1. The Council approved the calendar of FAO Governing Bodies for 2021/2022 as reproduced in Annex to this report.

For the moment, the Annex is blank, but the accurate Annex would be inserted once the full document is ready.

The floor is open for comments. I see none, so Item 20 is concluded.

Item 21. Developments in *For a* of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Point 21. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO

Tema 21. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO

(CL 166/INF/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Item 21, *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*. The document before you is CL166/INF/4 and CL166/INF/4 Web Annexes 1 to 4.

Comments from Members Commentaires des Membres Observaciones de los Miembros

REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:00

República Dominicana acoge con satisfacción el documento Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO (CL 166/INF/4).

Reconocemos que la probabilidad de que las personas sufran inseguridad alimentaria y las distintas formas de malnutrición se incrementa cuando no pueden permitirse una dieta saludable, por lo que la institucionalización de indicadores del costo y la asequibilidad de las dietas saludables es una tarea prioritaria para la FAO.

En ese sentido, valoramos los esfuerzos de la FAO y la exhortamos a seguir apoyando a los gobiernos a través de la creación de políticas para estos fines, pasando por la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios que permita garantizar que estas dietas resulten asequibles para todos.

Agradecemos la información proporcionada respecto a la participación de la Organización en las preparaciones para el G-20 de este año y auguramos el mayor de los éxitos a la Presidencia de la República Italiana.

En cuanto a la agro-informática como nueva herramienta para los bienes públicos y del sistema agroalimentario digitales, tomamos nota de los avances de la FAO en la lucha contra la pobreza y el hambre mediante el suministro de bienes públicos digitales para la alimentación y la agricultura en el mundo.

Consideramos que los proyectos que se han puesto en marcha para estos fines, a saber: la Plataforma geoespacial Mano de la mano, la cartera de servicios digitales y la visualización y el análisis integrados de datos agrícolas (salas de situación, tableros) resultan de gran importancia para nuestros países, por lo que esperamos que se siga avanzando en estos temas y que se nos informe periódicamente al respecto.

Para finalizar, agradecemos la actualización sobre los resultados de la Cumbre Un Planeta sobre la Biodiversidad y el Foro de inversión de la Iniciativa de la Gran Muralla Verde.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 14 de abril 2021 a las 16:58

La Argentina agradece la información brindada por la FAO bajo este punto de agenda, en el que se resalta la participación de la organización en otros foros de relevancia. Al respecto, la Argentina se complace en realizar los siguientes comentarios:

1. institucionalización de indicadores del costo y la asequibilidad de las dietas saludables en la FAO

Al respecto, la Argentina coincide que los bajos ingresos, sobre todo en el ámbito rural, en relación con el alto costo de los alimentos constituyen uno de los impedimentos más graves para acceder a las dietas saludables que son esenciales para una vida sana y activa y para prevenir todas las formas de malnutrición.

Los gobiernos, como se reconoce en los textos proporcionados, pueden y deben abordar los factores determinantes del costo de los alimentos nutritivos, mediante políticas que abarquen todo el sistema alimentario, en los ámbitos de la producción de alimentos, los entornos alimentarios, la demanda de los consumidores y las cadenas de suministro de alimentos.

Respecto a esto último, no se puede ignorar el hecho de que el comercio internacional puede facilitar y mejorar la disponibilidad y el acceso a productos saludables y nutritivos, permitiendo a los consumidores ampliar las opciones de dietas saludables y contribuyendo al uso sostenible y eficiente de los recursos para la producción en base a ventajas comparativas.

En esa línea, la Argentina resalta que tanto el análisis para captar costos o dar cuenta de los eslabones que componen el precio al consumidor final de los alimentos, como la necesidad de aumentar la asequibilidad de las dietas saludables, debería considerar las distorsiones vigentes en el mercado agrícola internacional. Ello, porque las tasas arancelarias y los subsidios aplicados a la agricultura afectan de lleno al correcto funcionamiento de las cadenas agroalimentarias mundiales.

Aún más, los subsidios a la agricultura implican una consolidación de ineficiencias e impide que los países en desarrollo, en particular, liberen su potencial agrícola, mejoren los ingresos de las poblaciones rurales y se pueda alcanzar la erradicación de la pobreza y mayores niveles de seguridad alimentaria y nutrición.

Por todo ello, la Argentina considera que la FAO, al abordar la problemática de la asequibilidad de las dietas saludables y la necesidad de lograr medios de vida e ingresos sostenibles desde un enfoque de sistemas alimentarios, debería contemplar como un factor determinante al comercio internacional agroalimentario y las distorsiones que allí imperan, lamentablemente, desde hace mucho tiempo.

2. la participación de la Organización en el proceso del G-20

La Argentina valora la participación de la FAO en los distintos ámbitos y actividades del G-20, tanto por su capacidad técnica dada su posición única en la estructura mundial de la alimentación y la agricultura como por su rol de liderazgo en las iniciativas mundiales de ese foro.

Merece destacarse la participación de la organización en la Cumbre Extraordinaria Virtual de Líderes del G-20 sobre la COVID-19 y en la Reunión Virtual Extraordinaria de los Ministros de Agricultura del G-20; reuniones en las que la FAO -desde una etapa temprana de la pandemia- contribuyó a la elaboración y consolidación de un mensaje claro y contundente a nivel multilateral en pos del buen funcionamiento de las cadenas mundiales de suministro de alimentos y la importancia de que los mercados siguieran siendo una fuente transparente, estable y fiable de alimentos.

Teniendo en cuenta la labor de la FAO durante la Presidencia de Arabia Saudita en 2020, la Argentina se complace que el G-20 seguirá valiéndose de las aportaciones técnicas de la FAO para fundamentar sus deliberaciones, lo que garantizará seguramente el éxito de la Presidencia italiana en 2021.

3. Agroinformática, una nueva herramienta informática para los bienes públicos y del sistema agroalimentario digitales

El sector agroindustrial necesita más y mejores soluciones tecnológicas a sus problemas propios y aquellos derivados de los cambios económicos y climáticos, soluciones que a su vez pueden ser útiles a todos los países, en función de sus contextos, prioridades y capacidades. Muchas de las soluciones a

estos problemas, emergen del contacto entre investigadores, empresarios, emprendedores y estudiantes cuyas ideas y desarrollos se complementan.

La Argentina ofrece un claro repertorio de instituciones públicas, centros académicos, empresas y recursos humanos dedicados desde hace más de 10 años a la materia. Por ende, nos congratulamos por el involucramiento de la FAO en esta herramienta informática destinada exclusivamente a la actividad agroindustrial y manifestamos nuestra disponibilidad para explorar vías para expandir y construir redes que permita el desarrollo y transferencia de conocimientos en la materia.

4. los resultados de la Cumbre de Un Planeta sobre la Biodiversidad y el Foro de inversión de la Iniciativa de la Gran Muralla Verde (11 de enero de 2021).

La Argentina toma nota de la realización de la Cumbre “Un planeta sobre la Biodiversidad” de la que participaron 11 jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, y tuvo una destacada participación de la FAO en la misma.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the information presented in CL 166/INF/4, Developments in Fora on Importance for the Mandate of FAO, and offers the following comments:

FAO's engagement in the G20 process

Australia values the ongoing collaboration between the FAO and the G20, especially on issues related to food security, and welcomes efforts to improve collaboration among international organisations and the international community, especially during Italy's 2021 G20 Presidency.

Australia notes that any further measures to be developed in 2021 should address genuine policy gaps and add value to the overall picture on this important issue.

Agro-informatics, a new IT instrument for digital agri-food system and public goods

Australia notes the FAO's investment in new IT instruments for digital agri-food systems while also acknowledging the important role of innovation, digitalisation and technological tools (in addition to good agricultural policies and governance), in achieving productive, sustainable and resilient agriculture and food sectors.

GUINÉE (on behalf of the Africa Regional Group)

Soumis le vendredi 16 avril 2021, à 11:51

La République de Guinée intervient sur ce point de l'ordre du jour au nom du Groupe régional Afrique. Le Groupe régional Afrique note que le document faisant l'objet de cette déclaration est soumis au conseil à titre d'information. A cet effet, le Groupe régional Afrique félicite le Secrétariat pour son élaboration qui s'articule sur les thèmes ci-après:

Etablissement d'indicateurs de la FAO relatifs au coût et à l'accessibilité économique d'une alimentation saine:

- S'agissant de ce thème, le Groupe régional Afrique note avec satisfaction la pertinence des études menées par les agences des Nations Unies concernées et autres partenaires ayant pris part à l'élaboration de l'édition 2020 de l'état de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition dans le monde.
- Comme indiqué dans le document, le Groupe régional Afrique est préoccupé par les statistiques alarmantes sur le nombre de personnes qui n'ont pas les moyens de se payer une alimentation répondant à leurs besoins en nutriments essentiels. A cet effet, le Groupe régional Afrique estime que la transformation des systèmes agroalimentaires pour rendre les régimes alimentaires sains et accessibles à tout le monde est l'un des facteurs essentiels pour la réalisation du deuxième Objectif de Développement Durable (ODD2).
- Le Groupe Régional Afrique encourage la FAO et toutes les parties prenantes à prendre des mesures visant à améliorer les méthodes de détermination de l'indicateur sur l'accès économique des populations à une alimentation saine et nutritive. Dans ce contexte, le Groupe

Régional Afrique estime qu'il faut prendre en compte les dimensions nationale et régionale des régimes alimentaires.

La participation de la FAO aux travaux du G20:

- Le Groupe régional Afrique félicite le FAO pour sa participation aux différents sommets du G20. Nous saluons la contribution efficace de la FAO sur des sujets relevant de son mandat et sur lesquels elle détient un avantage comparatif.

L'Agro-informatique, nouvel outil au service des systèmes agroalimentaires et des biens collectifs numériques:

- Le Groupe régional Afrique prend note de l'importance de l'agro-informatique dans la promotion de l'agriculture numérique et l'innovation.
- A cet effet, nous demandons à la FAO de mettre un accent particulier sur le volet renforcement des capacités, ce qui permettrait aux petits exploitants agricoles et aux agriculteurs familiaux de profiter de cette performance technologique.

Résultat du Sommet One Planet sur la biodiversité et du Forum de l'investissement par la Grande muraille verte:

- Le Groupe régional Afrique note que les différents sujets traités pendant ce sommet sont au centre des activités de la FAO. Nous saluons la contribution du Directeur général aux travaux et souscrivons à sa proposition de créer un groupe d'experts de haut niveau sur l'approche « une seule santé ». Le Groupe régional Afrique demande à la FAO d'apporter son soutien à la mobilisation des promesses de financement en faveur de la Grande Muraille Verte.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

FAO thanks the Dominican Republic for its comments on the institutionalization of the cost and affordability of healthy diets indicators, and takes note of its encouragement to FAO to continue efforts to systematically monitor the cost and affordability of healthy diets and support Members to transform agrifood systems to ensure healthy diets are affordable for all.

FAO thanks Argentina for their comment that the high cost of nutritious foods is among the most serious impediments to accessing the healthy nutrition that is essential for ensuring a healthy and active lifestyle and preventing all forms of malnutrition. This endorsement provides further confirmation that FAO should continue its efforts to institutionalize the cost and affordability indicators to enable the systematic monitoring of these. FAO acknowledges the comment by Argentina on the impact of agricultural trade distortions on the cost of nutritious foods. FAO's analysis shows that trade can improve economic access to food for the most vulnerable populations by bringing down food prices and reducing excessive food price volatility. Trade and related policies play an important role in this regard and, as such, it is essential that governments carefully consider the impacts on the cost of nutritious food and avoid creating unnecessary barriers to trade. At its 73rd (Extraordinary) Session, the Committee on Commodity Problems "recalled and underlined the importance that, in line with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and in keeping with their commitments under the WTO agreements, Members correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions as well as eliminate and do not create unnecessary and unjustified barriers to trade in agricultural markets". It should also be noted that an integrated and coherent set of policies within a clear strategy will have a greater and more lasting impact than any isolated policy action towards the objective of healthier diets.

FAO thanks Guinea and the Africa Regional Group on their endorsement of the importance and pertinence of indicators for the cost and affordability of healthy diets and their analysis and for communicating that transforming agrifood systems to ensure healthy diets are affordable for all is one of the key factors for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. FAO is in agreement that this is one of the key factors to achieve SDG 2 and will continue the work to enable FAO to institutionalize and systematically monitor and report on the cost and affordability of healthy diets, at the global, regional and national level.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusion on this Item, Item 21, *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*,

1. The Council received briefing notes on the following topics for information only.
 - (a) Institutionalization of cost and affordability of healthy diet indicators in FAO;
 - (b) FAO's engagement in the G20 process;
 - (c) Agro-informatics, a new IT instrument for digital agri-food systems, and public goods; and
 - (d) Outcome of the One Planet Summit on Biodiversity and the Green Wall Investment Forum 11 January 2021.

The floor is open. I see no comments, item 21 is concluded.

Item 22. Tentative Agenda for the 167th Session of the Council

Point 22. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent soixante-septième session du Conseil

Tema 22. Programa provisional del 167.º período de sesiones del Consejo

(CL 166/INF/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to item 22, *Tentative Agenda for the 167th Session of the Council*, which is set out in document CL166/INF/2.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Wednesday April 14 2021, at 17:09

Australia notes the Tentative Agenda for the 167th Session of the Council.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat took note of the comments received regarding the tentative agenda for the 167th Session of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

For this Item, the conclusion is simple.

Item 22, *Tentative Agenda for the 167th Session of the Council*,

1. The Council endorsed the Tentative Agenda of the 167th Session, which would be June 2021, as contained in CL166/INF/2.

The floor is open to Members. I see no request for the floor, so item 22 is concluded.

Item 9. Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee (22-26 March 2021)
(continued)

Point 9. Rapport de la cent trentième session du Comité du Programme (22-26 mars 2021)
(suite)

Tema 9. Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (22-26 de marzo de 2021) *(continuación)*

(CL 166/9)

CHAIRPERSON

Now we go back to item 9, which is *Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee*, and we can turn to this item and we will bring up the conclusions again on the screen and see if we can find consensus on the subparagraph.

Members, the floor is open. If you recall, there were these three paragraphs, subparagraph (i), that some Members wanted, and then there were these other two subparagraphs, all of the ones in green. May I open the floor to Members for their comments?

I have no requests for the floor, but may I give the floor to the United Kingdom, because, if I recall, you wanted this text given to you when we broke around 20:00 hours. I think they were sent to you by email as well, so would you have some comments to offer? What does the Council think of these subparagraphs? Subparagraph (i) was the original one, I think, with slight amendments, and the next subparagraph is acknowledging that there was no consensus and then proposing a text. The third one is also similar to the second one.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just to remind ourselves at what stage we are, it is a little bit pleonastic, but we understand subparagraph (i), it is hard to accept in our view. Of course, the subparagraph (j) for us, as I mentioned yesterday, would be acceptable, even not being necessary to mention that there was no consensus and if we go for this option, we understand that we need some time. It is the minimum consensus in our understanding. Of course, it is clear for everyone the limitations many delegations have in this aspect, but as I said at the beginning, it is just to remind exactly at what point we were yesterday.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Hemos sido todos tan constructivos en la anterior reunión y hemos llegado a esto. Yo estoy de acuerdo con la sugerencia de Brasil, tratar de buscar algún mecanismo para insistir hasta el último minuto con la búsqueda de un subpárrafo que sea consensuado, para evitar tener que ir finalmente a la última alternativa que es la que está incorporada como tercera.

Por lo tanto, por eso apoyo la sugerencia de Brasil.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, the subparagraph which is the paragraph of the report is paragraph (i), the other two, the second and third, is in case of no consensus. Perhaps we should follow what Brazil and Argentina have suggested, to concentrate on subparagraph (i) and see if we can find a consensus and move forward.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I am happy to have a go at some alternate language that perhaps combines some of the sentiments in both of these options, and reorders in a way that I hope might be constructively ambiguous enough to satisfy everyone. Shall I read that at dictation speed?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, please, go ahead.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

It would start, “acknowledged its observations and recommendations 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 Recommendation 2, requested regular updates to be provided to the Programme Committee and stressed the importance of implementing FAO’s strategy, taking into account the new FAO Strategic Framework, to be approved at the 42nd Session of the Conference, and “inviting” or “conducting additional inclusive consultations ahead of the 168th Session of the Council.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería agradecerle especialmente a la Sra. Alison Storsve, mi colega de Estados Unidos de America, por la propuesta que me parece muy buena. Solamente sugeriría para poder nosotros aceptarla, solamente sacar “*in particular Recommendation 2*”, el resto me parece perfecto.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would like to thank my Argentinian colleague. That was good, quicker than myself. I would also like to thank the United States for proposing this text that would be acceptable for us, without this “in particular Recommendation 2”.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perù)

Creo que estamos llegando a buen puerto y agradeciendo la propuesta que ha hecho Estados Unidos y las observaciones de Argentina y Brasil. Estamos conformes con este nuevo texto.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to propose an addition here that perhaps could take the place of the words that are currently in bracket, in particular “Recommendation 2”. Instead, I think we could say, after “2017”, we could put a semi-colon and then say: “noted that Management has accepted the evaluation recommendations”.

Then, just to come back to the last part of the subparagraph, I am not sure about “conducting additional inclusive consultations”. If those are on the Strategy, then I am fine with that. If these are on Recommendation 2, then I am not so happy with it. However, if they are consultations on the Strategy, and we are clear about that, then that is fine, from our perspective.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We are not comfortable with the proposal from the United Kingdom. Very frankly, we understand it is not important if Management has a separate evaluation or not. It is Council Members that have to decide. At this moment, it is not relevant if Management accepted evaluation recommendations or not.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor?

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Estábamos a un milímetro de alcanzar un consenso. Nosotros agradecemos la propuesta que hizo la Delegación de Estados Unidos de America con la observación que hizo el distinguido Embajador de Argentina. Creo ese debería de ser el compromiso.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to propose an alternative subparagraph. I think it is important that Members of Conference are aware that there is a disagreement about the need for a Climate Change Strategy that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I think Members will recall that we frequently said, in many of our conclusions, that we really want FAO’s Strategic Framework to be aligned with the SDGs.

We have an Evaluation of the current Strategy and the Evaluation says that the Strategy needs to be aligned with the SDGs. However, some Members are saying that they do not want the Strategy to be updated. I think it is important that Members of Conference are aware of this. I would like to propose the following language to reflect that.

It will be an alternative subparagraph that reads, “acknowledged the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO’s Support to Climate Action and the implementation of FAO’s Strategy for Climate Change 2017; noted that Management has accepted those recommendations; and considered the Programme Committee Recommendation that Council further review the Evaluation’s Recommendation 2. Members of Council were not able to agree on the urgency of implementing this recommendation”.

That would be my proposal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo quería decir que me siento más cómodo trabajando con la propuesta de Estados Unidos porque es la que ha tenido más consenso y, la verdad, sobre todo porque habla de un proceso consultivo amplio.

La verdad que me parece que Estados Unidos hizo una gran propuesta con las modificaciones sugeridas por Brasil, por Nicaragua, nosotros, y por Perú. Yo creo que estamos mucho más cómodos.

Yo agradezco a la colega del Reino Unido en su mención, pero, primer punto central, la Organización no es de la Administración, la Organización es de los Miembros. Por lo tanto, no corresponde poner qué es o no lo que la Administración acepte. Tengo un gran respeto por el *Management*, pero no es el el quien conduce ni decide por la Organización.

Entonces, me parece la sugerencia de mi colega del Reino Unido, pero en principio prefiero seguir trabajando con la propuesta de Estados Unidos. Si tuviéramos que aceptar, en principio, habría que sacar “a partir de 2017” y cancelar “*noted that Management has accepted those recommendations*”. Esa expresión no puede estar incluida en ningún párrafo porque la Organización no es del *Management*, es de los Miembros.

Pero repito, creo que estamos más cómodos con la sugerencia de Estados Unidos. Es más inclusiva.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would remind Members that we frequently refer to Management’s responses to evaluations, both in the Programme Committee and in our statements. It is not at all unusual to refer to Management’s response to an evaluation and, quite often, we welcome Management’s responses to the Evaluation. Indeed, we could welcome Management’s response to this evaluation too. It is absolutely not unusual at all.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

We are quite comfortable with the proposal of the Ambassador on working from the merged language that we raised. I am empathetic to the concern that the Ambassador of the United Kingdom raised that we need something in the bracketed language if, in particular, Recommendation 2 is dropped.

In the United States’ intervention during the Plenary, we noted the level of urgency that our Administration places on climate change and climate action. So, we need something there. I wonder, if we work on the basis of the first subparagraph there, if we would import from the suggestion of the Ambassador of the United Kingdom’s after “Strategy on Climate Change 2017” “considered the Evaluation’s Recommendation 2 and requested regular updates”.

We are comfortable noting that Management has accepted these Recommendations, but I understand that is probably still in brackets. In any case, we did consider the Evaluation’s Recommendation 2 and that is, in fact, what the Programme Committee’s Report is asked Council to do, or recommended Council to do.

I think we could do that. Alternately, if we work from the basis of the second subparagraph, we certainly can document that we did not reach agreement on Recommendation 2. We could just add to the back of that “and therefore requested regular updates to the Programme Committee”. I think there is a way forward here, to merge these two ideas. However, we do need something in that bracketed area about Recommendation 2.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia would also like to put on the record that we are very comfortable with the inclusion of the Management side of things. But as perhaps an alternative which may garner some support would be rather than “noted that Management has accepted the Evaluation Recommendations”, perhaps we can try “noted the Evaluation’s advice that the Strategy does not align with the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs)”. This is what the Evaluation said. It was noted, and it was reflected in plenary discussion when Ms Maria Helena Semedo came in, in response to our interventions and highlighted that this is a key finding. .

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to thank all the Delegations who contributed in a very constructive manner to this debate. We can accept what is being proposed in subparagraph (i). I was wondering as well if we could have added, when we say “stressed the importance of implementing the FAO’s Strategy taking into account”, to add, “taking into account Management’s response and the new Strategic Framework”. I

think it is important to recognize that there has been an Evaluation and debate, there are lots of comments and findings in that, and Management's response has assessed the implementation. That should also be taken into account.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer)(Portugal)

We are very close to a consensus. The Argentinian proposal is a very good one. I think that with this proposal of Australia, we are in a position to move forward and also take note of the proposal from the United Kingdom to have inclusive consultations after this Council.

CHAIRPERSON

[XX]. Okay, Argentina and then Brazil. What I was going to say is that the wording which was causing difficulty was "Management accepted the recommendations". Would the wording which was proposed, "and stressed the importance of implementing, taking into account the recommendations", would that have a more positive effect than "Management accepted"? So, in implementing something, you take into account Management's reaction to the Evaluation without saying Management accepted the recommendations.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estamos tratando de ver cómo podemos seguir siendo constructivos. Yo no sé si es posible porque es complicado poder comprender cómo quedaría. Pero, en principio, aunque tendría que verlo, podría aceptar la sugerencia última, o la primera de Estados Unidos. Necesito pensar un poco más. Déjeme analizarlo dos minutos más, por favor.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would like to be as optimistic as my colleague from Portugal, on behalf of the European Union. However, unfortunately, I am not. Before we started this discussion, we had a basic problem with Recommendation 2. Now, the discussion is becoming more complex because we have discussions over Recommendation 2 and Management's position on the Evaluation. Therefore, it will be hard to reach an agreement. I do not have any specific proposal. I would just like to stress that you are not going in the direction of consensus.

CHAIRPERSON

I think one of the Members proposed instead of using the words, "Management accepted the recommendations", I think the suggestion was "implementing taking into account the views of Management".

That always happens. Whether it is an external auditor's report or whether it is an evaluation. In implementing, you have to see the reaction of Management to that report. Otherwise, there may be errors in implementation. So, would the wording "that implement", "taking into account the views of Management", would that fly more than, "noting that Management has accepted the recommendations"?

The views would be on the whole Report. "Taking into account the views of Management", that is the views of Management on the Report.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Lo primero es que la segunda alternativa, el párrafo alternativo no lo encontramos conforme. Creo que no expresa la voluntad de todos los Miembros. Respecto al primer párrafo con las modificaciones que se han hecho, creo que estamos a punto de alcanzar el consenso, pero yo no quisiera dejar de considerar la propuesta inicial que hizo Estados Unidos de America.

El párrafo inicial de Estados Unidos en que básicamente ya estaba expreso reconocimiento a las recomendaciones de la evaluación, dejaba abierta la posibilidad de realizar estas actualizaciones. Yo quisiera más bien que retomáramos la propuesta que muy bien alcanzó Estados Unidos.

CHAIRPERSON

Is it possible to put the subparagraph of the United States? Before we move on, perhaps we could put the United States' initial proposal back on the screen. To enable my colleagues to do that, the United States would kindly have to read it out again.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I think it is all here. However, I was not sure if you wanted the most recent one.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, the recent one.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

At the end, the first two lines are fine and the implementation of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change 2017. In the brackets, "taking into account the views of Management" it makes sense to include: comma, "considered Recommendation 2". That is the part where we are responsive to the Programme Committee's recommendation. Then, drop down to "and requested regular updates to be provided to the Programme Committee". That is below and then the rest. I think the United Kingdom made a good clarification earlier, in that the very last line, "conducting additional inclusive consultation" is on the Climate Change Strategy. I do not think we need to refer to a year there. Hopefully that will leave things constructively ambiguous enough that we meet everyone's needs. We would have to say "on the Climate Change Strategy", since in the previous line we refer to the Strategic Framework. I think we want to make sure we are clear that we are talking about consultations on this particular Strategy.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

Actually, things are moving around from when I started the intervention I wanted to make. I am happy that we seem to be moving towards something that we will not put to the Drafting Committee, because there seems to be a lot going that way. The addition of Australia very well reflected what we, at least in our statement from the Nordics, wanted to emphasize which is important in the Evaluation's findings. We would be happy with that to be included. If this is where we are working now, I can refrain from saying anything more. However, then I would like to come back. If we are moving ahead, that might be a proposal I would like to come back to. Thanks also for clarifying now the last part, what the consultations would include.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was going to make a very similar point to Sweden. The addition proposed by Australia was a very helpful one. It would quite clearly set out to Conference what the issue at stake is. Of course, it is a huge issue as we move towards the 26th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26). Indeed, as many FAO Members seek FAO support to access climate finance, I know some of those Members have already been very successful. However, there are many others who, in their efforts to secure climate finance, will want to be reassured that FAO has a Climate Change Strategy that is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

CHAIRPERSON

Australia, could I ask you to repeat your comments? This subparagraph is patched with everybody's views.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I was just writing it in the chat, but I am happy to say it again. The proposal was "noted the Evaluation's advice that the current Strategy does not align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, are you ready for your input?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No, estamos tratando de analizarlo. Lo que sí tengo claro que, con la propuesta de Australia, para mí estamos mucho más lejos de llegar a un consenso con todo. Por supuesto, agradeciendo toda la buena intención de parte de mi colega de Australia, pero estamos muy lejos con esa sugerencia. Por lo tanto, no sé. No quiero ser poco constructivo, estoy tratando de pensar. Yo preferiría ir con la propuesta básica de Estados Unidos originaria, como dijo Perú, como estableció Brasil, Nicaragua y, a partir de esa propuesta originaria, de alguna manera, trabajar.

Creo que, con la inclusión de la sugerencia de Australia, por lo menos en mi caso, me hace estar más lejos del consenso.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We are in line with Argentina. However, I ask the Secretariat to, if possible, put back the original proposal from the United States of America. We have too many proposals on this text. It is hard to try to find a minimum text that would be acceptable to everyone, with so many brackets, so many options and so many ideas.

CHAIRPERSON

In order to separate all the suggestions which have been added and deleted to the original United States' suggestion, my colleagues can put the original United States' suggestion in a totally separate subparagraph and then we see how we proceed. However, they tell me for them to do that, the United States has to read it out again, the original one.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I just dropped it into the chat. I believe there are clauses that some Members said they could not accept. Therefore, I am not sure if this will take us forward or backward.

CHAIRPERSON

Can you extract it from the chat? The original United States' subparagraph now is there, just above subparagraph (k). Argentina.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Perdóneme que tuve que tomarme un poco de tiempo, pero muchas propuestas juntas, era complicado intentar buscar una salida. No sé si puede volar, pero sobre la base de la propuesta originaria de Estados Unidos, pregunto si podría ser que en lugar de donde dice "*in particular recommendation to*", eso ya dijimos que no, pero quizás, considerando todas las recomendaciones, no ninguna en particular. Considerando "*all recommendations*".

"*Considering... Consider all recommendations.*" Pero no sé si eso puede funcionar, estoy tratando de ser constructivo, más constructivo de todo lo que fuimos ya ayer. Porque acá hay que tratar de acomodar a todos, no solamente a un solo Miembro o a un grupo de Miembros sino a todos, es difícil.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we have some reaction to this subparagraph as amended by Argentina?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am willing to work with the proposal from Argentina, to strengthen it and see if we can make some progress. Where my colleague from Argentina said: "considered all the recommendations of the Evaluation", I would suggest some additions so that they read: "considered all the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation". Then, after "Evaluation": "as well as Management's response." It will be "and requested". As others have said, this is a simple statement of fact. It is not a statement of opinion. At the end of the paragraph, I would import the additional language that the United States have proposed in the earlier subparagraph, where it says "the inclusive consultations on the Strategy on Climate Change". Therefore we would insert the words "on the Strategy on Climate Change" into the last line.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Out of the three proposals from the United Kingdom, we could accept two of them. We would be willing to accept “all the findings” and the text proposed initially by the United States, and now supported by the United Kingdom at the end of the subparagraph. However, we are uncomfortable with the “Management’s response”.

CHAIRPERSON

May I clarify? Whenever there is a review, no matter by whom, whether it is, like I said, an external auditor, consultants, or Evaluation, there is always a response from Management because they may not accept all recommendations because consultants or evaluators are not infallible. Management has a view. They may dispute what the evaluator is saying or what the consultant is saying and it is not necessary that the consultant is right, or the evaluator is right. There is always a Management view on whatever report has been requested and given. Anybody, like a governance body, looking at the evaluation report. I think it should look at Management’s comments as well because the evaluators may have got it wrong. Because who says the evaluator, or the consultant is infallible?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Our concern is the other way around. We are not saying that. Some Members could have different views, either on the evaluators or on Management’s response. Therefore, we do not have to agree entirely with any specific or the totality of the opinions.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would just like to recall or remind Members how often we have said it is important that FAO’s Strategic Framework is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have agreed on that. I would also like to remind Members how often we say that it is really important that FAO’s work is based on science and evidence. Here we have an impartial evaluation that has provided documented evidence on the implementation of FAO’s Strategy on Climate Change and we are disputing the findings of that. I find it really hard to understand.

I think referring to the Management’s response is the absolute minimum. I think if we cannot do that, I would much rather include the proposal from Australia, which, in fact, sets out what the real issue is here. And let me remind you, the issue is the current Strategy is not aligned with the SDGs. We all believe FAO’s Strategic Framework should be aligned with the SDGs, so therefore its Strategy on Climate should be as well.

That is essentially the argument here, and I think if we cannot refer to the Management response, then I do think we need to refer to the finding that the current Strategy is not aligned with the SDGs.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I just wanted to draw attention to the fact that we are not making here, with this current language, a qualitative analysis or evaluation of the Management’s response. The word “considered” is, in fact, actually what we did. We considered the findings. We considered the recommendations, and we considered what Management said about it. I think the beauty of that language here is that we are not making a qualitative judgement about what the Management’s response was. I do consider that word “consider” to be quite a considerable compromise on the part of the United Kingdom and I wonder if we could all accept that.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

Now I see the proposals on the screen. It is good to come off the native English speakers who understand the language better than I. However, I was originally thinking exactly what you, United States, said. That the words we are using here, “consider all findings and recommendations” as well as “Management’s response”, actually does not make anything else than just put forward a fact.

On as second point, we are, like the United Kingdom, very concerned about the fact that we have an Evaluation which says that we are not in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). If we are not moving with this, I think we would also like to go back to the Australian language and put that instead of “Management’ response” in the sentence here.

CHAIRPERSON

I think there seems to be a deadlock on this subparagraph because all the suggestions are there and there is no consensus. Are we heading towards the draft which also was put on the screen yesterday, where it said, “acknowledge that there is no consensus or there is no agreement”? Are we heading towards that? Because there seems to be two positions and although Members have shown flexibility to move towards each other, it is not in sufficient magnitude for the consensus to be achieved.

Are we heading to have a subparagraph which says, “there was no consensus” and then have an appropriate wording? I do not know. I am putting this on the table to move forward. Otherwise, we are stuck on one paragraph.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would like to propose that we move ahead to discuss other items of the Agenda and we come back later to this specific text that we have here. We can have some informal consultations among ourselves and before we start moving a subparagraph mentioning that there was no consensus. This is my concern for the moment.

Item 14. Code of Conduct for Voting

Point 14. Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote

Tema 14. Código de conducta para las votaciones

CHAIRPERSON

Yes. In fact, I would be in favour of that because I think the informal consultations always assist. However, the next item is item 14, which is the *Code of Conduct for Voting*, and if I recall my informal consultations, we discussed this on quite a number of times. We could start this and see. Because the one on voting procedures I would like to take in the afternoon because the Secretariat is preparing a paper for you all to provide information on some of the questions you raised and asked for more information. I would like you to have that paper before we start discussing that. I see I have a request for the floor from Peru.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Muchas gracias, disculpe que interrumpa, pero sería posible que nos enviaran. Se eliminarán los otros párrafos que no, prácticamente ya no estarían en negociación y ¿podrían solamente compartir por correo el párrafo final con el que casi estamos llegando al consenso?

CHAIRPERSON

We will try.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just briefly, it would be very helpful if the Secretariat were also able to share the subparagraph above and below the one currently in blue.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, what the Secretariat is trying to do is get these subparagraphs and then send them to you by email. The Code of Conduct, in fact, needs the presence of the Legal Counsel, and I believe she is committed in another Meeting. That is why her Deputy was here for the other item. The voting procedures, the document should be with you. We have ten minutes before breaking. If you have some other suggestions on this particular subparagraph, we can bounce it around for ten minutes or break now. I am told that the Secretariat is suggesting that we reconvene at 15:00 hours. Would that be agreeable to you? We break now and reconvene at 15:00 hours? In the meantime, the Secretariat says they will send these subparagraphs to you by email. Hopefully that other document should also be issued, and I am optimistic about the afternoon. Or we break now, and it gives you an opportunity for your informal consultations as well.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I just wanted to endorse the suggestion of a break until 15:00 hours. I think after having worked beyond midnight for two nights in a row, I think we could all do with a slightly extended lunch break. Or break, recognizing that those who are fasting will not be able to have any lunch. I think we could all benefit from one.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I am happy to go with the consensus, and I note what the United Kingdom has just said about us all being exceptionally tired. However, I am also very conscious that if we do not start work, we are going to have another very long night. We still have got, well, two and a half exceptionally controversial issues to work through. I am concerned that the delay will then extend our debate this evening and that will further delay the commencement of the Drafting Committee which, selfishly, Australia has to do because we are the only Southwest Pacific Representative here. I can see a 04:00 hours coming up for myself, so as I said happy to go with the consensus but very mindful of the time after 15:00 hours.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me parece que el punto que marca mi colega de Australia es un buen punto. En este momento me preocupan los colegas que van a tener que estar en el Comité de Redacción. Me refiero a tener la posibilidad de trabajar en un horario medianamente digno. Ya estamos trabajando en Ramadán, que me parece, digamos, una complicación y, además, los colegas del Comité de Redacción no sabemos hasta qué hora van a tener que estar trabajando.

Entonces, simplemente lo dejo a su consideración. Pero el tiempo que usted nos de de *break*, que nos de de descanso, no va a ser de descanso porque vamos a tratar todos, por lo menos de nuestra parte, intentar construir o buscar alguna salida de consenso de los puntos que están sin cerrar. Así que trabajaremos para buscar informalmente alguna salida de consenso.

CHAIRPERSON

I think it is a question of half an hour. We would have reconvened at 14:30 hours; therefore, it is half an hour. Maybe your suggestion of the informal consultations could assist. The reason I am proposing the 15:00 hours reconvening is that is the input I get from the Secretariat because they are working on a document for you. Then I think the Legal Counsel is in another meeting and for the Code of Conduct you need the Legal Counsel. It is a question of half an hour. We could utilize it in some informal consultations. I do not know. Alternatively, we can come back at 14:30 hours and consider this subparagraph 9 of the Programme Committee. The question is reconvening at 14:30 hours or 15:00 hours. We could reconvene at 14:30 hours and continue with paragraph 9 of the Programme Committee.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I think that we need to convene as soon as possible; therefore, 14:30 hours would be fine.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was going to say the same thing. I do think a half an hour at 14:30 hours to discuss this issue on item 9 would be a good use of time.

CHAIRPERSON

What we will do is we will reconvene at 14:30 hours and take up this item 9 which we have been discussing now and see. Perhaps during lunch, you may have an opportunity to exchange views, and when you come back, there may be a possibility. We adjourn now and reconvene at 14:30 hours.

The meeting rose at 12:25 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 25

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.25

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA
29 April 2021

The Eighth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:35 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La huitième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 35
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la octava sesión plenaria a las 14.35
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 9. Report of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee (22-26 March 2021)**
(continued)
- Point 9. Rapport de la cent trentième session du Comité du Programme (22-26 mars 2021)**
(suite)
- Tema 9. Informe del 130.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (22-26 de marzo de 2021) (continuación)**
(CL 166/9)

CHAIRPERSON

Dear colleagues, Members, we can start our afternoon Session and as we have agreed we will go back to Item 9, *the Report of the Programme Committee*. I think the subparagraphs we were discussing on the screen were sent to you all and they are back on the screen. We will start with our discussions on these subparagraphs.

The floor is open for Members.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Looking at what is currently the second blue subparagraph on our screens, I have a small change that I would add to it and then I think we would be ready to accept it. My proposal would be on the third line from the bottom, where it says, “taking into account the new Strategic Framework,” I would add “taking into account the SDGs and the new Strategic Framework.”

If we could move ahead with that as well as with the Management response language that is currently in brackets, then I think we would be ready to move ahead with that. I am keen to hear others’ views.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

C'est avec beaucoup d'attention que je suis le débat sur la Stratégie de la FAO relative au changement climatique. La question est capitale et je voudrais une fois de plus m'exprimer au nom du Groupe Afrique et donner un avis à ce sujet.

Monsieur le Président, comme nous le savons tous, le dérèglement climatique aurait des impacts négatifs sur la production agricole. Les populations rurales dans les pays en développement seront les plus durement frappées et tout particulièrement notre région Afrique. Sur le continent africain 95 pour cent de l'agriculture est pluviale et donc particulièrement sensible au changement climatique.

L'agriculture dans nos pays est le secteur-clé de l'économie qui fait vivre plus de la moitié des Africains. La réduction des rendements agricoles due au changement climatique en est un effet négatif pour le continent, alors même que cette production devrait doubler d'ici 2050. Dans ce contexte, nous affirmons avec force que le Groupe Afrique estime que la FAO doit pouvoir améliorer son travail en matière de lutte contre le changement climatique et le renforcer au niveau des liens entre risques climatiques et systèmes alimentaires, comme l'a souligné d'ailleurs l'évaluation.

Je fais toutefois confiance à M. Hans Hoogeveen et à l'équipe du Comité du Programme, qui avec Hans en véritable leader, ont bien mené la réflexion sur ce point. Pour cela, le Groupe Afrique soutient pleinement, je le réaffirme, le développement d'une nouvelle Stratégie sur le climat. C'est bien d'ailleurs ce que recommande l'étude et cette recommandation, je le note bien, a été pleinement acceptée par la Direction.

En tant qu'Africains, nous pensons que cette nouvelle Stratégie devrait garantir que la FAO accompagne les pays les plus vulnérables, notamment le continent africain, dans l'adaptation de leur secteur agricole au changement climatique, en particulier dans les régions où les besoins alimentaires sont couverts par la production des petites fermes.

Aujourd'hui, pour terminer mon propos avant d'émettre la recommandation, alors que les efforts d'adaptation du secteur agricole s'avèrent plus difficiles, des projets ciblés sur l'atténuation des émissions de carbone et une nouvelle Stratégie de la FAO doivent permettre de remédier à ce problème.

Le Groupe Afrique soutient pleinement le développement d'une nouvelle Stratégie pour toutes les raisons que je viens de citer. Monsieur le Président, nous allons suivre ce qui a été proposé et pourrions également faire une nouvelle proposition.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Maybe I did not hear well the end of the proposal coming from the United Kingdom. I understood the inclusion of the text, but I did not hear well what was the reaction to the bracket expression, as well as the mentioned response.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Apologies if I had not made myself clear. We would expect the language that is currently in brackets to stand and the brackets to be removed. As you have said yourself, Chairperson, it is completely normal and a matter for Management to respond to evaluations and indeed for the Council and its Committees to take on board Management's response.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Without any comments on the substance and on the positions of countries and Regions, of course we understand that no one is against the Strategy itself. I would recommend countries and Members to read with attention finding 22, which is the essence of the transformational alignment with the Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I would like to propose that, if we keep Management's response and include, "and Members' opinions," or "and Members' views" maybe we could accept it.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je vous prie de donner la parole à la délégation du Cameroun parce que tous deux défendons la position africaine.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

Let me thank Congo for allowing me to support what he said. This new Strategy on Climate Change is very important for the Africa Regional Group. We discussed it and we fully support the development of that Strategy. Now we are discussing this subparagraph and we have tried to draft something, but I believe that it is enough because we are both done here and there should be a way out. In the multilateral there is always a way out. Let us be, all of us, flexible.

The first thing regards the change brought by the United Kingdom: "taking into consideration the SDGs". The Strategy on Climate Change was developed in 2017, when the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) were already approved. Definitely that first Strategy embedded and it said the evaluation of FAO's support to climate action SDG 13. The Strategy on Climate Change was developed on the basis of SDG 13. If we have to update our new Strategy today, obviously it is part of the SDGs. It cannot go out of that. We find that adding the element of "taking into account the SDGs" might be redundant. If that can satisfy every Member we could be flexible and leave it there.

When I listen to the discussion, I have the impression that what is tying us down is not the inclusion of the element, or the recommendations, of the evaluation and the Management response. But it is that we are taking on board the Management response. This is normal, I believe. But, if we can just say something like "considered all the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, noting as well Management's response to the evaluation, requested, following the adoption of the FAO Strategic Framework by the 42nd Session of the Conference: (i) regular updates to be provided to the Governing Bodies channels; and (ii) further inclusive consultations on the new Strategy on Climate Change to be developed ahead of the 168th Session of the Council."

With this sentence, we are acting as a Governing Body, which takes into consideration every aspect of the Secretariat production. We are not putting in our decision-making elements of the Secretariat.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

First I would like to thank our distinguished colleague from Cameroon for their positive spirit and positive contribution. Before going to start discussing and examining the proposal, I would like to ask

if what I proposed before could be acceptable to all because I understand we were very close to a final decision. If this would be acceptable, of course we could discuss something coming from the Cameroonian proposal. However, if you agree we go step by step.

CHAIRPERSON

Anything which contributes to Members reaching a consensus I would support. I think the step by step approach may be of assistance. Let us go that way. I will give the floor to Argentina and also ask whether the Ambassador could comment on the Brazilian amendment.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En la misma línea de Brasil, quiero agradecer a mi colega de Camerún, por su proactividad y su búsqueda de ayudar a construir un consenso en esta situación. Varios de nosotros estuvimos haciendo diferentes consultas informales, para tratar de ver la posibilidad de desbloquear esto y encontrar una salida. Sobre la base de lo expresado por el Embajador de Brasil, con algunos colegas que hemos hablado encontramos muy buena receptividad.

Por eso creo que es bueno lo que dice el Embajador de Brasil, porque analizar la propuesta del representante de Camerún en representación del Grupo regional de África, requeriría un trabajo adicional, porque allí hay algunas cuestiones que hemos discutido durante el día de hoy y que requerirían más tiempo para evaluar la posibilidad de ver si podemos llegar a un acuerdo. En ese sentido, como lo que queremos es tratar de buscar un acuerdo quizás podemos ver primero si podemos terminar de trabar la propuesta de Brasil.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, Argentina, I would go by that attempt because anything which brings the Members together and closer to an agreement I think would be good to follow. The first step is to react to the Brazilian suggestion and then we will consider the other interventions. The floor is open for Members.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I think we can accommodate the proposal of Brazil, which for us was obvious. It was a good proposal. Let us try to see if we can add "considered all the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation followed by Members' views" after "Evaluation." Members expressed their views on that evaluation, and because I do not want to put that in the same line with Management's response. Unless I did not understand the purpose of the Ambassador of Brazil, i.e., that it is the Members' views on the Management response. That makes it a little bit different. My understanding was that it had to do with the evaluation set. If it is the Members' views on the Management's response then we can tie them together. I wish to listen to the Ambassador of Brazil, if he sees this proposal workable.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to thank Congo and Cameroon for their interventions and indeed, I congratulate my colleague from Cameroon on his proposed subparagraph. I would be very happy with that and also to include the point from Brazil that is now in that subparagraph highlighted in green.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We are also very thankful for the delegations that made very good proposals and for the spirit of compromise, including from our colleagues from Brazil, from Argentina, from the United Kingdom and the very good positions of Congo and Cameroon in the name of the Africa Group for the very good suggestions. We are very happy with the compromise, so with your leadership I think that we are in a position to go forward.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Vamos a ver si podemos todos ayudar a construir un consenso trabajando sobre esta propuesta. La primer cosa que sugiero es colocar en la línea donde dice “*conduct inclusive consultations on the need of a new Strategy on Climate Change,*” and then it should be deleted “*to be developed ahead.*” as well as “*Management response and Members’ views and request regular updates be provided...*”

Déjenme analizarlo, pero a ver si esto podría funcionar. Las consultas son para evaluar si es necesaria una nueva estrategia y esa es la *rationale* que intenta capturar las posiciones de los diferentes Miembros que se expresaron durante esta discusión.

Las consultas inclusivas deberían hacerse antes del próximo Consejo. Creo que, cuando avanzamos en borrar parte del texto que estaba...exacto.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

First of all, we have got two proposals that are currently within the one paragraph and it might be helpful to split them up so we could be a bit clearer. Secondly, I noticed that some of the language that Argentina has proposed to be deleted has just been deleted rather than put in brackets. I do think it is important that it stays in brackets because I think what Argentina has proposed is fundamentally undermined by the very strong point that Congo and Cameroon have made, i.e.; that there is a need for a new Climate Strategy and that we want to get on and start discussing the new Strategy. I think with the changes that Argentina has proposed it completely undermines that point and takes us back to where we were.

I would much prefer we stay with the language that we had almost reached consensus on, as well as the bit that has just been reinstated., There were the proposals to include the words “on the need for,” which of course completely undermines what the African Regional Group, the Asia Regional Group, North America Regional Group and many other Regional Groups have been saying all week that this is important and needed. I am certainly happy to remind Members why it is important if they would like me to.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo le agradezco mucho a la contraparte del Reino Unido por tratar de interpretar lo que yo dije, pero me gustaría interpretarme a mí mismo. Lo que yo estoy queriendo decir es, capturar que existen diferentes posiciones, que algunos creen que es necesario urgentemente ir hacia una nueva estrategia y otros creen que se deben hacer consultas inclusivas para evaluar si es necesario. Y algunos creemos que esto debería estar capturado claramente en el párrafo. Sin embargo, si no hay consenso sobre eso, entonces, será complicado lograr consenso entre los Miembros. Por supuesto, entendiendo las diferentes posiciones que muchas veces acordamos con los Miembros que no estamos de acuerdo, pero puede ocurrir.

Mi intención es tener una visión lo más amplia posible para que todos puedan sentir que están dentro del párrafo y no dejar a nadie afuera. Así que en las consultas que se van a hacer, se definiría concretamente la necesidad o no de avanzar con una nueva estrategia. Creo que es el procedimiento más apropiado y además el *bottom up approach*, más democrático. Pero bueno, eso es lo que hemos discutido durante toda la mañana. Podemos seguir discutiendo.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je remercie l'Ambassadrice du Royaume-Uni et l'Ambassadeur de l'Argentine. C'est un point très important et peut-être ne voit-on pas la menace que pose le changement climatique aux systèmes agricoles et alimentaires. En tant qu'agrobiologiste je comprends bien l'importance de cette question très sensible et nous devons y prendre garde. C'est pourquoi tout à l'heure, nous avons insisté sur la recommandation et la réponse de la FAO, qui a donné sa pleine disponibilité pour développer cette Stratégie.

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais vous demander d'inviter une fois de plus, puisque nous sommes deux porte-paroles, à passer la parole au Cameroun, qui va compléter mon discours sur d'autres aspects.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I hope we are all on the same page and that we are working towards consensus. What we are trying to do as Members of the Africa Group is to try to reach the consensus. We are not working to come to a certain level of concession because consensus is not an elastic word. Please, let us work and strive to get to that consensus. We all are here, Members, representatives, we are not technicians in evaluation. The evaluation has had its own methodology and has decided that there should be a new Strategy. We are today trying to water that down with not much reference to support that.

Many Members have accepted that there should be a new Strategy. It is true that a consultation on how to develop that Strategy should take place. But not if we have to come back to what an evaluation has said. I say that because I was in charge of evaluation in my country and I know what is when you put up a methodology of evaluation, how it goes, and then the methodology concluded that there is a need for a new Strategy and many Members have expressed that. Today, I am trying to water it down by saying that we have to re-discuss the issue on a need for a new Strategy, I think it is one step back. I will plead with our colleague if we can remove the words on the need for a new Strategy. That will be good and we can accept every other thing. We are not evaluators here, so I am trying to say that if we can agree not to add on the need I think everybody will be satisfied. We are trying to make sure that we all come to an agreement on this.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to support what my dear colleague of Cameroon has just said and we could accept his proposal. I was wondering if one alternative possibility could be to say “inclusive consultations to ensure that the Strategy aligns with the SDGs.”

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Al reinicio de la sesión de la tarde, y tras los comentarios que hiciera el Embajador de Brasil, nosotros teníamos la sensación de que nos estábamos acercando a un consenso.

Si bien agradeciendo las contribuciones de otras propuestas, cada vez que continuamos acercándonos, nos seguimos alejando porque seguimos incorporando mayores argumentaciones al tema. Cuando se sugirió reiniciar el párrafo con las observaciones que habían hecho los Embajadores de Brasil y Argentina, creo que ya estábamos cerca. Nosotros habíamos solicitado también anteriormente iniciar esta discusión a partir de ese párrafo, del subpárrafo inicial. Comenzamos a las 14.35 y ya llevamos otra vez 15 minutos y como decía cada vez que nos acercamos pareciera que nos alejáramos más.

Por lo tanto, consideramos que podemos comenzar o recomenzar, como se puede decir, desde ese párrafo, desde el párrafo inicial, el que empezamos a discutir a las 14.35; de lo contrario aquí, ya estamos de nuevo llenando la mitad de la página y seguimos agregando y yo creo que así no vamos a lograr un consenso.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would like to thank the intervention made by Nicaragua. It is basically what I was going to say. We are now trying to improve the text with different proposals and different ideas and we are becoming far away from the minimum consensus. If you ask if I were happy with the first text that we had when we start discussions on this subject in the afternoon, of course I was not happy. But I understood that at that moment, it would be the minimum level of understanding to reach a consensus.

Very frankly now, with the text we are going to an unknown direction. By trying to be excellent we are losing the opportunities. I would propose that we go back to the text we started discussing in the afternoon. If we think it is the minimum that everyone would accept, we could eventually discuss some improvement later on. We would have the minimum text to show our consensus and not our disregard or disconsideration for this subject.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COEHLO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We would like to express our appreciation for the positions put forward by the African Group, by our dearest colleagues from Congo and Cameroon. I think that is why we have discussed this at the Programme Committee. That is why we did an evaluation of the FAO Strategy. I fully understand what has been said by our distinguished colleague from Argentina. I think to myself what the rationale behind the proposal is.

The discussion on the need for a new Strategy is explicitly referred to both in the evaluation as in the Management Report. However, if we go for inclusive consultations we also have the opportunity to discuss if we really need to have a new Strategy. I think that the concerns expressed by our distinguished colleague from Argentina are already in the text.

Minutes ago, we were very close to a consensus. We have these very good proposals from the African Group. We have this idea of accepting, but explicitly in the text “the Members’ views”, which makes clear that there are different views and different positions on this. I think that all concerns that are expressed this afternoon are already there. I am begging for the understanding of colleagues and try to go forward with these two ideas.

Going with the text that is proposed by our dearest colleagues from the African Group and accepting that there are different Members’ views that are already expressed on the text. I think that these two ideas and with the text as it is we have the basis for a solid debate on the future about the FAO Strategy and the alignment of the Strategy with the new Strategic Framework, which is in fact what we are discussing here.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Merci à ceux qui m'ont précédé, notamment l'Union européenne pour cette allocution prononcée avec beaucoup d'élégance. Monsieur le Président, je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

This is something that we have been avoiding. This split among the general group. It does too much harm to the Organization. Let us not have a split among two general groups. What the African Group is trying to do is to try to bring everybody on board and avoid those splits because it is somebody from my Region who says something, I have to support it outright. It makes a lot of harm and it does not build confidence.

We want to build confidence among ourselves and what really the proposal, I was not very attentive when they were writing in a proposal, it was “regular updates,” not “audit.” If that can be updated, it is “updates.”

I am of the opinion that we are almost there. We were trying to bring the ideas that were brought up by Latin America and the European Union together and we worked during the break on this among ourselves to try to see what could be the balance between the positions held by each Region. That is what the Africa Group is trying to do.

We are sorry that it is not understood that way and this split continues to emerge. Our intention was not at all to do that. We plead with everybody to understand that we were trying to do something that brings us together. That is our submission, as we have said, based on facts and on what people have said so far.

Let us really consider it with a different mindset and make sure that we are working for the global purpose and that out there in my village somewhere in Cameroon somebody is suffering. People are dying of hunger and we are here merely discussing if there should be this word or not that word. We are really in that situation now and Africa is really pleading that you should understand the problems that we are trying to bring forward for the understanding of the Membership.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we are getting closer and it is good to see Members showing flexibility and moving towards getting together. I hope we will soon all be in agreement with the text here.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Muchísimas gracias, querido amigo, Señor MOUNGUI MÉDI de Camerún, por los esfuerzos por tratar de intentar lograr un consenso y la verdad que yo creí cuando íbamos antes del almuerzo que estábamos muy cerca. Pero, quizás, un elemento que podría ayudar en esta línea, es que le hagamos a la Secretaría dos preguntas que creo que serían importantes.

En primer lugar, y necesito respuestas concretas, bien concretas para poder entender alguna cuestión que todavía tengo alguna dificultad para comprender. La primera pregunta es, ¿cómo sería el proceso en el caso que se analice llevar adelante una nueva estrategia? Es decir, aparte de las consultas abiertas, ¿cómo es el proceso respetando los procedimientos internos? ¿Cuáles son los Comités?, ¿cuál sería el procedimiento formal por el cual debería poder llevarse adelante ese esquema?, número uno. Y la segunda pregunta, ¿cuánto tiempo tardó la estrategia que está vigente en este momento? ¿Cuánto tiempo tardó en elaborarse esa estrategia?

Entonces, primera pregunta, ¿qué comités técnicos tienen que participar? ¿Qué es lo que hacen? Y, por otro lado, ¿cuánto tardó la estrategia anterior? Son preguntas muy concretas que yo creo que pueden ayudar a ver si todos entendemos elementos, que quizás pueden ayudarnos a ir en línea con lo que decía mi estimado amigo de Camerún en términos de buscar un consenso que incluya a todos los Miembros.

CHAIRPERSON

To provide these answers, Secretariat?

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (FAO, Deputy Director-General)

I would need five to ten minutes to provide you a reply because I need to find out how long the previous Strategy took. If I remember well, we had to go through the Technical Committee, through the Programme Committee and then finally to the Council. This was the process. However, if you want a formal reply, you should give me five minutes, I can just come up with a clear and concise reply.

CHAIRPERSON

Go ahead and do your research and come back for us. Thank you. Argentina?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Gracias a la Secretaría. Gracias a la Sra. María Elena Semedo. Esto es importante porque esto lo que nos indica, más allá que todavía la información de cuanto tardó la estrategia anterior y tengo entendido, pero no quiero yo dar la información, espero la información oficial, tardaron dos años en hacer la estrategia; que en todo caso lo que tenemos claro, entonces, es que acá hay un problema en el párrafo, porque para poder tener una nueva estrategia y tenerla en los plazos establecidos o previstos en este texto, tenemos un problema.

Lo que no deberíamos es plantearnos límites que no podemos cumplir. Quizás lo que habría que hacer es, incorporar lo que nos mencionó nuestra estimada Sra Semedo en el texto para adecuar, para que apliquemos la posibilidad o para que discutamos en todo caso una nueva estrategia, pero respetando todos los procedimientos técnicos mencionados.

Creo que quizás los más práctico es que apliquemos la actual estrategia y para que no dejemos a la FAO sin estrategia, y mientras se está aplicando podamos seguir discutiendo durante los comités técnicos la nueva estrategia. ¿Se entiende la lógica, de lo que quiero decir?

Lo que estoy diciendo es, que tenemos una estrategia, que la tenemos que sostener hasta que tengamos la nueva. Entonces, yo creo que, lo que nos informó la Sra Semedo es importante porque nos explica cómo funcionan los procedimientos y los tiempos que requieren hacerla.

Entonces, yo estoy totalmente de acuerdo con mi querido colega de Camerún. Jamás estaría en contra de una estrategia de cambio climático. Mi Presidente ha dicho en la Cumbre que Argentina tiene un compromiso muy fuerte con ello; pero lo que estamos discutiendo acá no es si estamos comprometidos

o no con ello, lo que estamos discutiendo es cuál es la mejor metodología para poder, justamente, atender las necesidades que Camerún, mi amigo del Grupo de África ha planteado.

Y justamente por eso y por el tiempo que tardaría hacer una nueva estrategia, lo lógico sería aplicar la propia estrategia que tenemos mientras logramos discutir la nueva. Eso es lo que quise decir para que nadie interprete que detrás de mi *rationale* está no querer una estrategia o no tener un compromiso con la estrategia sobre cambio climático. Espero haber sido claro, porque tengo la voluntad constructiva, no quiero poner ninguna traba al consenso.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am encouraged because I really do think we are making progress, not just on the text but in our understandings of each other and that is great. I think what I have heard is that there is recognition that there is a need for a new Strategy and there is also recognition that it is really important to ensure that ~~that~~ the Strategy reflects Members' views.

This consultation process will be an important part of the Strategy development. I completely agree that consultation with Members before the Strategy is developed is really important, or before the Strategy is finalized. That is good and so much the better to have that consultation done in the next six months or so. That is really good.

I think the actual process of finalizing the Strategy would then come after the consultation. My fear, as you will have heard me express this previously, is that if we have a consultation on the need for a Strategy and then another process to start consulting on the Strategy itself, it really delays things and, of course, that delay could be very damaging to FAO, particularly, for example, when it comes to seeking project approvals in Climate Funds and so on.

I think all of us will want to unite in ensuring that FAO is in the strongest position possible when it comes to accessing Climate Funds and presenting what it can offer member states as we try and achieve the Paris Climate Change agreement.

What I am coming round to saying is that I do not think it is realistic to expect a Strategy would be finalized by the 168th Session of Council. That is not what we are asking for. What I think we are agreeing on is that we would have consulted with Members on the Strategy before the 168th Session of Council, which I think would be useful and I hope that that could be the useful first step in the development of the new Strategy.

CHAIRPERSON

I see now Members moving closer and I see some optimism in arriving at a consensus.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je tiens à remercier l'Ambassadeur de l'Argentine, qui a rapproché de toute évidence les positions, ainsi que l'Ambassadrice du Royaume-Uni, avec qui j'ai longtemps travaillé, toujours de façon constructive, au Comité du Programme. Ces propos vont dans le sens d'une approbation des projets au niveau du Fonds vert et nous pensons que nous nous rapprochons du consensus.

Étant donné que nous sommes deux porte-paroles du Groupe Afrique, je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

At the outset let me say thank you to Ambassador Carlos Bernardo Cherniak because he put up questions that will help us to have the same understanding for what could be the process from now on. I strongly believe that we will understand from what the Ambassador from the United Kingdom said that time is not on our side.

It is like sometimes, I remember, we were to go for the election that was happening in the Article XIV bodies and the first thing I said, we want a vote, yes, so let us decide whether we should vote. It took a long time to decide whether we should vote and then we had to vote, one round, second round. By the time we are coming to the real vote, it was a lot of time that we spent.

We do not want us to come to this Institution here that, okay, we want to start the discussion on do we need a Strategy. I believe that, for the Africa Group, that discussion is behind us. We are looking now ahead of us and that is why we propose that the [XX] should be provided to the Governing Bodies because it is not only the Programme Committee. The Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), they all need that feedback. That is why we were requesting.

I am happy that Canada brought the idea of alignment of the Strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because this is a prerequisite for the funds that are earmarked. That is why that addition is, for us, very, very good. We can accept it the way it was put. That may help us to move forward. If we were to say something we can remove the brackets to “ensure that the Strategy aligns with the SDGs,” but if we have to do that then we must remove the new Strategy on Climate Change, “to ensure that the new Strategy on Climate Change aligns with the SDGs.” so we remove “...to ensure that the new Strategy on Climate Change aligns with the SDGs.” We have resolved that part of the question.

The other one is we have to develop it by developing ahead of the 168th Session of the Council. I think the Ambassador of Argentina was right to say that it is probably too close. When we were proposing this, we were thinking that it is the consultation that should take place ahead of the 168th Session. That is our understanding. There should be a way to put it in such a manner that we do not say that the Strategy should be there for approval at the 168th Session. No, it is the Members’ consultation that should go on until the 168th Session.

What we will suggest is to ensure that a new Strategy on Climate Change aligns with the SDGs. We should “conduct an inclusive consultation ahead of the 168th Session of the Council.” Now we are all convinced that what we need is the consultation that should take place within this timeframe and not that we are approving the Climate Change Strategy around the 168th.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

This really looks like it is getting close. I think the distinguished Ambassador from Cameroon just got us there and I only have maybe two words to add to get it to hang together there in the middle.

First, would it be possible for the Secretariat to just hard return subparagraph (j) down onto a fresh page so we can see just the subparagraph we are dealing with clearly. Could we take away the last five lines of blue and just scoot them down, just so that they are out of the way. I think that is mostly what we are dealing with at the top.

I think there where it says “considered all the findings and recommendations,” in the middle, “of the evaluation, followed by Members’ views, noting as well Management’s response to the Evaluation, requested, following the adoption...” “i. regular updates...” and then “ii.” I do not think we need the word conduct. “Inclusive consultations ahead of the 168th Session to start the development of the new Strategy.” I think that meets the intervention made by the distinguished Argentinian Ambassador a few moments ago that we are talking about the start, not the end of a process. “To start the development of the new Strategy on Climate Change that aligns with the SDGs.” Then I think that is the end.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero tratar de plantear que solo para dejar en claro que el debate no está entre los que están preocupados por el cambio climático y los que no están preocupados. Estamos todos preocupados por la misma cuestión, simplemente estamos viendo cuál es la mejor manera de llevar adelante esta discusión. Dicho esto, y sobre la base que hemos planteado una propuesta que sostuvimos algunos países, traté de tomar muy en cuenta lo planteado por mi querido colega de Camerún y el Grupo de África. Entonces, creo que, para poder también incorporar las preocupaciones de todos, es decir, de los otros Miembros, con la idea de avanzar, yo sugeriría que me permitan tener una propuesta que reemplace al párrafo 2, que está en el párrafo por otro texto como una alternativa. No quiero que cancelen nada, solo quiero explicar cuál sería el texto comunal. Si me permite el Presidente voy a leer en inglés a velocidad de dictado. *“Conduct an open, transparent and inclusive consultation, including FAO Technical Committees and government bodies, on the structure and objectives of a new Strategy,*

as well as its alignment with Agenda 2030, Rio Declaration, Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC on Climate Change in line with the new FAO Strategic Framework within its core mandate, ahead of the 168th Session of the Council.”

Creo que para llegar a un acuerdo lo ideal es tener a todos adentro, en las diferentes visiones. Creo que lo que hemos tratado de hacer en este ejercicio de todos los Miembros comprometidos con el cambio climático, todos que somos los Miembros del Consejo y de la FAO estamos buscando una salida consensuada y queremos que sea también capturada la preocupación de otros Miembros. Si podemos avanzar con esta línea, estoy dispuesto a acompañar el párrafo sugerido originado por mi querido colega de Camerún, en nombre del Grupo África y con las diferentes sugerencias iniciales planteadas por los demás países, pero espero que pueda construir consenso.

CHAIRPERSON

Any comments on the proposed text from Argentina?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Merci à l'Ambassadeur Cherniak de l'Argentine pour cette proposition, qui va dans le même sens. Monsieur le Président, je voudrais vous demander de passer la parole à l'Ambassadeur du Nigeria.

Mr Yaya A. Olaitan OLANIRAN (Observer) (Nigeria)

Thank you, colleagues. Thank you for the past few days, your tenacity, your commitment, Mr Chairperson, and the way you have patiently led us this far. I also want to thank all colleagues that have put in their best to get us over this hurdle.

My take is that having listened carefully I want to caution that we do not need a Christmas tree, wanting to put in every declaration, every agreement and, on top of it, miss the point. I think the United States gave us an excellent starting point this afternoon. Unfortunately, we have deviated almost completely away from that.

The issue to me is simple and straightforward. Hard work has been done by Management. All the Committees have gone through this, they have ironed it out, agreed, disagreed, and come up with something. We have a responsibility here and that is to walk the fine line. It is needed that for any funds to come from the Green Fund, FAO's Strategy on Climate must align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

If that happened, then we are on the path of having more resources. New one, old one, know how long it has taken to arrive at any agreement is key, but at the same time, it is the ball of contention here. Let us work on what we have and let us improve on it as we go on. There must be a common understanding that we all have the same goal, the same objective. Once that is in place every other thing can be agreed upon.

I do know, to my dear colleagues Argentina, Brazil, United Kingdom, United States of America that we all have a responsibility for the millions out there and of course to our dear Organization the FAO. On this note I want us to really go back to basics.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, so much, for your wise words. I hope the Members bear those in mind as we move forward because it is important to keep things simple. I agree with your comment that we do not need to put everything under the sky in one paragraph.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

I would like to ask for the floor for Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We would like to strongly support the wise and insightful words that our distinguished Ambassador from Nigeria has just said. In fact, it is a very wise position and we fully support that. It is not what we asked for the floor at the same time, but in a much better way that I can imagine to do.

We are also supporting the first proposal from the United States of America, but now we have a clear view, a clear support. Finally, I want to say that I also can understand the proposal of an alternative small to high from our Argentinian colleague. As Nigeria said, it is in our view captured by the original text. I would like only to point out that there are no Technical Committee Sessions prior to the 168th Session of the Council.

We need to rephrase something, but after listening to the proposal from Nigeria and considering, again, that the ideas are in the first paragraph, I am wondering if you can, now that we are very close, to go forward with the text as it was proposed by the United States and supported by Nigeria.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

J'étais prêt à renoncer à la parole après avoir écouté l'Ambassadeur du Portugal, qui représente l'Union européenne, mais je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun, qui a un mot à dire pour le Groupe Afrique.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

Let me first of all recognize that the United States has brought some very positive amendments to the suggestions that we have made so far. I am always inspired by the wisdom of my dear friend Yaya and once again he brought that wisdom here. I want all of us to try to listen to that wisdom. I have a problem with the text in yellow now for two reasons.

The first problem is that we are in an odd year. The time for the Technical Committee to meet, between June and the 168th Session is no longer there, so there will not be a Technical Committee meeting, unless we want to limit them to the Finance and the Programme Committee. That is one thing. That consultation will not be inclusive.

The second thing that I want to say is that, and our friends from Nigeria said it, let us not put up a Christmas tree. We have developed here a statement where we with very much respect of what it contains, everything there is totally correct. But we are drafting already the Terms of Reference of that consultation and what it should look at. I am not so sure that what we have there is what is required.

I am of the opinion that it is within the development of the Strategy itself that all those elements, 2030, Rio Declaration, Paris Agreement, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and so on, can be addressed. With that, we are putting ourselves into a strait jacket and it is not what we want. My question is, is what we want, to put ourselves in a strait jacket? We were almost there with the addition of the United States, which we clearly understand and appreciate. I am begging, really begging, with all due respect, I am really begging our Ambassador of Argentina, for the sake of compromise because this kind cannot fly within the Africa Group, for the sake of compromise to try to reconsider that proposal.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think this is my first time in the afternoon. Actually, we have been discussing in this small subparagraph, but it is very important and pertinent for the last two hours. Definitely, so far, we have not done any progress at all because we are trying to change it from time to time worse.

As you have always been saying, all the time, Mr Chairperson, we are just becoming the Drafting Committee. I remember that at 15:00 hours, almost two hours ago, there was a proposal by the United States. It was very nice and accommodates everything. At that time, we are almost in agreement, but, later on, for the last two hours, we have been changing from time to time, from time to time.

Everybody knows a new Strategy is very important, not only on climate change, but also on other issues. We have to update, we have to design new strategies all the time. Definitely to implement a new Strategy and to design it will take a lot of time. It is not an issue which you can drink like a cup of tea.

Therefore, to get back onto the main point, I appreciate the statement which was already two hours ago proposed by the United States and at the same time His Excellency Ambassador Yaya A. Olaitan Olaniran has also said very brilliantly, we cannot accommodate everything in one subparagraph, like putting all the currants in a Christmas tree. That we have to agree.

Therefore, my recommendation is let us go back to the first subparagraph which was proposed by the United States and we have to see that one properly. Otherwise we cannot accommodate everything in one paragraph. The most important one is we need a new Strategy and we need that one also as soon as possible, as appropriate and it has also been endorsed by the Council. Therefore, let us go back to the original statement and we can make some changes on that one and we can be in agreement.

I think I have said what I have proposed because so far we cannot accommodate everything in one paragraph. We have to focus on the two most important things, new Strategy, very pertinent, and the time can be defined later on by the Secretariat. If possible, before the 168th Session, well and good, if not, we will see. My proposal is let us go back to the original statement, which was proposed by the United States.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La verdad que escuché muy atentamente a todos mis queridos colegas y la propuesta que hice no era para buscar complicar. Fue una propuesta constructiva. Siempre cuando uno propone tiene el problema que es muy fácil ser objeto por ahí de alguna crítica, pero la intención era absolutamente constructiva para tratar de ayudar a construir una sensación en la cual todos tuvieran la idea de que sus preocupaciones estaban capturadas. No voy a ser yo el que trabe el consenso. De ninguna manera porque no lo he sido nunca. Si mi sugerencia no es algo que vuela, jamás me he aferrado a una posición si no hay consenso. Así que no hay ningún problema. No es necesario que nadie me pida expresamente ni por favor porque soy una persona muy racional.

Solamente hice una propuesta. Interpretaba que esa propuesta completaba de mejor forma lo que de alguna manera nos puso María Helena Semedo en el chat, que es: como es el procedimiento para poder elaborar justamente la estrategia de cambio climático y de acuerdo a ese procedimiento yo de alguna manera lo que traté de hacer es capturarlo en el párrafo. Pero en definitiva para hacer una nueva estrategia vamos a tener que pasar por todas estas etapas. No va a haber una nueva estrategia si es necesario, sin que pase por todos los organismos y por todas las instancias. Así que, yo estoy en sus manos.

No cuente conmigo como alguien que pueda afectar o romper algún esquema de consenso y no hace falta que nadie me pida por favor porque lo mío fue una propuesta constructiva que, si no vuela, soy yo la misma persona que considera que si no vuela, no vuela y punto. No hay ningún problema.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

After hearing all the proposals from different areas I would come back to what I proposed some time that, and Eritrea just reinforced. We are not happy with the text that we almost reached an agreement. We were 98-99 percent sure, but it is what we have, it is a minimum that we could live with. I would again propose that we go back and we react to that proposal, which is the initial United States proposal with some United Kingdom amendments and also our amendments. It is not a good one, it is the minimum we can accept.

CHAIRPERSON

I think you have a good point because this text has expanded so much that there would always be something which is left open. We will follow your suggestion. First, I would like to ask Ms Maria Helena Semedo whether she can give the information which the Ambassador of Argentina had requested. Is she ready now?

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (FAO, Deputy Director-General)

Yes, thank you, Chairperson. I put it in the chat, but, if you allow, I can repeat here on the process just for information.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, please, go ahead.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (FAO, Deputy Director-General)

Thank you. Indeed, we started in the Programme Committee no. 118 on 30 November 2015, where it was presented, an evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate adaptation and mitigation. In that Programme Committee, the Committee requested that a roadmap for developing a Strategy and its conceptual framework to be submitted to the next Session of the Programme Committee.

In this regard, in the 119th Programme Committee in May 2016 the Secretariat presented a roadmap for a Strategy for FAO's work on climate change, which was approved by the Programme Committee. From that, the Programme Committee also recommended that it will be presented to the Technical Committees after the presentation, to approval by Council. It was presented in Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI), all in 2016.

Then, in March 2017 DC/121 reviewed FAO's Strategy for Work on Climate Change and noted that the final Strategy has been completed and reflected the recommendations made by Council in the 155th Session. From that, in the Council 156 in April 2017 the Council appreciated that the Strategy for FAO's Work on Climate Change was completed in line with the recommendations, noting the importance in defining FAO's activities in support of the climate change adaptation and mitigation and also it was presented in the next Session of the Programme Committee and in the Council 168 in December 2017 it was reviewed the Action Plan and the Results Framework for the FAO Strategy on Climate Change.

This is how worked. We was started in November 2015 and we concluded in December 2017. It went through all the Technical Committees, also for endorsement. I put everything in the chat.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ms Maria Helena Semedo. I think, although there is progress in terms of acceptance of some text, Brazil's proposal is a good one. At least that is why I think because if we start again and have the objective being the minimum we can agree on to move forward that would be a stride forward because this way the text is getting expanded, but we are at the consensus spot, as it were. There is always a difference. May I ask my colleagues to put the United States proposal on the screen and then see how it could be amended where acceptance could be achieved?

What will also help is, okay, we have spent some time, but Members have given views and suggested texts. There is more knowledge on the process now than when we considered the United States proposal when it was submitted.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Chairman, sorry to interrupt you. What I propose is that we go back to the initial proposal with the amendments coming from the United Kingdom and our amendments. This is the text that reached almost consensus.

CHAIRPERSON

You can reproduce those?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Yes, in our proposal was "as well as mentioned in response and Members' views."

I recall that the United Kingdom proposed something including Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), I do not remember exactly. I think it was before the "Strategy on Climate Change." maybe the United Kingdom delegation would help us.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I do recognize that this was the proposal that the United States made when we first starting at 14:30 hours or so, but I think since then we have made much greater progress on the blue paragraph above, which was proposed by Cameroon on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. I would strongly prefer working on that paragraph. Indeed, the United States itself has been working closely on that paragraph. That certainly would be my preference and it does also include the Brazilian language that

reflects Members' views. My strong preference would be to continue working on this blue subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

I think I am in favour of, and I am sure everyone else is as well, to see how we can come to a conclusion on this subparagraph. If the blue subparagraph assists in reaching a conclusion quicker I am for that because we are already at. We started at on this and we are still there. I do not think the Council can carry on, stuck on one subparagraph when other Items are outstanding.

May I please appeal to Members to show flexibility because it is not the end of the world if you reach a consensus and it is not absolutely 100 percent to your liking? It is not the last day of the world. There is a whole process which everybody has been referring to. Matters can be reopened, matters can be improved, you are the governance, you are the Governing Bodies, you are the stakeholders of FAO.

I think we should move forward even if it not 100 percent to your liking, the word or the sentence, and come to a conclusion because we have spent a better part of yesterday on it, so much so that we had to go almost until 01.00 hours. We started at 14:30 hours. It is 16:15 hours and we thought we would be dealing with the voting procedures where the Secretariat has produced a separate document, but we are still on one paragraph.

I could understand if someone said we spent a whole day on the Programme Committee's Report. No, we did not spend a whole day on the Programme Committee's Report. We spent a whole day and more on one paragraph. Can I appeal to Members to show some flexibility? I give the floor to Costa Rica. If Members feel the blue paragraph is one which has brought them closer to each other, then let us go with the blue subparagraph.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

What I propose is that we stick to the yellow paragraph. We tried from the blue and we deviated. We did not reach an agreement. Am I happy with the yellow paragraph? Of course I am not. However, it is the minimum that we can accept and we spent more than one day in this text and discussions.

Again, I would appeal to other delegations, if they would react only to the yellow paragraph. This is not my preference. I am far away from being satisfied, but it is the minimum and I can be creative and go to any other colour coming with new proposals that would protect my interests, my ideas, but we have to work with the minimum level of consensus and this is the yellow one.

CHAIRPERSON

Other delegates have a different view. They feel they are closer to each other on the blue paragraph. It reminds me of a tadpole in a bowl of water going round and round biting its tail. I do not know how we are going to move forward. There are some Members who feel the blue one is getting them closer to each other. Even the United States has worked on the blue paragraph. Your view is the yellow was closer, so I would like Members to tell me which paragraph brings them closer to each other?

Members, can I ask you, should we move with the yellow or blue? I would like to move with the one which brings you closer.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Hice durante la mañana varias propuestas para tratar de ayudar a construir consenso. Ya veníamos con este tema anteriormente y siempre traté de buscar el consenso en toda la reunión. Lamentablemente, fue muy difícil y muy complicado, incluso luego llegué a hacer una propuesta que no tuvo respaldo así que yo mismo la bajé. Creo que la base de un consenso es el mínimo común denominador.

Yo creo que está muy claro cuáles son las visiones distintas que hay en la Organización sobre este tema en particular, no sobre el tema del cambio climático. Sí sobre cómo llevar adelante esta discusión, este proceso. Entonces, sinceramente, lo que a mí me dolería en lo personal, como país, es que no hubiera un subpárrafo en este sentido.

Por eso yo creo que lo que usted dice, es correcto. Trabajemos sobre la base que puede ser el mínimo común denominador de todos. Cada uno de los países tiene las mayores o menores aspiraciones sobre

el subpárrafo, pero si queremos tener un subpárrafo seguramente la única manera va a ser a partir del mínimo común denominador. Si no, va a ser muy difícil. Eso es lo que a mí me preocupa, que no hubiera ningún acuerdo, que no hubiera un subpárrafo, porque es muy importante que lo haya y yo lo respaldo.

Entonces, creo que hay que trabajar sobre aquello que pueda tener la posibilidad de construir la base mínima de un consenso entre los Miembros. Nos va a dejar insatisfechos a todos, pero son las reglas cuando uno trabaja en la búsqueda de un consenso. Siempre se produce la sensación de la insatisfacción, porque si hay satisfacción total hay insatisfacción total en otros y para el consenso se necesita un mínimo de satisfacción para todos.

Esa es mi *rationale*. Por lo tanto, creo que hay que trabajar en lo que usted mencionó. Usted dijo, y creo que es correcto, trabajemos sobre la propuesta amarilla y tratemos de ver si podemos desde ahí avanzar o por lo menos tener algún subpárrafo que pueda terminar esta discusión y poder avanzar, pero siempre estoy a favor del consenso.

CHAIRPERSON

What is worrying is that we started with the paragraph which is yellow and we have expanded it to what is blue and all the time it was to be able to reach consensus. If the yellow was the minimum which would have enabled Members to reach a consensus why did Members keep expanding the paragraph?

Why did we not try and reach a consensus instead. One and a half days have gone? We should have had the Drafting Committee's work finished today and it has not even met and we are still arguing on one paragraph. I would like Members to declare which paragraph they want to work on.

Could I please know? I know the view of Brazil and Argentina. They would prefer yellow. Can I hear some others? Which paragraph would they like to work on, which could bring us closer?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Il y a longtemps que j'ai pris la parole parce que je pensais que nous étions proches d'un consensus sur le «paragraphe bleu». En effet, sur ce paragraphe, le Groupe Afrique a fait sa proposition, puis il y a eu un complément par le Royaume-Uni, l'Union européenne, les États-Unis; nous étions presque arrivés au consensus.

S'il manque quelque chose, que l'on dise ce qui manque dans ce paragraphe, mais repartir au «paragraphe jaune» signifie reprendre le travail à zéro puisqu'on avait commencé sur ce paragraphe. Vraiment je pense que le texte du «paragraphe bleu» est celui convient le mieux à tous, car il rassemble la préoccupation qui a été celle de l'Évaluation et aussi du Secrétariat, et c'est celui qui nous paraît de toute évidence le plus proche du consensus.

Mais comme nous sommes deux, le Cameroun demande aussi à donner un avis sur ce paragraphe, je vous prie de lui donner la parole.

CHAIRPERSON

Cameroon, I give you the floor and it is to address this question because we have to move forward. Now there is an opinion, which wants the yellow. Although the yellow existed when we started the debate and we moved away and everybody participated to arrive at blue and now we want to go back to yellow. We have to try and agree on some sort of consensus, otherwise I am bound to advise that we should go back to what FAO used to do decades ago.

Some Members said this and other Members said that, or majority said this and a minority said that. That used to be the process of FAO two or three decades ago. We cannot go on this way. We have got other work of the Council to do. We have got the Drafting Committee. We have got two or three other Items still to consider and those are Items, on one of them I have seven informal consultations, so it is not an easy one that one either. We are here, stuck on one paragraph.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I know that Costa Rica has been waiting and also the United States. I will be very brief. You know our position. This is the proposal of the entire Africa because we are only the two of us spokesperson, Congo and myself. This is the proposal of the Africa Group. If any member proposed something different it is not. This is what the Africa Group has tabled. You know that is our position. It is the blue text that we have tabled. I know that the United States also might say something, what is their preference. We would like to listen to them.

CHAIRPERSON

I have three speakers, Costa Rica, United States and Germany. I am sorry, we were discussing some other things and we were not able to give you the floor before.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Sí, estaba esperando hace algún ratito y me saltaron algunos colegas, pero no importa. Sigo escuchando opiniones. Yo no había querido participar mucho en este tema porque tenía entendido que esto había sido manejado por correspondencia y ya se ha discutido bastante sobre esos puntos anteriormente. O sea, eso venía, digamos, redactado desde el principio prácticamente como tenía que quedar.

A mí, a Costa Rica, lo que le interesa es que aparezca y se le dé la importancia que merece el cambio climático. No son tan importantes los puntos y las comas y los apóstrofes, sino que se dé una idea de la importancia que tiene el cambio climático en todo este proceso. También me es indiferente si es el azul o es el amarillo. Me parece que el azul es el que más tiene consenso y eso tal vez es donde más fácil vamos a llegar a un acuerdo y para Costa Rica estaría bien.

Mi preocupación va más allá. Mi preocupación es que hemos invertido o mal gastado tanto tiempo, donde esto se ha convertido ya en una lucha de solo yo tengo la razón y solo este país o solo el otro y yo tengo más poder. Yo creo que, por favor, señores, hay mucha gente muriéndose de hambre en el mundo. No podemos. ¿Qué dirá toda esta gente que se está muriendo de hambre cuando nos ven a nosotros discutiendo por un punto o una coma en un tema que fácilmente puede superarse? Esa sería un poco mi inquietud.

De veras que me llena de mucha tristeza ver que hemos perdido dos, tres horas en un subpárrafo cuando esto es sencillo. Es simplemente, sigan trabajando y sigamos avanzando para ver si podemos dar un ejemplo al mundo de que estamos verdaderamente preocupados por la gente con hambre y por la alimentación mundial. Por favor, Señores, seamos más consecuentes.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for your really positive and wise words. I could not agree with you more and I think we need to have that sort of thought in mind and move forward quickly.

Ms Alison STORVE (United States of America)

I am quite inspired by what the Ambassador from Costa Rica just said. I think we should all remember that yellow and blue make green, so we are getting there. I understand that sometimes you have to go backward to go forward in negotiations, but I think when I proposed to start the development in the blue paragraph, which maybe you can turn green, I do not think we ever heard a round of views of whether that would fix the paragraph.

That was proposed in order to bridge the interventions of a series where we were discussing that we all acknowledge that a new Strategy cannot be complete by the 168th Session, but that we just are making a start. I wonder if we can actually start with the blue paragraph, see if there is agreement on that before we go to a different step.

Then I would just note, I think all of the bracketed text after the final word "SDGs," all of that actually has been incorporated in the paragraph above and all of that can drop out at this point. Those causes are all reflected above and it is just the top eight lines in blue and green.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COEHLO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I would like to support what Congo said and the way it is said. It is what we want to say and it is very important for us. We all, in the last two hours, are working on this. There are a lot of contributions on the blue text.

In replying to you, Chairperson, I think that we are almost there in the blue text, following diverse and various propositions. That is where we are and this is our position. We are also one to echo what the distinguished representative of Costa Rica just said after waiting a long time respecting the rules of working. Thank you, very much, Costa Rica, for that. I think that also it is a very good message.

Finally, I think the last proposal from the United States of America is absolutely understandable and is in line with what we have already in the text, so we can also support it.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

Like other Members, we swiftly wish to reach a consensus. We have listened carefully to the other delegates and I would like to know whether we can proceed on the basis of the yellow text? I am referring to the part of the text which starts "requested." Here we want to know whether indeed we can reach a consensus.

CHAIRPERSON

China, that is what is being discussed. Two Members requested the yellow text.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

[No English interpretation]

CHAIRPERSON

China, may I interrupt you? That was the discussion which we have been having, whether blue or yellow. Two Members suggested yellow, but I heard most other Members saying let us start with the blue and then we will see what we can incorporate. Please address the blue paragraph.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We are still deciding which paragraph we should choose?

CHAIRPERSON

I am telling you to start with the blue and if you want to borrow some from the yellow, put it in the blue. We have to move with the blue because most Members I heard wanted the blue.

Ms Xi LI (China)

Our solution is that we can borrow the part from the yellow one, "requested regular updates," to the end. This part. Yes, we borrow this one and replace it to the second small point of the blue one. Replace the last sentence of the blue one. Yes, this is our proposal.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Muy rápidamente, queremos sencillamente manifestar nuestro acuerdo con lo expresado con la Unión Europea, por nuestros colegas portugueses. Creemos que la opción en azul, tal y como lo había planteado el Grupo regional de África, es la que más consenso ha elaborado, ha recabado y por tanto la más adecuada.

Y quisiera hacer un aplauso público a las palabras del Embajador Zamora de Costa Rica. Que nos haga a todos reflexionar sobre nuestra verdadera función y no perder el norte es importante.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We have been listening carefully of all the discussions, opinions, views. We would like to be constructive. Following your guidance to work on the blue, now we have the addition by China. It will probably take care of the concern of the views that I heard. Just to propose small amendments, Chairperson, if I may?

First, in the terminology, “inclusive consultations,” to put brackets on the “s,” so that it will not preclude whether we want one or more consultations. Then the “new Strategy,” we put “FAO” after “new.” So, “new FAO Strategy on Climate Change. I would add additional phrases, “based on three dimensions of sustainable development and the shared principles and commitments of the 2030 Agenda, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.”

That is my proposal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Está sobre la base que la mayoría de los colegas están de acuerdo con trabajar sobre el subpárrafo azul. La idea también, según lo que yo escuché de mi estimado colega del Grupo regional de África, la idea era trabajar sobre el subpárrafo azul e incorporar, si es necesario, algo que sea de importancia para los otros colegas, para poder ver si con eso conseguimos el consenso.

Para nosotros la sugerencia recién planteada por Indonesia es apropiada. En general el contenido de lo que está allí no contradice, creo, por lo menos quiero entender que es así, no contradice lo planteado por el Grupo regional de África. Entonces, si eso es así, podríamos consolidar una posición amplia de consenso porque todos hemos tratado de buscarlo.

Y por supuesto, agradezco mucho también a la delegada de China que intentó, a partir de su propuesta, también buscar una solución de consenso. Y creo que el incluir el principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas, no “*and differentiated [ininteligible] but differentiated responsibilities*” es, quizás, un aporte importantísimo planteado por Indonesia y que es, en general, un planteo que los países en desarrollo siempre hemos sostenido.

Así que bien, creo que por ahí estamos muy cerca de llegar a un consenso. Gracias, Indonesia.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We, as Argentina, think we are very close to a consensus. We thank Indonesia for the proposal. I think it is a good one, but I have doubts about the “s” after consultation. I think we need “consultations” because it might be more than one and it might be in different fora and different Technical Committees or informal consultations. I think we need to keep the “s.” Thank you.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En línea con lo expresado anteriormente por las Delegaciones, compartimos y agradecemos a Indonesia por haber agregado el tema de la Agenda 2030, haber incluido también el principio de responsabilidades comunes y diferenciadas.

Ahora tenemos un subpárrafo tricolor, creo que se están comenzando a juntar posiciones y espero que logremos terminar en esta sesión de la tarde t.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I think it will not come as a surprise to colleagues because I think we have dealt with this matter in a number of Committees, including recently that the Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) reference is problematic for us. One way we have dealt with this in the past is we have footnoted it and we footnoted it most recently in a Joint Meeting Report and stated that we affirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including *inter alia* the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities as set out in Principle seven thereof. It is important to the United States to put the CBDR reference in the proper context, which is broader than the principle standing alone.

Thank you. I am sorry, Chairperson. I meant to also add, I appreciated the imported language from below in yellow. I was just checking through the text and I think each one of these lines is already in the blue text, so not entirely certain how it is proposed to change the blue text because, for example, “requested regular updates be provided to the Programme Committee,” is not at (I), “regular updates to be provided to the Governing Bodies.

The next line, “stressed the importance of implementing the Strategy.” “That is the second line of the blue text. The new Strategic Framework to be adopted at the 42nd Conference,” is now the fifth of

sixth line down. Finally, the “inclusive consultations,” is also in (ii) in the blue text above. That was maybe a question, how is this to be incorporated?

CHAIRPERSON

You have raised a very valid point because there is bound to be duplication because when Members were working on the yellow text we were adding aspects later on in the blue text as well. So, Australia and then Congo.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I was just wishing to take the floor to encourage Members to listen to what the United States has just said. If we truly want to conclude this subparagraph today, this week, this year, we really need to consider previous negotiations and entering in terminology on Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) will not help us achieve that, unless we learn from our prior experience and seek to footnote it as the United States has suggested.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

What was said by our colleague from the United States is exactly what I wanted to say, the added yellow on the blue. Every element of that added yellow is already contained. I must confess that, I know that it is China that proposed that, I should confess that in our consultation during the break we tried to take elements from each section and incorporate it in there.

There is nothing new in the Africa Group that we created. We consulted, then we showed that it could be drafted this way for the [XX]. The United States has already mentioned that. That is what I wanted to say.

I have to address the addition by Indonesia. It is a very good addition, but I do not know if at this point we will be happy to have new language added on the basis of what we have agreed because this is almost a new language that is being brought here. We are in your hands, Chairperson. We do not want to take your place, but we are just looking at the way we can move forward.

The last thing, I think what Brazil said about consultation, I think the “s” has its place, so we concur with him that we should leave the “s” there. Following what Ms Maria Helena Semedo said about how the process went during the development of the first Strategy. Every consultation went through all the places. I am now in your hands because we are almost there. If some people can just adjust and so on, we are almost there and I hope that in the next ten or fifteen minutes we can say we achieved something.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to Argentina and the United Kingdom I would like to request China to give thought to what some Members have said. That the portion she transferred from the yellow paragraph to the blue paragraph, quite a few Members have emphasized that those points are already covered in the blue paragraph, so there would be no need to repeat them. Would she agree if those were dropped out? Then there is the suggestion of the United States to put one aspect in the blue paragraph into a footnote, whether Members, in the interest of reaching consensus, would support that. Please give thought to those two aspects.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Primero, estoy de acuerdo con Camerún que estamos muy cerca. Pasa que cada vez que me pongo contento porque veo que estamos muy cerca, tengo miedo que no lo logremos, pero creo que estamos muy cerca.

Déjenme hacer solo una mención a una expresión que hizo mi estimada colega de Estados Unidos de América sobre el principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas. Es decir, justamente la Agenda de Río se da en el contexto de la cuestión del clima, no está fuera de contexto y acá estamos hablando de eso.

Es muy difícil hablar de una estrategia de cambio climático y no mencionar específicamente la Agenda de la Cumbre de Río acordada por todos los Miembros, y que indudablemente coloca la cuestión de las responsabilidades para poder discutir el financiamiento de cómo llevar adelante procesos de transformación en clave. Tratar de adecuarlos en los países que, obviamente, más necesidades tienen. Por lo tanto, me parece que ahí, creo que no, que el contexto es el adecuado.

Ahora, tratando de buscar alguna alternativa, después de “*and commitments of the 2030 Agenda*”, podemos incluir el lenguaje acordado que es “*reaffirming all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*”.

Una alternativa, estoy tratando de poner después de “*2030 Agenda*”, en el subpárrafo azul, “*all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including inter alia, the principles of differentiated responsibilities as set out in Principle seven thereof.*”

Continues in English

I could say that this is something that you can see in the Paris Convention, in paragraph 2, Article II of the Paris Agreement, which is also included.

Continúa en español

Lo que quiero decir es que, quizás, esto pueda ayudar entre los Miembros a encontrar una manera, poniendo ese texto allí, de ver si ese es el problema, a ver cómo lo podemos acomodar para que lleguemos a un acuerdo si ese es el punto del desacuerdo, pero, me parece que estamos muy cerca, estamos ahí.

Quisiera ver si podemos invitar a Estados Unidos de América a mostrar algún grado de flexibilidad en esto para poder estar juntos y ver cómo podemos acomodar las posiciones para llegar al consenso. Pero estamos muy cerca, creo que, con su liderazgo, estamos ahí nomás.

CHAIRPERSON

We will come to the United States after two speakers, just after two speakers.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I wanted to come in. I noticed in the chat that our colleague from China had said that some of the rationale for introducing the yellow text was because that reflected some of the points made by the United Kingdom and Brazil and I just wanted to confirm that we would be content to leave out the yellow text and indeed work on the blue text.

As others have said, I am getting more and more optimistic that we are very nearly almost there and I did note that the United States had proposed a solution for the Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) issue as a footnote and if that has worked in other recent conclusions then I think I would be happy to accept it here too.

Ms Xi LI (China)

Just as you said that we propose all these interventions, just to help you reach a consensus. If the United Kingdom are happy about this and if our colleague from Brazil are happy about this we have no problem to retreat our proposal to delete the yellow one because our reason is that the blue one and the yellow one, the first several sentences are quite similar, almost the same, but only the difference start from (ii). This is our reason.

We would like to support Argentina and Indonesia's proposal, the Rio Declaration, especially on the Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) principles, are quite vital. We remember that we had quite a prolonged discussion on the previous discussion, Other Issues. At that time we proposed to add some dimensions, the CBDR and some other colleagues say they disagree to propose this because it is only limited to the Climate Change issue and so here we would like to say we are discussing the climate change issue and this is the perfect place to stress this issue. This is very important to all the developing countries.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

Thank you for the proposal to the Ambassador of Argentina. I do appreciate the attempt to help us with this language. I would like to go back to an intervention that was really wise, made of the Ambassador of Nigeria a few minutes ago, maybe half an hour ago, in which he cautioned us to build a Christmas tree. I am looking at this and now I see we have the addition of 2030 Agenda, we have the Rio Declaration and Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) and it is starting to look again like the text that was withdrawn. If we are making a Christmas tree, then I think we need to list all of the ornaments because now we have also the Paris Agreement that supersedes some parts of these.

I would actually prefer, if it is possible, to end the sentence at “based on the three dimensions of Sustainable Development.” The reason for that, notwithstanding what was said about building a Christmas tree, is that I do not believe that these other concepts were actually part of the discussion in the Council and I think we really do need to recall that we are trying to build conclusions here that are based on what we discussed in the plenary. I do recall that we talked about the three dimensions of Sustainable Development, in fact we do in almost every discussion, and I would hope that we could end the paragraph there.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to also support what the United States has just said. I am a bit surprised that we are trying here to come closer to consensus and I am bit surprised that there are still new ideas and language that have not been raised as such. The Climate Change issue is one that has been discussed a lot in the FAO context as well and the Strategy Framework and now we are coming with language that is actually complicated and belongs to another forum and I think that is even for Trade and we would try not to import issues.

I trust that there is some language in the 2030 Agenda, but like we have said in other fora, we do not like cherry picking and bringing references and we are not now negotiating the Strategy or any product. We are just concluding the discussions that we have had under this Agenda Item. I would really think that at this stage, after about five hours, two this morning and now three this afternoon, that if we could all please look at the text that was closer to consensus and really ask whether we cannot live with that. It is not now a question of trying to bring in ideas and work on the subparagraph. We are at a stage where it is, can we live with the imperfect, but still inclusive language that has been worked by all the Regional Groups and many Delegations, all committed to this issue.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Voy a tratar de responder a cada uno de los planteos de mis queridas colegas. En primer lugar a Canadá. Lamento que no haya podido, no sé si por ahí no fue el caso, pero no había podido escuchar la Declaración sobre el Marco estratégico que hemos hecho en nombre del G77+China durante estas discusiones en el Consejo. Porque tengo aquí la Declaración que hicimos y el G77+China incluyó el principio de las responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas.

Segundo lugar, este principio, yo puedo entender que puede ocurrir que algunos de los países se puedan no sentir cómodos, pero la verdad es que está en tres instrumentos internacionales acordados. Está en la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, está en la Cumbre de Río y está en el Acuerdo de París. Yo no sé cuánto más necesitamos, en términos de acuerdos internacionales que incluyan tanta cantidad de países, para que ahora digamos que nos incomoda un principio acordado.

Y creo, Presidente, y ahí sí le pido por favor que intervenga, si es posible, para encontrar una solución. Porque si ha habido claridad en esto, en que hemos sido sumamente constructivos todos los Miembros y si hemos llegado hasta acá es porque todos hemos sido constructivos, pero si vamos a cuestionar lo que ya está acordado en un contexto que se refiere a los temas que internacionalmente están acordados, es muy complicado porque si no la flexibilidad está solamente en unos Miembros y no en todos.

A mí me parece que el Grupo regional de África nos marcó el camino. Me parece que nos enseñó a todos hacia donde llevar este debate y esta discusión, obligó a que muchos de nosotros que intentábamos tener nuestra propia rationale, negociarla, acordar, flexibilizar y estar juntos como siempre estamos o siempre tratamos de estar los países en desarrollo.

Me imagino que los países europeos que defienden y sostienen porque son, en gran medida, muy activos en el Acuerdo de París y han planteado la necesidad de que esta nueva estrategia vaya de acuerdo a la Agenda 2030. O sea, no comprendo cuál es el problema para incluir algo que está acordado.

Entonces, yo planteé esta propuesta pensando en que la posición de mi estimada colega de Estados Unidos de América... Bueno, no pensé en Canadá, pero con Canadá también, nos iban a ayudar desde una actitud de flexibilidad a buscar acomodar esto para tratar de terminar de una vez por todas esta discusión.

Porque estamos ahí, estamos absolutamente ahí, al borde de cerrar toda una discusión de mucho tiempo en la cual logramos poner a todos adentro del acuerdo gracias a su liderazgo.

CHAIRPERSON

It is true, if one considers that we started discussing this yesterday and carried on until late that Members have given attention and have shown flexibility to come together and that is what most Members are saying, we are on the brink. In fact, each and every member who has taken the floor has said that we are almost there. If the problem is just that wording, United States, is there a possibility of some flexibility there, so that we can close this paragraph and move forward?

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I think colleagues know that we have tried to show flexibility and offer bridging language throughout the last four or five hours. Unfortunately I do not have guidance that is flexible on the Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) and I do not think this is such a surprise. I recall that we had a day's long discussion of this in the voluntary guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and unfortunately I think we have a principle disagreement on what are the agreed principles when they are selected, as Canada noted, or cherry picked from these various declarations.

I think what we find is that pulling concepts out of each of these we create meaning that is not in any of these. That is the crux of the argument and we have had that in multiple fora. I think the farthest we can go on this additional language is to end where I suggested. I will keep thinking this over if others would like to take the floor, but unfortunately I think this language add does not help us.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got no one else requesting the floor because most Members have said we are almost there. May I propose the same question to the other Members? We have used this even in our present Session. I forget whether it was the Joint Meeting. It was Item 3 or Item 4. We agreed to put a note in two sections. Would Members accept if a footnote was put there? United Kingdom?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Would you share with us the footnote? I know that my colleague from the United States mentioned the footnote a little bit earlier this afternoon. It would be helpful to have a reminder of it.

CHAIRPERSON

I have on my list, first, United States, and then Argentina. As requested, my colleagues have put the note on the screen.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

Can we see the text of the subparagraph that we are negotiating, please? I can try this, in the spirit of flexibility, to try to accommodate some of the language that was added. "...based on the three dimensions of sustainable development and the shared goals and cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda," and end there if that works. I hope that that comes a little more than halfway here.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La verdad, yo hay cosas que sigo sin entender y me siguen sorprendiendo. ¿Por qué seguimos bajando el compromiso de los compromisos que ya están asumidos? ¿Por qué no principios y commitments si hay commitments hechos por los países?

No podemos decir que tenemos un compromiso con el medio ambiente y después tener una actitud en la cual no reconocer lo que hemos acordado. Yo insisto, creo que tenemos que mantenerlo en el subpárrafo, pero si esta es la manera para poder avanzar, para tomar parte de su propuesta, pero primero dejando en claro que necesitamos seriamente a todos los países comprometidos con el Acuerdo de París en su integridad.

No podemos decir que estamos de acuerdo con el Acuerdo de París, pero no en todo sino en parte. Tenemos que estar de acuerdo en todo y lo que yo expresé y propuse está en el Acuerdo de París. Pero para ser constructivos nuevamente, tomo en cuenta lo que usted dijo y dejaría, *“reaffirming all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development”*, y ahí hacer el pie de página incluyendo *“including inter alia the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities”*.

O sea, tomo en cuenta lo que usted dice. Dejo en claro que los principios de la Declaración de Río, que son de contexto, están en el subpárrafo, pero la footnote es solo para el principio que en particular incomoda a algunos colegas, para ver si con esto podemos terminar de una vez por todas de manera consensuada.

CHAIRPERSON

May I get the view of United States on this?

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

We are firmly in favour of the Paris Agreement. I wonder if we can use that. “based on the three dimensions of the sustainable development and the shared goals and cooperation toward the 2030 Agenda and commitments of the Paris Agreement.” If that would solve it then we potentially would avoid adding footnotes and a mess. I can agree wholeheartedly with the Argentinian Ambassador to the commitments of the Paris Agreement.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would support the alternative proposed language from the United States. I was in the discussions with the Ambassador of Argentina in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) context, but it was a long discussion and the Agenda 2030 has sharpened that commitments that go beyond the Rio Declaration and they are taken together and if we are going to start citing declarations we should start with Principle 10 in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

There is a lot of reference as well to the Beijing Platform, the World Summit to Single Development, which are relevant as well to the work that we do. We have a reference to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda and we think that is sufficient for the purposes of our Council deliberations. This is without prejudice to any future discussions that we have. I do not know why we have to try to find, I am sorry, but I have to be very straightforward here. This is not an easy issue and so it is not, as we are trying to find consensus, putting this language is certainly difficult for us. We would have to go back to Capital.

It was already difficult in the context of the CFS and for us it was in the context of the Rio Declaration, but bringing it in any areas relating to financing is still something not agreed and we have to be careful. This goes for other issues as well. I am just pleading now because of the time we have. We note the importance of this issue to Argentina and other colleagues, but for the sake of moving forward here at the FAO Council if we could stick. For us, we could also support a reference to the 2030 Agenda, the shared principles and commitments.

CHAIRPERSON

Could I have your reaction to the suggested amendment by the United States, whether it meets your expectations?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Mi declaración en nombre del G77 y China la hice reafirmando los principios de la Declaración de Río, por lo tanto, preferiría que esto siga en el texto. Primero, no estamos hablando de una cuestión financiera, estamos hablando de una responsabilidad más general, pero lo que sí digo es que sigo insistiendo que podemos poner el principio de responsabilidades comunes pero diferenciadas en una

footnote, como usted lo sugirió y lo sugirió el Reino Unido. Dejando solamente los principios de la Declaración sobre Ambiente y Desarrollo en el texto.

Creo que es una solución elegante, constructiva y que evita tener que poner en situación más incómoda a Canadá y Estados Unidos de América porque en definitiva son cosas que ya hemos incorporado en otros documentos y este es pertinentemente el documento sobre cambio climático. Todos han demostrado un gran compromiso con esta cuestión, y el compromiso incluye también la Declaración de Río.

Entonces, me parece que la flexibilidad en este caso ahora sí debería ya... Más no puedo ser tan flexible y tampoco creo que pase por incorporar más cosas al texto, citando a mi amigo el Embajador de Nigeria, no crear acá un *christmas tree*. No, esto es muy específico, lo hemos dicho en nuestra declaración, pongámoslo en una footnote y dejemos el tema de los principios de la Declaración de Río en el texto.

Espero que Estados Unidos de América y Canadá puedan acompañar esta sugerencia.

CHAIRPERSON

May I ask the United States and Canada whether they go along with the suggestion just made by the Ambassador from Argentina.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just to be clear, I was not advocating a footnote, I just asked to see the footnote because it had been mentioned previously. I just wanted to make that clear.

I also just wanted to remind everyone that what is at stake here is all about Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR). It is about how we can support FAO to position itself to support its Members to access climate finance. It is really important and all of this is really getting in the way of Management's efforts to support the countries which are Members of FAO which are most vulnerable to climate change and FAO's assistance most. That is ultimately what we are talking about here and it is a real shame that, as others have said, we are so close and then all of this language about principles seems to be a real sticking point.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

I could not agree more about the frustration. I think the debate that we had earlier was really about whether we should have a new Climate Change Strategy at FAO and how we should set it in motion. I regret that we are now debating the specifics of climate principles. I acknowledge, I am not a climate expert, so I would need to go back to Capital for some guidance on these last three lines as they are right now. I do not have sufficient guidance here at the table to just go forward. I am sorry.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

Thank you, so much, Excellencies and colleagues who have reacted to my proposals. Just to reiterate my intention to propose the proposal is to facilitate consensus because I feel that that is the sticking point. I agree with what my colleague from the United States says, just to set the train and then the how the train is conducted. We are clear on that one, which is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on the three dimensions and the shared principles and commitments in the SDG itself and in that which is mostly related to climate change, of course about the Rio Declaration, and the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR).

Just to explain the background and the intention and to show our flexibility I can agree with what the Ambassador of Argentina said that if it is too complicated to put CBDR in the text, we can put it in the footnote.

CHAIRPERSON

I heard the United States saying they would need to get guidance from the Capital. In such a case, and here perhaps some Members would know if a similar situation arose before, how does the Report go forward? How do we go forward? This subparagraph is held in abeyance?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Nous sommes presque au but, près d'atteindre notre consensus. Seuls ces deux points posent un problème. Comme l'a dit l'Ambassadeur de l'Argentine, généralement, lorsqu'on parle de questions de climat, on pense à la déclaration de Rio et à l'Accord de Paris; mais il y a aussi la proposition, comme l'ont dit les États-Unis, que l'on peut inclure en bas de page, et restent les questions qu'ils régleront avec leur capitale. Je pense donc que, hormis ce petit détail, nous sommes presque arrivés à un consensus.

Mon collègue du Cameroun voudrait ajouter quelque chose et je vous prie, Monsieur le Président, de lui donner la parole pour conclure au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I believe this is the light at the end of the tunnel. I do not want to believe that it is the train light which is shown in the tunnel. I understand perfectly the issues of the problems raised by our colleague from the United States. It is true we all follow the development and the consideration of the issue of Climate Change in North America and especially in the United States. I am not sure that it will do harm to anybody to have it in the footnote as suggested. Congo has just said it, as we are communicating, we believe that here we mention the principle of the Rio Declaration, the Paris Agreement and the three dimensions of Sustainable Development. These are three elements that we consider here. The details could be put in the footnote. Chairperson, this was to support what Congo said earlier. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

The footnote was originally suggested by the United States. The last intervention, at least that is how I understood, the Ambassador of Argentina agreed that there could be a footnote, but there seems to be a problem. The United States, originally you had suggested a footnote, is it the wording of the footnote which is causing problems?

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

As we know, there has been a significant change of administration in the United States and I think we were out of the Paris Agreement and we have re-joined the Paris Agreement and, as I understand, there is still some discussion of how these all line up in our policies. I would need to check. The footnote was from the Joint Meeting two cycles ago, so I would need to check on that.

I will make one last try here at the table, which I could agree at the table with the guidance that I have got, and hope that this is seen in a spirit of compromise and goodwill. I think we have put forward quite a lot of language today to try to bridge gaps from the very first intervention of the day. I wonder if this might be acceptable. "The shared goals and cooperation towards the," on the third to bottom line, "2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development." Without a footnote and we just end it there.

We have cited all three of the documents and the agreements and the declarations, which all contain principles. In much the way that we have left constructively ambiguous in other elements of this subparagraph, language to help each other out, I hope that this might be acceptable. Again, without the footnote.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Brazil, United Kingdom and then I would ask Argentina the reaction to the latest proposition from the United States.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I asked for the floor in order to propose that we waited for the reaction to consult Washington for the footnote, but there was some development in this aspect. For the third time we are almost there, but we are being too creative and I am trying to help. Not being creative and being silent for the moment. I was going to propose that we stop here and waited for Washington. This is overdue now.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Yes, I would very much support the latest proposal from the United States there. Could I also, while I have the floor, just confirm or make it clear that I am very happy that we have reached agreement on the rest of the subparagraph. It is only this issue that remains. That is my understanding and I hope that is everyone's understanding too. I hope that colleagues around the table will accept the latest proposal from the United States and we can draw a line under it and agree it there.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je veux remercier la déléguée des États-Unis de cette proposition qui va dans le sens de la construction. À mon avis, pour le Congo et le Groupe Afrique, nous sommes arrivés au consensus, tout au moins nous sommes sur la voie d'un consensus. Nous avons tous fourni beaucoup d'efforts et je remercie les États-Unis et tous les collègues qui sont intervenus sur ce point. Nous pensons qu'on peut applaudir parce que c'était un paragraphe très difficile.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Creo que estamos cerquísima, nunca estuvimos tan cerca después de tanta discusión y tantas conversaciones. Gracias mi querido colega del Congo y mi querido amigo, Señor Médi, de Camerún, por todos los esfuerzos para lograr esto.

Incluso me convencieron de cosas que no estaba convencido. Creo que sería bueno, yo creo que sería un buen ejercicio darle la posibilidad a la delegada de Estados Unidos de América que haga la consulta en capital, porque también nos permitiría tener bien claro a muchos países cuál es el estado de los compromisos internacionalmente asumidos.

Entonces, quizás, una footnote podría ser la mejor salida para que llegáramos a la solución de compromiso total. Creo, como dijo la Embajadora del Reino Unido, estamos contentos de que hemos llegado a tantos acuerdos en este subpárrafo y creo que lo importante es, como sabemos, nada está acordado hasta que todo está acordado.

Por lo tanto, es muy importante ver si podemos también lograr en este tiempo que nos falta para cerrar la discusión, la posibilidad de esa consulta de mi colega de Estados Unidos de América a su capital. Quizás pudiera hacerlo, por la diferencia horaria, durante el día de hoy o cuando pueda y de alguna manera sería maravilloso cerrar este tema con todos los Miembros adentro y con la sensación de haber logrado juntos el consenso.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, the last wording suggested by the United States where they mentioned the Paris Agreement, that latest wording, does it not satisfy you?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Se me ocurrió, después de tantas horas, levantarme un segundo de la silla. Discúlpeme, pero hace muchas horas que estoy sentado. A ver, si me puede repetir la pregunta por favor.

CHAIRPERSON

No, I can understand that. After this Item, I was going to have a break. I just wanted to know that we were talking the footnote. It was not acceptable, but then the United States made another suggestion where she included, apart from the Paris Agreement, there is a reference to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. That last wording or the last amendment which the United States proposed, is not satisfactory for you?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estoy sumamente satisfecho con el texto del subpárrafo. Creo que Brasil planteó el tema de que la delegada de Estados Unidos de América haga la consulta en capital, no sé, tenemos que ponernos todos de acuerdo sobre eso, pero desde el punto de vista de lo que queda en el subpárrafo, para mí es una buena salida de consenso.

Por supuesto, a mí me gustaría ver la footnote, pero repito, el texto que está en el subpárrafo a mí me parece absolutamente aceptable y creo que estoy en eso en línea con la mayoría de los colegas.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got five speakers, but going on experience, as one speaks another one adds on. I think I would break. The break is for 30 minutes because the Secretariat has to organize certain things. We will come back after 30 minutes and hopefully, because when I heard Brazil, the impression I got that Brazil originally was waiting because the United States had said they would like to consult their Capital, but then this new wording came. I was not under the impression that Brazil was still doubtful. I see Brazil is nodding that you have doubts on the wording. Brazil, can I give you the floor?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

No, I do not have doubts. It is okay. I had some thoughts before, but it was the proposal coming from the United States. I was going to react to that and say that we stop here, we reach agreement and start discussing another Item, waiting for the United States, if it was the case for consultation to Washington. Again, this was precluded by the last proposal from the United States.

CHAIRPERSON

That means we have reached consensus and I would like to thank Members because it has been hours and hours and hours of discussions on this one subparagraph. More time on this than some of the other Items which were also very important. At last we managed to come together.

It reminds me of a story my school teacher told me. That there were two mice at night who went into the kitchen of the house they were living in and did not realize there was a bowl of milk and they both fell in and one started swimming and the other was screaming that she cannot swim or he cannot swim and he was drowning and although the colleague kept saying do not give up, the other one who was screaming that he cannot swim gave up and drowned while the one who kept trying and trying throughout the night and was swimming, in the morning found himself sitting on top of a lump of butter. The milk had turned into butter.

If one keeps trying, the success is there. I am grateful to you and thankful to your Members for coming together after hours and hours of discussion. Thank you to you all and I break for 30 minutes and we will come back. I have a list of speakers. If you insist on speaking, we will speak when we come back.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just to organize ourselves, what is the idea? Of course I imagine unfortunately we are going to have an evening Session and so what is your idea?

CHAIRPERSON

We have got two more Items, one is the *Code of Conduct* and one was the *Voting Procedures*, which you all were discussing. I was told that the Secretariat had produced a document, or were producing, and they must have put it on the Gateway. Not yet. They were going to make a further presentation to answer some of the questions and provide some of the information which Members had requested yesterday, or they felt it was lacking. It is these two Items.

If I could come back to you after discussing with the Secretariat because of the organizational aspects and the logistics, etcetera, of how we are going to proceed with the Drafting Committee, plus the discussions on these two Items, which are not the easiest of Items because they have been under discussion before.

Could I give you an update when we come back because there are issue that I have to clarify with the Secretariat as well on logistics, interpretation, etcetera. Thank you, we adjourn the meeting now and we will meet in 30 minutes. It is 17:45 hours. We will meet at 18:15 hours. Thank you.

The meeting was suspended from 17:43 to 18:22 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 43 à 18 h 22

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.43 a las 18.22

Item 14. Code of Conduct for Voting (*continued*)**Point 14. Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote (*suite*)****Tema 14. Código de conducta para las votaciones (*continuación*)****CHAIRPERSON**

Good evening, colleagues. We can start this Session and I have checked with the Secretariat about the logistics and they have suggested that we work from now until 20:00 hours and then we have two options:

1. That we break at 20:00 hours for the Drafting Committee to meet and we suspend our plenary until tomorrow morning.
2. After the break at 20:00 hours we come back at 21:00 hours and carry on with Items 13 and 14 until midnight and the Drafting Committee meets tomorrow morning.

It is up to Members whichever option they would like to choose.

We need now to take up Items 13 and 14, which we have discussed before and we need to go forward with them and try and reach consensus. We take up Item 14 first, which is the *Code of Conduct for Voting*.

Members will recall that I led the consultations with Members on voting procedures since the requests of the 162nd Session of the Council in July 2019, which noted matters arising out of the 41st Session of the Conference. In parallel, issue has been addressed by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at a number of Sessions and through its Reports by the Council. The matter was considered by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters at its 109th Session in October 2019, which requested the Secretariat to prepare a comparative study of relevant rules and best practices of other United Nations Common System Agencies and recommended this be considered at my forthcoming informal meetings with the Regional Groups.

The 163rd Session of the Council endorsed this request. The initial comparative study was presented at my informal meeting on 27 February 2020 and a revised version of that study was subsequently submitted to the 110th Session of the CCLM in May 2020. At this Session, the CCLM took note of the Study and requested the Secretariat to develop a Code of Conduct addressing the candidates, Members and the Secretariat, and that is consistent with Rule 12 at large and the General Rules of the Organization.

The CCLM also noted that the development of the Code of Conduct should be member led and participatory. The Council, at its 164th Session in July 2020 endorsed this request of the CCLM, including its request to have a draft Code finalized prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

I continued to consult on this issue with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairperson of the Regional Groups during my monthly informal meetings in September and November 2020. The Joint Meeting of 129th Session of the Programme Committee and 183rd Session of the Finance Committee in November 2020 requested that I expedite my consultations to allow the Conference at its 42nd Session to take a decision on the matter.

More recently, extensive efforts have been made to expedite this work. A first draft Code of Conduct containing relevant provisions from codes of other United Nations Agencies, as well as FAO's rules and practices, were circulated to Members for my monthly Informal Meeting with Regional Groups on 24 September 2020. Consultations then proceeded, both through dedicated meetings, as well as through correspondence. A further revised draft Code was circulated, taking into account Members inputs and concerns for my monthly Informal Meeting on 27 January 2021. A third draft Code was developed and circulated to Members on 4 March 2021.

In order to expedite the development of the code, I held separate consultations with each Regional Group during the month of February 2021 and noting a continuing divergence of views, decided to hold entire Membership consultations in order to find consensus on a draft text.

These entire Membership consultations were held on 4 March, 1 April, 9 April, 12 April without interpretation and 23 April 2021. Many meetings were held until late into the evening and the last one was held without interpretation, given the heavy schedule of meetings in this period, demonstrating Members' interest in and desire to have a Code of Conduct in this respect.

This matter, like I said, has been discussed on several occasions before, and so I open the floor for Members' interventions. The floor is open.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Pedí la palabra por un tema que tiene vinculación y tiene relación con esta cuestión. Pero no me voy a expresar todavía sobre las conclusiones del proceso. Solamente quiero compartir con mis colegas del Consejo una situación que interpreto es importante porque durante todas las reuniones que hemos mantenido en la discusión sobre el tema del Código de Conducta, una de las cosas que hemos discutido y conversado y, sobre todo, creo que fue las cuestiones que más se repitieron.

Tuvieron que ver con el tema de los principios y el tema de las buenas prácticas. Entonces, quería compartir con ustedes que hace 48 horas recibí una comunicación de mi Cancillería, dos países europeos, pero no Europa en su conjunto, sino que los dos países europeos solicitaron una reunión con mis autoridades a fin de hacer una demarche respecto de dos temas que son el tema del Código de Conducta y el Método de Votación en la Conferencia.

Obviamente la primera pregunta que me hice fue, ¿por qué lo hicieron? Para promover las posiciones, las visiones propias e intentar cambiar mi posición, la posición que expresé en las diferentes reuniones informales que usted condujo, Presidente, para forzarme a que me calle, a que no hable. ¿Fue para verificar si cuando yo hablo, lo hago con instrucciones de mi Capital?

No sé, obviamente no tengo la respuesta, pero lo que más me duele de todo es que esa demarche fue hecha sin avisarme, sin adelantármelo, sin contarme. Entonces, la primera pregunta que dije, pero no es un comportamiento que viole ninguna norma, no es un comportamiento ilegal, pero ¿fue una buena práctica? Yo creo que no lo es.

Y con todos los colegas con los cuales compartí esta situación, me expresaron que tampoco creen que esta es una buena práctica. Y, sobre todo, para mí es difícil comprender porque los colegas que se presentaron en mi Capital, la señora Charlotte Brial y el señor Philip Herzog, representan a países con los cuales sus representantes permanentes aquí en Roma tenemos un muy buen diálogo.

Intercambiamos WhatsApps muy seguido, compartimos almuerzos, a veces hasta coordinamos posiciones.

Entonces, para mí es muy difícil comprender este tipo de comportamiento. Obviamente la respuesta de mi Cancillería a los colegas de estos dos países europeos fue muy clara. Para estos temas, deben hablar con el Representante Permanente ante la FAO, por ser él — o sea, yo — la voz de mi país en la Organización. Y además evitar superponer canales de diálogo y negociación que tenemos aquí todos los días.

Por último, me pregunto, ¿será esa la manera en que algunos piensan que debe conducirse esta Organización o representarnos a los Miembros? ¿Son esas las buenas prácticas que promueven? Lamentablemente, no tengo respuestas a estas preguntas. Por lo tanto, mi reflexión final es que para poder pretender mostrarse como un ejemplo de transparencia y de buenas prácticas, no solo es necesario tener buenos discursos o ser países que cuenten con recursos económicos y políticos poderosos, lo más importante, es aplicar diariamente en los hechos, en las pequeñas y en las grandes cuestiones, las buenas prácticas con o sin Códigos de Conducta.

Lo que quiero decir, es que no se necesita un Código de Conductas para tener buenas prácticas al margen que puedo estar de acuerdo en qué haya un Código de Conducta para las votaciones, pero está claro, entonces, que las buenas prácticas es algo que es la única manera que como colegas podemos trabajar juntos, construir confianza y construir consenso.

Podemos no compartir posiciones, pero tenemos que ser y parecer y actuar como hablamos y si no estamos y no queremos actuar como hablamos, entonces, por favor, no pretendamos ser los champions de las buenas prácticas y de la transparencia, porque me parece que hay una contradicción y hay una

incoherencia. Gracias, Presidente por permitirme con su indulgencia compartir con mis colegas esta situación que más que nada es un dolor personal que tengo que quería compartir.

Discúlpenme a todos los colegas a esta hora comentar esta cuestión, pero sinceramente para mí era importante compartirlo con todos ustedes.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I will try to be very brief. I just want to share my thoughts on how we should proceed in this meeting. This meeting is so important, but we spent so much time on particular things. We should be very practical. I have no particular suggestions, but we should be refraining from making long speeches. Some kind of rationale is important, but we should put the conclusion first.

If you ask, then we can elaborate on that, but if we do that and everybody does that, we spend too much time on this. I think it is very much related to the topics that we have already been talking about, how we are going to have the next Conference. Yesterday we exhausted the discussions and we do not need to repeat it again and if we are in a position to be close to a consensus let us make it.

If we see that is not the case, let us have a kind of solution to move forward. Let us stick to the particular topics and not spend so many hours on things. We should have done all these items by the end of yesterday, but we are still working on that. We need to have time for the Drafting Committee and tomorrow's Plenary. We should not spend too much time on the hours that were so exhaustive. I am frightened that we are in a difficult time zone. I think it is the morning hours. Let us be brief. We cannot have the moment to agree the consensus.

Our efforts should be done to make some kind of way forward. I think this should be the exercise that we have been doing. It depends on the realistic situation that we are facing.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

You probably remember last night when I asked for the floor for a comment twice, and the comment was this one that my Argentinian colleague just made. Unfortunately, this did not happen only in Argentina, it also happened in Brazil and in some other countries in our region. I am not trying to repeat the words of my good friend and colleague from Argentina. This is a very regretful situation that occurred in our countries. I understand it would be serious if it were not ridiculous.

Very frankly, this is a kind of ethical posture that we could not accept and countries that are coming to Rome preaching principles and morals and good faith and against the basic rules of diplomatic life and practice try to undermine the work of the representatives here. I do not know what the practice is in these countries, but one Member of the Council regretfully, and another observer of the Council act in this way. Very frankly, it is in my opinion, inexcusable.

I would like to see we are open to discuss opinions, frankly we can offer a coffee if it is necessary, but it is hard to understand what the rationale is behind this. Some countries probably do not understand that the representatives are extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ambassadors, which is our case here. Plenipotentiary for these countries that are forgetting the basic rules of diplomatic life. I am not going to go further with this discussion, but as I said, it would be serious if it were not ridiculous.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Le Congo a pris la parole hier soir, nous avons suivi les débats sur ce point. Je vais à présent inviter l'Ambassadeur du Nigeria à parler au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mr Yaya A. Olaitan OLANIRAN (Observer) (Nigeria)

Dear colleagues, we have done a lot of work debating this issue and, if you permit me, I would kindly seek your indulgence to let our dear Ambassador from Israel to broach it and then I will come in.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

First, I will speak on voting, I just would like to share the feeling of the Argentinian Ambassador and the Brazilian Ambassador. I regret that they had to face a *démarche* in their Capitals. I really do.

On the issue of voting, I think we have two different approaches here. Either we are going to have it digital or in-person. I think we are kind of half and half. I think the real democratic way is to allow each and any country, each and any Member to choose their own way of voting. Those who want to vote in person, they can come to FAO and vote in person. Those who want to vote via electronic ways and means, they are welcome to do that.

Let us leave it to each and any country to decide the way they want to vote and then I think it will be fair for everybody.

CHAIRPERSON

I just would like to point out that we are dealing with Item 14, which is the *Code of Conduct for Voting*, not the voting modalities, Item 13, which would be the next one. You will get a presentation from the Secretariat based on some of the issues you had raised yesterday. We will take that up then. This is the famous Code of Conduct where we were stuck on one paragraph on the General Committee, if you remember. There was a second paragraph as well. It is Item 14, the *Code of Conduct for Voting*, the secrecy of the vote, etc. I would request Members to address the Code of Conduct and once we finish this we will go to the other one, the voting modalities, where you will get a presentation from the Secretariat first.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Chairperson, I just gave a heads up to Members and so obviously, here we go.

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you very much, to Argentina and Brazil for sharing that information. I just very quickly wanted to also share that that was not restricted to your Region. Certainly, the United Kingdom was also approached by other Members, so it was not restricted to your Region. We did not perceive that as a form of malpractice in any sense. We are relatively used to colleagues getting in touch also between Capitals. I hope that also just helps to share in that spirit of transparency following on from those comments.

I really wanted to get back to focus on the introduction from the Independent Chair of Council and first of all, underline once more our thanks to you for your commitment, your patience, your tenacity in convening us together and facilitating the ongoing very inclusive consultations on trying to reach a Code of Conduct to submit to Conference this year for the endorsement, in line with the mandate that we have all received.

I think we would underline that much progress has been made, and again we thank all Members for their active participation and the efforts made all round to make that progress. There are now just a couple of outstanding issues and we are very convinced that, with the ongoing constructive collaboration that we have seen from Members, we can continue to work together to reach a consensus on this in time for the Conference.

We very much look forward to continuing to do that, to meet together, to continue to discuss and to reach that agreement on this important document, so that we first of all fulfil that mandate and that we as Members are not the ones holding FAO back and making sure that it is at the forefront of taking good practices forward and supporting Management in that too. I think we have all recognized that Management is very committed to ensuring that FAO is at the forefront of good practice. Once more, thank you again for all the work you have done.

We note also the Report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), noting the ongoing consultations, as well as the Joint Meeting, and we very much encourage those ongoing consultations and look forward to them succeeding in finalizing a document that we can submit to Conference and then continue to review as necessary, ensuring that we adapt and keep abreast of evolving practices and make sure that FAO is at that forefront of good practice.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

Like the United Kingdom, I would like to add my voice that the United States has appreciated so significantly the efforts of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the staff for all of the

significant work to facilitate the development of a code among Members. I would also like to thank all the Members.

I took note of the Argentinian Ambassador's and the Brazilian Ambassador's interventions. We thank Members because I think there has been such a high degree of consultation, despite the pandemic, here in Rome and also between our Capitals.

We too have done some outreach and received some outreach in Washington. You certainly are not alone in that. I think that everyone shares the goal and the aspiration to achieve a Code. We were heartened to hear exactly that, a universal and resounding support among Members, as recently as last Friday's Informal Consultation that FAO should have a Code of Conduct for Voting.

We have spent many hours together, including late hours, and everyone keeps showing up prepared and working hard and so we believe that this demonstrates the membership's commitment to continually improving the Organization and strengthening the integrity of its most fundamental processes.

Achieving a Code of Conduct we think will help ensure the integrity of FAO and bring it into conformity with existing practice at many other United Nations Agencies with regard to governance and accountability issues. We welcome this work and we, like the United Kingdom, note that Members have achieved much in these ongoing and inclusive consultations toward developing a code.

Indeed, at our last consultation we heard lots of consensus, both around principles and around the process, and so we hope that the Council will in its conclusions, reflect some of this momentum and our desire to see that this work continue in the weeks prior to Conference, to reach a consensus on a code that can be adopted by the 42nd Conference.

I think we have seen a great commitment from Members. We have also seen a great commitment from FAO staff. We noted yesterday's comment by the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters in which she also noted that Committee stands ready to consider a draft prior to Conference and so we welcome this momentum and hope that can be reflected in our conclusions.

Mr Naohito OKAZOE (Japan)

Japan really appreciates the numerous informal efforts by you, the Independent Chairperson of the Council, to facilitate consensus on the Code and also we have special thanks to all of the Members. We can be very proud of ourselves for having such big progress so far.

While it is very unfortunate that no consensus has been achieved at this stage, but we think it is important to keep this momentum and adopt the Code in consensus at the 42nd Session of the Conference so that the next Director-General election can be conducted with fully respecting the Code. In this regard, we strongly hope that all the Members continue discussion in a flexible and constructive manner aiming to achieve consensus for the common goal.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Monaco, Montenegro and San Marino align themselves with this Statement.

First of all, we would like to commend you, Independent Chairperson of the Council for your continued efforts in facilitating the ongoing informal consultations with all Members.

We recognize the progress achieved so far, as mentioned by you in your oral report. Some important issues still remain pending and need more consultations, such as the absence of conflicts of interest for nomination as officials of the Conference, the modalities ensuring the complete secrecy of the ballot, the absence of electronic recording devices, the counting of votes and the sections on electoral campaigns.

We remain fully committed to providing FAO with a meaningful Code of Conduct that will promote an open, fair, equitable and transparent process for elections for the office of Director-General of the FAO, ensuring the full alignment of FAO with the best practices and standards in the United Nations (UN) system, to the benefit of all FAO members, in particular the integrity and complete secrecy of voting procedures.

We are fully supportive of continuing the ongoing consultations and we look forward to reaching a consensus on the draft text prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Permítanme solamente decir que me preocupa que haya sido considerado como algo normal por parte de la Delegada del Reino Unido y la Delegada de los Estados Unidos. Lo que yo considero y muchos colegas consideran que no es una buena práctica, que no crea un buen espíritu de negociación en este contexto, que no crea un clima favorable a buscar acuerdos.

Yo creo que el problema más serio es que me parece que ni siquiera tenemos consenso sobre lo que son las buenas prácticas, lo cual es interesante porque queremos establecer en un código buenas prácticas y quizás vamos a tener que volver a empezar a trabajar sobre qué consideramos nosotros la base de esas buenas prácticas.

Solo creo, que la voluntad de todos los Miembros durante las conversaciones informales fue tratar de buscar, llegar a un consenso. El consenso no se logró, estuvimos muy cerca, estuvimos a un paso y creo como lo expresé en la última reunión cuando estábamos a punto de llegar a un consenso y donde algunos países consideraron que, si no era de la única manera que era analizada la situación, o sea, si el 100% de la posición no estaba incluida, no había posibilidad de llegar a ese consenso.

Me parece un buen ejercicio. Creo que, seguramente, tendremos oportunidad de continuar intercambiando ideas en conversaciones, pero creo que es importante tener en consideración que muchas veces el clima, el espíritu son muy importantes para favorecer o perjudicar el consenso. A veces podemos ayudar y a veces podemos perjudicar. Simplemente, quiero que quede claro, que de mi parte como en representación de mi país, vamos a seguir haciendo todo lo posible para tratar de buscar un consenso sobre esta materia y sobre las otras materias a pesar que no compartimos con algunos colegas ni siquiera lo que significa una buena práctica.

En más de 30 años de diplomático, jamás un colega hizo lo que hicieron sin haberme avisado de que iban a tener una *demarche* en mi Capital.

No estoy diciendo que no haya diálogos en las Capitales, estoy diciendo otra cosa. No puede reducir la gravedad de los hechos, como hizo mi colega del Reino Unido, pero los hechos son los hechos y yo creo que una buena práctica con los colegas es contarles, “tengo instrucciones de hablar con tu Capital. Tengo que mandar tal nota”. Eso es una buena práctica. Al menos, en mi experiencia. Quizás otros tengan otra.

Pero repito, a pesar de eso, mi compromiso sigue intacto. Seguiré trabajando para tratar de buscar el consenso también en esta cuestión.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Quisiéramos agradecer, en primer lugar, por todos los esfuerzos que usted está haciendo y ha hecho.

Nicaragua como miembro del Comité de Asuntos Legales y Constitucionales conoce muy bien todo el trabajo que usted ha desarrollado dentro del Comité y también por todos los esfuerzos que se han venido realizando en estos últimos períodos con el proceso de consulta.

Si bien pareciera que estamos lejos, yo me voy a acercar a su ejemplo, que siempre nos ha transmitido optimismo para encontrar soluciones, no sé si la vamos a encontrar esta tarde, pero creo que existe una buena disponibilidad de parte de los Miembros del Consejo para encontrar una propuesta que tenemos que llevar a la Conferencia de alguna forma.

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We thank you, over the past month regarding the Code of Conduct for Voting, for your efforts and we thank you for your tremendous contributions and work which really help out the Code of Conduct during this process. It is open and transparent.

Ms Xi LI (China)

We would like to stress that the whole negotiation process of the Code of Conduct should be conducted in a transparent, open and a fair way, so that a lot of countries stress the best practice and here we would like to echo the distinguished Ambassador from Argentina. We really should have a discussion on what is the best practice. If every country believes what they are upholding is the noble concept to conduct the best practice, it should be okay to discuss in an open platform, under your excellent leadership here in Rome.

We also would like to stress that the consensus and the reason why we do not have the draft, as we commonly wish that you have one, is because we failed to achieve the minimum consensus as our Legal Counsel has mentioned that we need to reach complete consensus about this issue. This is what we would like to stress.

Mme Martine GARCIA-MASCARENHAS (Monaco)

La Principauté de Monaco souhaite apporter son soutien total à la déclaration de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 membres, prononcée par le Portugal, relative au Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote.

Ms Hyo Joo Kang (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea also followed our intense consultation regarding the Code of Conduct closely so far and we do consider the current draft document as a great achievement, like others have said.

As we all know, creating a document from none is a difficult task indeed. In this regard, we applaud all Members and you, Chairperson, for the tremendous efforts. My delegation does consider this document is significantly important, although it is a voluntary guideline. We stress that this document has to be based on the consensus among all Members and we believe there is no doubt on this.

We recognize that there are a few pending paragraphs in the document, on which we could not reach a consensus yet. Hence, we recommend extending the consultation period until the coming Conference if there is no serious obstacles. Please understand our suggestion is based on Members' valuable and arduous work so far, which we already had, and a spirit of solidarity.

Ms Lieselot GERMONPREZ (Belgium)

Belgium aligns itself with the Joint Statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

Belgium strongly encourages the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) to continue the informal discussions with the Member States., after this Council; in the view of achieving a consensus before the 42nd Conference.

We hope these consultations will lead to the adoption, during the 42nd Conference, of a meaningful and transparent code of conduct for voting within FAO, aligned with best practices and standards in the UN system.

In addition, Belgium expresses its concern with the fact that these important consultations are being organized at quite unreasonable hours. This is not feasible for small delegations, which leads to an unequal representation in the discussions. We therefore would like to call upon FAO to take this issue up in the review of the working arrangements of the FAO Governing bodies meetings, with the objective of improving the efficiency in the use of time, and effectiveness.

In response to some of our distinguished Colleagues. We can also openly inform you that our Capital has been approached by other Member States in this matter. Belgium considers it normal procedure and diplomatic practice, as also our Ambassador has been clearly informed and briefed by Brussels on this matter.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia welcomes the positive progress made in negotiations to date and we encourage you, Chairperson, to continue these negotiations with a view to finalizing the voluntary Code of Conduct as soon as practical and ahead of the 42nd Conference.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Like others, we would like to thank you very much for all your leadership and for identifying the times with interpretations to have this very important discussion over the last months, and I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for all the colleagues for having led the process like we were entrusted and mandated to do.

Canada believes that a proposed Code of Conduct that protects and upholds the secrecy of ballots would greatly contribute to the integrity of elections at FAO as well as position it well to join the ranks of all the international organizations that are committed to high standards.

We also feel that all Members have agreed to the Basic Texts and I think we are all committed to making sure that we apply them in a way that puts into practice in the most effective way. We were very pleased to see how much engagement there has been on this issue and we look forward to continuing these discussions on a constructive basis and we are confident that we can achieve that in time for the Conference.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

We fully align ourselves with the statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We have indeed participated in the Informal Consultations held by you and we welcome the progress achieved so far. You have really proved your stamina during these long consultations and you have shown how much we can count on you.

We are ready to work on a meaningful Code of Conduct for voting, ensuring the full alignment of FAO with the best practices and standards in the new system to benefit all FAO members. At the same time, we acknowledge that there are still some pending issues and sections to work on.

Therefore, we join others recalling a few important principles such as the integrity and complete secrecy of the vote, as well as the absence of conflicts of interest for nomination as Officials of the Conference. We encourage you, Chairperson, to continue the Informal Consultations after this Council to prepare for the 42nd Conference. We are confident that we can get there.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En lo relativo al Código de Conducta para la votación, España apoya en su integridad las declaraciones efectuadas por la Unión Europea en nombre propio y de sus 27 estados Miembros, al tiempo que desea incidir, brevemente, en los siguientes puntos.

Lo primero de todo es agradecer la labor del presidente independiente del Consejo para avanzar hacia una solución acordada entre los Miembros.

En segundo lugar, aunque reconocemos que hay todavía algunos puntos por acordar, se ha llegado al consenso en la mayor parte de ellos, con gran esfuerzo y flexibilidad de los Miembros, lo cual es da reconocer.

Tercero, es por ello que confiamos en que, si seguimos trabajando y mantenemos las consultas tras eso Consejo, podremos llegar a un texto consensuado, sólido y ambicioso para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO.

Ms Vincenza LOMONACO (Italy)

I totally align myself with the European Union statement delivered by Portugal and I would like to add some national comments.

I would like to express my deepest esteem and appreciation to you, Chairperson, for your continued efforts in facilitating the ongoing informal consultations with all Members regarding such a strategic issue. My greatest appreciations also goes to my friends and colleagues virtually gathered today.

The Members of this Organization are showing a very constructive and positive attitude towards the negotiation process of the Code of Conduct. It makes me feel quite optimistic about the substance and the quality of the important result we are going to see at the end of this complicated road. Our efforts will be rewarded soon.

In the light of this, we are fully supportive of continuing the ongoing consultation and we look forward to reaching a consensus on the draft text prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

En primer lugar, quiero agradecer al Presidente Independiente del Consejo por todos los esfuerzos que ha realizado de las consultas para llevar a cabo de una manera atinada y por buen camino el Código de Conducta.

Yo creo que es una buena señal de que vamos por buen camino y nuestro mayor deseo, pensando en aquel dicho que dice que la mujer del César no solo debe serlo, sino que debe también aparentarlo, quisiera hacer un llamado a todos los Miembros que estamos hoy aquí conversando sobre este tema, que exista una actitud de transparencia, que se hagan todas las acciones diplomáticamente correctas para poder llevar adelante en forma ordenada y respetuosa las negociaciones que se están logrando.

Es ese básicamente mi llamado en cuando al Código de Conducta y, por supuesto, apoyar a las gestiones que se hagan para llegar a buen término con esta gestión.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I would like to salute you, the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), for your endless efforts to bring us to a consensus for the Code of Conduct. I would like to join Germany and Italy in convincing you and ICC to continue consultation in order for us to reach a proper and good consensus on the Code of Conduct.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We commend you for your hard work and perseverance in facilitating the negotiation of this draft Code of Conduct. We took note of your Report. In this regard, we would like to underline the importance of adhering to the general principles that the proposed amendment of the Code of Conduct (CoC) should not compromise state sovereignty, and alter a substantive aspect of our Basic Texts.

However, we also note that there have been some proposed amendments that have been agreed upon, such as the inclusion of the monitoring aspect and the implementation of the CoC, which we fully support. In this regard, however, we would like to underline the importance of adopting the amendments of the CoC in a consensus manner and Indonesia stands ready to engage constructively in the discussion.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings to end the list of Members. I have one request from an Observer, France.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

La France appuie pleinement la déclaration de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres. Je souhaite vous remercier Monsieur le Président pour votre engagement, votre dévouement et votre rapport sur cette question importante pour la FAO, mais également plus largement pour la démocratie onusienne. Vous avez, avec les États Membres, travaillé depuis plusieurs semaines pour parvenir à un document, certes non juridiquement contraignant, mais exigeant et rassemblant les standards les plus élevés en matière de démocratie onusienne.

L'importance que nous attachons au mandat de la FAO et au multilatéralisme, nous engage à continuer et prolonger nos efforts. Les discussions ont permis des avancées, comme vous l'avez justement souligné, mais des points majeurs restent non résolus. Je souhaite souligner en particulier trois aspects.

Premièrement, le secret du vote doit être protégé de toute atteinte, y compris de l'électeur lui-même. Les modalités de vote doivent être à même de garantir la confidentialité du vote, tout en assurant la visibilité du votant pour éviter tout risque d'enregistrement du bulletin.

Deuxièmement, le processus de dépouillement doit être mené en public sous le regard des délégations, comme c'est prévu par les textes.

Enfin, l'impartialité et la prévention des conflits d'intérêt doivent conduire les pays présentant un candidat à s'abstenir de participer au comité chargé de l'élection.

Il importe de refléter ces éléments importants dans le Code de conduite pour éviter tout retour en arrière. Il est donc important de poursuivre nos efforts, poursuivre les consultations diplomatiques, dans tous les lieux, dans tous les formats, afin de mieux comprendre et rapprocher les positions de chacun. C'est ainsi que nous parviendrons à un consensus.

Pour ces raisons, nous souhaitons que les discussions sur ce texte, qui constitue un cadre essentiel de la bonne gouvernance de la FAO et du multilatéralisme, se poursuivent jusqu'à la 42ème session de la Conférence et au-delà si besoin.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Observer) (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

The Russian Federation would like to align itself with the other delegations who have thanked you for.

The Russian Federation thanks you for your active participation in the consultations on this very important issue. We note the high level of professionalism in the Organization of the consultations and the consideration of the opinions of the parties. We think it is important to stick to the initial mandate in developing the text of the Code of Conduct. We feel it is necessary that all aspects proposed in the Code must be properly founded and based on best practices of United Nations bodies.

At the same time, we feel that in agreeing on the text of the Code it is necessary to follow the procedures of developing documents in accordance with principles adopted at the FAO. Namely, the text agreed under your Chairmanship must also be examined by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters and recommended for approval by the Council and the Conference. In our view, this will ensure that this document will have the support of Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that completes our list of speakers. Now I just ask the Legal Counsel whether she would like to add anything. If not, I will go ahead and make my very short conclusion.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I stand ready to assist *vis á vis* a guidance on the Rules of Procedure if there is a decision to go forward. That no doubt would come forward in the report language that may be proposed and considered by the Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a very short conclusion. Item 14, *Code of Conduct for Voting*.

The Council commended the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) on his efforts in leading an open, inclusive and transparent consultation process towards the development of a voluntary draft Code of Conduct for Voting, and requested the ICC to continue such consultations with a view to having the draft finalized prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference.

That is the paragraph of the conclusions and so the floor is open for Members for any comment or remarks they wish to make. I see no requests, so we agree to go forward with this paragraph. Item 14 is concluded.

Item 13. Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference

Point 13. Préparatifs en vue de la quarante-deuxième session de la Conférence

Tema 13. Disposiciones para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia

(CL 166/13)

Now we go to Item 13, *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*. The document before you is CL 166/13 and I am pleased to inform Members that two new Information Notes have been published, providing further details specifically on the alternative voting modalities for the 42nd

Session of the Conference. These may be found in *CL 166/13 Information Note 1* and *CL 166/13 Information Note 2*.

I will now pass the floor to the Secretariat to make a presentation. Mr Rakesh Muthoo, Secretary-General, you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, Independent Chairperson, as you have noted and as promised during last night's debate, we have produced overnight and published today two Information Notes. These Notes provide additional information on voting options for the 42nd Session of the Conference, for instance, on the secure online option. They articulate the new hybrid physical/online modality as requested last night, elaborate on the legal dimensions of all the options and also respond to some specific queries raised by Members last night.

Information Note 1 also adds details on the process of a roll-call vote through the Zoom system, which will be used for the endorsement of the secret ballot voting modality at the Conference as well, as the suspension of relevant general rules.

I am joined tonight by the colleagues who are leading the Secretariat efforts to ensure a viable secret ballot at the 42nd Session of the Conference. They will shortly introduce additional details of all the options, but at the outset, I would like to touch on two key aspects, which received much attention by Members last night, on the secure online option.

The first is the timeline for the online option, on which I have been personally in close contact with my counterpart at IFAD, Mr Luis Jiménez McInnis, since late last year; and for which our FAO team shadowed IFAD colleagues throughout the process of preparations for the 2021 General Council, and learning from IFAD we have been in contact with the same external system provider used by IFAD. We have discussed the requirements for the FAO Conference, we have received demonstrations, quotations and satisfaction. Ultimately, we have undertaken all the internal due diligence steps and clearances with colleagues from the Information Technology Division, Procurement and the Legal Office.

As a result, right now we have a well-planned timeframe from today to the virtual Session of the Conference in June. This includes signing of the contract with the external system provider following a decision – hopefully – by this Session of the Council, next week on 4 May; the start of testing of the system tailored for FAO's Conference needs, with Members soon afterwards from 6 May; and we will be technically ready by 15 May to begin the training for all Members; and then be done and dusted by 25 May.

The second point I would like to reiterate is the rationale selecting the system chosen by IFAD. This online voting system has already been carefully evaluated and tested by IFAD, on the basis of a mandate by the Governing Council of IFAD. That earlier trajectory of the system in IFAD, both technically and in terms of governance Members decision-making, has allowed us to engage with the same supplier with confidence that a secure and usable online voting system can be acquired and used.

In turn, that engagement had led to a clear understanding and agreement of the customisation requirements for FAO, and ultimately a direct contract fully in accordance with the procurement rules of the Organization, on the basis that the technical parameters and conditions are the same as the IFAD contract. In fact, the terms agreed for the FAO contract are more favourable for FAO

Thus choosing the same supplier as IFAD is not only a technically sound action, it is also a positive, clear and tangible example of Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration. In turn, it means that, as Secretariat, we are ready to deliver a sound and high-quality online voting system at the 42nd Session of the Conference. What we really could do with now is guidance and decision from the Council so we can keep working at full pace for the Members.

Chairperson with your permission, I would ask you kindly now give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

CHAIRPERSON

Legal Counsel, you have the floor.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

I would like to take you briefly through *Information Note 2*, understanding that, of course, you have not had much time to review it with care and attention.

This Note looks deceptively simple, but I am aware that there are many lawyers amongst you, and I am sure those will join me in saying that the most deceptively simple documents are often the ones which have taken the most work. I trust that this is the result that meets this criterion, indeed I feel that it does.

At the outset, what is important to note is that what will be happening for this Conference will always require modification of the usual practices of the Organization. As all other UN System organizations we have to take or rather you, as Members, have to take a position of some flexibility to enable the governance structures and the Members of these organizations to actually continue their work and to allow them to deliver their mandate.

Therefore, there will always need to be a decision taken to address some modalities and change. What we have now done as well to try to assist you going forward, bearing in mind that there are a number of queries and very reasonable concerns as to how far this might require a departure from the Basic Texts, is we have prepared a Note, which would show the decisions that would need to be taken in our view in the context of the rules that would need to be modified if an election was going to be conducted by secret ballot, using any of the modalities that have been presented to you by the Secretariat.

These are distinct from the operational and technical matters and, indeed, I think you will find that it is in fact the operational and technical aspects which may be the ones that require a deliberation from you. I am sure once you have had the presentations from my colleagues you will have more clear information regarding those, but *vis á vis* the Rules, my review suggests that there are a limited number of specific rules that would need modification for the conduct of votes.

As the Independent Chairperson of the Council noted, the approval of the Conference would be required of any modality going forward. Firstly, the approval to suspend the Rules in accordance with Rule XLIX of the General Rules of the Organization, of such Rules as needed, to be suspended in order to conduct a vote during a virtual Conference Session. This vote would require a two-thirds majority and would be conducted by roll-call. As already contemplated in the General Rules of the Organization this would then be a nominal vote.

What I would like to underline is that as a consequence of the reviews that I have undertaken, there is much which is of essence that would not change. The Credentials Rules would not change, irrespective of the modality used. The authority to vote, whether the delegate or an advisor or alternate are participating for the delegate, would not change. The Rules on quorum would not change. The mechanisms presented by my colleagues would not change the rules *vis á vis* tellers and scrutineers, insofar as they would be present in all the modalities. The duties and obligations of the election officers would not change. The Rules on secrecy would not change, and nor indeed, would the requirement *vis á vis* rounds of voting, etc., would not change in any of the proposals that have been presented.

Nevertheless, we are in exceptional times and consequently what we have set out in *Information Note 2* are the specific elements that we consider would need a decision by the Conference. As you will see in the possible elements of the draft decision that has been presented, firstly we have taken note very clearly of the importance that the Members have underlined that the actions being taken now are exceptional.

Secondly, this proposal reflects that as far as possible the Basic Texts should be adhered to, and thereafter the aim is to set out where there would be requirements for departure. With regard to the electronic voting system, our analysis to date shows the changes that may be needed would be: firstly, the additional requirements of the authentication processes as to who would actually vote in an electronic system. This will become clearer I believe when you have more information on how this system works as will be explained by my colleagues in due course.

Thereafter, we believe that the other rules that would apply would in essence operate as usual. But in an electronic environment such as the system adopted at IFAD, there are still scrutineers, there are still tellers, and there are still election officers who operate within that virtual world.

Similarly, there would be records and there would be the capacity to vote in the context of a ballot paper, thus it would not be a ballot paper, but an electronic vote. I consider that Members would have to therefore agree to replace electronic records and electronic actions for the voting booths and for the records that would ultimately have to first be verified, counted and thereafter stored, in accordance with the Rules of the Organization.

I note in other respects the usual rules would seem to be readily applicable. For example, abstentions are already addressed in the General Rules of the Organization and I would refer you to Rule XII, paragraph 4 (b) (iv). I do not see within that virtual environment, since it has been developed specifically for the conduct of voting procedures, a need for a great significant departure from the General Rules of the Organization.

With regard to physical voting in person, I believe the challenge, particularly now, lies in the conduct of physical voting in multiple locations, as it has been proposed. In this context, there would need to be an ability to coordinate the counting, coordinate the bringing together of the outcome of the ballot, and indeed, there would need to be a decision to have a vote in three different locations. Nevertheless, it would be possible, as in the proposal that has been made to you, to have the requisite links, to have the tellers in all locations wherever it is taking place, and indeed, to bring everything back to Rome for the purpose of consolidation and announcement.

Thirdly, I recall that yesterday a number of Members proposed hybrid voting practices. That is a combination of electronic and in person. In those cases I would suggest, based on the Rules that I have mentioned, that it would be those two procedures that I have explained operating in parallel with those Rules set out there. Where I believe that difficulties or rather the challenges would come, would be more in the context of coordination. Rules can be complied with, but coordination, and so the practical considerations, would be a challenge.

With respect to the postal vote, which was another option was presented to you, here the Information Note is indeed, I believe currently lacking. This is me saying that of the document before you, and that is because I believe that we would need further guidance from you as to how you would wish to conduct, if you consider that it would be appropriate to recommend a postal vote to the Conference. I believe we would need more guidance from you as to how you would wish that to operate.

Nevertheless, I believe that, as reflected in the note that has been presented to you earlier and *Information Note 1* that has just been circulated, the Basic Texts Rules would apply as usual, from the moment of receipt of votes, counting, etc., would happen in Rome. What needs more clarity would be a set of rules that would clarify how ballot papers would be transmitted and more importantly how they would be received and what would be done if they were not received. There would be therefore a rather complex exercise in my opinion, but of course, we are ready to be guided by you and to draft as you may wish.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight again the issue of timing. I think it will always be the key. This will be particularly significant in the case of a postal vote or any sort of election method which uses multiple locations, because especially in the case where there may be rounds of voting, there will need to be a huge amount of coordination, considering also the time to count and undertake another round.

This, for example, would affect election of the Independent Chairperson of the Council where Rule XII.11 established the rules *vis á vis* rounds of voting as mentioned before. Indeed, it could also affect elections to the Council, where if there are the same number of candidates for the number of seats then there could be general agreement, but if that is not the case those rules are subject to rounds of voting.

The other element I wanted to highlight is that there may be other rules, which may be affected beyond the election process and these are for example Rules regarding timing. My review indicates that there are very few instances where specific timing is required. There are specific time limits

established *vis á vis* elections, most specifically it tends to be in the case of Council elections, if there are elections held as opposed to general agreement, but there are other situations where timing is relevant and I came across a few examples.

According to Rule XII.13 (a), for example, a second vote has to be taken within the space of an hour. This would be difficult to achieve in the circumstances that we face, and so there may indeed need to be the suspension or adjustment of some other Rules.

Nevertheless, that is why I would propose at the end of any decision taken that a broad clause is included, which says “calls for the suspension or modification as required of other Rules as may be needed”. This would avoid the Conference on each moment having to take a series of procedural decisions during the session, each time a rule was triggered that had not been foreseen and then having to stop proceedings in order to take another decision.

In conclusion, distinguished Members of the Council, the options are all there, *vis á vis* the Rules that apply and that govern the Organization. I believe that the three options presented to you –online vote, physical vote, and the hybrid option – can be conducted in accordance with the General Rules of the Organization, in the spirit of them, and with a limited modification of them.

I consider that it would be the operationalization of them that would be the challenge, as I have noted and as I keep repeating. There are issues of timing particularly when we get to having to coordinate the votes where there are repeated rounds and therefore there is need for announcements to be made and for further rounds of the vote to be set up.

I am ready to provide any further information as may be requested from you. I look forward to being guided by you as to any next steps you may wish me to take in this regard.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Dejan Jakovljevic, Director Information Technology Services Division.

Mr Dejan JAKOVLJEVIC (FAO, Director of IT Services)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide more information. I will take a moment to focus on the technology aspects of the solution and, in particular, security aspects as a number of questions came in last night, but also today.

As you would see in the Information Note, there is a section that details the online secret ballot, but also the online system specificity. It is basically describing line by line the solution in place and the online process that will be followed with technology, but I thought maybe it would be useful to provide more information very specifically on the security aspects.

We would see a lot of questions related to confidentiality and the integrity of the system. As mentioned before, the system itself has already been under a very robust due diligence by colleagues in IFAD, but as a starting point, I think it is important to note that the system from the very beginning was envisioned to fulfil the following high-level security requirements.

The requirements are to ensure the security and integrity, confidentiality, the referability and integrity of the vote, as well as implementing a secure system that minimizes the probability of cyber-attacks. So this is the technical ecosystem of the requirements that have been targeted already by colleagues in IFAD. The system should also allow for secure authentication and guarantee of the secrecy and the validity of the vote. This is one of the key elements of the confidentiality of the votes that FAO needs, an alternative system that ensures that the data cannot be manipulated and that the voting process is confidential.

With these high-level requirements and before deciding on a solution, I think maybe it is interesting to note that five companies were actually evaluated on the commercial but also, importantly, technical merits and validation of the solution has begun by a third party. The validation aspect is very important because it provides an independent audit, if you will, of the system against the requirements, including the security requirements.

So if we look at the security standards, validation and the audit of the system, the system itself uses the strongest encryption methodologies, and I apologize for some of the technical jargon, but I will name a

few. So RSA2048, ES256, and hashing algorithm, which I will describe in a moment, are very important for ensuring the confidentiality of the vote. The entire system is composed of a number of security elements and the security measures that include voting encryption, homomophormic encryptions, certificates, and digital signatures.

We also heard last night from a delegate reference to the blockchain. This solution, in fact, relies on blockchain security as well as single-use links, universal variability, multi-factor implication, voter variability, blind signature in multi-voting, but the message about these key elements is to say that they are all orchestrated together, and one of the key elements of putting together the security measures in place is that a solution does not rely on the third-party elements inside basically preventing anyone from inserting any secret code or malicious function within the solution. So it is all originated from this company.

Looking at vote secrecy and maybe these are the two points that are most interesting, vote secrecy and vote integrity. In order to maintain the integrity of the vote, the system actually adds the votes cast to so-called analytic-curve homomorphic encryption. This is a very specialized type of encryption that allows summing up the encrypted votes without actually having to decrypt the individual votes. So the system can actually fulfil the requirement without endangering secrecy. The individual votes remain encrypted and readable. Therefore, the anonymity remains while the system can actually produce the results, the numbers of the votes. I recall one of the questions was around one candidate versus a number of candidates, that in terms of the system security it makes no difference. So one or more candidates can be accommodated with the system.

Related to voting integrity, when casting a vote, each voter receives a numeric code and can validate the vote after. However, this vote belongs to the voters, so no one else could be able to see what the vote is. So again, to ensure the integrity and that the vote has not been changed or tampered with blockchain security is used for this purpose and as an integral part of the solution.

The solution also has a layered security approach. This is basically to signify that the system access and execution is based on user tokens. It means there is that the system provides access on a need-to-know basis and no one has, let us say, the access to the entire system to have insight into the votes or who is voting for who, and so that their integrity remains intact.

The system is also built upfront with intrusion detection. So the system would protect itself, if I may say in that way and, of course, there is a security log that can be examined and shows actually provides what proactive controls should there be a security incident the system will immediately actually report that something is not correct. So the solution has been audited extensively and to the question on the company and if the company has experience with the system, we could see that the solutions have been audited a number of times over the last nine or ten years from external partners like KPMG and Deloitte and PWC with the certificate provided.

In terms of certifications, the company has all the certificates, including the security certificates. So from ISO900001 to SMMI Level-3 and Level-5, UNE166002, Madrid Excelente, the ISO20000. Including multi-crime technical production, so ISO27001, including ISO50000 001 and ISO14001. In terms of the principles and technology, the solution office online voting according to the FAO needs, and again, the Information Note details a bit more the online system specificity.

I apologize again for some of the technical jargon. Thank you, Chairperson, and I am, of course, available for any additional questions.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Sergio Farraro. He is the Deputy-Director of Governing Body Servicing Division.

Mr Sergio FERRARO (FAO, Chief at the Meetings Programming and Documentation Service)

Just to confirm that the contract with the company Indra Soluciones Tecnologias de la Informacion SLU, provides all support to the Organization for the use of the system during the Conference, from the support to organize simulation from the day we sign the contract up to the Conference, the

execution of the Conference. They will support us also during the Conference, and, of course, the validation of all the process.

The system it is a robust system, one of the things not said by Mr Dejan Jakovljevic, which is under my authority is that the system will be customized to be available in all six languages. All users will be able to access in their language the platform and all procedures. This is something that also we have evaluated as part of the evaluation, to be sure that the platform supports all languages, and it is robust.

We can start as soon as we sign the contract. We are already in contact with the company, they are ready to support us. This is also another element in favour of the company, the feedback received from the colleagues of IFAD, although they did not use the system at the end, they confirmed that support was provided by the company throughout the whole process for the designing the system. We count quite a lot on the company and the process of customization involved also the creation of training material for all voters, as well as the definition of the users.

This is also another important element for the vote. We might use the voting system and we might have votes in several days of the Conference, on the first day and other days of different topics. The system can support all these votes and elections, which might happen during the Conference, and we can also have different voters, since countries might delegate different persons for the different days, for the different votes. The system can support also those activities and can support assigning different persons based on the vote to a single election and single vote.

This of flexibility, was one of the key elements for the selection of the supplier, and of course, it has a robust system for authentication. The delegates who attended the IFAD General Committee had access a double authentication system that at the end at IFAD was not utilized because it was quite complex. We might decide, or not, based on your feedback. If you decide to use the system, we might decide the level of security, if we want only one-level security or two-level security for the system. I am open and ready to give any other explanations, if needed.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Ilja Betlem, Chief Member Liaison in Communications. You have the floor, Ilja.

Mr Ilja BETLEM (Secretariat of the Conference and the Council)

I would like to make a few comments about the hybrid voting option. First of all, to confirm that we are capable of supporting that option. We have gone through what it would take, how we would organize it and there is nothing that would prevent us from offering that voting option.

One point to make is that the delegations to the Conference would need to establish for themselves which of the two options either physical or online voting they would take up on the basis of considerations that they deem fit, that they deem relevant.

Subsequently, we would ask Members to communicate to us what that choice would be. So that we are on time, we have set a deadline of at least 15 days before the Conference for that in order for us to be in a position to make all the preparations for both of the voting options.

On the practicalities we believe that it would be best if the terminals that we would use for the online voting would be in the same room as where the tellers would conduct the counting of the physical ballot as well. In that way the tellers could supervise and carry out and perform their duties in respect of both voting modalities and they could on the one hand carry out the physical ballots, and on the other they would have direct access to the computer terminals to monitor and to establish the result of an online vote.

Now, seeing that it is the duty of the tellers to supervise the balloting process, I would not want to make too many fixed statements of exactly how this process would run I would prefer that to be done in consultation with the tellers who are appointed by the Chairperson, also, to make sure that the tellers themselves are actually comfortable with their functions - this is important to make sure that they can properly perform their functions on the one hand in relation to the physical vote and on the other in relation to an online vote.

It is likely that it would end up that we would first conduct the physical ballot and then turn our attention to the online voting ballot, which in any case takes only a very short amount of time. We think it will take up to 10 to 15 minutes during which ballots are received for an online vote.

Regarding the counting, also there the tellers would first execute the physical vote, they would count the ballots, they would establish the partial result of the physical vote and then ascertain the results that is coming out of the online voting system.

Another aspect of having these two voting procedures essentially taking place in the same room even though the nature is obviously different, is that also the scrutineers that might be appointed by the candidates can have access to the conduct of both the elements of this hybrid process.

Then the results, the tellers would establish a partial result of the physical vote and they establish and ascertain a partial result of the online vote, which they would consolidate in the vote counting room, they would certify and once it would be certified that result would be communicated to the Chairperson.

In closing, it is not a process that would pose a whole lot of logistical problems, if any. When we thought the whole option through following the deliberations of last night, this is very much a doable procedure.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 20:10 hours. I think we need to break for the Ramadan and like I said at the beginning, we have two options where we need your decision. So we are going to adjourn now until 21:00 hours. The options are that we meet tomorrow and the Drafting Committee would meet at 21:00 hours today, and when we meet tomorrow we continue with Item 13.

It is your decision whether you want to reconvene at 21:00 hours and carry on, or reconvene tomorrow morning. So Item 13 would be dealt with in Plenary tomorrow, and the Report will be in the afternoon.

I open the floor. It is for your decision.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I very strongly support the option of the Drafting Committee meeting this evening at 21:00 hours. We have made a lot of progress and we have only one item left. I do think there is a lot for the Drafting Committee to be getting on with and I would be very grateful for them if they start this at 21:00 hours, and I noticed that a number of colleagues supported that position in the chat earlier this evening.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Just to say that, I completely agree with the United Kingdom. I think it will be better off for us to start fresh tomorrow morning.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no other requests, but I saw the exchanges in the chat. We will adjourn now and meet at 09:30 hours tomorrow morning and the Drafting Committee would meet this evening.

The meeting is adjourned unless some Member wants to say anything. If not, I adjourn the meeting, and have a good rest and tomorrow I am sure we will come full of life and ready to finish Item 13.

Ms Alison STORSVE (United States of America)

For the Drafting Committee, shall we just be watching our emails for the information about signing in the Zoom meeting?

CHAIRPERSON

I will just pass the floor to the Secretary General to answer that question.

SECRETARY GENERAL

Indeed, you will shortly be receiving all the requisite information and link information as well.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es la misma pregunta que han hecho los Estados Unidos de America, así que esperamos el envío de las notas de conexión.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no further requests. So the meeting is adjourned, and I thank you again for a constructive and successful afternoon session. We came to a consensus on a paragraph which was not easy, but in the end, Members came together. That is the strength of the Membership and the strength of the Organization because in my history with the Organization, I have seen situations where that did not happen, and it had very negative effects on the Organization.

I adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 20:17 hours

La séance est levée à 20 h 17

Se levanta la sesión a las 20.17

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
NINTH PLENARY SESSION NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE NONA SESIÓN PLENARIA
30 April 2021

The Ninth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:34 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La neuvième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 34
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la nona sesión plenaria a las 09.34
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 13. Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference (*continued*)**Point 13. Préparatifs en vue de la quarante-deuxième session de la Conférence (*suite*)****Tema 13. Disposiciones para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia (*continuación*)**
(CL 166/13)**CHAIRPERSON**

Good morning, colleagues. I hope you had a good rest and we can continue and finish. We start off with Item 13 that is the one which is still outstanding. Please ensure you have documents *CL166/13*, *CL166/13 Inf. Note 1* and *CL166/13 Inf. Note 2* before you. This is the last item on the Agenda of our Council Session, and I hope that we will be able to conclude this in a timely manner.

Yesterday we heard presentations from the Secretariat, in particular on the various options presented to Members on alternative voting modalities at the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference. Now I open the floor to Members for their comments and their input. So, the floor is open and I have Australia followed by Argentina.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I believe Argentina had flagged up ahead of me.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, you have the floor.

Item 14. Code of Conduct for Voting (*continued*)**Point 14. Code de conduite sur les procédures de vote (*suite*)****Tema 14. Código de conducta para las votaciones (*continuación*)****Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)**

Presidente, gracias por concederme el uso de la palabra y con la indulgencia suya y de mis colegas, a los cuales les deseo muy buen día de trabajo a todas y a todos. Después de una semana tan dura, si con su indulgencia podíamos volver un segundo al texto sobre el tema del Código de Conducta, que me gustaría observar y ver una cuestión. Permítame ver ese report por favor. Gracias.

CHAIRPERSON

That actually means reopening item 14, which is the Code of Conduct. I will do so if Members all agree. The Code of Conduct text is on the screen — the conclusion.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Porque el texto que está allí al cual creo no ha habido oposición de ningún Miembro, lo cual es una cosa muy positiva porque a pesar de las diferencias hemos tenido muchas coincidencias. Y yo recuerdo varios puntos, en la cual quizás depende cual sea el proceso y el espíritu de consenso y de construcción de acuerdos, quizás podamos imaginarnos que también este Código de Conducta no sea solamente para el Director General o para la elección del Director General, sino también, si es necesario, y eso es un tema que deberíamos evaluar en las conversaciones informales, también para el caso del Presidente Independiente. Quiero decir, cuando hemos tenido las conversaciones informales, las hemos tenido bajo ciertos niveles de presión por el tema del tiempo. Ahora tenemos más tiempo. Por lo tanto, tendremos más posibilidad de pensar e imaginar, quizás, de incluso... Presidente, ¿me escucha? Porque veo en el chat que varios colegas dicen que no hay interpretación o que no están escuchando. ¿No sé si es así? Por favor, estoy leyendo a los colegas en el chat.

CHAIRPERSON

Let me check the interpretation. I think they are checking but they feel it should be fine. Let us go ahead and see.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Decía, Presidente, de manera sintética, que creo que hay una nueva oportunidad. Una nueva oportunidad para intentar con más tiempo tratar de ver si, incluso, el eventual Código de Conducta para votar también podría incluir la elección del Presidente Independiente. Porque, en términos de tener un poco más de tiempo, todo está dentro de las posibilidades. Creo que, incluso, varios miembros plantearon esa posibilidad.

Entonces, simplemente, lo que quiero recordar y en modo absolutamente constructivo es que, considerando que vamos a tener que designar autoridades para la conferencia que, por favor, tomemos en consideración que vamos a tener conversaciones informales para poder conversar acerca de lo que serían las buenas prácticas en la designación de los diferentes cargos de responsabilidad en la Conferencia que viene y en la próxima; y que esos cargos de responsabilidad en uno de los puntos que están en discusión en el draft que no logramos consensuar, está la cuestión de evitar ciertos conflictos de interés o incompatibilidades entre los cargos en la estructura de la Conferencia y quienes puedan pretender ser candidatos en los procesos electorales, tanto para el Director General como el caso del Presidente Independiente, en caso que el proceso de consultas pueda incluir también al Presidente Independiente.

Como este es, creo, entiendo yo, un proceso abierto en el cual vamos a continuar, porque hubo, creo que todos a pesar de muchas situaciones no simpáticas que ayer hemos planteado, hemos mostrado un espíritu constructivo, abierto, de seguir buscando acuerdos y consenso. Yo sugiero tener en cuenta para el próximo ítem que vamos a referirnos, si yo no me equivoco tiene que ver con la designación o la propuesta de designación de autoridades para los diferentes órganos de la Conferencia, tengamos en cuenta este punto que estoy diciendo.

Porque lo que tenemos que tratar es de que, si vamos a impulsar buenas prácticas, a ver si podemos aplicarlas a todas las alternativas de voto. Sobre todo, de los dos cargos más importantes que es el de Presidente Independiente y Director General y, entonces, tratar de que ninguna persona que quiera ser candidato a Director General, no se encuentre en la próxima Conferencia, si eso es lo que acordamos que no integre ningún comité, ninguna instancia de cargos importantes dentro de la conferencia como tampoco en el caso de Presidente Independiente. Así nos da la posibilidad en las conversaciones sobre el Código de Conducta poder tener la posibilidad de ser lo más abiertos posibles para que las mejores prácticas las podamos capturar en ese proyecto de Código de Conducta.

Espero haber sido claro, Presidente, simplemente una sugerencia. Como el texto del ítem 14 es suficientemente amplio, creo que nos permite pensar que el proceso de negociación y consenso al que podamos arribar, podría llegar a incluir la candidatura del Presidente Independiente. Entonces, creo que, por eso lo digo ahora porque después vamos a discutir otro ítem, que tengamos en cuenta este punto porque me parece que sería bueno para las buenas prácticas. Nada más que eso, Presidente, y discúlpeme con su indulgencia haber hecho volver al ítem 14.

CHAIRPERSON

I have three speakers on the list, European Union, the United States and Dominican Republic. European Union, you have the floor. I think we will go to the next speaker and then come back to the European Union.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States does not support reopening this item for discussion. Our Council still has much to do today, including the Drafting Committee. Furthermore, we see absolutely nothing in this agreed-upon language that would close the door to what is in those consultations. In addition, I wanted to remind everyone it was our colleague, in fact, who pointed out we should not be talking about the substance of any code of conduct in this item. Therefore, we request you, Chairperson, to leave this item as previously agreed.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Usted sabe que he estado interviniendo muy poco durante este Consejo contrario a Consejos anteriores. No quisiera que ningún delegado fuera a pensar que estoy utilizando el asiento de

República Dominicana y el derecho a hablar como Miembro de este Consejo para hacer intervenciones llamando la atención sobre mi persona. Presidente, respecto al tema 14 que estamos ahora hablando, hemos escuchado argumentos a favor y en contra, y lo venimos escuchando hace semanas o meses, sobre la pertinencia de que un país que presente un candidato a la Dirección General de la FAO, también algún delegado de ese país pueda pertenecer al Comité General. Hemos escuchado argumentos a favor y en contra.

Le puedo reiterar que mi Delegación entiende que una prohibición en este sentido restringiría los derechos de soberanía de los Estados que están consagrados en las cartas de las Naciones Unidas. Lo ideal, Presidente, es que un país en esas circunstancias se abstenga por voluntad propia, de su libre y espontánea voluntad, se abstenga de someterse al Comité General y que en su Región se lo hagan notar. Que le digan, “Un momento, vamos a pensarlo mejor. Usted, su país se está sometiendo a un candidato a Director General.” Entonces someter también un candidato, un delegado al Comité General, esto no se ve bien. Es la vieja distinción, Presidente, entre lo que es legar y lo que es legítimo. Hay cosas que, siendo legales, no se ven bien.

Y por eso, mi Delegación, la Delegación de República Dominicana cuyo Jefe de Misión que es la persona que está hablando, no se está presentando, nadie de mi delegación, a una posición en este Consejo, pudimos haber optado porque toca el GRULAC, es la rotación que corresponde, a una de las Vicepresidencias de este Consejo. Pudimos habernos presentado a cargos a ser elegidos en la Conferencia General, el Comité del Programa o de Finanzas. De hecho, hemos anunciado que no nos vamos a presentar como país a la reelección como Miembros de este Consejo. Esta es nuestra última sesión, la sesión 166. Fuimos elegidos hace dos años. Ni siquiera, Presidente, para un periodo completo de 3 y no vamos a continuar en el Consejo.

Así que, por todos estos motivos, Presidente, yo hago un llamado a todos los Miembros del Consejo a que al considerar este ítem 14 y al considerar las conversaciones que usted va a liderar en lo adelante y quien le suceda, que también liderará, se tomen en cuenta todas estas cuestiones. Podemos y deberíamos tener un Código de Conducta y la sustancia de este y los detalles de este, las analizaremos en su momento como acaba de decir la Delegada de Los Estados Unidos y también hay que tomar en cuenta que hay cosas que siendo legales, no se ven bien.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

As the United States, Israel is very much against reopening item 14, and we suggest we will go and discuss item 13.

CHAIRPERSON

The Legal Counsel has asked for the floor.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

Of course, this matter is in the hands of the Members but I wish to just note that there is no substantive document before the Council on this item and it is my understanding that the Members have proceeded on the basis that they would only be addressing process as opposed to the content of a draft code within the context of the Council at this time.

I would also recall that, of course, it is within your discretion and the Members' discretion whether an item may be reopened for discussion but there would normally be a general need for agreement to the reopening of an item. I just wish to just draw these practices to the Members' attention. Thank you, over.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Legal Counsel, for this clarification.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero explicar que de acuerdo a lo que sugirió, lo que planteó mi colega de Estados Unidos y mi colega de Israel, no es mi intención reabrir este issue. Yo no tengo ninguna intención de reabrir esta cuestión. Lo único que me parecía importante, quería leer cómo había quedado el Report porque no lo

tengo conmigo y creo que lo que está establecido aquí como texto deja la puerta abierta para que podamos avanzar de acuerdo a lo que yo pretendía hacer que fue clarificar un punto.

Entonces, no es mi intención reabrir esta cuestión, simplemente clarificar que no está restringido a nada las próximas conversaciones que el Presidente va tener porque de acuerdo a lo que allí veo en el texto, se puede conversar no solamente sobre la candidatura del Director General sino también de la eventual candidatura del Presidente Independiente del Consejo. Creo que ese es el punto que quería marcar, pero no reabrirlo. No, era que, simplemente, quería ver el Report, clarificarlo e invitar a los colegas a tomarlo en consideración porque es justamente un proceso que todos han pedido para tratar de tener las mejores prácticas posibles en la FAO. ¿Okey? Entonces, no estoy queriendo reabrir el issue, quería clarificar este punto porque es importante para las conversaciones de los próximos puntos de agenda.

Así que, Presidente, no veo contradicción entre lo expresado por mi querida colega de Israel y por mi estimada colega de Estados Unidos con lo que yo dije. Simplemente, fue una clarificación y creo que el Report captura suficientemente de manera general la posibilidad que avancemos también sobre lo que yo expresé. Gracias, Presidente, y les agradezco a los colegas las intervenciones anteriores.

CHAIRPERSON

I would just like to say that the text of our Report is just saying that the Independent Chairperson of the Council should continue with the consultations because we have not concluded. In addition, in all the consultations on the Code of Conduct, the informal ones, which I had undertaken with Members, there were different views.

There were Members who said the Code of Conduct should apply to the Independent Chairperson of the Council as well. Therefore, I do not think our Report on item 14 needs to change, and with the agreement of Members in my consultation, I can take both these aspects into account –that is the Director-General as well as the Independent Chairperson of the Council. That will be in accordance with some of the discussions that we had in my informal meetings, where there were Members who felt it should also apply to the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

Therefore, with those comments, if you agree, we will leave the Report the way it is, and when I hold my consultations, we will take this aspect into account as well. The Code of Conduct would apply to the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Council, and then it would be up to the Conference to decide. However, in our consultation we will deal with both aspects. If that is okay, we can move forward and go back to item 13.

So, item 13 now, the floor is open.

Item 13. Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference (*continued*)

Point 13. Préparatifs en vue de la quarante-deuxième session de la Conférence (*suite*)

Tema 13. Disposiciones para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia (*continuación*) (CL 166/13)

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

On item 13, firstly, Australia welcomes the information that has been presented on this matter and we respectfully raise the following points:

As agreed by all Members, the voting modality must uphold the principles of integrity, confidentiality, inclusivity and the secrecy of the vote must be maintained.

We appreciated Management's confirmation that these voting modality arrangements are being considered on an exceptional basis only due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic on in-person meetings, and we re-affirm the need for arrangements to respect the requirements of the Basic Texts to the maximum extent possible.

We note the need for Council guidance to help us arrive at a decision, but we consider that all Members should be given an opportunity to consider and endorse any recommendation prior to the Conference.

As such, we strongly recommend that FAO write to all Members to seek their agreement to the recommendation made by Council in a similar manner to that which was done when we first considered conducting the Council by virtual means.

While noting the information that has now been provided, for which we express our thanks, we highlight the importance of Council Members being fully informed of all options in order to make a decision. We also note that adequate time needs to be provided to consider information as well as allow consultation with Regional Groups. This is particularly important for this issue should we need to take a decision through a vote.

This said, we have done some urgent outreach overnight should a vote be required.

In this regard, we highlight that Australia is the only Member on Council representing the 16 Members of the South West Pacific region. Noting the importance of consulting with our region, we also highlight that the time difference between Rome and our region needs to be factored in when determining what comprises sufficient consultation time.

This is particularly important taking into consideration that only two Members of our region are based in Rome, and even these Missions have a very small representation footprint.

This point on representation is also important to keep in mind for the execution of the Conference vote, and as such we welcome the range of voting modalities being put forward for consideration, including simultaneous in-person voting at multiple sites such as Rome and New York which would be our preference should in-person voting occur.

Finally, we welcome advice from Management that detailed guidance on the agreed voting procedure will be provided to all Members ahead of the Conference to avoid any confusion including on the use of proxy votes if applicable.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I want to echo what our colleague from Australia has pointed out. We are very grateful for all the work and all the information that has been provided to us in these Information Notes, and all the work done by the Secretariat. However, clearly more time is needed for capitals to be able to consider.

I am going to return to a few things. The United States supports the in-person by appointment vote with a secret ballot to occur at FAO headquarters. We simply cannot support an electronic or mail-in voting modality. In addition, I want to return to something that was raised on Wednesday and Thursday and that was a question that Canada, the Legal Counsel and others posed. The Legal Counsel responded, and the Secretary-General responded and gave greater detail. That is, that any Council decision, whether by consensus or vote, this week is not going to eliminate any of these options. This Body certainly has the authority to provide a recommendation at Conference; however, ultimately it is Conference that has the authority to decide on Conference's behalf.

Therefore, given that circumstance, it is very clear to us that the Secretariat has no choice but to continue to prepare for the in-person voting modality. This is the modality that is the most secure means. The one that is best aligned with the Basic Texts and, frankly, it is the one that is in keeping with the United Nations precedent.

This is what has been done and this is the precedent we have. Therefore, the issue here at hand for us is are the safety measures necessary to ensure a safe, socially distanced in-person secret vote at FAO acceptable to us Members or not? If not, what is so different about FAO that the rest of the United Nations can use and we cannot?

Additionally, I would point out that delayed votes that we have seen, have been at organizational conferences away from the Headquarters which is certainly not the case here. Ultimately, I take the point, these are exceptional circumstances. We all agree that that is the case; however, we cannot kid ourselves. What we do here does set a precedent, and we simply have not had the time to review all of these things. Our capitals have not had a chance to weigh in, so we need to keep that in mind.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

I should like to begin by thanking you for your patience during this week, in particular with this particular Agenda item. I will be very short. I speak on behalf of the Caribbean nations. I should say, first of all, that we believe that everybody should have a right to vote, and I have heard the discussions that took place with respect to my distinguished colleagues a few days ago, and the presentation put forward by members from your team. However, the concern for this region is that an in-person vote would be very difficult.

As you know, we are still in a pandemic and for that reason many of my Member States are unable to travel to the location for the purposes of an in-person vote. There are restrictions that are in place with regard to the pandemic and, more importantly, many of our countries are behind with respect to the vaccination efforts.

We support the idea in the first instance for the electronic voting. We have heard the discussions put forward, and we believe that it is a secure means of voting. However, as a compromise, we also support the idea of a hybrid system for those countries that have a representation in order to have in-person voting. Then they can, therefore, vote that way. But for countries like the Bahamas and in the region of the Caribbean, we are unable to support the idea of an in-person vote.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for providing us with a very detailed Information Note on the three modalities of voting. Much appreciated.

We would also like to stress that we are working in an unprecedented, unpredictable and exceptional situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Right now maybe the situation is stable but tomorrow we do not know what will happen. Maybe the pandemic will evolve after two, three weeks here in Italy. We do not know what will happen.

Therefore, I think we need to be creative, innovative also in our thinking. Of course, the decision will be taken during the Conference. However, we have to provide clear guidance to the Conference and also to the Secretariat to prepare themselves. I think also, according to Information Note 1, the Secretariat has already provided a lot of information about if we will accept a hybrid modality of voting or electronic voting. They have to also sign a contract with incumbents, so we need to give them guidance to move on.

What will happen if we do not take any decision or any recommendation here in the Council? The Conference will start discussing this decision and the majority of the Conference say that we have to vote through electronic voting? What will happen if we do not prepare it in advance for this? So, based on these comments, Egypt prefers to have a hybrid system, in-person for the Representatives who are based here in Rome, and also electronic voting for Members who are not based or represented here in Rome.

I think the right of voting is very important, and we have to maintain it. We cannot deprive any Members from its sovereign right to vote.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We want to join our voice to what has been said by Australia and by the United States of America. Thank you very much, colleagues. Thank you very much to the distinguished Representatives of Australia and the United States for setting clearly what we think is a wise and reasonable position.

We wish to highlight that it is up to the Conference to decide on its own procedures. This is what we have to do. I also want to say that these arrangements that we need to endorse have much more questions and much more issues than simply the voting setting, as we rightly understood from what our Legal Counsel said yesterday.

In addition, from what we heard yesterday from the Secretariat on the different options and returning to this question of voting, for example, the technical questions behind the electronic voting setting are very difficult to evaluate. At least in our case, we are not specialists in that case. We need to return to our capitals. We need to digest, let us say, the information we received, and especially what has clearly been said by the technical expert we heard from the Secretariat yesterday. However, we cannot evaluate what is at stake.

What we know is what we just said on this, is that there are a lot of questions on the electronic setting that have been a concern in the world, especially in the online world for the last 20 years that are preventing countries from adopting this kind of voting. Therefore, we are not in favour or against, we are simply saying that we need more information. We need more time to digest the information. I think that all the options are on the table.

As the Secretariat said yesterday, as our distinguished friend and our distinguished colleague, Mr Rakesh Muthoo, said yesterday, the Secretariat will continue to work until the Conference. So, by the time of the Conference, we are certain that FAO will be prepared for a decision that the Conference will take on this issue. In saying this and returning to you, we fully support what has been said by the United States of America and by Australia. Let us go for a decision that is consensual at this Council and can keep the options open until the Conference.

Mr Bommakanti RAJENDER (India)

First of all, I would like to compliment the Secretariat for preparing a very comprehensive Note regarding different options for voting. It is very clear. As my distinguished colleague from Egypt has mentioned, first of all, it should be physical and also the hybrid mode. But considering the exceptional circumstances, I think we have to think innovatively and do something, and it should be inclusive. No sovereign country should be left out from their right to vote. That has to be properly taken care of.

I think it is easy. Most of the Representatives are based in Rome, so physical voting is possible but at the same time those who cannot travel, for them there should be some special measures, as it was mentioned last time. It can be either in New York or Geneva. They can vote and it can be that they can authorize other Members to vote. I think an electronic system, before it is introduced it has to be properly tested, the integration of the system has to be properly tested, Members have to be taken into confidence, and the information has to be properly provided.

Therefore, I think with this we prefer the hybrid method full of inclusivity, transparency and taking all the Members into confidence. As my colleague from Egypt has mentioned, time is very short. I think we have to take a decision now, and the Secretariat has to work on this.

In conclusion, we prefer the physical as far as possible and, if it is not possible, then the hybrid method has to be followed.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would also like to thank the Secretariat for the Information Notes which are very useful in terms of having additional details. Like my Australian colleague, I think it is very useful to be able to consider in more details such additional information and ensure that all Members, especially those who are not represented in Rome, can have the opportunity to see what actually would be feasible and workable for them.

I also note in one for the Information Notes, the number 1, which for us, Canada, is of interest because we want to make sure that any option can uphold the principles of integrity and secrecy of the secret ballot. In the preventative measures for the online voting, it says at paragraph 37, “the medium risk relating to the possibility of the votes being altered on compromised computers is inherent to all online systems. No system allows a service provider to control the computers being used to submit votes. Since the best way to mitigate this risk is from the user side, the Secretariat will urge all voters to adhere to the following mitigation measures:

- a) ensure that fully updated software and current antivirus software is installed and enabled on the computers they use to vote;

- b) ensure that Internet browsers used to access the system and cast votes are updated to the latest version and the list of recommended browsers and their versions will be circulated to Members before the testing period;

Then there are guidelines on the voting process.

We are not sure that this can be achieved in the short time we have for all Members if the option of electronic systems would be the one that would be considered for all Members. However, we feel that before we do the testing period, and we can see that this is achievable.

As for the testing period, I am not sure what it entails but I had the impression that our security people could also test it to see each of the Members' security to see that it responds or it meets the security requirements. To our knowledge so far the discussions have been held in other United Nations organizations. They have not approved the electronic option because even the Department of Security of United Nations organizations could not guarantee that they could protect against hacking.

My question is, can the Secretariat ensure that the system that is put forward would be protected against hacking. In addition, in light of the measures that we need to take to see whether we are able to have preventative measures implemented, and in light as well of the additional information that we have, we feel that the Council is not in a position today to make a recommendation that is fully informed. The fact that the Secretariat has to prepare and if it were, for example, the hybrid option, they have to prepare anyway for the two systems to work very well.

However, the best option is to make a recommendation after the testing and after we have had reasonable time to consider and test the options and make the consultations necessary. We are open to have an extraordinary Session of the Council if we want to make that recommendation. However, if at the end it is one day before the Conference, we are also flexible in terms of going directly to the Conference, recognizing that the Conference will make the ultimate decision.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I will start saying that we from Brazil are very satisfied with the presentations made by the Secretariat yesterday concerning the different proposals and possibilities for this specific Item.

We are somehow very impressed with some Members proposing that we postpone this decision and preaching only the in-person vote. Frankly, I can understand. I would say I cannot understand; however, I can understand what is behind this. It is very easy when a Representation, a country, has a mission here and could easily go to FAO headquarters and vote.

However, what about the other 53 countries that are not represented here and if you go only for the in-person vote, would the sovereign rights of the countries be respected? I would be ashamed, and this is the word, ashamed, to support a proposal like this, blocking 53 countries of their right to vote. Of course, we need to take all the necessary measures in order to guarantee the security of the different methods but, very frankly, I understand the only reasonable solution is the hybrid system.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Muy buenos días para todos. Para comenzar, coincido con la representante de los Estados Unidos en que la Conferencia es la que decide finalmente cómo será el tema del voto y todo este asunto. Sin embargo, ¿qué le vamos a decir nosotros a la Conferencia como deben votar? Nosotros, creo que nuestra obligación en este foro es dejar definido el sistema que se utilizará para voto. Desde ya debo decir que para Costa Rica la opción híbrida es la mejor y nosotros quedamos muy bien impresionados con la presentación que hicieron ayer la parte legal y el Secretariado. Creo que están cubiertas todas las áreas técnicas, de manera que se pueda dar seguridad en que el voto electrónico funciona bien. No creo que esto sea un problema.

Ya hemos escuchado a los hermanos de Bahamas; por ejemplo, que todo el Caribe, prácticamente todo el Caribe quedaría por fuera. Ya ahí estamos tomando, si decidimos voto en persona ya estamos dejando por fuera a una gran cantidad de países de la región nuestra en relación a Latinoamérica y el Caribe y me parece que eso no es justo. Costa Rica, por ejemplo, ayer justamente acaba de decretar un lockdown. Nosotros en América Latina estamos atravesando, pasando por la ola que ya en Europa digamos va un poco bajando, allá está subiendo. Entonces, nuestros países están decretando en este

momento muchas medidas sanitarias que evitarían el traslado de gente, funcionarios de esos países para acá. Aparte del tema presupuestario que ya había comentado.

De manera que así coincido con Bahamas, con India, Egipto, Argentina. Todos los que hemos hecho estas, digamos, manifestaciones de preocupación porque queremos que absolutamente el cien por ciento de los Miembros tengan la posibilidad de votar. Yo quisiera hacer un llamado a la cordura. No podemos empeñarnos en que simplemente porque sí, se debe hacer algo que va total contra toda racionalidad de lo que está pasando en el mundo. Estamos pasando por una situación anómala. Estamos pasando por una situación compleja y esto, hablo por mi región, está siendo muy afectada por el tema del Covid en este momento y no quisiera que esto produzca una, que no haya una inclusión de todos los Miembros para poder votar.

Así que, insisto un llamado a la cordura, por favor. Seamos sensatos, seamos comprensivos, seamos inclusivos para todos tengamos derecho al voto y de eso la solución sería la solución híbrida que ya técnica y legalmente, para mí por los menos, quedó demostrado en la presentación de ayer que es perfectamente factible si lo hacemos ya. Si esperamos una semana, probablemente tal vez no. Tal vez en algún caso, algunos de los Miembros están tratando de atrasar estos para justamente que ya después no haya tiempo técnicamente de instalar los equipos y de instalar toda la seguridad del caso. Así que, yo insisto en que tomemos una decisión rápida sobre este tema, que le recomendamos a la Conferencia cómo es que se debe votar y en mi caso recomendaría la opción híbrida.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Buenos días, buenas tardes y buenas noches a todos los colegas. En primer lugar, queremos agradecer la información que nos ha proporcionado la Secretaría sobre las diferentes alternativas y opciones.

Nosotros hemos tomado nota de la declaración de nuestros hermanos del Caribe, pero también hemos tomado nota sobre la declaración de nuestra colega de Australia donde hay más de diecisiete países o varios países del Sur Pacífico que seguramente tendrían dificultades porque no están representados en Roma. Y ya por ahí con la suma estamos llegando casi a cincuenta y tres países, como mencionaba el Embajador de Brasil, que tendrían dificultades serias para poder ejercer el derecho presencial.

En segundo lugar, señor Presidente, si este Consejo ha aceptado que la Conferencia se tiene que reunir de manera virtual y si la Conferencia tuviera que votar en este sentido cual es la modalidad, me pregunto, ¿cómo tendría que votar la Conferencia esa decisión si ya se reúne virtualmente? Entonces aquí tenemos una serie de contradicciones, yo creo que escuchando las primeras palabras que mencionaba la Embajadora de Israel el día de ayer, la orientación tendría que ser por encontrar una modalidad mixta, una modalidad que nos permita a los que están representados en Roma poder ejercer su derecho al voto físico y los que no están, y estamos corriendo ya contra el tiempo, tener la posibilidad de, encontrar la posibilidad de poder ejercer su derecho porque el derecho que tenemos todos los países, todos los países tenemos que tener la oportunidad de ejercer nuestro derecho.

Por último, señor Presidente, nosotros nos hemos decantado desde el inicio por la opción híbrida en el sentido de que, nosotros lo dijimos el día que abordamos el tema, no tenemos garantía. No hay garantía que dentro de quince días aquí pueda suceder de todo como está sucediendo en varios lugares del mundo, como mencionaba el distinguido Embajador de Costa Rica. Esta situación puede cambiar de un momento a otro. Tenemos que estar preparados para todas las opciones. Advertimos incluso sobre la situación, de lo que se presentó en el FIDA.

Yo mismo hice el curso para que mi Ministro pudiera ejercer el voto y orientarlo a él. No es posible en el 2021, mientras yo voy al supermercado y puedo comprar una pierna de pollo con un QR o con un código a barra y yo puedo trazar completamente todo el origen de ese pollo y yo estoy poniendo en discusión en este momento la seguridad de mi voto electrónico. Es una contradicción absurda completamente.

Nosotros nos decantamos por opción híbrida. Creo que es lo que nos permite a todos poder avanzar y asegurar el derecho desde el más chiquito, del país más pequeño, de la isla más remota hasta el país más grande. Porque claro, si discutimos sobre el tema de la vacuna, ahí no vamos a salir.

CHAIRPERSON

I have nine speakers, and I have a request from the Directeur de Cabinet for the floor. Perhaps I will give the floor to the Directeur de Cabinet because it may facilitate interventions of the Members, listening first to him. Mr Godfrey Magwenzi, you have the floor. We cannot hear, Mr Godfrey Magwenzi. We cannot hear you. Let us carry on and then we will see. It is still not coming through. It is not coming through, so we will carry on. Once your technical problem is sorted out.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

Please may you give the floor to Kenya?

CHAIRPERSON

Kenya, please go ahead.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (FAO, Directeur de Cabinet)

Can you hear me now, Chairperson?

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, Mr Godfrey Magwenzi, you take the floor and then the Members can, yes.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (FAO, Directeur de Cabinet)

Just something that might assist you in arriving at a decision. As was already explained by the Legal Counsel, which has been mentioned by some Members, it is the Conference that will make the final decision on which option to use.

However, for Conference to make that decision, the options actually have to be available in practical terms, so that if the Conference is looking at the option of electronic voting, it must actually be available in practical terms. We need a decision today that will enable us to make that option available in practical terms, so that next week we can actually sign a contract, install the system, start testing, and the training that we have offered in the information, and then we can also even start training specifically those Members that would have indicated that, if conference decides so, they can vote electronically under that the hybrid system.

We need that kind of decision that will help us to put these mechanisms in place and then we can start training you, you can feel how it works, and then you can make your decision during Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that clarification is very helpful, and I would request Members to bear that in mind because it is an important point. If the Conference opts for hybrid or electronic, FAO should be in a position to deliver that, and so it is important that when you come to your decision, that aspect is also borne in mind. My next speaker is Kenya.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

I am speaking on behalf of the Africa Regional Group (ARG), and I am glad, and I want to compliment first the Secretariat for the comprehensive note on this subject matter. I am also pleased, Chairperson, that Mr Godfrey Magwenzi has actually stated exactly what I was going to say, but I will repeat in my own words, and that was the principle that I was trying to express.

Principally, ARG agrees that the principles of inclusivity, secrecy of the ballot, and integrity of the vote is important. We expect that the Council should give guidance to the Conference and we believe that the principle can only be safeguarded if the same voting system is applied. Leaving Members to choose what system they will apply, may have far-reaching consequences on the outcomes, including open doors for contestation. We are therefore to be very careful and be mindful of the fact that the Conference is the body to decide on its own modalities.

Any guidance of the Council can be overturned by the Conference, so we also have to be aware of that. Then maybe listening to the Secretariat to confirm whether they will be ready, which Mr Magwenzi has now said, to apply either the electronic voting system or the physical presence, one is

for to decide on either direction. I think the decision should be made by the Council, so that the Secretariat is ready and prepared to guide the Conference. That was what I was trying to emphasise, which Mr Magwenzi has also put and pre-empted exactly the principle of my position.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voulais tout simplement vous saluer et appuyer la déclaration que la Présidente du Groupe Afrique a faite ce matin. Étant entendu que l'Ambassadeur du Nigéria voulait aussi donner un avis, je vous prierais, Monsieur le Président, de lui donner la parole; il va s'exprimer au nom du Nigéria sur cette importante question qui concerne nos États.

Mr Yaya A. Olaitan OLANIRAN (Observer) (Nigeria)

I just want us to be on the same page. We should not be heading for another night Session, if you do not mind. We have been using a ten-foot pole to kill the snake and it makes it difficult.

I want to compliment Mr Rakesh Muthoo and his team, and I am also glad that borrowing a lead from the sister establishment, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the electronic system has been tested. Most Members of IFAD Governing Body have gone through the training and, and like the first speaker said, if you cannot trace the origin of a chicken in your superstore today, we are all clamouring for digitalization and innovative approaches. There is nothing that is perfect.

I know countries have problem with electronic voting and so on. Fine, but we are here to suggest at the Conference that this thing has to happen and we have options, and we have been given the options that are doable. Everybody has a right to vote and everybody must vote. I thank you, Ambassador of Brazil, for telling us that 53 countries are not represented in Rome.

That is a large number, almost a quarter. If there is the possibility of their voting electronically, why not avail them of that opportunity? In addition, for us represented in Rome, let it be organized for us to vote in person.

The other point is that we should not hide behind any government behind our back. Let every government decide how do you want the vote, but we must make the platform ready. Colleagues, Chairperson, let us take a decision today to give the go ahead, following what the Directeur de Cabinet said, and of course by Chairperson of the African Regional Group. A decision is needed and IFAD has given us an example.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ambassador, thank you for your really complete analysis of the situation which is before the Members. I agree, we need a decision which would enable the Conference to proceed further.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

First, I think we all really need to be honest with one another. Nobody here is talking about travelling and so discussions about travel restrictions and things like that I think obscure the main point. The main point is we support inclusivity. Every Member should be able to cast its vote during Conference, which is without dispute. Which system is going to be the most inclusive, I have to ask. I have heard a lot today about hybrid, e-voting. Can I ask is it really inclusive to expect all countries are going to have the hardware and the software and the anti-virus package and all the training available in all of their languages to be able to securely conduct a vote?

Is that inclusive? I can tell you that it is inclusive what FAO Secretariat laid out for us about a universal proxy, voting in person with universal proxy, that every country, every Member rather, may select a proxy to vote on their behalf, in person, at FAO headquarters. That sounds inclusive.

We can say we have no uniformity of views here, we do not have guidance from capital on all of these many options that we have discussed today. We have heard our colleagues say they want to recommend a hybrid model, we have heard so many hybrid models here and I think it would take the entire six weeks between now and conference if we were to identify which hybrid model we are actually talking about. We really cannot recommend a hybrid model today, we cannot recommend an e-voting.

Why are we recommending to change the way we do business fundamentally in such a rush? We either can proceed with the way we have done it in the United Nations system, which is in person voting with universal proxy for every Member, or we can make a decision that that does not work. If that will not work for Members, then we have two choices and those are we either delay the vote, or we devise an alternative system that we then approve. Those are the choices we have to make here, and I take the point about tracing the origin of a chicken through a QR code.

Innovation is a wonderful thing and we are all adapting to new ways of working and new ways of holding United Nations meetings. We are not discounting the fact that electronic voting or hybrid voting may be something the United Nations system may choose to explore, but are we really going to say that this Council is going to define that in the next six weeks that would set a precedent across the entire United Nations system?

I also have a question and that question really is for the FAO Management. We welcome the Directeur de Cabinet's comments to us and I see that preparation has already been done for an electronic voting system. I am curious to know under what mandate that was done. Was there a mandate by Members for FAO to change the way the voting is done in the United Nations system? I will conclude it there.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Germany fully aligns with the statement delivered by Portugal on behalf of the European Union and wants to express its full support to the two interventions of the United States. I think they summarized it very well. This is an issue of utmost importance, it sets a precedent and there are so many open questions here. Of course, we want to give all Members, I repeat all Members, wherever they are, the possibility to take part in this vote. However, I understand from the documentation that was made available by the Secretariat that there is a secret vote in person, physically. The possibility not only to do this in Rome, but also at the same time in New York, in Geneva. That certainly gives many more countries the possibility to cast the vote in person, physically.

It is not the full story we are telling ourselves here if we say there are 50 countries not represented in Rome that then would not have the possibility to cast a vote. There is the possibility to do this in Rome and New York and Geneva. In addition to that, there are the provisions for the proxy vote, so another way to physically cast a vote in person. I do not see this big problem here. However, I respect that there are different opinions on this, and underline that it is the Conference that has to take the ultimate decision. In the meantime, I think we have to prepare for all options, so that the Conference can take an informed decision.

For the time being, we are not in a position to take an informed decision on all options. We clearly favour physical in person vote with all the additional possibilities I already mentioned. On the electronic vote, we still do have a number of questions that are not answered in the papers we received and many of the items were already mentioned, the problems, by previous speakers. I think the way to go is for the Council to give the authority to the Secretariat to prepare all options so that the Conference can take the ultimate decision on this, but in an informed way.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Hemos estado un poco, más bien escuchando el debate, pero creo que es momento de expresar nuestra opinión. Para nosotros el principio es que cada Estado Miembro pueda emitir su voto por sí mismo. No por alguien más en su nombre. El que un país emita su voto por sí mismo es, igual, uno de los principios definitorios del sistema multilateral. Tener proxy es una contradicción con la discusión de la garantía del secreto del voto. Discusión que tenemos con el Código de Conducta.

El sistema en línea que se nos presentó funciona bien es el mismo que en el FIDA, un organismo de Naciones Unidas. Lo probamos, nos lo explicaron, funcionó bien. No se usó porque solo hubo un candidato y se eligió por aclamación. Pero ese sistema no tuvo los cuestionamientos que tiene aquí, lo cual es de llamar la atención. Es un sistema que ha estado certificado y que se usa en votaciones electorales en países, en votaciones públicas. Está en los seis idiomas, como en la FAO que es un reflejo de la boleta en papel que se suele utilizar en votos en persona.

Sobre la parte de sistemas electrónicos, el asumir que países en desarrollo no cuenten con sistemas informáticos actualizados no refleja la realidad. Francamente es ofensivo y creo que esa expresión fue

hecha por error. No hay sistemas perfectos. Un sistema en línea siempre tiene una parte débil. Pero el sistema en persona tampoco es perfecto y esto nos llevó a tener la discusión sobre el Código de Conducta.

Señor Presidente, colegas, escuchemos a Bahamas, que es el único Miembro del Consejo que ha tomado la palabra que no tiene representación en Roma. Todos los demás que hemos tomado la palabra no entendemos lo que es no tener una representación aquí. Igual, este es un momento donde podemos avanzar o quedarnos en el pasado. Lo hemos dicho varias veces en este Consejo. Queremos que la FAO avance y no se quede en el pasado. Estamos convencidos del sistema en línea. Si bien esa es nuestra preferencia, y es el que consideramos más parejo, el sistema híbrido es aceptable ya que permitiría a todos escoger cómo votar. Y de nuevo, es aplicar el principio de que todos los Estados Miembros puedan votar por sí mismos.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Traté de escuchar atentamente a todas y a todos los colegas. La verdad es que la semana pasada tuvimos un debate fuerte, pero productivo, positivo, en el cual quedó claro que hay tres principios que tienen que estar receptados y respetados. El principio del voto secreto, el principio de la inclusividad y el principio a la soberanía de los Estados y todos esos tres principios conforman de alguna manera un principio indivisible.

Hubo ante las diferentes posiciones más extremas, las posiciones de que solamente podía ser voto presencial o con proxy o voto electrónico sin presencial. Finalmente apareció una corriente que se convirtió en mayoritaria en favor del voto híbrido. Ante esa circunstancia, obligó a que la Secretaría nos proveyera información para saber si eso era posible porque también se presentaron dudas sobre si esa metodología podía ser, en términos prácticos, si podía llevarse adelante. Se planteó también la cuestión legal para ver si esto era posible.

Ahora tenemos que la Secretaría nos dio toda la información, también la Consejería Legal. O sea, ahora ya tenemos todos los elementos. Ahora, tenemos que tratar de ser lo más, por lo menos, podemos equivocarnos, pero lo más importante es tratar de ser coherentes. Si nosotros en el FIDA votamos a favor del voto electrónico, es complicado ahora estar en contra en la FAO. Si vamos a utilizar el mismo método, no podemos decir que estamos a favor en una Agencia y después no tenemos la misma posición en otra.

Por otro lado, yo creo que la posición y lo explicado por Bahamas, es simplemente la voz que tenemos que escuchar porque si no solamente nos estamos escuchando entre nosotros, que somos los que tenemos representación aquí en Roma. Por otro lado, no me parece que sea apropiado llevar adelante comentarios que impliquen subestimar la capacidad técnica de los países en desarrollo sobre la posibilidad de utilizar el método electrónico para poder votar. Tenemos muchos problemas los países en desarrollo, muchísimos, muchísimos. Podríamos tener menos si se resolvieran algunas cuestiones que no dependen de nosotros. Pero no tenemos problema con la posibilidad de utilizar el método electrónico para votar.

Entonces, a mí me parece que llegamos a un punto donde parafraseando a mi colega de Costa Rica ayer, al cual todos les pareció que fue una excelente intervención, sobre que estamos dedicándole mucho tiempo a discusiones, mientras nuestra gente en los países en desarrollo se está muriendo de hambre y que tenemos que ser prácticos e ir para adelante. Y me parece que podríamos perfectamente utilizar las mismas expresiones para ahora. Entonces, creo que ahora el punto llega a una circunstancia que es definitiva porque la discusión ahora es que, lo que no podemos hacer es no tomar una decisión. Porque la decisión final la va a tomar la Conferencia, pero nosotros como Consejo no podemos abstenernos de tomar una decisión.

Entonces, yo veo dos caminos, Presidente, y me gustaría compartir con usted esta reflexión que va a ser breve. O lo decidimos en esta reunión. Es evidente que hay una gran mayoría de Miembros del Consejo que estamos en una posición de buscar la solución de compromiso intermedia que es garantizarle a todos los Miembros de la FAO la posibilidad de votar o buscamos la posibilidad de una reunión especial del Consejo el lunes o martes de la próxima semana donde nuestros colegas que tienen que hacer consultas con sus capitales puedan hacerlo y nadie puede decir que no se llevaron adelante dichas consultas.

Y tomo muy en cuenta lo expresado por Linda, mi estimada colega de Australia. Porque, al menos su posición fue, "Puedo no estar de acuerdo o puedo tener que discutirlo, pero necesito hacer consultas." Y si estamos defendiendo el principio de la inclusividad, yo no puedo no tomar en cuenta lo que dijo mi colega de Australia. Porque, repito, empecé mi conversación diciendo, "Tenemos que se coherentes." Y mi coherencia hace que no voy, no quiero afectar el principio de la inclusividad y de las consultas.

Pero al mismo tiempo, lo que no podemos hacer es que esto se convierta en un proceso sin una fecha clara y fija de definición porque le tenemos que decir a la Conferencia qué es lo que vamos a hacer y qué es lo que la Conferencia tiene para refrendar, para respaldar. Entonces, yo creo que a esta altura lo que queda no es ya cuándo o cómo definimos, sino que hay que definirlo. Ahora, repito, creo que quizás sea razonable, si hay consenso, de establecer el lunes o martes de la semana que viene como último deadline, para decidir el método y aconsejar a la Conferencia. Pero, dándole la posibilidad a la Secretaría de que tenga la capacidad de organizarse para poder llevar adelante esas opciones en términos prácticos en la Conferencia.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUNEZ (Perú)

El Perú desea manifestar y adherirse a las declaraciones efectuadas por los países del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe que me han precedido. Especialmente desea apoyar las declaraciones de México y la propuesta hecha por el Embajador de Argentina. Las apoyamos totalmente. El Perú ya expresó su opinión, su preferencia por la votación electrónica, pero estamos abiertos y creemos que una solución cercana a las opciones presentadas, es la opción combinada y que debemos llegar a la Conferencia con una propuesta. Por eso apoyamos la propuesta Argentina.

Nosotros quisiéramos también como presidencia del GRULAC, hacer un llamado a todos los estados, Miembros del Consejo. Los países tienen una igualdad soberana en las Naciones Unidas y esa soberanía debe reflejarse en el voto y en el poder elegir la modalidad de voto. Por ello, quisiera también mencionar y hacer un llamado a que se escuchen las voces, las voces que han sido representadas por Bahamas en nuestra región, las voces de los países caribeños que se decantan por una votación combinada.

Sin más, por favor, le pediría a los estados que tuvieran comprensión de la situación de muchos de nuestros países que no se encuentran representados en Roma.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Firstly, we would like to thank the Secretariat for the very useful information. We still feel very strongly and support in person by appointment secret ballot voting to occur at FAO. We also strongly believe that the right to vote needs to be given to everyone. I would like to ask what about voting by proxy, to make it simple?

I believe this was one of the options suggested to us by the management. Why this is not an option, why this is not a possibility? Besides, I think we need to know the cost of a total electronic voting. I think this is something that we need to know before accepting or agreeing to any kind of electronic voting. Maybe voting by proxy is not an ideal one, but I think it is a better one than spending money on something that will serve us only once, and here I quote the very Distinguished Argentinian Ambassador.

I would like to suggest a combination of three, voting in person, for those Member States that are in Rome, voting in person for those Member States who are in New York, and voting by proxy. I think by that we will cover and guarantee that all the Member States will have the right to vote.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am going to start off by sharing with you the United Kingdom position on this issue, and then I wanted to make a few comments perhaps on the way forward.

The United Kingdom position is that we would prefer voting in person, but we are open to considering online voting. We cannot make a decision on online voting until we have much more information. I would say thank you very much to the Secretariat for the information they have provided in that the

information they have provided has answered many of the questions that we had about online voting and it is really helpful, so thank you for that.

We do have two more key pieces of information that we would like, and indeed I think everyone around this table would want to have these pieces of information before taking any decisions. Firstly, we need to hear the views of the 53 countries that are not represented in Rome, and indeed we have heard the views from the Bahamas today, and that is great. As Australia has said, and I would strongly endorse, we need to contact them and seek their views.

I mean, it is absolutely fundamental, and I would strongly urge that and, indeed, I do hope we can reflect that request in our conclusions, as it is really important. We have all talked this morning about inclusion and how we really want to include all Member States, and therefore I think we must include them in this decision-making process, or we must consult them at least before we take a decision. That is the first piece of information I think we need. I think we also need some further information and, indeed, that is we need to go through the trials of the online system, before we can take a decision on it.

I see in the Information Note that Secretariat has proposed to do some trialling of it next week. I think that would be really helpful and, indeed, it will help us inform ourselves and help us guide our capitals when they give us instructions.

Coming to the way forward, I think the issue in front of us, as we try and take a decision on this together, is really whether we should rule out any of the options. We have a number of options on our table and I think really the issue is should we rule any of them out?

Our view, and in fact I have heard others expressing this view, is that we should not rule any of them out at this point, and that, indeed, we would be keen for the Secretariat to prepare for all options. We are in an exceptional situation and, indeed, things could even change in six weeks.

I do think we should agree on sending a message to the Secretariat. We would like them to prepare for all options, and that, of course, would then allow us the option of being trained and seeing how the systems would work. Then I do think if we need to make a decision in Council on a preferred option, then we clearly cannot do that today without the information we need, perhaps we could meet in special Session, if we need to, but I do not think we can make a decision on which option, or on which option to recommend today without the information.

My strong position, my strong advice is that we agree that we will not rule out any options, and that we will seek the additional information that I have set out in my statement. I hope that we can move forward on that basis.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Ante todo, quisiera agradecer el esfuerzo de la Secretaría en aportarnos criterios en esta difícil decisión. El asunto central que estamos debatiendo es el aseguramiento del secreto, de la integridad y de la inclusividad del voto. Lo cual no es solo un derecho sino un deber. En este sentido, España apoya entre otras muchas, las intervenciones de la Unión Europea, Israel, Estados Unidos, Canadá. Alemania, insisto, entre otras. Como la han indicado así mismo otras representaciones, este es un tema que debe decidir la Conferencia y el Secretariado por tanto debe prepararse como sea necesario para responder a la decisión que finalmente tome la Conferencia. No tenemos por qué decidir hoy que opción debe tomar la próxima Conferencia.

Desde nuestro punto de vista, el voto presencial que se realiza incluso en tiempos y situaciones de pandemia en otras Agencias de Naciones Unidas, es el único que garantiza plenamente las tres condiciones de secreto, integridad e inclusividad. Por tanto, desde España creemos que se deben explorar en profundidad las opciones mediante el voto delegado o mediante el voto en varias sedes de Naciones Unidas, que ya hemos visto que es perfectamente posible para aquellos países que no cuenten con una representación en Roma, como mejor fórmula, insisto, posible de garantizar el secreto, la integridad y la inclusividad.

Finalmente, pedimos por todo ello a FAO que nos aclare mejor las opciones para seguir estudiándolas en nuestras capitales.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe fully supports the statement delivered by Kenya on behalf of the African Regional Group, and we express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the presentations with the different options. I support what Australia said, and in the same vein what the Bahamas said. Every country has a right and every country has a right to decide how it wants to proceed. In my view it is imperative that everyone should be consulted, all Member States should be consulted.

For Zimbabwe we can probably choose anything because we can go to FAO and vote. However, I have tried to wear the shoes of those that are not here and how they would feel if a decision was made on their behalf, in their absence. It is unfair. I think we should consult. While we are consulting and making all other decisions, I asked Members of my team this morning, what then were we doing in IFAD>International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD?) What was that all about? I do not know, it boggles my mind. Before I leave the floor, it is important to note that some of us come from developing countries, some of them [XX] for a lot of things.

We may be poor and we may be developing, but we certainly can participate in online voting. Every government can do something about that. It is not the decision of Council. It is the decision of Conference, but Council needs to make a recommendation. When are we going to make this recommendation to facilitate the work of the Secretariat?

How much longer can we continue to debate this, bearing in mind what Costa Rica said yesterday, and what a lot of people say, that the United Nations is full of topshops while people are hungry, we are debating about semantics. I would like the Secretariat to inform us how much time they have for us to proceed with all these debates before they can implement anything. We are all in this pandemic, it is going yoyo, up and down. Nobody knows where we will be in six weeks time.

For all we know, we could all be grounded in our houses without permission to leave.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

After listening to all of you carefully, and also with respect to all of you, we note that today our task is to try to get all possible options and modalities, available. We would suggest the Conference to make the decisions.

All the options may not be 100 percent perfect but we can improve. Thailand would like to echo our voice that we are open to all the possible options that can keep inclusivity, secrecy of ballot, and also integrity. We know that some of you prefer physical voting and some of you suggested to have a hybrid or electronic voting.

If we look back at last year, when we had the pandemic at the beginning, all of us were reluctant to have the virtual Council Meeting. We were reluctant to have the virtual negotiation of all others. However, once the situation changed, finally we adapted ourselves to the situation. That is why today, we have to make sure that we will have all possible options and modalities available, and then the decision will be made later by the Conference. I do hope that after the long discussion, all the options will be included.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

We also followed actively, the discussion on this issue since several days ago. Of course, during the informal consultation convened by you, Mr Chairperson. For us, there are the principles that we have to follow. First, that the options presented must follow the Basic Texts. We heard from the Secretariat that there are options presented by the Secretariat and they have explained that the options presented are still within the context of the Basic Texts.

Of course, physical or in person voting is preferable, but we are in a challenging and exceptional situation. The decision that we make is exceptional and will only be applied to the 42nd Conference. In that regard, we also have to pay attention to the principle of inclusiveness and the sovereign right of a country to vote, to exercise their right to vote in a manner that the country can and is comfortable with.

Therefore, with thanks to the Secretariat for the Notes presented of the voting modalities, including the hybrid option, we feel that the hybrid option is the most preferable one that we can take. Of course, the decision will be at the Conference, but I think the Council can make the recommendation to the Conference on this one. This also takes into account the explanation by the Secretariat of the preparation that they have done and should be done before the Conference, to ensure that the systems are well in place and are ready to be used.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

First I echo what the United States colleagues and the German colleagues said. This decision is very important and related to the whole United Nations system and how the international organizations should be operated. We do not think it is a wise idea to make a drastic change in such a hasty manner or rush. We should be thinking of addressing the current situation by the way it exists, as long as it addresses all the concerns.

Second, I appreciate the work by the Secretariat for the effort to provide us information. At the same time, I was reminded by the United States colleague, that the Secretariat should be 100 percent neutral and not work for a particular direction unless the Member countries has a decision on that. I would not say it is concern, but worries that the FAO Secretariat has to prepare for what we have not agreed upon yet.

Finally, just to point it out, that the inclusiveness is important and every sovereign country has a sovereign right to cast a vote, an indispensable right. However, it does not necessarily mean that it is the sovereign right to choose or prefer the way to vote. That is about the system, the Organization. We should not be mixed with the right to vote and how we implement this voting.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

Je sais que ce que je vais dire n'a rien d'original, mais je m'en voudrais de ne pas saisir cette opportunité pour vous renouveler, Monsieur le Président, l'appréciation de ma délégation pour la façon remarquable dont vous conduisez nos travaux. Je crois que nous devons vous rendre un hommage mérité pour toutes vos qualités, par lesquelles je suis toujours impressionné. Je parle en particulier de votre patience, de votre endurance, je dirais même humilité, de votre modestie, et bien entendu de vos compétences.

La Guinée s'aligne sur la déclaration faite plus tôt par le Kenya, au nom du Groupe Afrique. À l'instar de mes préopinants, je voudrais également remercier le Secrétariat pour les efforts louables qu'il a déployés afin de nous fournir des informations détaillées.

Après avoir écouté ces dernières heures, avec beaucoup d'intérêt et d'attention, le débat sur la question qui nous occupe, il faut constater avec regret qu'hier après-midi le climat consensuel a été éphémère. À l'évidence, les positions restent tranchées, elles sont figées en dépit des réponses très précises et des éclaircissements qui nous ont été apportés par le Secrétariat sur les questions soulevées par les uns et les autres.

À priori, Monsieur le Président, aucun d'entre nous ne souhaiterait que l'on déroge à la tradition, je veux dire à la règle d'or selon laquelle les décisions sur des questions aussi importantes pour l'humanité que celles dont nous discutons ici à la FAO, que ces décisions puissent être prises à l'issue d'un consensus. Il est évident et indispensable, comme il a été dit par le Directeur de Cabinet, que le Conseil doit prendre une décision aujourd'hui même.

Je ne vais pas donc revenir sur les avantages et les inconvénients des différentes options, étant donné que tout a déjà été dit et, à l'évidence, aucune des options n'est parfaite. Je voudrais donc lancer un appel à chacun et à tous, afin d'accepter de faire des concessions, qui préservent les trois principes fondamentaux du vote que sont: l'inclusivité, la confidentialité et la sécurité.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Monsieur le Président, je vous prie de donner la parole au Président du Groupe Afrique, le Kenya.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

Thank you very much Chairperson for giving me the floor once again to speak on behalf of the African Regional Group. It is a very important and significant discussion for the African Regional Group. As I mentioned earlier national sovereignty is very key in terms of voting and everybody's right should be respected. What the Africa Group is talking about is the level of mixing and accepting that those who are not able to attend are assured of casting their votes, whether it is online or in person, and the Secretariat has given options.

We also are conscious of the Africa Group and empathize and sympathize with those of our brothers and sisters of Bahamas who would be aware and also the preference of what Australia talked about. We need to identify which hybrid options to recommend to the Conference. Our region is also very conscious about the constraint of time before the Conference.

We have also heard about the electronic voting that has not been sampled from some of our respectable colleagues. However, IFAD had conducted this particular electronic voting to a level that it was actually supposed to be used. Why do we not also look at it or task the Secretariat to give us what they think was the best advantages of that as we are mixing the hybrid.

We are taking so much time and it is very significant that we also are conscious of the level of preparedness of the Secretariat. The principle of inclusivity, sovereignty and not leaving anybody out, is all the Africa Group is talking about. Let us look at the options of hybrid so that the Council comes out with options to present to the Conference.

We are conscious about the time and would really prefer at the Conference that the Council identifies what to tell the Secretariat to do and which has already almost been agreed by all of us that the option is between online and in person. We are conscious of the 54 countries and a majority of them are coming from our continent. It is our plea that we have short time, we have very constrained time, that we should be able to look at what IFAD did and see how much it can be drafted into the in person hybrid.

CHAIRPERSON

At this stage I would like to suggest that we break for ten minutes and then come back and continue with the list of speakers. We have been sitting for two hours. I think a little stretch of the legs would help. I break the Meeting for ten minutes.

The meeting was suspended from 11:31 to 11:42 hours

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 31 à 11 h 42

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.31 a las 11.42

Ms Xi LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China would like to reiterate its position. We believe that the right to vote is an issue of sovereignty and Members are entitled to this. Each Member should have a choice when it comes to voting. During the pandemic things are very different for each country. Some countries have no vaccines available to them, nor the necessary measures. There are inequalities among countries and we should make an effort to remedy those disparities rather than compounding them through our voting options.

The Secretariat has provided us with several voting options and the Secretariat must provide Members with open information on all modalities and it is up to the Members to choose the modality or modalities they prefer. We need to prepare for the hybrid option fully for the Conference vote.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIOGHIS (Eritrea)

I really appreciate the way you are leading the Council. Eritrea appreciates the Secretariat and the Legal Counsel, for providing us a very important information and we have already grasped a lot.

To that extent, Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statement made by Kenya on behalf of Africa. Of course in the issue of voting, luckily we have already got a very nice experience from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and that is online electronic system, which at that time all the governors got training and they were ready to make it very successful. Unfortunately, we cannot say at the end of the day it was analysed by acclamation, and that is also another very nice news.

All possibilities are possible to be conducted by the governance. However, at this point of time, I think the Council can not make a decision but the only thing we can do is recommendations and then we have to say what are we going to recommend? I think we have to recommend that the institution make all the platforms ready – online, in-person, etc. – and at the end of that the decision will be very easy.

I really feel that we have taken a lot of time on discussing this issue but the object is always the same – what are we going to say? We have to recommend that all options are ready. At the end of the day, if there is a possibility to make in-person, and that is possibly if the vaccine is available in all places, I think at the time for everybody it is very free and possible to move and do in-person. If this is not possible and if we feel this will not be fulfilled on time, the other option is to make it online. Therefore, we have to recommend at this point in time that it is the responsibility of the institution to make everything ready, make the platform ready, so that the option is possible by all the participants.

On the other hand, we should not fear also that the capacity of the developing countries is not pertinent and possible to make by. [XX]

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

From my side, I have finished and my recommendation at the end of the day is to make the platform ready for all options that are available, and make it very successful. At this point of time, we do not have to be in a hurry to make a decision. We cannot say “do that or do that,” but what we can recommend is that in all options, the [XX]

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to come in and practically support the United Kingdom’s proposed next steps. We have listened to all the delegations and we find that this is a very sensible approach in terms of moving forward on a Council recommendation today, and we would like to note the following points based on the discussions.

First, there seemed to be some interventions questioning the proxy as a legitimate means to exercise your sovereign right to vote, and we would just like to point out that this is in the Basic Texts of FAO, in a context where there are 53 Members who are not represented in Rome and it has never been put in question in terms of their sovereign right to vote. We want to make sure that our discussions today about possibly exceptional measures are not at all being interpreted as [XX] see our longstanding system being tested effectively in those exceptional circumstances.

I would also like to recognize the point that was made by Her Excellency Ambassador Jackline Yonga of Kenya as well about some questions about applying a dual system all at once and I think we certainly appreciate the creativity and the proposal of the hybrid option and we would like to examine it further. Often the devil is in the details and for us, it would be important to know how we are able to ensure that. I do not know how the counting is done, the tellers, but if you have voting results that are coming from one system and another, how are they not being traceable to those who have chosen to vote online or not, and then how is it applying to the futures of delegations to use the system or not?

Maybe linked to that, and I appreciate the point made by the delegate from Nicaragua about innovation and electronic devices being used in supermarkets in tracing the origins of chicken. In the context of elections by secret ballot, that is exactly what we are trying to prevent though, is being able to trace the identity of the person who has voted and we want to make sure that those safeguards are there.

Also, we would like to support the proposed next steps of conducting the consultations and we should not presume that those who were not represented, would automatically have a preference for electronic online voting. It depends on the circumstances and context of each Member.

Finally, also to say that the IFAD had its particular process. We can have consistency and look at precedent, but we cannot rely on decisions or recommendations made in another Body that has different Members, and has had a different process to develop and test this system and apply it in a rushed manner without ourselves being able to test the system. For all these reasons, we would really support recommendations along the lines proposed by the United Kingdom.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I just wanted to come back to my proposal and I am grateful to Canada for their support. My proposal is that we take a decision that FAO or the Secretariat should continue to prepare for all the options that we discussed. We should request further information on, for example, the views of the 53 Members that are not represented on the experience of the trials with the online system and, indeed, some more information on how the hybrid system would work.

That would be my proposal. I hope we can reach agreement on that.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I would like just to ask the Secretariat two questions. The first one is what the budget is that we need to prepare for the electronic vote? And the second one is that what if this option is preferred and eventually it is not used? How much money will be wasted?

Ms Hyo Joo KANG (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea values and respects all the key principles for voting – integrity, credibility, secrecy of the votes, Members' sovereign rights, inclusivity, which were mentioned by many Members. We also regard that the online voting system can be one of innovations that FAO is currently striving for and can regard it as one example of RBA collaboration, because clearly FAO takes its advantage from IFAD's experience, though even IFAD have not used it in a real voting stage yet.

At the same time, once again we consider how much the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly influenced our every matters, including FAO's traditional practices, particularly to voting methods, as we discuss now.

My delegation regards elections maybe as the most conservative sector to adopt digitalization, particularly when it is significant to everyone. We do not have a concrete number of how many countries or international organizations do have the electric voting systems for the similar purpose, like us, appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), but we do consider even those countries or international organizations which do not have the electric voting system, the reason might be somewhat fundamental rather than expenses, limited timeframe and experts, etc., under this pandemic situation.

Definitely FAO is different from Members, but we would like to take this point into account as well. This can be one of the reasons why we are having continuous discussions towards selecting the voting modality.

We are grateful to some countries, particularly Bahamas and Australia, for sharing the difficult situations that some countries are facing. However, we still have some curiosity. How many Members are completely unable to vote for any reason, neither in Rome, Geneva, New York or where FAO offices are located in when we adopt in-person voting modality?

With this limited information, the Republic of Korea considers either in-person or the hybrid voting option for now, but in any case, all the key principles must be fully guaranteed. Needless to say, the Secretariat has to be clear, transparent and vigilant in every preparatory step, supporting all Members without any confusion or doubts but with actual preparatory actions.

Thus, we recommend the Secretariat first to seek the in-person option as much as possible, and the second, to fully prepare both two options, in-person and the hybrid, if this Council cannot reach a consensus in order to make Conference take a decision via an extraordinary Session of the Council.

We believe the Secretariat can give more information and assurance to many Members during the coming weeks before the Conference to make the most appropriate decision in these extraordinary circumstances.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voudrais que vous donniez la parole au Cameroun, qui va s'exprimer sur les dernières conclusions du Groupe Afrique.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

Thank you to Congo for allowing us to reiterate what the Chairperson of the Africa Group brought on the table and which is the position of the Africa Group on the way forward on this dedicated question. What we want to address is, first of all, the principle that even if it is one country which is not able to vote, it is already a problem because we cannot allow that to happen, even if it is only one country. That should be clear enough because I heard what the Republic of Korea is asking, how many countries... Even if it is only one country, it is already a problem. We should avoid that and we plead that that should be avoided very carefully.

The second thing that we want to address is what our Chair said about the hybrid because she asked clearly what is the nature of that hybrid? You have three options. Is it a hybrid of option one, option three? Is it a hybrid of option one, option two? Is it a hybrid option two, option three? Is it a hybrid option one, two, three? We need to see that clearly and it is very difficult for us to have a stance on the way forward concerning any hybrid until we have it on the paper and well-defined. However, what she mentioned again, is that we need to take a decision to allow the Secretariat to prepare for any option that Council will decide on, and I believe that as long as we are here, we want to address this issue and give guidance to the Conference based on the best information we have at hand.

This is simply to clarify the position of the Africa Group because we are still questioning what is on the making as regards to the hybrid. We want to stress the fact that the Rome-based Agencies (RBA) collaboration is also key, and this is an area where we can see facets of RBA collaboration. IFAD has tested a process. They can share it with FAO very quickly in line with the RBA collaboration and we have to give that guidance and allow the Secretariat to liaise with IFAD and see how they operated and we have that. It was given, or it was said by the Secretariat that they can sign a contract at the shortest period of time with the organization that made IFAD's electronic voting system. So, why don't we rely on, or give that benefit of doubt or whatever, clearance, to the Secretariat to go ahead? It is important for all of us.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We would like to propose, if you agree, and Members, of course, that we, after hearing the Observer's proposal, if you could propose a draft for the Report? I guess we still have a lot of discussions to do after you propose the text for our discussion. I understand that we heard a lot of different opinions and views. Many countries spoke a long time, including myself now, and maybe with the best use of time, going after your proposal and taking the opportunity that the Israeli Representative demanded the Secretariat the cost for the electronic option, I would also like to ask the Secretariat what is the cost for each Session of the Council, in terms of translation and the different costs in addition to, so we can compare.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, it was my intention like every other agenda Item, to offer some conclusions and then obviously Members take the floor and amend those. I now give the floor to the Observers.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (Observateur) (France)

Je voudrais saluer tous les collègues et souligner que la France s'aligne complètement sur l'intervention de l'Union européenne et de ses États membres. C'est un sujet important pour la FAO comme je l'ai dit hier. C'est une question pour la Conférence elle-même parce qu'il importe que tous les États, tous les Membres de la FAO puissent se prononcer, et comme vous le savez, ils ne sont pas tous au Conseil. Au-delà de la FAO, c'est un sujet essentiel pour les organisations des Nations Unies.

Des solutions ont été trouvées dans toutes les villes onusiennes, à New York, à Montréal, à Vienne, à Genève, pour assurer la participation en présentiel de tous. Dans le respect des contraintes sanitaires, dans le respect de l'inclusivité, dans le respect de la démocratie onusienne. Il importe d'être cohérent dans le système des Nations Unies.

Je voudrais aussi souligner que la FAO a bien prévu des solutions pragmatiques pour le vote en personne, pour les délégations qui n'ont pas de présence physique à Rome. Il y a des solutions dans les notes d'informations et je renvoie les délégations à ces précisions.

Nous avons reçu du Secrétariat, des informations complémentaires, il y a quelques heures. Nous les avons bien sûr envoyés à nos capitales, mais il n'est pas raisonnable de penser que nous pouvons nous prononcer sur ces informations complémentaires en si peu de temps, aujourd'hui.

Nous continuons, pour notre part, en ce qui concerne la France, de penser que les règles fondamentales, c'est-à-dire le vote en personne, doivent être utilisées, et nous continuons de penser que le vote électronique ne fournit pas les garanties suffisantes de fiabilité et de sécurité.

Nous avons régulièrement, encore aujourd'hui, des problèmes informatiques qui nous rappellent la fragilité de ces systèmes. Nous avons entendu hier de nombreuses précisions techniques du service informatique. Je ne suis pas informaticienne, je le regrette, mais je n'ai pas tout compris. Donc, j'ai hâte d'avoir ces informations par écrit.

Nous aurons besoin du cahier des charges du système informatique, car, comme je vois dans la note, ce système sera adapté («customized») à la FAO. Que veut dire «customized»? Nous avons besoin de précisions là-dessus. Pour cette raison, nous ne sommes pas favorables, aujourd'hui, à la solution hybride, car elle reviendra à accepter le vote électronique, sur lequel nous ne sommes pas d'accord.

Nous avons entendu aujourd'hui toutes les options, et toutes les options de mode hybride. Ces réflexions doivent se poursuivre. En prenant en compte l'expérience des autres villes onusiennes et organisations internationales. Comme je l'ai indiqué hier, pousser une recommandation du Conseil aujourd'hui, en faveur d'une unique option, n'est pas une bonne solution.

D'une part, ce serait divisif et non inclusif; d'autre part, cette recommandation pourrait être renversée par la Conférence, l'organe suprême de notre Organisation, qui, pour modifier les textes devra se prononcer à la majorité des deux tiers. Donc, pour renverser un vote en personne, il faudra la majorité des deux tiers des Membres. Pour toutes ces raisons, il nous semble que la FAO doit continuer à se préparer à toutes les options.

Je vois d'ailleurs dans le document de la FAO, qu'elle a déjà, sans mandat dont visiblement elle n'a pas eu besoin, fait des tests sur le système électronique. En tout état de cause, il nous faut plus de réflexion pour que la Conférence, c'est-à-dire tous les Membres de cette Organisation, soit en mesure de se prononcer, en toute connaissance de cause, sur un sujet fondamental pour la démocratie onusienne.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO BIN ANTHONY (Observer) (Malaysia)

First and foremost, allow me to, of course, thank you for your patience and your resilience in conducting this Meeting. We are definitely going to miss you at the next Council but at the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to you.

Number two, thank you very much for giving me the floor to speak as an Observer and I, myself, have taken the floor many times but I thought it is incumbent for me due to the importance of this issue, to say a few words based on my observations.

It is clear that we have discussed in detail on both sides of the coin in terms of the outcome of the voting process. Either it is done online or in-person or a mixture of both. Now, we have gone through the issues of the right to vote, secrecy of the ballot, modalities and so on and so forth. I think we are quite clear what is on the table. What I feel, based on what I am listening to for the past two or three hours, there seem to be two parties or two camps from the list of speakers and it is quite obvious that, if I can be frank, the developing countries are more keen on the hybrid system whereas the developed countries are more keen on the in-person voting.

Now, I do not know why this is so. Perhaps you learned colleagues know more. I am sure there are reasons behind this. Varied reasons. I am not disputing the fact there are varied reasons but what I am trying to say now is here, that we are actually in the area of a defining moment in FAO's history. I agree that this has not been done before. I agree that this is something new, this hybrid process and so on and so forth, but we cannot disallow ourselves to take the lead.

United Nations agencies, when we first started the United Nations agencies, there were a lot of innovative approaches that were done and we would have not come so far if it was not for those innovative approaches. I must say the mere fact that we have been having online meetings at this

stage, of course, it was due to COVID but it is something that we never imagined a year or two ago, but this is the reality now.

My point is let us not be afraid of taking the leap. Let us not forget that we represent millions of undernourished, poverty-stricken people and that is the ultimate aim. The whole idea of what FAO is here, is not for us. Of course, the Members are important in terms of the country but what can we do for those people who are undernourished or in poverty and what would be the best way to ensure that their rights are protected? That is what we should all be striving for.

Now, in practical terms, I think what we need to look at is what this Council can do moving forward and it is quite clear, from what the Secretariat have said, that in order for Conference to be able to decide, all the three options must be prepared in time. We cannot delay the process by discussing. Of course we need to consult, I agree to that fact, but we must get to a point at a minimum so that we can ensure the Conference is ready to work on any of these options and if you do not allow the Secretariat to do that, or Management to do that, then we are not allowing the Conference or giving the Conference the ultimate authority to do so.

My thought process now is, moving forward I would advise that we allow Management to prepare for all the consequences of all the options and then allow Members in the Conference to decide. And I agree, because some of you have said that we need to allow Conference to make the decision. We only can recommend. So, let us recommend that. Let us recommend the fact that options on the table are there and allow Management to prepare for those in order for Conference to make a decision.

Members, this is just my two points worth but I believe that we are on the brink of change here and let us not stop change. Let us move on. Forget whatever fears or conspiracy theories or what we may have in our mind, but let us look at what is the best for FAO and what needs to be done in the future.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I am sorry to come back but I just wanted to illustrate something that I said, which might help probably. I said even if it is one country that has been denied its right to vote, it is already a problem. I just want to tell you, Chairperson, that sometime back we witnessed an election here in FAO where the winner came up with one vote, and he mentioned in one of the Councils that every time he looks in the eyes of everybody in the room, he feels like this is the country that gave me that vote for me to win.

You cannot see how important it is that every country should exercise its right and we are here trying to say that we can say, okay, some countries may not have the right to vote. Even if we do not listen to what Australia said, or what the Bahamas said, and we continue to say we want it, and we know perfectly that there are countries that will not be able to vote either here or in New York in presence.

Why do we tie ourselves down in one option which we know perfectly that it will sideline the rights of some other countries? This, I do not understand it. We are trying to bring up this illustration for people to know how important and how dangerous it could be to sideline the rights of any given country.

Ms MI NGUYEN (Canada)

I just had one additional question. I am not sure, maybe it has been provided either orally or in the notes I was looking at, but I was wondering what were the, I guess, back-up options, let us say in a scenario of an electronic or a hybrid? What happens if the Internet is not working at the moment? I know that it is a short timeframe, and cannot cast a vote? Have we considered what the implications for the voting process are?

CHAIRPERSON

Valid point. I think I will now give the floor to the Secretariat to comment on some of the points made by Members. I will first give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, Independent Chairperson of the Council and thank you also to Members for your kind comments on the additional information we provided yesterday, which is much appreciated by the team.

There were some specific questions raised by Members this morning and in a minute my colleagues will provide answers to them. Before that, I would like to highlight one dimension from a Secretariat perspective, which I hope may be useful for Members in their deliberations.

We are all aware that the formal authority for decision-making on the issue at hand lies with the Conference, based on a recommendation by the Council. The Legal Counsel has confirmed this.

At the same time, there is a matter of practicality, as highlighted by the Directeur de Cabinet. We live in exceptional circumstances within which Members of FAO have managed to maintain the integrity of governance of the Organization on the basis of practicality and adaptability, rooted firmly in the Basic Texts of the Organization, as mentioned by Thailand and Malaysia.

Let us take, for example, this 166th Session of the Council. The formal authority to hold this session virtually lies with the 166th Session of the Council. But we did not, and we could not, wait for that formal authority before making preparations for a virtual session. We could not wait for Item 1, *Adoption of the Timetable and Agenda* on Monday morning before we started the written correspondence procedure.

As your Secretariat, we are continuously and proactively seeking practical solutions to ensure that Members can continue their business in the Governing Bodies as smoothly as possible. That is what we have done in developing the options for voting at the Conference, including the secure online system. That is our duty. That is our mandate.

Which is why today we need your guidance as clear and as practical as you can offer, so that we can make the required practical preparations for the 42nd Session of the Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to the Legal Counsel, if she wants to add anything.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Thank you, Chairperson. I do not have anything substantive here to say, except to echo the plea of my colleague, the Secretary-General. We wish to be able to prepare properly for you and guide you properly from the aspect or from the perspective of the basic text and therefore your guidance as to what you need next or what would assist Members in taking the decision on what recommendation to make would be extremely helpful to us. We are here opening up options for you to explore and from my perspective analysing those in the context of the basic text when, indeed, we are doing the opposite of, say, pre-judging. We are setting out options for you. That was all I wanted to add and, of course, should there be queries, I am happy to reply.

Thank you. Over to you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Dejan Jakovljevic, Director IT.

Mr Dejan JAKOVLJEVIC (FAO, Deputy Director of IT Services)

I picked up a couple of question on the technical side, one related to preventative measures, as outlined in the Information Note from line 37. The objective of that paragraph is to basically indicate that the expectation on the side of the voter is to have a computer that is free of viruses and up-to-date. This is the same expectation, in fact, we have from all the participants in this call, indeed, today. So, it is from a technical perspective, what we are considering more of a IT hygiene, to have the clean computer.

It is important to note that the system itself is actually having the burden. Not the client but the system itself has the burden to provide the integrity of the vote in secrecy. So, this is why a technology like blockchain and yesterday I mentioned some complicated terms, but it is these algorithms that are used to ensure the secrecy. So, that is the burden on the system.

In case there is an issue with the Internet connectivity, it happens. The system is designed in a way that is, so to say, asynchronous. If the vote does not go through, then when the person has the access to

the Internet, then the vote will be made. If there is a time period maybe that is to be used for the voting, Internet connection would be needed within the time period.

That is all I have for now and a Note is made for technical specification to be provided also about the system. This is well-noted and will be provided.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I give the floor to Mr Sergio Ferraro, Deputy Director of Governing Bodies Servicing Division (CSG).

Mr Sergio FERRARO (FAO, Deputy Director Governing Bodies Servicing)

I will go over a few questions on vote-taking aspects and customization of the system. The first question is on the cost. I think it was Israel asking the cost of the system. We replied to this question in paragraph 31 of the *Information Note 1*, the cost is exactly the same cost paid by IFAD for their virtual system, which is equivalent to EUR 31 704. You can find the details in paragraph 31 of the *Information Note 1*.

We discussed and negotiated more favourable conditions than IFAD. The cost paid by IFAD for one event, the election of the President. Then it was not used, but the cost paid by IFAD was just for the election. In FAO, what we negotiated with the company the use of the system for unlimited events, so all the elections and votes during the Conference, even for the verification of the quorum, if needed, and for a period of three months. Therefore, we can cover, if needed, other events, and we already have requests from some meetings of Statutory Bodies, and they would like to use a voting system for elections. Therefore, the cost actually can be spread with other events in the period of three months.

There was another question, I think from Brazil, on the cost of the Council. It is difficult to give a figure for the cost of the Council, considering all elements and possibility of night sessions. We work in blocks of three hours because we have some arrangements with interpreters and with the services. For one block of three hours, including all costs, the average cost is USD 20 000. Of course, if the event is overnight, the cost is higher. We have some overtime costs and some people costs, but there is an average. During normal working hours, the total cost is around USD 20 000.

There was another question from France on what is the customization. The Minsait system is a robust and stable system. There is no adaptation on the voting system. What we foresee that we have to do is the translation of the environment in all six languages, the creation of the environment for FAO, the creation of all accounts for Member who have a right to vote, the creation of the access to Members. These are the customizations that we will have to do.

Of course, we have not touched the engine of the system. We work only on the layout and on training materials, video for the voters in order to see how to vote and to do testing.

Then, to complement on the question of Canada on what happens if a country has Internet problems. Whenever there is an issue we have to refer to what would happen in the physical world, if a delegate who travels misses a plane? This would be the same situation. The principle is one: the vote would be open for a period of time, it could be 15, 20 minutes, half an hour. During this period, countries can express their vote.

The General Rules of the Organization state that once the vote is open, it cannot be stopped. Therefore, during this period we cannot do anything. If a voter has a problem with the Internet within the 30 minutes, unfortunately the vote will not be cast. If there is a problem and the country sees the problem before the opening of the vote, as could happen in the physical world, the voters can inform that there is a problem with Internet connections and the Conference might decide to postpone the vote until all voters have solved their problems.

The same thing normally happens in the physical world. In the physical world, a delegate might miss a plane, and is not able to attend the session. The Conference might decide to postpone the vote to give the possibility to this delegate to participate in presence.

Then, to complement what the Secretary-General said on what is our mandate for doing the identification of the remote voting solutions. We normally evaluate products. It is normal activity and

it is part of our mandate. Because we have to improve and to provide facilities for improving the methods of work.

One example is this meeting. We are meeting with full interpretation. The interpretation is provided on a platform that has not the facilities for full interpretation. We worked with our technicians and with the interpreters and thanks to our interpreters and our technicians, we were able to find a solution to provide interpretation on this platform.

You remember that at the beginning, the first months of the implementation, we had not all official languages. Arabic was not present on the platform. We found a way to provide interpretation through another channel and thanks also to the participants of the meetings, we were able to provide for a number of months interpretation on different channels.

We were the first organization in the United Nations to provide interpretation for all languages for all meetings. All United Nations organizations copied from us, called us, verified with us the modalities for the provision of services. We did not have a specific mandate for doing that. We did it because it is part of our mandate, it is part of our responsibility providing the services to all of you.

I think I have touched all question, but I am here in case you have other questions.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Ilja Betlem, Chief of Communications with Members.

Mr Ilja BETLEM ((Secretariat of the Conference and the Council)

I wanted to respond to a few matters that were raised. There was a question on proxy voting. Now, in the in-person vote in Rome and perhaps other locations, delegations would rely not strictly speaking on a proxy, but on the possibility under Article III of the Constitution for Members to appoint any person as a member of their delegation. There is inherent flexibility in this provision and that opened up the possibility to identify the in-person voting option for consideration of the Members.

From the perspective of the voting procedures, under that option nothing will change since voting will proceed as per standard and delegates of Members would present themselves in the voting area, as any other delegate, and as such this voting option would not present any risk in terms of the voting process.

On the hybrid method, also here we are satisfied that the practicalities would work out in a way that ensures that a result of the combined two votes could be established properly. The vote-counting method of a physical vote is well established. There is a lot of practice with that and it is second nature in our service and so in terms of the vote-counting, this is the same.

Physical vote counting is actually the more complex process in the context of a hybrid vote because the process of voting through an online system can be monitored easily and the counting of an online vote is very short work. The online component of a hybrid vote would be a very short process and that is why we are satisfied that the two methods can be put together in a fairly straightforward manner. Of course, the Secretariat will ensure that the tellers would be fully briefed to make sure that they can give effect to their mandate and their responsibilities.

Then there was some reference about various voting locations. Now, in the earlier Note we had proposed to consider that a vote might take place in Rome as well as in New York on the basis of the consideration that a very large number of countries have a representation in that location.

In that context, we also thought about perhaps opening up Regional Offices, even Country Offices as voting locations but we needed to dismiss that option because of the logistics and because of the fact that we would need to train a large number of tellers and we could no longer guarantee the integrity of the voting process. It was for that reason that these locations necessarily have to be limited to perhaps a second location and maybe a third. However, beyond that, it becomes uncomfortable for the Secretariat to guarantee a proper voting process.

Finally, hearing the meeting on the various voting options and the preparations of the Secretariat for the options, I wanted to reconfirm the preparedness and the readiness of the election team to make sure that all facilities will be in place.

CHAIRPERSON

I think, Members, we have gone past 12:30 hours. I think we need to break and pick up this Item again at 14:30 hours because we have got some other aspects for decision by Members on this Item of *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*. I would adjourn the meeting and we meet again at 14:30 hours.

The meeting rose at 12:40 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 40

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.40

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
TENTH PLENARY SESSION DIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE DÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
30 April 2021

The Tenth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:36 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La dixième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 36
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la décima sesión plenaria a las 14.36
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 13. Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference (*continued*)**Point 13. Préparatifs en vue de la quarante-deuxième session de la Conférence (*suite*)****Tema 13. Disposiciones para el 42.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia (*continuación*)**
(CL 166/13)**CHAIRPERSON**

Good afternoon, colleagues. We can commence our afternoon session. Under this agenda item 13, *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference*, there are a few other aspects which we need the decision of Members, and this is with regard to nominations, etc.

With regards to the issue of nominations for Officers of the 42nd Session of the Conference, to be nominated at this Session of the Council under item 13, I wish to inform Members that we have received the following nominations:

The Chairperson of the Conference: Mr Michal Kurtyka, Minister of Climate and Environment of Poland as Chairperson of the Conference.

Three Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference: Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe of the Republic of Cameroon; Ms Yael Rubinstein of Israel; and Mr Edward Centeno of the Republic of Nicaragua.

One Chairperson of Commission II: Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Netherlands.

We are still waiting for the Chairperson of Commission 1 from the G77 and China Group.

We have received six nominations for the General Committee: Australia; China; Guatemala; Iran; San Marino; and United States of America.

We are still awaiting one nomination from the Africa Regional Group.

We have received nine nominations of the Credentials Committee: Bangladesh; Canada; Democratic Republic of Congo; Kuwait; Malaysia; New Zealand; Nicaragua; San Marino; and Venezuela

That completes the information in this respect. Do I take it that the Council agrees with these nominations as outlined?

I see no request for the floor. It is taken that the Council agrees with these nominations and we will go forward with these names. There are still two outstanding, one for Commission 1 and one for the General Committee.

I see Peru has asked for the floor.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUNEZ (Perú)

Sobre este tema deseamos hacer una mención, el Perú en calidad de Presidencia Pro-tempore del GRULAC, desea compartir con el Consejo un informe de nuestra Reunión Plenaria del 15 de abril. Cito, “en su intervención ante los Delegados de los países latinoamericanos y caribeños, el Embajador de República Dominicana manifestó que, honrando las buenas prácticas de gobernanza multilateral, su Delegación declinará la posibilidad de presentar candidaturas a cargos institucionales durante la Cuadragésimo Segundo Conferencia de la FAO, por ser ámbito donde se llevará a cabo la elección del próximo Presidente Independiente del Consejo, considerando especialmente que el Representante Permanente de la República Dominicana es uno de los tres candidatos para ese cargo”.

“En el entendido de que abstenerse de ocupar una posición de alta responsabilidad y de visibilidad en el principal Órgano Rector de la Organización, cuando al mismo tiempo la persona es candidata a un cargo de ser elegido en ese mismo escenario, es una buena práctica de gobernanza multilateral, el Embajador Mario Arvelo desiste de presentarse y su Delegación por igual, desiste de presentar candidaturas a cualquier otra posición durante la Conferencia o a ser elegida por esta”.

Esta es la porción relevante del informe de la plenaria del GRULAC del 15 de abril que quería poner en conocimiento de todos los Estados Miembros del Consejo.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other request for the floor? I have no other request, so we will go forward with these names and we are still awaiting two names.

Now, if there are no other comments or requests for the floor, I can read out my conclusions.

Item 13: *Arrangements for the 42nd Session of the Conference.*

1. The Council:

- a) agreed, in line with Rule I.1 General Rules of the Organization (GRO), to hold the 42nd Session of the Conference from 14 to 18 June.
- b) agreed to hold the 42nd Session of the Conference in virtual modality in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- c) recommended approval by the Conference at its 42nd Session of the Special Procedures to be applied on an exceptional basis in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and as outlined in Appendix A of *CL 166/13*.

2. The Council reviewed options proposed for alternative voting procedures outlined in *CL 166/13*, Appendix B, and elaborated further in *CL 166/13 Information Note 1 and 2*, and recommended the Conference approve for implementation at its 42nd Session and on an exceptional basis either options one or two or a hybrid of the two options, based *inter alia* on the progress in preparations on the three options from the 166th Session of the Council to the 42nd Session of the Conference. In this regard the Council requested that the Secretariat continues its efforts and urged all members to engage actively in the preparations so as to ensure the viability of all three options for Conference decision.

3. The Council decided to submit the tentative timetable set out in *CL 166/3* to the Conference for approval.

4. The Council further recommended the Conference set the deadline for receipt of nominations for election to the Council at 12:00 hours on Monday 14 June 2021 and the election to be held on Thursday 17 June 2021.

5. In accordance with Rule XXIV.5 (b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO), the Council nominated Mr Michal Kurtyka, Minister of Climate and Environment of Poland as Chairperson of the Conference.

6. The Council agreed to submit to the Conference the following nominations for Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference:

1. Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe of the Republic of Cameroon
2. Ms Yael Rubinstein of Israel; and
3. Mr Edward Centeno of the Republic of Nicaragua.

7. The Council agreed to submit to the Conference the following nomination for the Chairperson of Commission II: Mr Hans Hoogeveen of the Netherlands.

8. The Council noted that nomination of the Chairperson of Commission 1 was outstanding.

9. Nominations of seven members of the General Committee. In accordance with Rule XXIV.5 (b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) the Council agreed to put the following nominations before the Conference: Australia; China; Guatemala; Iran; San Marino; and United States of America;

10. The Council noted that the nomination of one member of the General Committee from the Africa Regional Group was outstanding.

11. The Council urged Members to submit the outstanding nominations.

12. Nominations of nine members of the Credentials Committee. In accordance with rule of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) the Council agreed to put the following nominations before

the Conference: Bangladesh; Canada; Democratic Republic of Congo; Kuwait; Malaysia; New Zealand; Nicaragua; San Marino; and Venezuela.

13. With regard to the biennial team for 2020-2021 biennium, the Council agreed to submit the theme: *Agriculture, Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action* to the Conference for endorsement and requested that a concept note on this theme be submitted to the Conference.

14. The Council further agreed to recommend to the Conference that the theme of the General Debate at the 41st Session be *Agriculture, Food Systems Transformation: From Strategy to Action* and the statements by heads of delegations be limited to a maximum of five minutes each.

That is the end of the conclusions and I open the floor for any comments by Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Le quería pedir, por favor, si es posible que en la parte que se refiere a “transformación” en los dos puntos del texto, que son los temas de discusión en la Conferencia y el tema bienal, si podíamos hacer un footnote, un pie de página, con lo que habitualmente varios países expresamos cuando se utiliza la palabra “transformación”, en la cual decimos que transformación debe ser entendido de una manera... Lo voy a decir en inglés a velocidad de dictado si le parece.

“...recalling that transformation should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, and in accordance with and dependent on national context and capacities.”

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Just looking at paragraph 2, we would suggest to change in line three “recommended the Conference,” instead of “approve,” “consider” because we have at the end for Conference decision. If I am basing the discussions that we had today, it is not as if it was a mutually based on either option. I think “consider” would be better because we still need additional information. After “on an exceptional basis,” would add “as a one-time arrangement.”

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

For paragraph 2, we wanted to ask if it could be spelled out exactly what options one and two are. We think it needs to be made very clear in this item that FAO should still prepare the in-person option, while also looking at the other options for Conference to decide. We feel that it is very important to capture the fact that the in-person option has to include the one that meets the minimum of the Basic Texts. That is the in-person vote because we cannot pre-judge what Conference might say. What we are requesting is that the Secretariat, for example, in the credentialing instructions that will go to Members, have to urge all Members to include in their delegate lists the names of their voter and an alternate based on Rome. Because, if I understand correctly, if Conference should decide not to waive the Basic Texts or change the rules then this would be the default option, the in-person one. We want to make sure that that is clearly captured in there.

We support the changes that were suggested by our colleague from Canada.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you have some suggestions for particular wording in this regard?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Yes, I will, I just need a moment to formulate those.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Just a quick question, do we have a timetable for part two? Are we going to discuss informally the various options until the Conference or do we have a previous or earlier deadline?

CHAIRPERSON

Secretary-General, could you clarify the point which Israel has raised?

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, as I recalled earlier, the approval process for the voting modality is a recommendation by Council and approval by Conference. Should the Council wish to add any other guidance, specific or otherwise, between now and then, that would be welcome.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Canada?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I wonder if we could add as well “recalling the discussions.” If at the end when we say, “the Secretariat continues its efforts to add, including consulting with all Member States and undertaking the required testing.” I do not know if that is the right word.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

May I just ask if you could just leave the text just for an additional minute, please?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I was just wondering, just because we were waiting, if it was a good moment, but I could wait after we had looked at this decision. I just had an additional question for clarification, based on some of the answers that were given before the lunch break, but I can wait.

CHAIRPERSON

No, please go ahead.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I thank the Secretariat for all their answers, but I was wondering again for the option of the hybrid procedure, regarding the counting. I do understand that the online voting has its own counting, as well as the in-person voting has its standard procedure. I just did not understand how it came together in a way that would protect the secrecy. I would welcome and, of course I do not have all the details. I am sure that must have been thought through. But I was wondering, for example, practically speaking, if a number of countries have decided to go with online voting and the results of the online voting are all the same, for one candidate or show, for example, there is no support for another candidate, there would be a risk that there is additional information that either the tellers or someone else have about the way a Member has voted, just because it has a different system of registering the vote. I was just wondering what were the procedures to make sure that the anonymity is preserved and that there is no linkage or any interpretation of the voting results due to the dual system that would not protect the way a Member has voted.

CHAIRPERSON

We will take this question up.

First, I will give the floor to the United States for the suggested wording, so we agree on paragraph 2.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I want to thank you for your patience, Chairperson.

We would like to add the following and for now, we could put it after the word “Conference,” toward the bottom of the paragraph. We may need to look at the order later. “requested the Secretariat continue its preparations of the option which conforms to the Basic Texts that is in-person voting with proxy, while exploring the other options.”

One comment, and I welcome suggestions from other Members on this as well. In the last line of that I note that it says, “urged all Members to engage actively in the preparations, so as to ensure the viability of all three options”. In fact, it is really not the Members’ responsibility to ensure the viability of all three options. That would be really a call for the Secretariat, to ensure the viability. We are not comfortable with that responsibility being put on the Members.

We also want to make the suggestion that, and I believe the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) did this, mention that the Council is willing to meet in an Extraordinary Session. I

could suggest perhaps we add that as another paragraph. That Council noted its willingness to convene in an Extraordinary Session, if necessary, prior to Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

Secretary-General, could you clarify this statement of, “urged all Members to engage actively?”

SECRETARY-GENERAL

It is a reflection of the debate by the members and a cognizance that all three of the options which are now on the table will only be ready for the Conference to be able to implement them in any meaningful manner, if we have engagement between now and the Conference by the Members.

Of course, the Secretariat has its responsibilities and we will undertake them with the outmost diligence and care, but these options will not transform, will not become viable if Members do not engage. That is, all three of them. This is just a comment to help Members on this suggested text.

If I may, Independent Chair, I think the Legal Counsel may wish to comment to support the Members on some other aspects of the text that is now on the screen.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Legal Counsel, may I give you the floor before I give the floor to Members?

LEGAL COUNSEL

Certainly. I just wanted to intervene to share some thoughts with respect to some of the proposals for wording, specifically with respect to compliance with the Basic Texts as reflected in Information Note 2. All of the options that are being presented will require some sort of adjustment as regards to the processes set out in Rule XII. Thus, for example, the proposal for physical voting, if what is contemplated is physical voting in New York and/or possibly Geneva in addition to headquarters, this would be a departure from the wording of the Basic Texts, which ends at the traditional application of the Basic Texts, which presumes voting within headquarters. I just thought I would just draw your attention to that and maybe that could be considered in the context of the language that Members may be considering putting in place in this Report.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We are not comfortable with the proposal coming from the United States. I think it is a reiteration of obvious measures that the Secretariat is already taking. This is the normal procedure. I do not see the need to further elaborate on that.

We also do not agree with the idea of including a new Session of the Council to discuss this. Going back to the question I presented to the Secretariat, which I thank very much for the information, reacting to this number of countries that are concerned with the expenses for the electronic system voting. Only the cost of the next Session will be double of the cost of the electronic system vote. We never had this concern before, but I remember that some countries expressed these concerns. It has to be clear to everyone that if we refrain from speaking for three minutes, each delegation, we already pay the system.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je remercie le Secrétaire général du Conseil et la Conseillère juridique, qui nous ont donné des informations précieuses, nous permettant d'avancer.

Monsieur le Président, pour le Groupe Afrique, je voudrais vous prier de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

After “exceptional basis,” “without setting a precedent and as a one-time arrangement.”

The other thing that I think we agree with is what Brazil said about the text in yellow, the first yellow. This is the position of a few countries, it is not the position of the Council. We are no longer working on the position of countries, we are working on the position of the Council. I recall perfectly well that

there were countries that proposed this view. We can probably put a full stop after “Basic Texts.” The rest is not very important for us. We request the Secretariat for the approval of the options which conform with the Basic Texts.”

The Council noted its willingness to convene an extraordinary Session, if necessary. I do not know, either we take the decision to convene an extraordinary Session or we do not. If we do not take the decision who is supposed to convene the Council. It is the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC).

I presume that this is taken into consideration before we can put that sentence, “the Council noted its willingness.” We do not agree very much with that sentence the way it is. Probably we can work on it. The way it is put there, it does not give any guidance to the ICC and the Director-General to convene an extraordinary Session, if necessary.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMÉNEZ SAUMA (México)

Tres cosas en este párrafo y voy por orden. Primero, en la tercera línea cuando dice “Conference consider”, si bien escuché el argumento es que en la Conferencia no necesariamente tiene que aprobar algo, pero incluso en la opción de default que es “mantener el sistema en [unintelligible]” claramente, hay que aprobar arreglos nuevos, porque no se podría hacer una votación en persona como se ha hecho en el pasado y la propia nota número 1 así lo menciona, que tendría que haber arreglos especiales, los cuales se tendrían que aprobar de todas maneras. Entonces quizá el texto original era el correcto de todas maneras.

Segundo, cuando se mencionan las opciones 1 y 2, tiene razón Estados Unidos que no sabemos exactamente cuáles son porque no se hace la referencia correcta y quizá la solución es sencilla, es simplemente de la nota número 2, usar los subtítulos que están ahí que es en inglés “for voting through an electronic system” en lugar del número 1. Y en lugar del número 2 es “for voting in person through physical secret ballot”, es lo que está en el texto y creo que es como se debería estar.

Y respecto a la propuesta que está en amarillo por Estados Unidos, en efecto, esa propuesta no genera consenso y de hecho sesga la orientación que el Consejo pueda dar hacia las preferencias que un reducido número de países expresaron. Entonces como mencionaron otros colegas, esa propuesta debe ser eliminada.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

Just want to be brief because my argument has been said by colleagues from Cameroon with regard to the proposal by the United States, requesting the Secretariat to continue its preparation until the end. I fully agree with him. I also want to support the proposal by Mexico made just now.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

As other members also, my delegation is not in a position to accept the proposal made by the United States. We could support the amendments made by Mexico. I also recall that during our deliberation that most or the majority of the members of the Council and also the Observers stressed that we have to maintain or guarantee the sovereign right of all the Members to vote under any options. In light of this, I would like to propose a new wording here. It could be after the second line, after Notes one and two, “Stressed the need to guarantee that the sovereign right of all Members to vote under any option endorsed.”

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you to my colleagues for their comments. We are okay with deleting the extraordinary Session portion and have a different way of phrasing the other part that we had put. We thought after “recommended.”

My Egyptian colleague just added that portion and then there is the word “and” right there. After the word “and,” “recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts recommended the Conference consider for implementation,” all that part stays the same.

On the options one and two we just want to make sure those are consistent with the papers what were circulated. I think they may be backwards, but in any event that can be fixed. I just want to point that out.

If we have in there, “recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts,” we have a question for the Legal Counsel. The question is, if we move to Conference and Conference does not elect to waive or forego any of the rules in the Basic Texts, what happens? In other words, if they are unwilling to suspend any of the rules on voting what would actually happen? That would be a question for the Legal Counsel.

We can agree later where our colleagues suggested the deletion of the portion in yellow, that is “in-person voting with proxy”.

Finally, one more change and that is just to make it a little more clear in the last part. We have, “The Council requested that the Secretariat continue its efforts so as to ensure the viability of all options, and encouraged all Members to actively engage,” and the rest of that as it was. Deleting the “viability” part at the end. “Conference decision,” and at the end of that, “in accordance with the Basic Texts.”

If the Legal Counsel could just clarify, it would help us to know if no rules are waived, what happens.

CHAIRPERSON

I was saying that there have been a few points raised and before I pass the floor to Members I will request both the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel to clarify those. Secretary-General, you have the floor and then we will go to the Legal Counsel.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just to respond to one request for clarification, the substance of the two options, option 1 and 2 as they appear on screen now, are consistent with the document that was circulated. I can confirm that.

As for the formulation of the third-last sentence, as it appears on the screen, of course it is the Secretariat’s responsibility to ensure the viability of all three options, but the delivery of the same, as I explained, is contingent on the active participation of the Members, whether it is for the online testing programme for the online option, whether it is reaching out to Members to ask them who would be their voter would be in a physical vote or in hybrid modality. This is just something that the Members may want to bear in mind.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (FAO Legal Counsel)

With respect to the question from the United States as to what would happen if the Conference decided not to waive any rules. In this regard, I would note that the entire Conference is premised upon a virtual setting. Indeed the decision, and this is a decision that the Council is mandated to take, is for the Conference to be held in a virtual setting.

With respect to the specific question of the conduct of an election, it would be my understanding that if the Conference decided not to waive or suspend or slightly modify any Rules, the traditional methods of voting would apply in Rome, in headquarters. This would therefore require the setting up of tellers, etcetera, within Rome. In this context, and this is as I outlined earlier when presenting Information Note 2, the implications relate more to the operation of such matters, in so far as if Rome was the only location there would be a need to ensure that it was operationally possible to conduct the elections in a timely manner, again bearing in mind the duration of the Conference, which is brief, as compared to other United Nations System fora.

There would also be the fundamental question of the exercise of rights in the context of the delegations’ rights to vote. This is in the context of the provisions vis á vis the designation of a voter in accordance with the Constitution. Nevertheless, as the United States said, this is a Conference decision, that is, presumably a decision taken by the Members of the Conference all present and voting, and indeed that in itself raises the question of the validity of how to take that first decision.

What I am trying to say is that in all aspects there will always be something in this Conference which will require an initial decision of flexibility to allow it to even begin and to conduct its business. In practical terms, in the context of the secret ballot, yes, what the Basic Texts would require would be

the conduct of the physical vote in Rome in accordance with the established practice. I suppose in this context by appointment and maybe, timing would be a matter at issue.

CHAIRPERSON

We will carry on with our list of speakers.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I first wish to clarify that my proposal to put “consider,” was not to imply that a Conference decision was not required. I just had noted that at the end of the paragraph we had “for Conference decision.” We could bring it up. My point was more that by saying “approve,” either option is as if we were recommending an approval indifferently and our discussions were not reflecting that we were indifferent between either option. It is more that we are not ruling out options at this point, so “consider” we feel more appropriately reflected discussion but of course it is for decision.

My other point was in line three regarding the proposal to “stress the need to guarantee”. I would like to add “that was stressed many times in the discussions and stressed the need to guarantee the complete secrecy of the ballot”.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you, very much, to the Legal Counsel for clarifying for us what happens if Conference does not suspend any rules. That is really what we are asking to be reflected here in this paragraph. May I request that we un-bracket the part that says, “requested the Secretariat continue its preparations of the options which conform with the Basic Texts,” and add to the end of “Basic Texts,” “as set out in Rule XII.”

On line four, “the right of all Members to vote under any modality”, it says “option,” but if it could be “modality”. At the very start of that line, “Sovereign right of all members to vote under any modality.”

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I understand that we are walking on a very difficult branch now. There is a new word, we are not sure that we understand what it is, which has been introduced by the United States now, “modality.” What is that? We know of options, but we do not know what “modality” is. It has never been defined anywhere, so if we want to use that then we lose “options,” which is the correct word.

After the addition of Mexico, which is totally the best thing that we can have, I have again seen that there is a repetition under that. The “requested the Secretariat to continue its preparation of the options.” It is nothing new. “under the options which conform with the Basic Texts, as set out in Rule XII.” If we have separated that and have a new sentence, I believe that we can now double the sentence in Rule XII and we can accommodate that there.

The text in yellow, “we are still working to ensure the viability of all options.” I understand that. I do not know what Canada wanted to say there. I hope it is Canada, unless I am mistaken. We are leaving with the idea of viability of all of the options that we agree to choose.

Do we say all options or one option, or the chosen option because we have the three options, one, two and a mix of one and two. We have to do what is feasible because there we are opening the doors for every country because it wants to assert its sovereign right to choose among the options. We learned from this morning’s discussion that opening many options for one single vote will instantly bring a lot of discussions and problems. We should make sure that we are deciding on one option among the three that are presented.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quería hablar solamente para respaldar, para apoyar lo planteado por mi colega de Brasil, México, Camerún en nombre del Grupo de África, Indonesia, Egipto y también la nueva intervención de Camerún. No me siento cómodo, no me parece bien la última sugerencia hecha por mi estimada colega de Estados Unidos porque infiero, creo, que podría limitar a la Secretaría para poder llevar adelante en términos prácticos todas las opciones.

Es decir, lo que no puede haber en este párrafo por un lado plantear cuáles son los principios y los modos de votar que la Conferencia determine y por otro lado poner restricciones que la Secretaría después no pueda llevarlos a la práctica.

Entonces creo que hay que ser muy cuidadosos en no tener dos mensajes contradictorios en el mismo párrafo. Entonces la última sugerencia de Estados Unidos me parece que no garantizaría la posibilidad que la Secretaría... O podría traer algún problema, entonces creo mejor movernos de manera de darle a la Secretaría la libertad de poder llevar adelante las opciones en caso que así la Conferencia lo establezca.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Getting back to our colleagues' point, instead of "modality" to use the word "options." By using "modality" I was merely trying to echo the term that the Legal Counsel uses because this text as written sets out three options, if you will, option one, option two or a hybrid. However, in fact, the Conference may not decide to waive the rules and so we may be left with a "modality" that is none of those three options and that is why I had used that word "modality."

I have to ask, given that this text, in particular paragraph 2, contains references to these information Notes that were just provided overnight and that our Capital certainly has not had a chance to review them. We would like to ask to keep this Item open because we are not going to be in a position to be able to fully agree to this today without consulting with our Capital. I have to say this is all just too important and frankly we have heard from our colleague from Australia about the time zones for our Pacific colleagues and I hope other members may agree that we may need some more time on this,

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Simplemente para apoyar en el párrafo 2, apoyar las observaciones que hiciera Egipto, México, Camerún, Brasil. Y sobre el siguiente párrafo la intervención que hizo el Embajador Cherniak, tenemos que reconocer que los flujos de horarios, los cambios de horarios son para todos.

Creo que hay Delegaciones que están conectadas también desde América Latina, desde Asia, desde África, desde Japón. Entiendo la dificultad que nos acarrea esto a todos. Creo que en el caso del párrafo 2 hemos avanzado bastante, podemos hacer todavía un intento para resolver el párrafo siguiente, pero lo dejo en sus manos, señor Presidente. Ha sido una semana bien difícil.

CHAIRPERSON

There is a suggestion by the United States. May I ask the Legal Counsel to assist how would this work, since the Council is programmed to end today, or maximum, the way we have, our timetable has worked, perhaps another day. How would it work keeping a paragraph open, as it were, for a future decision?

LEGAL COUNSEL

As you say, the Council is expected to approve or make a recommendation to the Conference for consideration. Consequently, in the absence of a recommendation there is a vacuum, as there is not a mandate for a recommendation to be transmitted directly from an informal consultation to the Conference. There, I believe, in order for the Members to decide, the key would be in distinguishing whether they wish to have either a recommendation which is very concrete in terms of going forward now, or a recommendation which is accompanied by continued work and continued consultations.

As you will have recalled, the Secretary-General had indicated that there would be briefings and sensitization, engagement with the various Members to enable the Conference to actually have the information to take a decision at some stage. If that approach was taken by the Members, a recommendation could be made by the Council now to continue to explore various options with a view to activities then being undertaken to enable the Members participating in the Conference. One could close this matter as it were in the Council, if that was the desire of the Council, while having ongoing work to assist the Members actually take a decision at the Conference.

The alternative would be the holding of an ad hoc Special Session to formulate definitive recommendations of the Council, if the Members considered they could not reach such a conclusion at

this stage in the matters of timing and the ability to prepare may well come into play, thus impacting upon the preparations for the Conference.

In summary, there could be a recommendation now, saying to go forward in exploring the three options, and, in the interim period while exploring, undertake sensitization, engagement to allow the Members to become familiar and take their decision and that would be a recommendation in itself. Or, there would be a holding this back and a convening then of a subsequent Special Session, but in that regard I would note that timing may be at issue. Indeed, I think it would be important for the Members to bear in mind whether they would feel within a week or two weeks they would be closer to making a decision on what to recommend to the Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

That was pretty clear. I give the floor to Brazil.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

I would very much prefer that we finish this discussion today. I would incentivize our colleagues if they need to consult their Capitals, at least for the countries in our continent it is a feasible time. We can consult our Capitals and then before the end of the Session or evening Session we can have a reaction back from our Capitals. We very much prefer that we finish this discussion and it is not a final decision. It is just a text that has to be sent to the Conference.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like also to stress on keeping options. This is the original wording that I proposed because the rationale behind this, and also totally support my colleague from Cameroon, we cannot accept “modality” in this paragraph because Council is reviewing options for alternative voting procedures. We are not discussing the modality of the voting or not. No, we are discussing options provided to us by the Secretariat for alternative voting procedures. We would insist to keep the wording “options” on the third line of paragraph 2 and delete “modality.”

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

My question is on paragraph 3. Do you want to continue on paragraph 2? I will return to you later, if not I will go for paragraph 3. Please, let me know your guidance.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us deal with paragraph 2, first. Thank you, Portugal. I want to know whether all Members agree on paragraph 2.

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

I must say, all other Members’ points seem to be in here except the one that we have repeatedly raised, which is that the voting option or modality, or whatever we call it, of voting in person at headquarters, which is the only option that is provided for in the even no portions of rule 12 get waived.

That is our point here, that that option needs to be reflected in here as well and so I can understand the desire to conclude this paragraph today, but if we are going to do that we have to keep this reflecting of what all members discussed and that would include that the default option, if no Rules are waived, then the option of in-person voting at headquarters must be in there as well and the Secretariat must prepare for that option as well. That is what we are asking to be reflected in this paragraph if we are going to be able to conclude it.

CHAIRPERSON

We are still on paragraph 2. Any other Member wish to take the floor on paragraph 2?

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

This is to strongly support the United States on this. We have to reflect the discussion properly here and this bit has to be in there, otherwise this is not authentic, what we have here. I understand that if we want to conclude this here we have to make sure that everybody can live with this. We also think it is important to mention the option, which would apply, or modality in case nothing is waived by the Conference or suspended. So, we support the United States fully on this.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

I just wanted to echo what the United States colleague and the Germany colleague said. I think it is very important for us too.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just to say, yes, we very much support the inclusiveness of the United States proposal in this paragraph. It reflects the discussion and it still leaves the options open.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Nuevamente haciendo un llamado para que por favor tomemos decisiones y no le demos más largas a este y otros asuntos porque verdaderamente me preocupa lo que comentaba el día de ayer en una de mis intervenciones y, justamente, ayer también nuestro amigo el Director Ejecutivo del PMA, el señor David Beasley hablaba en uno de los países donde anda en el terreno, trabajando de la mano con los más necesitados, tal vez no hablando tanto sino accionando como debe ser, y decía que se corre el riesgo de que se pierda la vida de un niño cada 75 segundos.

Imagínense ustedes qué barbaridad y nosotros aquí perdiendo el tiempo discutiendo donde va un punto y donde va una coma. Finalizó el señor Beasley ayer diciendo que es una obligación dar recomendaciones a nuestras Capitales que tengan las mayores oportunidades para todos y no solo para unos pocos.

Creo que este mensaje del señor Beasley es muy atinado y muy acorde con este momento que estamos discutiendo. Por eso yo, por favor, les pido que llevemos a buen término hoy mismo esta situación, terminemos este Consejo como tiene que ser para darle los insumos al Comité de Redacción y poder tener todos los documentos en debido tiempo.

CHAIRPERSON

I entirely endorse your statement. I think, members, can we not go forward with both words, “options” and “modalities?” It will all be done at the Conference. What is the harm in saying “options” and “modalities,” so go with both words? Why do we have to select one word? Spain, and then Congo.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

Por nuestra parte simplemente queríamos tomar la palabra para apoyar como ha ocurrido con Reino Unido, Japón, lo dicho por Estados Unidos y Alemania.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je vous prie de donner la parole au Cameroun.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I think somebody brought something which we can applaud, which is “options” and “modalities.” I think we cannot be labouring on this. I want to caution about the rethinking behind what is referred to in Rule XII of the Basic Texts. What we see inside is that they want to impose us to give the vote in Rome and in physical presence.

This we cannot accept. It is absolutely out of consideration for us. We have three options, we are giving the Secretariat the authorization to move ahead with those three options. I think the decision that we are taking is to allow the Secretariat to propose or to work on these three options and we are happy to see that there is a special Session which is organized prior to the Conference to finalize it.

The Africa Group feels very uncomfortable that one more option is promoted under special or very difficult circumstances where necessarily we have to waive some Rules. I know that the Secretariat are very optimistic that we are not going to waive the Rules, but I am sure, I am convinced that some rules

have to be breached, whatever we do. Unlike what the European Union and others said that we should stick to the fact that the Rules are not going to be waived, we are not convinced. It is a normal thing.

When we are under special circumstances, you need to address those special circumstances by waiving the rules. By the simple fact that we are holding this Conference in a virtual modality, some rules have to be waived. It is something that we have to address. Let us give the right message to the Secretariat to move ahead with the preparation and probably we can call a special Session of the Council to finalize the preparation.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I fully support what has been said by my colleague from Cameroon regarding the options that we are discussing here in the Council. I think I was listening carefully during the deliberation on the options for the voting procedures and I think the majority of the developing countries have supported the hybrid option. I think also this is an option that will guarantee the sovereign right for all Members to vote, wherever they are, here in Rome or even in the Capitals.

As my colleague from Cameroon said, “recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts.” This means that we only support one option for the voting. Our understanding was that the Council does not want to just present the three options on the table for the Conference to consider and approve. I think we cannot accept “recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts” and also to be more flexible and also constrictive. We could accept “options” and “modalities” but we would like to delete “recalling Rule XII of the basic texts.”

CHAIRPERSON

Members, it boils down to this wording of “recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts”. The next text is naming all three options to be developed. If Rule XII has to be recalled, let the Conference, before deciding, ask for Rule XII or any other rule so that they can make an informed decision on which option to approve. Should we leave it to the Conference if they want to recall Rule XII or any other rule, so that they are better informed before they make a decision on any of the options?

Since our agreement depends on just that wording, should we keep arguing on that or leave it to the Conference? The Conference can recall Rule XII, ask for explanations of Rule XII or explanations of any other when they are considering the three options which will be before them. Could we leave that aspect to the Conference?

Mr Giorgio Maria CAVALIERI (Italy)

Italy fully supports the suggestion made by the United States and we align with what has been said by Germany and Spain. We support maintaining Rule XII.

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Como está redactado el párrafo cuando hablamos de opciones o modalidades, estamos hablando en plural. Lo que la Conferencia se va a decantar es por una sola opción, supongo, de las tres que se presenten.

CHAIRPERSON

Mexico, there is no interpretation. There is something wrong with the sound.

Ms María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Can they listen to me in English?

CHAIRPERSON

The interpreters cannot hear you clearly, Mexico.

Ms María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Okay, let me get back. Thank you.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I have a few observations. I think what I would start with, we completely understand the frustration among Members of this Council, but something as important as elections and voting is so important and I think all we have to do to understand that, is to look at our conversations, our consultations on the Code of Conduct. This is a fundamental issue of importance to all Members and so that is why I hope you can understand why we feel very strongly that this is not something we can just simply decide without clear guidance from our Capitals.

Furthermore, I am a bit concerned when I hear that Members have opposition to saving the Basic Texts. What we are trying to say here, we are not trying to be prejudicial in recommending anything to the Conference. What we are trying to capture here is that we expect the Secretariat to prepare for all eventualities, including the eventuality of Conference not deciding to suspend the rules. That needs to be captured in here and so it is somewhat troubling to hear that colleagues would not be comfortable including references to the Basic Texts of the Organization.

Again, I would request that we keep paragraphs 2 and 3 open, and I would like to seek your guidance on how the Drafting Committee and Report adoption could be handled in a way that might make that possible.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal for the European Union?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

I think what I want to say was already said in the previous intervention by the United States delegation. The question is, we fully understand the questions that we are facing in this Council. We are fully aware of the difficulties. We are fully aware about what has been said, but what we have in this paragraph is a simple question. It is simply stating what our starting point is and our starting point is the accomplishment of the Basic Texts. We are simply recalling what we have in our Basic Texts and that is, in our view, very important for the Organization.

Of course, we are living in a very exceptional situation. As all Members and a lot of Members have said, there is the need to be inclusive and to guarantee that all can vote in this case, in this particular discussion, and that is absolutely true. We have all these statements already in the paragraph.

What we are simply discussing here is a simple question, what is our starting point? Our starting point is the Rule XII of the Basic Texts. Of course, the Conference can consider the exceptional situation and, without any pre-emption for the future and without setting a precedent, can suspend it. Yes, we are fully aware what the Members said, but I do think, we do believe that having this does not jeopardise in any way the process of going for the most inclusive that can guarantee the secrecy and the sovereignty, as said in the text, of the voting process. I think that we should also remember our starting point. Our starting point is our Rules of Procedure that are our way of work. That should be in the text.

Saying this, we do very much want to keep this reference just to remember what our starting point is and to resolve the question between paragraph two and three, because we also recognize what has been said on paragraph three. Maybe returning to the merging of the two paragraphs is an option, but I am not proposing this way. It is just for your guidance and your cleverness as always guiding you on this, in order to solve this question of the double reference on Rule XII.

Without trying to get the bells that we are listening to, enforce my wording, please. It is just to remind Members what is our starting point.

CHAIRPERSON

I see I have got about five requests for the floor and I hope we do not have a repeat of yesterday, when we were stuck on one paragraph and we are stuck now on two paragraphs. The United States asked me a question on how we can proceed by keeping these paragraphs open and adopting the rest of the text.

One option is, and I put it to the Members, we keep these two paragraphs open and we let the Drafting Committee meet and if the Drafting Committee finishes its work today, then you have the option of the Plenary today or Plenary tomorrow. These paragraphs we take up in Plenary tomorrow and try and

adopt them in the Plenary because if we are stuck here, it holds up the Drafting Committee work. My recommendation would be to let us keep these two paragraphs open and we adjourn now, and let the Drafting Committee finish its work because it did not finish yesterday's work. Then we come back to Plenary and then it is up to you. If the Drafting Committee finishes work too late, we will have to meet tomorrow or if you feel tomorrow is not the right day, on Sunday but we have to meet and when the Plenary comes back, we discuss and adopt these paragraphs in Plenary.

May I have your reaction to my suggestion? I give the floor to China, but please react to what I have just said. Any other arguments, we will keep pending until we come back to this discussion of these two paragraphs. What is your reaction to my suggestion, which I made because the United States asked how can we keep these two paragraphs pending and come back to them?

Ms Xi LI (China)

Our position is that we prefer to solve it in the Plenary right now. I just want to brief you on the nightmare of the Drafting Committee that happened last night, or this early morning. Probably it is not my obligation, but the Drafting Committee really had some problems deciding something that has not been decided in the Plenary. I think that the Drafting Committee only decides the specific words and grammar, but this is a principle issue. A lot of countries do not think that this is the problem of words. We do think that we should solve it in the Plenary and right now.

CHAIRPERSON

My suggestion was that this should be sorted out and agreed in Plenary. I was not going to send this to the Drafting Committee. The choice is Plenary now or Plenary tomorrow. My suggestion is that it should be, or will be, approved in the Plenary. It is just a question of timing.

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Sí, para reaccionar a su... No es fácil reaccionar a su solicitud señor Embajador. Porque estamos hablando aquí de acudir...

CHAIRPERSON

Mexico, the interpreters cannot hear you. I go to the next speaker.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Responding to your question, we prefer to continue our deliberation to solve this paragraph here because as my colleague from China said, yesterday in the Drafting Committee, all the paragraphs that were not cleared by the Plenary, will come back to the Plenary again to be deliberated. So it is better to finish our business here in the Plenary.

I would like also to respond to my colleagues who spoke earlier, trying to blame one Member of the Council that does not want to recall or respect the rules of the Basic Texts. I would like to remind him that Egypt is one of the founding members of the United Nations and FAO, and we fully respect the Basic Texts and we would like our intervention, just using this wording or recalling this Rule XII of the Basic Texts and putting it here in the third line, we cannot support it.

However, of course, we can recall and as the distinguished delegate of the European Union said, it is a starting point. The starting point of our deliberation today that we have, recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts. Secondly, we are working in unprecedented and exceptional situation due to the COVID-19. That is why we are discussing the options of voting procedures.

This is my response and in this regard, I would also show the flexibility and constructive way that the delegation of Egypt always shows during our deliberations. I have a proposal, so we can start this paragraph with "recalling Rule XII of the Basic Texts." I hope this will make my colleagues very happy. We add after that, "and taking into consideration the exceptional situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic," and we can continue, "the Council reviewed." This is my proposal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Estuve escuchando todos los planteos. Creo que estamos todos intentando buscar que la salida de esta situación sea por consenso. Creo que hay un gran esfuerzo, creo que un principio democrático

importante que siempre debemos tener en cuenta en una Organización, en una estructura multigubernamental, es la cuestión del respeto de las mayorías o de las opiniones mayoritarias por las opiniones minoritarias y también por parte de las opiniones minoritarias respecto de las opiniones mayoritarias.

Por lo cual, las soluciones de compromiso tienden a implicar un grado de flexibilidad y es importante que esa flexibilidad se exprese de manera en la cual en este tema, los principios planteados en el Artículo 2 estén garantizados pero por sobretodas las cosas de un punto de vista legal y de un punto de vista práctico, tanto la Secretaría como los Miembros puedan llevarlo adelante.

Entonces, yo insisto con esta cuestión. Creo que la propuesta de Egipto es muy apropiada porque de alguna manera captura esto que mencioné antes y reitero, nosotros necesitamos para poder llegar a un consenso y evitar tener que ir a otras alternativas que también están mencionadas en los textos básicos, porque en los textos básicos está mencionado también cómo se resuelven estas situaciones, es la de buscar que los principios que todos queremos, no solamente estén garantizados en el texto sino que el texto nos dé los instrumentos, tanto de la Secretaría para que prepare las condiciones para llevarlo a cabo, como del punto de vista práctico y del punto de vista legal, y que también los miembros puedan efectivamente llevarlo adelante.

Esas dos cosas son fundamentales, entonces, a veces las discusiones por las palabras o por las frases, tienen que ver con esto, con que determinadas palabras podrían poner en riesgo la aplicación de los principios que en el mismo texto estamos diciendo. Entonces, yo creo que hay un gran esfuerzo de todos por tratar de buscar una salida de consenso. Creo que está claro esto y, creo, que está claro también que algunos Miembros están incómodos con alguna de las opciones y es legítimo, es legítimo.

Lo único que pido es que estén las opciones, pero también que esté garantizado que la Secretaría pueda prepararlo, pueda preparar el trabajo para que esas opciones se puedan llevar adelante y que los Miembros lo puedan hacer y que esto desde el punto de vista, repito, práctico y legal no haya inconvenientes, por lo cual el report debe garantizarlo y por eso es, creo, que estamos debatiendo a veces las palabras.

Pero repito, y creo sí, sería mejor tratar de resolverlo hoy porque pareciera que estamos cerca, pero después, cada vez que nos acercamos, aparece algún problema. Pero creo que la salida que plantea Egipto me parece que podría ser una buena vía de salida para lograr el consenso. Sería bueno ver cuáles son las reacciones. Gracias Egipto y gracias al Presidente.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En línea con lo que expresaba el querido Embajador de Argentina, nosotros apreciamos la propuesta de Egipto. Creo que todos tenemos en nuestro escritorio los textos fundamentales que son nuestra base. Nosotros como Nicaragua somos Miembros Fundadores de la FAO.

Aquí está recogido todo y agradecemos a Egipto por esta propuesta, creo que este es un punto de partida importante. Por otro lado, señor Presidente, creo que esto lo tenemos que resolver aquí en el Pleno, entendemos que estos temas no pueden ir al Comité de Redacción. Son temas demasiado difíciles para tratar en esa sede.

CHAIRPERSON

Definitely, Nicaragua. In fact, my suggestion was to sort it out in Plenary, but later and not send it to the Drafting Committee. Perhaps I was not understood so I repeat. These paragraphs are not to go to the Drafting Committee. These paragraphs are to be decided in Plenary. What I was saying was, we adjourn, and let the Drafting Committee finish its other work which it did not. The more we spend time here today, the more the Drafting Committee cannot meet. That was my suggestion.

I repeat, and if I could put my repetition in capital letters, I would. The matter should be decided in Plenary, not by the Drafting Committee. The speakers each time are saying not Drafting Committee, but nobody said it should go to the Drafting Committee. I was asked how this should be sorted out. My reaction was, it should be sorted out in Plenary, not by the Drafting Committee. The only difference was the timing as we are holding up the Drafting Committee because the rest of the work must continue as well.

Mr Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (Dominican Republic)

You know that my delegation and myself personally, we intervene in most agenda items in most meetings and we participate in every single meeting. I have been quiet because I am a candidate for the Independent Chairperson of the Council, to succeed you, sir. I, in agreement with my Capital, have chosen not to expose myself, not to be seen as taking advantage of a seat in the Council and showing off, or partaking beyond what is minimally reasonable.

We have erred on the side of caution here because this is something that pertains to so many fundamental principles. I am speaking, of course, not as a candidate but as a government representative, as someone who has been participating in meetings such as this for a long time. I would like to stress one thing, and that is the principles.

The principles that are here on paragraph 2 are fundamental. They must be upheld. I will refer to the Charter of the United Nations, Article 2, which are “process through the Organization and its Members in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1 shall act in accordance with the following Principles,” and then there is a list of principles.

The first principle of the United Nations Charter is, “the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.” We have heard some colleagues refer to the condition of their countries being founding members. The Dominican Republic was the third country to ratify the United Nations Charter after the United States, which came first, and France, second. We have accompanied the United Nations in all these years, always upholding these principles.

It would be interesting if we have a roll-call during Conference and we have all 194 Members on the screen debating about modality of voting and options that we see on paragraph 2, with some Members arguing that other Members should not have the right to vote, only because they do not have a Permanent Representation here in Rome, when we are in the midst of a pandemic.

A pandemic by definition is a disease that has taken over the whole world. My own country, in our own Basic Texts, calls for elections every four years and we had to postpone for several weeks our own elections because of the pandemic. We were in the first lockdown at that moment in time.

Extraordinary circumstances call for extraordinary remedies, and this is one of them. The world is fighting a pandemic. People are dying by the millions. The most developed nation that human society has ever seen has buried over 600 000 of its citizens because of this pandemic. The developing countries are being ravaged by the COVID-19 disease. I myself am a survivor. I caught it twice. I have been bedridden on the first wave in January last year, and again in February this year on another variant. I know in my own flesh what it is like to be bedridden for three weeks with COVID-19 and thankfully, I could get out of bed and get back to my duties with all of you.

This is the principle. The sovereignty of every single Member. All countries are equal under the United Nations Charter and all countries must be given the reasonable possibility of exercising the right to vote. This is the position of the Dominican Government.

CHAIRPERSON

I have three more speakers and then I would ask the United States as well. Could you kindly also comment on the Egyptian proposal because some Members have supported the Egyptian proposal and I would like the views of the three speakers on the list. United Kingdom, Congo, Germany and I would ask the United States to also comment on the Egyptian proposal.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would just like to respond to the intervention from the Dominican Republic. I want to wish the Ambassador all the best on his recovery. Terrible news to have caught COVID twice. I would also like to say that I do not think I have heard anyone in all of our discussions suggest that anyone should be disenfranchised from this vote. I think we all agree on that. Everyone should have an opportunity to vote.

You have asked me to comment on the proposal from Egypt and, yes, I think we could live with this, assuming that we also retain the yellow bits in paragraph 3 as well.

Finally, I would like to come back to your question about the timing of the Drafting Committee. It would be helpful to know from the Chair of the Drafting Committee, how much more work the Drafting Committee has got to do on all of the other items.

I clearly recognize that this one is not going to the Drafting Committee, as you said yourself. I am just wondering how much more time the Drafting Committee actually needs. It would be useful to have an idea about that. I know the Drafting Committee cannot be certain how much time they will need. Part of the reason I am asking that is, I am wondering if it possible for the Drafting Committee to meet now and for us to come back to this a little bit later this evening or whether the Drafting Committee would need to meet all evening.

CHAIRPERSON

We will ask the Chair to provide that information. First, I give the floor to Congo, then Germany. Congo is the Chair. Perhaps, Congo, you could also clarify the point which has been raised by the United Kingdom about what sort of timeframe you envisage for the completion of what you have already on your plate, as it were.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

C'est avec beaucoup d'attention que nous suivons ce débat et je remercie le Royaume-Uni d'avoir posé cette question, qui va également à tous les membres du Comité de rédaction puisque nous nous sommes vus tout à l'heure. La Chine et l'Égypte ont réagi à la question de transmettre un texte à revoir au niveau du fond, car il serait très difficile au Comité de traiter de questions de fond. Le Comité de rédaction regarde la forme et traiter des questions de fond devient très compliqué; il semble que nous en ayons déjà deux, qui causent beaucoup de problèmes.

Ainsi, Monsieur le Président, vraiment, j'appuie votre décision de continuer à traiter toute question de fond au niveau du Conseil pour laisser au Comité de rédaction le soin de s'occuper de la forme.

Concernant la question que l'Ambassadeur du Royaume-Uni a posée, il est très difficile d'y répondre. Selon l'avancement des travaux, peut-être que cela pourrait nous prendre une nuit, mais j'entends que l'on pourrait interrompre maintenant pour redémarrer à 21 heures. Cela se peut faire, nous allons essayer d'avancer, car il serait bien de terminer ce que nous avons commencé hier.

S'il faut observer la prière ce soir, le Comité de rédaction devra suspendre ses travaux et les reprendre après la prière; sinon, le Secrétariat verra avec le Président indépendant du Conseil, si le Comité de rédaction n'a pas terminé, à quel moment il lui faudra suspendre son travail.

Voilà les informations que nous avons jugé utile de mettre à votre disposition pour vous permettre de prendre une décision consensuelle et idoine.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Could you please give the floor to Portugal?

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

We would just like to support what has been said by our distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom. We welcome the procedure, of course. We are in your hands, sir, and it is what we want to say for now. We are also very grateful for the job and for the words that our distinguished Ambassador from Congo just said. Ambassador, thank you very much.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We want to also offer our thanks to the colleague from the United Kingdom. We can support the change by Egypt, provided that the language in yellow in paragraph 3 is retained. However, in paragraph 3 we suggest, instead of the three options referred to at the end of that paragraph, that they just be left as all options. We could agree to that and, if so, we would be able to agree to close the paragraph.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Preferiría primero concederle la palabra al Congo porque es el Presidente del Comité de Redacción y seguramente es importante lo que él pueda decir primero. Después, en todo caso, voy a pedir la palabra para poder expresar mi posición.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je remercie l'Ambassadeur de l'Argentine, mais je pense que j'ai expliqué ce qu'il y a lieu de faire au niveau du Comité de rédaction ce soir. Je revenais en fait pour demander la parole afin que vous puissiez la donner à la délégation du Cameroun, qui s'exprime au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

We want to be very grateful to Ambassador Cherniak. We are really grateful for allowing us to speak at this point in time. We agree totally with what Egypt said, but I believe that the text in dark yellow we can do away with. That is the fifth line of paragraph 2. That is the first thing that we wanted to say.

The second thing is that we followed your guidance that you want us to discuss this later on. That is perfect with us but if you can put paragraph 2 and 3 in abeyance, and continue with paragraph 4 and the rest of the text, I think we can go very quick on those so that we have only that part of our Report to deal with.

CHAIRPERSON

I think at least we will gain something by agreeing on the rest of the text. Therefore, I think yours is a good suggestion. We will keep these two subparagraphs in abeyance and move on. At least we will be able to do this, if not the Drafting Committee's work to be handled because time is running out for the meetings of the Drafting Committee. Let us go to the next paragraph, paragraph 4. Argentina, do you want to speak on this?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Señor Presidente, pensé que me iba a conceder la palabra luego de mi estimado colega de Camerún, pero no importa [XX]. Déjeme hacer una mención y luego si me permite y después seguimos con lo que usted sugirió.

En primer lugar, mi máxima solidaridad con el Embajador de República Dominicana respecto de su salud y me alegro que esté bien. En segundo lugar, mi reconocimiento al trabajo enorme del Presidente del Comité de Redacción y todos los Miembros. En tercer lugar, creo que la propuesta o la sugerencia de Estados Unidos, es un buen paso adelante, me parece un elemento positivo, en todo caso después de ver el resto del texto Presidente. A ver si podemos estar más cerca de llegar a un acuerdo y, quizás, evitar lo que los propios textos básicos plantean como alternativa si no coincidimos o si no llegamos a un consenso.

Así que, simplemente, Presidente, quería reconocer el primer paso adelante que veo y el agradecimiento a Estados Unidos por ese gesto.

CHAIRPERSON

We will keep open these two subparagraphs and we will go to the rest of the text. We go to paragraph 4.

Ms Xi LI (China)

Sorry to interrupt. I am just wondering why are we still keeping paragraphs 2 and 3 open? I think that most countries have already reached a consensus. I think that our colleague from the United States has already made a very kind gesture, saying that we can delete the one in the middle, the yellow part and they can accept the first sentence.

CHAIRPERSON

There is a condition that the yellow in paragraph 3 stays. Do you agree with that?

Ms Xi LI (China)

If the other countries agree.

CHAIRPERSON

They have not agreed, so that is why we were doing the other text. I would prefer to lead with the other text and keep this in abeyance for the moment because paragraph 3 has not been agreed to.

Ms Xi LI (China)

Okay. Thank you, Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph 4; I see no comments, so we can agree on paragraph 4. We go to paragraph 5. There are no comments, so paragraph 5 is agreed on Paragraph 6. No comments, so paragraph 6 is agreed on. Paragraph 7. I have a request from an Observer.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

I am sorry because we did not have time to liaise with our colleagues in the Council. However, I prefer that we also give the title of the Minister of Cameroon. He is Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe, Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Cameroon.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments?

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Agradeciendo al Delegado de Camerún exactamente eso, hay que poner los títulos de los distinguidos Vicepresidentes.

CHAIRPERSON

We will do that, Nicaragua. We will put the titles. With that we move to paragraph 8.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Just a confirmation from you, Mr Chairperson, is Ambassador Johannes Petrus Hoogeveen appointed by the Europe Regional Group, is that right?

CHAIRPERSON

I am informed he has been nominated by the Europe Regional Group. Is that it? Yes, nominated by the Europe Regional Group.

I see no other requests for comments. We go to paragraph 9. The Observer from Kenya.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

This is about the nominations for the General Committee, where the Africa Regional Group (ARG) has not given their nomination. Is that the case?

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph 9 is the Chairperson of Commission I.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

Sorry, Chairperson, mine was nominations for the General Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

That would be the next.

Paragraph 10. Paragraph 10 is for the General Committee. Kenya, did you want to intervene on that?

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

This is where I wanted to intervene, Chairperson. I must begin by commending you for your resilience. It is late in the day and you are very patient. Thank you, for that. I also apologise that the Africa Regional Group (ARG) has not submitted the nominations of their Representative from the

Region. We have now consulted, and we have submitted the nomination of the Republic of South Africa for the General Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

We can now move to paragraph 11. That has been done, paragraph 12. We move to paragraph 13. We have got one nomination outstanding and that is for Commission I. We urge Members to come forward with a name for that, and we go for paragraph 12, which is the Credentials Committee.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We first have a request of the Secretariat and/or the Legal Counsel and that is to clarify the eligibility for Members who are in arrears to serve as member of a Committee. Once we have a response to that, Chairperson, I would like to ask to intervene again.

CHAIRPERSON

Legal Counsel, could you clarify that, please?

LEGAL COUNSEL

Would it be possible to give me one minute just to double check the rules?

CHAIRPERSON

In the meantime, could we go to paragraph 13? I see no request for the floor, so 13 is agreed.

Paragraph 14? Paragraph 14 is agreed.

LEGAL COUNSEL

A rapid review of the Rules reflects that arrears affect only, a) Membership of the Council; and b) the right to vote in the Conference. Thus, I believe it would not affect the participation in a Committee established within the Conference, if that Committee does not exercise any decision-making authority. It is simply the voting rights within the Conference that are affected by arrears.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. United States, you had other comments?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Regarding paragraph 12, the United States would like to go on record opposing the inclusion of Venezuela in the Credentials Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

That takes care of the Credentials Committee, and I think paragraphs 13 and 14. However, I have a request for the floor from Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Would you please pass the floor to Portugal?

Ms Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Just a small question. I do not know if it is for the Members or for the Secretariat. The Secretariat can better explain or recall what we have on the themes, both for Biennial Theme and for the General Debate. As far as we recall, we discussed this at the Programme Committee. We agree to the themes on the second line on paragraph 13 and also on the second line on paragraph 14 to have, instead of, "Agriculture Food Systems". I do not know if the agreement at the Programme Committee was to go for "Agriculture and Food Systems". It is more a question than a request from our side. Maybe the Secretariat can explain what the final result of the debate was, or if I am mistaken. I think that the final solution is to put, "Agriculture and Food Systems."

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor to the Secretary-General to clarify that.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

These two issues of the General Debate for the Conference and the biennial theme for the 2022-23 biennium were presented to the Members and the Council through document *CL 166/13*. They have not been put forward to any of the Committees of the Council before where there might have been a separate debate on concepts that look the same.

There is already one request from the Council for a footnote on both the biennial theme and the General Debate as far as the understanding of what the name of the specific themes are.

CHAIRPERSON

I think now we can go back to paragraphs 2 and 3. The way I understand it is the proposal of Egypt is acceptable to Members and Members said that the yellow in the fourth line in the second paragraph should be deleted. I assume that is acceptable to everybody.

Paragraph 3, the United States' proposal, supported by some other Members, was to retain the yellow in the third paragraph.

Could I open the discussions on this aspect, paragraph 2, to include the Egyptian proposal and deletion of yellow in the fourth line? That is the request of some Members. The United States, supported by some Members, would like to retain the yellow in paragraph 3. Have I put it accurately? Can I have a reaction to this from Members, so that we can move forward with paragraph 2 and 3?

The floor is open. Would anyone like to break the ice?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Maybe that means we have got consensus then?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, this is what I thought, and that is what I was thinking. I will repeat. It seems we have consensus. In paragraph 2, the Egyptian proposal is listed at the beginning of the paragraph and there is support for that. In the fourth line there was a yellow text to be deleted. That was the request of the Members who supported the Egyptian proposal. The United States requested retention of the yellow in paragraph 3, with support from some other Members. That is what I was asking, for comments from the floor from Members, and I was not getting any response. Now I have an observer, Cameroon, requesting the floor.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

It is a very quick one. We accept everything in yellow; however, we want to add something to the penultimate line, this is the [XX] of all three options which was probably suggested for the three, it was suggested by the United States. We want to put "all above mentioned options."

CHAIRPERSON

Any reaction to that? United States?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Just a technical question. Are Observers allowed to make changes to the text? I just wanted to clarify.

CHAIRPERSON

Legal Counsel?

LEGAL COUNSEL

As has been the practice, all I can do is refer to the practice that was adopted for the current Session at this moment in time, which I believe was based on some practice that had occurred in the past. Normally, an Observer would only be called upon to speak during the debate or at the request of a Member or after the Members have spoken. With respect to the conclusions, there appears to be mixed practice from the review of the Organization. I am afraid I would leave it in your hands, Chairperson. Or rather the hands of the Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Argentina, Brazil and Nicaragua, in that order.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Presidente, hago más las declaraciones del colega de Camerún como Miembro del Consejo. En segundo lugar, quería decir simplemente que ayer en algunas discusiones, ciertos párrafos que tuvieron mucho debate fueron incluso reabiertos a partir de alguna sugerencia o enriquecimiento de Observadores.

Simplemente para recordarlo, no quiero ir a los párrafos específicos, los tengo claramente anotados y por supuesto no tengo ningún inconveniente en volver para atrás, pero creo que lo mejor es ir para adelante. Así que simplemente hago más las expresiones de mi colega de Camerún.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

The same way as Argentina, I was going to propose that we consider Brazil, but it is Argentina, right now. It is Brazil and Argentina and some other Members. Taking the opportunity of these decisions coming from the cautioning of some Members at this moment, I would like to take the opportunity to ask you when we are going to discuss this matter because we have had these pending matters from the beginning. I understood that sometime this week we were supposed to discuss this and also to remind you that it was also proposed that we discuss the matter of candidatures coming from Regional Groups and not informal groups in FAO, so we can have a final standing decision for this.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, I remember we agreed to go forward with the way we did. Particularly, it started with the Observer speaking on behalf of the European Union countries, and we said we will go forward this way and then we will have a review. I am not sure whether I said this week because this week, you can see, we have not even got time to deal with the Agenda Items. We have been working until 1:30 hours for a few days.

My suggestion would be to take these Items up at my next Informal Meeting. Usually my Informal Meetings are with the Chairpersons. However, for certain topics we open them to other Members. For this topic, we could do that, and it could be discussed at my Informal Meeting with the Members, which would be the next monthly meeting, which would be in May. As you see, this week there is hardly any time for it. I give the floor to Congo and then the United States.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voudrais que vous donniez la parole au Cameroun, qui va parler au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Observer) (Cameroon)

We are grateful to the United States to remind us of our status of Observer. We are Observer indeed, but if we ask for the floor it is because Congo has mentioned from the very beginning that they are asking the floor all the time because we were assigned by the Africa Regional Group to discuss this matter on their behalf. I did not go beyond my prerogative. If I did, I am sorry about it. It was not intentional. However, I thought it was understood by everybody, since we have been discussing that Congo mentioned this from the very beginning. I endorse our position of Observer and hopefully that will end after this Session of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I would also like to add that in the meantime we discussed the practice over the past number of years and it has been a mixed bag. I think it depended on whether the Representative chosen to speak for the Region was a Member of the Council or Observer. In the past the Observers did participate. Sometimes only in the discussions and sometimes, I am told, also in proposing adjustments.

All this we were going to discuss, so that a fixed policy could be developed by Members. As I said, this week is almost impossible to discuss anything other than what we have got. My plan was, at the first meeting, which is going to be in May of the Informal Meeting with Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, but like we have done for other topics, we can expand it to include Members, since this

is an important topic, and it would be helpful if all Members participated. That is what we will do. I have got the United States requesting the floor.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I understand the suggestion of our colleague from Cameroon. Just trying to find a way again to make sure we can reach consensus. One option I would like to suggest is, in this paragraph 3, we want to try and agree to the “above mentioned options.” What I am trying to make sure is that the “above mentioned options” include the default option to which I have referred to multiple times in my interventions. In other words, the option, modality or whatever we want to call it, that is, what happens if we do not prejudge the Conference, and the Conference decides not to waive any of the rules. That is what I am trying to figure out here, if that “above mentioned” can in fact refer to all of the options, including the basic option, which we would be left with as the Legal Counsel explained.

One way to do that perhaps is to change, instead of, in the first line where we have, “the options,” just have that say, “the option,” singular and delete the “s.” “The option which conforms with the Basic Texts, as set out in Rule XII,” and then we could live with what our colleague from Cameroon has suggested on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, is this acceptable? Do you agree with this suggestion? I see no request for the floor. Wording of paragraph 2 and paragraph 3, as shown on the screen, is agreed on. That completes Item 13 and our Plenary Session, I believe. The Drafting Committee would have time to meet. I see Brazil and United States want the floor.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Somehow, I would like to express my disappointment with the missed opportunity that we did not discuss two legal aspects pending. The first one was not proposed by Brazil. I do not know which country proposed it, but it is the important matter of the participation of Observers.

The other one is the missing opportunity that the Council would not decide this and have this included in the Report because I have seen many times the Secretariat and some Regional Groups insisting on the, I would stress, illegal possibility of informal groups indicating candidates for different positions. I am tired of reading papers saying that Group X or Group Y would indicate on a rotational basis in text prepared by the Secretariat and some Regional Groups also insisting on this practice.

If we could take some minutes and include this in the Report of the Council, I think it would be important. It is in the Basic Texts. Of course, we can consult with the Legal Counsel and other Members. However, it is just stressing that something that is in the Basic Texts, a list on what concerns the candidates.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

First, I just want to thank all of our colleagues for the efforts to reach consensus. I wanted to clarify something, and this pertains to some comments made about the Drafting Committee. I just ask for everyone’s patience. We very much appreciated the interventions during this last Item made by China and Egypt. They were saying they do not want the Drafting Committee to send things back to the Plenary Session. I understand from the Drafting Committee that there are several paragraphs that have text that was tasked to Plenary to resolve, and that was because the text given to the Drafting Committee was slightly ambiguous. This in particular pertains to Item 9, which refers to the Programme Committee Report. I just want to clarify, and I did state this as we concluded that Item. We had reached a Council consensus to ensure that the text on the Digital Platform Terms of Reference kept the authority for drafting the Voluntary Guidelines as coming from FAO Members. I just wanted to again make that point because the Drafting Committee cannot be deciding this. Somehow, between when we talked in the Item and when the text got the Drafting Committee it got a bit ambiguous. I just wanted to clarify that.

Item 23. Any Other Matters

Point 23. Questions diverses

Tema 23. Asuntos varios

Item 23.1 Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension
Point 23.1 Nomination d'un représentant de la Conférence de la FAO au Comité des
pensions du personnel

Tema 23.1 Nombramiento de un representante de la Conferencia de la FAO en el Comité
de Pensiones del Personal

Item 23.2 Appointment of the Second Alternate Chairperson of the Appeals Committee
Point 23.2 Nomination du deuxième Président suppléant du Comité de recours
Tema 23.2 Nombramiento del segundo Presidente suplente del Comité de Apelaciones

Item 23.3 Methods of Work of the Council
Point 23.3 Méthodes de travail du Conseil
Tema 23.3 Métodos de trabajo del Consejo

CHAIRPERSON

I just wanted to make a comment. Brazil has raised a valid issue. In fact, that was raised during the Council when these interventions were made, and the agreement was that let us continue and we will look at this issue. I am told by Governing Bodies Servicing (CSG), the Secretary-General that the text is on the screen. In the interval, before we start the consultation, would this be of some assistance to Brazil? That, "the Council is looking forward to the results of these consultations with the participation of Observers", etcetera, "in the Council is discussed". Would this be of some assistance to Brazil?

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Here in this text, we had just recognized, "and transferring for an informal meeting", and we do not know when it is going to come back. It is just a matter of ratifying the Basic Texts in what concerns the candidatures. It is hard to understand why the Secretariat insists on mentioning informal groups and why some Regional Groups sometimes try to benefit from this informal practice, which is illegal.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Voy a ser muy breve, estamos todos agotados, cansados después de tanto esfuerzo. Creo que este tema de los Grupos fue un tema discutido y usted lo capturó, o la Secretaría capturó, esta discusión muy bien en este párrafo. Creo que lo que plantea Brasil es importante, nosotros en el Grupo Regional de América Latina es un tema que hemos discutido en varias oportunidades sobre, bueno, que tenemos diferentes Grupos también en nuestras regiones.

Entonces, creo que una buena discusión sobre esto, intercambio de ideas tiene que ser constructivo. Digamos, utilizando los textos básicos, me parece que es el mejor método para poder terminar de no dejar dudas en próximas reuniones y no tener que abrir estas discusiones permanentemente en cada Órgano de Gobierno, en cada reunión de los Órganos de Gobierno de la FAO.

Permítame terminar agradeciéndole y me parece bien lo expresado por la colega de Estados Unidos, me parece que tanto Europa, como cada uno de los países han hecho un enorme esfuerzo y por supuesto que por tratar de ser flexibles. Y creo que la actitud propositiva de muchos colegas en particular del Grupo Africano, en particular no quiero dejar afuera a nadie, Egipto, etcétera han sido fundamentales en sus aportes para poder lograr lo que hemos logrado que es tener una salida por consenso y no por votación que hubiera sido muy negativa como precedente de esta reunión.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Very frankly, I cannot understand why we have to discuss this and present the document to the Council for consideration later on. I do not understand that anybody could dispute this. This is a basic, clear rule in the Basic Texts. Frankly, what I would appeal to Members is just that we ratify that only Regional Groups have the right to nominate or to indicate candidates for any position at FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

I thought the discussion is whether the Observers can participate in the debate on the conclusions because for the Item to be discussed, when should we discuss it because the Council is coming to an end, but there is still work outstanding. The Council usually prefers to have some documentation before it.

Plus, on this issue of the Observers, as I said, it has got a history and I am informed that history needs to be put forward to the Council Members as well because it is not that it is just a reason. These are the reasons. However, I do not know when to programme it in this particular Session because there is still work outstanding and today is the end of the Council as it were. Germany, and then the Legal Counsel, and then Brazil again.

Ms Susanne SCHLAACK (Germany)

This is to give the floor to Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

First of all, I want to join my voice to what has been said by our distinguished colleague, Ambassador of Argentina. Yes, indeed, it was a great effort to liaise, to be constructive, to work together, and at the end to have the agreement we have until now. This is what we need from this Council in order to better serve the Organization and to better prepare the Conference in this very difficult situation. We are very grateful to the G77 Group Chairperson. We are very grateful to all Members and to the Groups, and we are very grateful for the work that has been done. I think that it was a common effort from all of us, and I think that that should be recognized. That is my first thought.

Our second thought is we need to have a good discussion on this. However, we should state that the European Union from our side, it needs to be said that we are Members of the FAO as Member States and as the European Union itself. That is clear in the Basic Texts of the Organization, on the one hand. On the other hand, at the beginning of the Session we clearly stated to all Members what the competencies are, in what position we are here to work, the way we are working, and who has the competence for what. That is very clear from our side and that should be recognized.

The way we are working is stated from the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), from I think the 99th, I am not completely sure, 100th or 102nd Session. I cannot recall, and I am sorry if I am mistaken. However, that is very clear — our way of working. In addition, what we are saying and the way we are saying this here are also very clear. This is a very established practice from our side. Of course, we can always discuss this. We are always open to discuss, but our way of working, for this Session, we are asking no more than what we are doing and what is the well-established practice. That is very clear. From the other side, from the other questions that are on the table, of course, nothing better than have clarifications in accordance to our Basic Texts and to our Constitution. I think that on that point we are all in agreement.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

LEGAL COUNSEL

If I may, I wanted just to intervene to reinforce the value of your suggestion of having a discussion in informal consultations with a view to then a report back for recommendations to the Council. Indeed, it was very much illustrated by the discussion earlier this week, as noted by the European Union. There is much in the Basic Texts that is then clarified in the past practice of the Organization or in recommendations or conclusions of the Council.

Thus, for example, the Council, as referred to by Portugal, did specifically confirm at the 103rd Session that the European Economic Community (EEC), as a Member Organization, has the right to participate in all its meetings as a Member. That is not necessarily apparent in the General Rules. It is for this sort of reason that I think it would be beneficial to have a document which could also show where practice had been inconsistent in so far as I had noted a little bit earlier there had been a discussion about Observer participation in the conclusions.

Our review that took place just recently this week showed that the practice had been inconsistent. I think it would help the Members in considering this issue to know what has gone before, so they could be fully informed. This would include as well any recommendations or decisions that may exist in some of the Governing Body reports, as to these other groups that maybe have practiced or otherwise received some sort of recognition within the FAO system, if not recognized in the Basic Texts.

For these reasons, I would recommend that there be a placeholder to address this and then come back, to have time for us or the Secretariat to provide you with the full information as to how and why we are here.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Sorry for taking the floor so many times. There is a confusion here. Of course, I would like to thank the Legal Counsel and Portugal for stressing what is already known. I am not disputing and talking about the participation of Observers in the Council. What I am stressing is that the Council would need to recommend the Secretariat not to insist or put in a positive way to use the Article X when mentioning candidates being nominated from Regional Groups. There is no discussion in this. It is as simple as that. Being as simple as that, some parts of the Secretariat insist in mentioning informal groups and this is against the Basic Texts. This is so simple and clear that it is hard to understand why we cannot just stress this.

CHAIRPERSON

Dear Members, we have come to the conclusion of today's Plenary Session. There is still work left for the Drafting Committee; therefore, for us to adopt the Report. In the meantime, I would like to thank all Members. In fact, it is a fantastic achievement for all Members coming together in a consensus because we had some important and difficult Items on the Agenda, which did generate a lot of debate. But in the end Members came together and reached the decisions by consensus and that, in my view, is the strength of the governance process and your strength in the end because you make decisions by consensus. I want to thank you and before I adjourn Brazil asks for the floor again and then Mexico.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We do not agree with this text. If you want to stress or to affirm, to mention that you are going to have an informal consultation with Members in order to discuss the participation of Observers, I agree entirely. However, why do we need an informal consultation to stress something that is clear about regional representation. I do not agree, frankly.

CHAIRPERSON

Brazil, my intention was, in fact, this whole controversy is about Observers. I did not have in mind about the regional representation. That does not need discussion. That is a legal question.

So, I think we have been talking a bit at cross-purposes. When I said my discussion at the informal, I meant the Observers participating because this controversy that Observers can participate in the debate, but not in the amendment of the conclusions. I was going to discuss that at my informal meeting. As to the question of the regional representation. That is a legal question and so it does not need a review by either the Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons. I do not know.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Sorry to interrupt. I entirely agree. That is why I am insisting. We did not need to mention regional representations in the text and that is why it is not an open debate. The way it is now, it is acceptable, but not the way it was before.

CHAIRPERSON

So, the text now does not include the question of regional representation. Just that. So, the question of regional representation, I do not know how it should be addressed, whether the Legal Counsel should be given an opportunity, perhaps not now, with a bit of research, and when we meet for Plenary tomorrow we can, before adoption, have a little discussion on that.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Perfect. I entirely agree.

CHAIRPERSON

Sra. María De Los Ángeles GÓMEZ AGUILAR (México)

Gracias, señor Presidente. Mi intervención nada más es para reconocer su trabajo que ha sido titánico para todos los colegas que están en medio del Ramadán.

CHAIRPERSON

We have received the same message from the interpreters, Mexico. That they cannot hear you well.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we have come to the end of this Session. Therefore, I would like to thank everybody for their very constructive participation, and obviously I am delighted that Members came together for this consensus on everything. I would adjourn now because the Drafting Committee has to meet. After the Drafting Committee's Report is ready it has to be translated, etcetera.

I am told that the Secretariat would be ready for the plenary to convene at 15:00 hours, tomorrow. Would that be acceptable to Members? I see some positive nods and no requests for the floor. I think Members agree that we can convene at 15:00 hours tomorrow for a Plenary Session. I thank everybody again for this discussions and debate in the Council. We had some intensive discussions. I think probably this was the first time we had quite a few meetings going until 01:30 hours and beyond. I adjourn and I wish you a pleasant and restful evening.

The meeting rose at 17:27 hours

La séance est levée à 17 h 27

Se levanta la sesión a las 17.27

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Sixth Session Cent soixante-sixième session 166.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 26 - 30 April 2021 Réunion Virtuelle, 26 - 30 avril 2021 Reunión Virtual, 26 - 30 de abril de 2021
ELEVENTH PLENARY SESSION ONZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE UNDÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
1 May 2021

The Eleventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 15:06 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La onzième séance plénière est ouverte à 15 h 06
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la undécima sesión plenaria a las 15.06
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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**ADOPTION OF REPORT
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT
APROBACION DEL INFORME**

CHAIRPERSON

Good afternoon, colleagues and welcome to the eleventh and final meeting of the 166th Session of the FAO Council.

I wish to inform Council that the *Report for Adoption* is available on the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway in all languages.

The relevant document is *CL 166/Report for Adoption*, which was made available through the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway.

I now invite the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Marc Mankoussou of Congo, to take the floor.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo) (Président du Comité de rédaction)

Monsieur le Président, merci de m'accorder la parole pour présenter les travaux du Comité de rédaction.

Comme vous le savez, la reconnaissance est le sentiment le plus profond du cœur. Je voudrais donc, avant de commencer mon propos, vous remercier de la confiance que vous m'avez témoignée en me confiant la présidence du Comité de rédaction de cette 166e session du Conseil, la troisième organisée en modalité virtuelle à cause de la pandémie de covid-19.

Mes remerciements vont également aux dix membres du Comité de rédaction qui ont travaillé avec moi, à savoir l'Australie, le Brésil, la Chine, l'Égypte, l'Espagne, les États-Unis d'Amérique, la Guinée équatoriale, l'Indonésie, le Pérou et la Suède, ainsi que l'Union européenne.

Grâce à leur ardeur au travail, Monsieur le Président, et à leur dévouement, le Comité de rédaction s'est réuni dans un esprit constructif, je dirais même de responsabilité et de collaboration mutuelle et je pourrais même ajouter de fraternité parce que nous avons travaillé dans un climat de sérénité.

Monsieur le Président, je salue donc la bonne volonté de tous ces membres, qui ont donné la preuve d'une équipe soudée autour d'une responsabilité commune, afin d'aboutir à un but commun, celui de produire un rapport de consensus. Cette motivation positive nous a permis de terminer le rapport pour son adoption par le Conseil, qui l'examinera cet après-midi, et c'est grâce à l'expérience commune des membres de ce Comité que nous avons pu achever nos travaux hier, dans un délai raisonnable et avec efficacité.

Vous constaterez, Monsieur le Président, que nous avons évité, et j'insiste là-dessus, d'apporter des changements importants aux conclusions que le Conseil nous avait transmises. Nous nous en sommes tenus au consensus dégagé en séance plénière, à vos conclusions et à tout ce que les membres du Comité ont convenu en plénière.

Enfin, Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais également remercier le Secrétariat qui est resté à nos côtés pour essayer de nous éclairer et apporter des explications sur des sujets que nous n'arrivions parfois pas à bien saisir. Nous témoignons donc notre reconnaissance au Secrétariat pour toute l'assistance qu'il nous a fournie durant les débats, afin de dégager un consensus, et sans oublier les interprètes, qui, grâce à leur inlassable soutien, ont permis à tous les membres du Comité de pouvoir communiquer entre eux, dans un esprit de convivialité et de fraternité. Ainsi, nous avons travaillé et avons obtenu des résultats concluants.

Pour terminer, Monsieur le Président, au nom de tous les membres du Comité de rédaction, qui a travaillé dans un esprit constructif et dans un effort pour tomber d'accord à l'unanimité sur le rapport qui vous est présenté, je recommande que le Conseil adopte ce rapport en bloc parce qu'il est le fruit de la participation de tous les membres et de toutes les régions.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. I would like to extend my appreciation to Mr Marc Mankoussou, the Chair of the Drafting Committee and to all Members of the Drafting Committee for the good work done. It appears that the Report of this Session may be approved *en bloc*. Any linguistic observations should be communicated in writing to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Final Report.

Does the Council wish to adopt the Report *en bloc*?

I see no response. No request from the floor. Therefore, the Report of the 166th Session of the FAO Council is adopted.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

I thank the Drafting Committee and the Members of the Council for the successful conclusion of the 166th Session of the Council.

I now invite the Director-General to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, Independent Chairperson of the Council, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues, We are closing a very important Council Session after a long intensive week.

A Session that took place, as the world continues to cope with the pandemic and adapts to the digital world as the new normal. A Session that prepares for the first virtual FAO Conference in history.

The Digital FAO has been accelerating evolution and preventing involution! I strongly encourage all of you to look at the world. It is not new, but we are all trying our best to prevent involution of FAO.

It comes as no surprise, that the working hours were long and the debates passionate.

My appreciation goes to all delegations for their contributions and their active and constructive engagement throughout this week.

Of course, my high respect and appreciation go to my brother, the esteemed Chairperson, Mr Mehboob Khalid. I looked at a Chinese dictionary and I found a proper name for you. In Chinese, one of the official languages, I think you have never has a proper Chinese name. Since day one, I tried my best to find a Chinese name for you, now I give it as a special gift: Mu Kaili.

This is a combination of Mu Guiying. All people from China, Korea, Japan, East Asia read the legendary story about Mu Guiying. Mu is a well-known family name – Mu Guiying was a legend, from a royal family of heroes; Kai Ming, means open minded with inclusiveness and Li Mao, which signifies courteous. Mu Kaili means that you are very precious and royal family, with open-mind and inclusiveness, and you always address in very courteous and polite way. He started his long career with FAO in 1969 and continued contributing and sharing his experiences for FAO's mandate during the past 52 years.

Over the past week, we could all witness, once again, his wise and steady way of guiding the Council. This is true dedication and a big moral sentiment! Let us hail the highest salute to Mr Mu Kaili from all corners of world!

The Council's support for the Strategic Framework, the Medium-Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget is a very positive sign. It confirmed that the unprecedented, broad and inclusive consultation process that went into the preparation of these documents was recognized and appreciated.

You welcomed the progress made in the Hand-in Hand-Initiative.

Here again, we are working very hard and closely to produce concrete results on the ground, despite the pandemic and its impacts.

The Council's positive views on FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme are also well noted and appreciated.

We are also encouraged by the Council's positive comments and support for our continued efforts of renewal, reform and transformation. This also includes our decision to give priority to multilingualism and our proposal for a new set of FAO Awards.

You have reached agreement on different voting options for the Conference to choose from. This was understandable and worth the big debate leading to consensus.

Since 2020, FAO has been spearheading innovation that others are following and we will continue to do so.

I want to close, by thanking all FAO employees, who worked diligently and tirelessly in preparing this Council and in servicing it.

Of course, wishing you, dear Delegates, colleagues, continued health! Stay safe for our Joint Mission that is not yet accomplished!

Thank you, have a nice Labor Day, and weekend to come.

We have a lot of work to do more and better.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General, for your very kind words concerning myself and thank you for the honour of giving me this name which you explained very explicitly what the name actually means, and I consider it a great honour that you extended that privilege to me. I thank you again, Director-General.

I have two requests for the floor, Brazil followed by South Africa.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Thank you very much, Chairperson. Good afternoon to you and to everyone. We understand this is the right moment to recognize all your dedication, your passion for consensus, your high spirit and all the efforts in benefit of the Organization. You set very high standards for the function and it will be a great challenge for your successors from now on.

Finally, Chairperson, I would like to propose that we establish an Informal Award in the Organization. It would be The Khalid Mehboob Award for Perseverance and Patience, which would recognize the most positive inputs from the most perseverant and patient delegation for the period. Thank you very much again.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Brazil, for your very kind words, and for me it has been an honour and pride to have served the Organization, served its Members and I am still passionate about FAO's mandate and I will continue to be so. I give the floor to South Africa, followed by Congo.

Ms Nosipho Nausca Jean NGCABA (South Africa)

We also, on behalf of South Africa, wish to thank the Director-General for his inspiring closing remarks and also to pay tribute to you as the Chairperson for your endurance in bringing us to a successful conclusion in your last Council session. Your wisdom and patience has guided us to many successful Council meetings, and you will be missed.

Chairperson, we may have had a very difficult week in forging a consensus on our work or the work of FAO. However, important decisions have been made in relation to the new Strategic Framework of FAO that will guide us in the next decade.

Let us bear in mind and be clear that although the current COVID-19 pandemic has held most of our current attention away from critical issues of the day, we still have to deal with the challenges of climate change and those will continue to dominate our future work as it is having devastating impacts, not only in Africa but globally.

Our priority should be to commence without delay the revision of our current Climate Change Strategy for FAO in order to reflect current realities and to make sure that there is alignment with the 2030 Strategic Goals.

South Africa stands ready to work with all delegations in the spirit of cooperation to achieve this objective. I thank you very much, Chairperson. We really appreciate your tenacity.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, South Africa, also for your generous and kind words. I now give the floor to Congo.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

J'ai enlevé la casquette de Président du Comité de rédaction pour prendre celle de délégué du Congo. Monsieur le Président, le Congo, par ma voix, veut vous remercier et vous témoigner sa reconnaissance du fond du cœur pour avoir mené les débats du Conseil, depuis que vous en assurez la Présidence lors de votre premier, puis deuxième mandat avec tant de professionnalisme. Vous avez démontré à tous votre patience, votre maîtrise et votre leadership, qui nous ont beaucoup marqués, y compris ceux viennent d'arriver. Vous resterez pour nous un modèle pour la manière dont vous avez mené les débats, jusqu'à la dernière session du Conseil.

Voilà, du fond du cœur, la République du Congo vous témoigne ses remerciements et vous félicite de tout le travail accompli. Nous pensons que vous allez continuer à œuvrer toujours pour que nous puissions atteindre les buts que nous nous sommes fixés dans cette Organisation, notre Organisation. Comme le Directeur général le dit souvent: «il faut avoir une nutrition, une bonne nutrition, un bon environnement, de bonnes conditions de vie et une bonne production». Vous allez donc continuer à nous aider pour que nous arrivions à réaliser cette ambition noble de donner à tout le monde de l'alimentation et une alimentation saine. Nous vous en remercions et vous souhaitons bon travail, que le Seigneur vous accompagne.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Mr Mankoussou, for your kind and generous words. I now give the floor to Kenya.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Observer) (Kenya)

Thank you very much, Chairperson, and I also want to appreciate the Director-General for his closing remarks. Chairperson, on behalf of the Africa Regional Group (ARG) and on my behalf as Kenya, I want to really appreciate your tenure as the Independent Chairperson of the Council. You have made an enormous difference in FAO, the way you have conducted business. You have been a very integral part that has advanced very important conclusions to many of the meetings, including informal meetings and including educating the ARG in understanding where you are going.

You have created an atmosphere of collaboration amongst the Members, Chairperson. You had some toughest moments, but you performed with dedication and tenacity. You distinguished yourself as a judicious steward of the various meetings and never flinched a face, even during difficult decisions like the last Council.

Chairperson, a famous activist said, "wisdom is knowing what to do next, virtue is doing it."

Chairperson, you have proved to be both wise and virtuous. We would like to thank you for your contributions and especially key turning points, such as the last Council. We would not have been able to accomplish and come out with a Report without your wise counsel and precious advice. Even regardless of that, you are actually having your Ramadan, Chairperson, and you took time to be with us until 02:00 hours.

As you look back on your time with us, Chairperson, please note that our achievements would not have been possible without you at the helm. You have tirelessly given up your time. By all measures, we have improved our services immensely on your watch. We are very grateful, Chairperson and we will miss you, but God bless you and we hope to see you again.

Thank you very much from ARG.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you so much, Ambassador, and thank you to the Africa Regional Group, for these very generous and very kind words for my term as ICC and, obviously, I will always carry very pleasant memories of the Council sessions and of the Members I worked with. Now I give the floor to Thailand.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thank you very much, Chairperson Mr Mehboob. Thailand would like to take this opportunity to join other Members in expressing our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your great contributions and also for your success as the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

During your Chairmanship, with your great leadership, diligence, wisdom and patience, you led us through all the difficult situations, difficult discussions and you really helped us to achieve at the end of the day, as you did today.

We know that you set a very high standard of the Independent Chairperson of the Council and you are really our aspiration. At your age, over 80, you are our senior friend, our senior colleague who really showed us how you contribute, how you devote yourself to the work, to the food security and nutrition and poverty reduction, which actually all of us need to do more, because you are our role model.

That is why I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best, but it is very important to have good health after you leave the office and wish you all the best. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Thailand, for your kind words. I remember my time in the Asia Group, which was very productive and I learnt a lot. I spent eight years in the Asia Group and I thank you all. I am sure we will remain in touch over the years. I now give the floor to India.

Mr Bommakanti RAJENDER (India)

Thank you very much, Chairperson. On behalf of Asia Regional Group, we would like to appreciate for the great work you have done and I join all of the colleagues in placing our deep appreciation for your abilities, for your poise, balance and consensus-building. It has been wonderful working with you, Chairperson, and we are going to miss you. I am not going to talk about the outcomes but my personal regards to you, and I wish you all the best and we are going to miss you. Thank you, Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Rajender, and thank you to the Asia Group for these kind words. Eritrea, you have the floor.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

Thank you, dear Chairperson, Mr Khalid Mehboob. Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, good morning, good afternoon, good evening, wherever you are. Eritrea appreciates and thanks Mr Chairperson and all the other stakeholders – the Programme Committee, the Council, and the Secretariat – for leading us very successfully. And on top of that I would like also to appreciate the Director-General for the very interactive involvement in all the meetings we are conducting. I really appreciate it from my heart.

Dear Chairperson Mr Mehboob, Eritrea fully aligns itself with the statement made by Kenya on behalf of Africa. Chairperson Mr Mehboob, we really appreciate your wise leadership. You are great and we appreciate your contribution very much.

During your chairmanship, you led us successfully. You contributed a lot to FAO and not only to FAO, I can say even to the whole world because FAO is one of the leadership of the world. You are a good moderator. I really feel that we miss you but wish you the best. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Eritrea, for your very kind and generous words. I now give the floor to Germany.

Mr Heiner THOFERN (Germany)

Thank you, Chairperson, dear Khalid Mehboob. First my personal thanks to you. We've known each other for a long time in different positions. I have always had the pleasure to work with you, be it as the Assistant Director-General for Finance and Administration, as the Chair of the Finance Committee, as the Independent Chairperson of the Council. Great thanks, great job. With this, I would like you to pass the floor to Portugal to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Heiner Thofern, thank you, and it is true, we have worked together in different functions and I always enjoyed working with you because, especially in the Finance Committee, your interventions were always to the point and very analytical, and they contributed to the positive work of the Committee. I thank you, and now I give the floor to Portugal.

Mr Luís COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Thank you, Chairperson. I join the words that my dearest colleague and friend, Heiner Thofern, just said to you. Yes, all over these years it was a real pleasure and a real honour working with you, Sir.

And let me finish this Council as we start, thanking you for your guidance, for your leadership, for the brilliance in you guiding us in these difficult times, not only because of the COVID-19 but for the difficult situation we are facing in various areas. Sir, be sure we will miss you in the future. It is a great honour, a great pleasure and the way you are conducting us in this gracious way is also very important for us. Thank you very much, Sir.

We also want to thank the Secretariat for their outstanding job in this new and very challenging situation. And of course we want to thank all the other people that make this Council possible. I think from our side it is an outstanding and brilliant job, thank you very much. It was very well conducted in a very challenging situation, from the top, from our Director-General to all the people that are working for FAO that make this Council possible, we are very grateful for this very well organized session.

From my side, I want to give a special word to the interpreters. Let me say I received from the people that are listening in a language different to what I am speaking very good comments from what I am saying. So, I understood the interpreters make my wording much better than the one I am speaking. So, please, for the next session, interpret my English to English, please. I think it is a very good way to continue.

And saying this, of course, we are very grateful to all Members and to the membership of the FAO. It is always better to perform better. It is always better to have something new and we need to make better a lot of things but in any case it was a very good speed I think that we finally go for, continue to work on the consensus basis. It is the most important thing, I think, for the FAO, that here there are no winners or losers. All we want is that FAO fulfils its important mandate in the context of the United Nations and serving the people in the world that deserve that FAO fulfils its mandate.

And, finally, a final word to my colleagues from the European Union and from all colleagues that are Members and are observers of the Council, we are working here collectively and collectively we will continue to work. I am very grateful, from my side, to my colleagues and we are assured to all Members that we will continue to work positively, proactively and in this way.

Saying this, Chairperson, again, we will miss you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you so much, Portugal. Thank you for your very generous and kind words. I hope to keep interacting informally with Members whom I have known for many years. In fact, one of the disadvantages of staying so long is that you meet Members and you become friends and then, when their mandate ends, they go back and one loses touch.

So, Members have come and Members have gone but I seem to have stayed here forever, as it were, and it has been an honour working with all the membership and the European Union over the past four years, so I thank you again.

I pass the floor to Egypt.

Mr Haitham Abdelhady ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Thank you, Chairperson, and good afternoon, everyone. As representing the Near East Group, we would like to join other distinguished delegates to express our appreciation and sincere gratitude for your leadership, patience and wisdom, and guiding us during the last four years.

On behalf of Egypt, we would like to thank you so much. Personally I have learnt a lot from your wisdom and your dedication to your work and I wish you all the best.

I would like also to thank the Director-General for his closing remarks, all the Secretariat, all the distinguished Members of the Council, observers, and I wish you all the best and looking forward to seeing you all in the Conference next June. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Egypt. Thank you to you and the Near East for your generous and kind words. I now give the floor to the United States of America.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

Thank you very much, Chairperson. First, I have to start by saying this has not been, of course, the easiest Council. I know all of us have been suffering together through this pandemic and other hardships and our people back home have been suffering and they are fresh in our minds. It has been hard. We have not been able to see one another in person. But even though at times during this Council our tensions were high and our differences seemed very, very far apart, in the end we did achieve consensus and these were not easy topics we were talking about. We were deliberating the strategic framework for this Organization for the next decade and talking about such important things as COVID and climate change and their effect on our world.

And so I know that the people that we all serve around the world are going to be very thankful for the work that we have done here this week. I want to extend my thanks to all of our colleagues for their flexibility. I hope to see all of you in person sooner than later.

Chairperson, on behalf of the North American Regional Group, we would like to extend our thanks to the Director-General for his attention and support of the work we are doing here. We would like to extend our gratitude to Monsieur Marc Mankoussou, the Chair of our Drafting Committee, for his patience and leadership of that work. We would also like to thank the Secretariat and Legal Counsel. We had many questions during this session and you were always there, always with answers at the ready and research to back those up. So, we are very grateful for that. Our thanks as well to the Secretary-General.

I have to also take a moment to thank the interpreters. I know all your voices so well, I feel like I hear old friends on the telephone and I complement your amazing resilience. And the same goes for the technical support behind the scenes who keep all these meetings running smoothly.

And, of course, last but certainly not least, Mr Chairperson, it is just beyond words how well you have led all of us through these unprecedented times and I think back myself and remember our first virtual meeting last spring and how quickly you adjusted to all of these new technologies and I can only imagine that some of your meetings at the FAO over 52 years ago were nothing like they are today and you probably could never have imagined how we would be working here in 2021.

I just want to thank you for your patience, your thoughtfulness, your flexibility and, of course, I hope my colleagues agree that you have more energy than all of us. I am just in awe of that. You have been just wonderful leading this Council over the past four years and I extend our deep gratitude and thanks and we wish you the best of health and the best of luck moving forward. Thank you, Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United States, and thank you to the North American region for these very kind and very, very generous words addressed to me. I thank you, and I now pass the floor to Japan.

Ms Fumiyo TSUDA (Japan)

Thank you, Chairperson. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Director-General, to the Independent Chair, the Secretariat and all the delegates for your hard work and dedication during this 166th Council meeting and congratulate on the greatest success we have achieved, although it was a very hard week.

FAO's work has become and the world has become more important than ever due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this is a time when we need to unite all our efforts to achieve the goal of eliminating hunger from the world. I believe we have been able to make really good progress towards this goal, especially thanks to the great chairmanship and the guidance from the Independent Chair.

Japan is determined to strongly support FAO's work from now on and I also would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Mr Khalid Mehboob and wish you all the best luck for your future endeavour. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Japan, for your generous words. Now, I give the floor to the United Kingdom.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you, Chairperson. Good afternoon to everyone. The United Kingdom would like to join others in thanking you for your leadership of the Council. We have valued your patience, your commitment to overcoming challenges, and your guidance. And I would like to say job well done, and it has been well done but we know it is not over yet and we are very much relying on you, and looking forward to your guidance as we work towards reaching consensus on that Code of Conduct.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the Director-General, to the Management team, to the Secretariat, to the interpreters, and of course all of our colleagues around this, our virtual table. And Ramadan Kareem to everyone.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United Kingdom, for your kind and generous words and we will be working together until the Conference because although this is my last Council, I still have some assignments from the Council for the next two months until the Conference, so we will be working together and I am sure we will come to a consensus. Thank you, and I give the floor to Peru.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUNEZ (Perú)

Muchas gracias, Señor Presidente. En nombre de los países del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe, deseamos agradecer y reconocer el gran trabajo y extraordinario trabajo que ha realizado como Presidente Independiente del Consejo liderando a los Estados Miembros en busca del consenso. Es indudable reconocer el arduo trabajo que ha desempeñado y el ejemplo que nos ha dado para continuar buscando soluciones a los problemas, a las controversias que se presentan entre los Miembros pero que siempre arriban a un buen puerto gracias a su liderazgo.

Vamos a, sinceramente, extrañarlo, pero todavía tenemos algunas sesiones en las que podremos trabajar bajo su liderazgo y reconocemos todo el trabajo que usted ha desempeñado. Reconocemos el trabajo de su equipo asimismo y, especialmente, en estas sesiones que han sido tan duras, tan largas reconocemos también el trabajo de la Secretaría siempre dispuesta y reconocemos a la Administración de la FAO.

Señor Presidente, ha sido un gran honor trabajar bajo su liderazgo y los países de América Latina estamos muy reconocidos y seguiremos trabajando y apoyando sus labores hasta el último minuto. Muchas gracias, Señor Presidente.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Peru and thank you GRULAC for all your support and your generous and kind words. In fact, the work of the ICC is always dependent on the Membership and the Membership I have seen, they always came together, even in the most difficult of situations, like the present Council, and in the end we had decisions with consensus, which I have always said, is the strength of the governance process of FAO. So, I thank you and now I give the floor to Indonesia.

Mr Caka AWAL (Indonesia)

First of all, I would like to echo all of what other colleagues have expressed, including the one expressed by India on behalf of the Asia Group.

I would like to reiterate our delegation's gratitude for your guidance, perseverance and hard work in fulfilling your task and mandate. Your persistent calmness and wisdom during the Council Session, including this one, and intersessional consultations, have brought this Council to reach consensus and deliver concrete recommendations.

We also express our gratitude for all colleagues, the Director-General and members of the Secretariat for all of the hard work so that together we were able to make good progress in realizing the mandate of the FAO.

Thank you so much, Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Indonesia, for your kind words. I now give the floor to China.

Mr Defu GUANG (China) (Original language Chinese)

Chairperson, on behalf of the Chinese Government, we thank you for your leadership. Over the years, we have overcome difficulties to promote FAO's work. Colleagues have been thanking you today for your wisdom and your leadership and I also admire these qualities in you.

I regret that you are leaving just as I am arriving, but you will stay in our memory and I am convinced that in future we will be able to continue to work with all colleagues to promote FAO's work and to become good friends all together to work together for a better future. I thank the Independent Chairperson of the Council, I thank the Director-General and his Secretariat. We would also like to thank the interpreters.

We wish you good health, happiness and we invite you to come and visit us in China. Thank you very much, ICC.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Ambassador, for your kind words. What you said is valid in the sense that I am leaving just when you come. It would have been great working together in the interests of FAO together. However, I am sure we will be interacting informally, like you said, and I thank you, again, for your kind words. I give the floor to Bahamas and then Costa Rica.

Ms Koschina MARSHALL (Bahamas)

Chairperson, distinguished colleagues, on behalf of the Caribbean Region, we wish to extend our sincere thanks to you, Chairperson. Your resilience and diplomacy during these sessions were par excellence and on behalf of my nation, the Bahamas, I should like to extend all the best to you and thank you for the opportunity to meet you during this Session. Have a great day.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Bahamas, and thank you to your region for your kind words. Costa Rica.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Es mi deseo unirme a las palabras expresada por la Presidente del GRULAC y lo mencionado por otros compañeros y colegas que me antecedieron. Debo admirar, Señor Presidente, su tenacidad, su buen manejo de las situaciones, sobre todo en momentos difíciles para lograr consensos. Debo aceptar que usted tiene un gran manejo de inteligencia emocional. Yo mismo estuve a punto de perder mi

paciencia en más de una oportunidad y así lo demostré en algunos de mis comentarios. No quisiera dejar de agradecer al Comité de Redacción, al equipo de intérpretes, la Secretaría y todo el personal de la FAO por su apoyo e impecable trabajo. No puedo dejar pasar la oportunidad de esta última intervención en este período de sesiones del Consejo para recordar y hacer un llamado, una vez más. La razón que nos tiene a los que formamos parte de esta Organización, en mayúsculas y en grande lo digo, erradicar el hambre en el mundo. Este esfuerzo trasciende las fronteras, las regiones, las diferencias étnicas, religiosas y políticas. Por favor, nunca olvidemos cuál es nuestra misión.

En nombre de Costa Rica, señor Director General y Miembros de la FAO, acepte nuestro compromiso para seguir logrando estos objetivos.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Costa Rica, for your kind words. In fact, I thank all the Members, the regional groups and the Director-General for their very kind and generous words about me. However, before closing the meeting, I would like to make some closing remarks.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We have now reached the end of the 166th Session of the Council.

For me, it is the close of my last session as Independent Chairperson, a role which I have had the honour to undertake over the past four years. But it is also a major milestone for me after 52 years of service to FAO, which I began in 1969 as a young professional officer (P1) and eventually progressed to the position of Assistant Director-General.

I then, continued after retiring from FAO as the Pakistan Representative serving on Governing Bodies in the three Rome-based Agencies, including the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and then the Finance Committee at FAO, first as member and later as Chairperson. I was then honoured with the opportunity of continuing my service as the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

Over the past 52 years, I have seen a lot of change, at FAO, in the United Nations system, and the world at large. Through this time, I have attended over around 130 sessions of the Council and chaired the sessions in the last four years.

Throughout these years of service, I have worked with four Directors-General and one former Director-General in different ways, but always with loyalty and passion for the Organization and its mandate. You, Director-General are the sixth one, and easily the most dynamic and energetic FAO leader I have witnessed. Naturally, your predecessors each had their distinguishing qualities and achievements too.

I have also had the good fortune to work alongside some extraordinary colleagues: at FAO, in the UN system, and more recently with representatives of Members with whom I have always worked in close collaboration with courtesy and civility.

Dear Colleagues and Members,

I have found through all this that shared aspiration and unity of the Membership has been essential for good governance at FAO. In recent years, we have enjoyed a practice of decision making by consensus. Members coming together and giving importance to consensus decision-making. This was not always the case in the past. As Independent Chairperson of the Council, I am happy to have worked with Members in the last four years to facilitate this, because consensus, apart from uniting the Membership, strengthens the governance process and the Organization. I thank you for this prevailing spirit of consensus which is entirely due to the Membership.

It is the Members who provide policy guidance and make the circumstances and are responsible together with management for creating conditions that are enabling. There are two major improvements I have seen in governance at FAO through the years.

First, as I just mentioned, the practice of taking decisions by consensus. For an intergovernmental agency such as FAO, this is a critical improvement that not only fosters comity in the shared goals of the Organization, but it also lends credibility to implementing decisions taken by Governing Bodies.

The second is efficiency. When I first started at FAO, the Council would last for two weeks, and the Conference for one month! The reports of Governing Bodies would run into reams of pages, noting every aspect of issues under discussion. Nowadays, meetings are shorter and sharper, and reports are focused on action and guidance, as they should. This improvement in efficiency is crucial for effectiveness of governance at FAO, and efforts to maintain focus of agenda setting, discussions and report, must be cherished for the future.

Another important aspect which I am pleased to highlight is the improvement in the working methods of the Council over the past four years. These efforts for improvement have been driven to maintain the capital of trust among Members, based on the principle of transparency and dialogue. In this respect, we increased the number of inter-sessional meetings of regional groups in order to address potentially difficult issues before the sessions of Governing Bodies. We have made use of audio-visual technology in real time during meetings so that all Members can see the text of draft conclusions in Plenary session and propose amendments prior to endorsing it.

Similarly, we established the practice and mechanisms for seat sharing arrangements in the Council, while remaining faithful to the provisions of the Basic Text. This was endorsed by the 159th Session of the Council in June 2018, after four rounds of informal consultations with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups, and nine bilateral ones with Regional Groups themselves.

Of course, it was in the forum of my meetings with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs where we discussed and finally agreed upon modalities for virtual meetings of the Council, including the legal aspects, the technological dimensions and new processes such as the written correspondence procedure. This all led to three successful virtual Sessions of the Council, and has also served as a blueprint for other Governing Bodies, including the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees, and will act as a basis for the virtual 42nd Session of the Conference.

In addition, the mechanism of my informal meetings with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups was essential in seeking consensus amongst Members on specific mandates bestowed upon me by the Conference and the Council.

The first one was improvements to the working methods of the Conference, including round table discussions, advance informal meetings of the General Committee, digital statements by delegates and better time management of Conference and its Commissions. Consensus reached in the informal meetings was formally agreed upon by the Council at its 165th Session at the end of 2020.

Second, the Conference mandate for informal consultations with Members with a view to defining consistent and sustainable conditions for the award of FAO prizes was undertaken at numerous informal meetings with the Regional Groups from September 2019 to February 2021. These led to the related Management proposal reviewed by the Council this week, which recommended its approval by the 42nd Session of the Conference.

Third, the Code of Conduct on Voting for which Council mandated me to undertake consultations with Members. I am pleased that after our numerous and intense consultations, with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups, and also with the Membership at large, we managed to achieve consensus to a significant degree on some aspects of this matter, as well as on the way forward.

Finally, we have made tremendous strides forward towards consensual resolution on the matter of selection and appointment of Secretaries of the Article XIV Bodies, which had remained unresolved from years before my mandate as Independent Chairperson of the Council.

Dear Friends,

As I have said, this is my last and final Council. I have enjoyed every minute, every discussion, every session of serving this Organization and of interacting with Members. I have been honoured with the opportunity and the privilege to serve FAO and its Members.

Before I conclude, I would like to convey my best wishes to Members and to the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu. Naturally, this era will be shaped according to your vision and that of the Members. Change is a good thing. When one door closes, another one opens, perhaps one that was not seen before.

Revitalization is life itself, and is part and parcel of progress. A constant of that process is to strive to be better, and to do better. This Organization is no exception. In fact, over the years it has undergone significant change and renewal, and I am pleased to see that the Director-General is giving importance to change and renewal so that FAO can continue to find best practices, streamline its procedures and continue strengthening its business processes and internal control systems, because they not only impact accountability, oversight and governance, they also ensure value for money in the prioritization of its activities.

This new renaissance of FAO is further driven by the Director-General's vision of the four betters, which frame its strategic direction, and place the transformation of agri-food systems at the centre of the Organization's work. It is promulgated by inventive approaches such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and Digital Food and Agriculture, which in turn are galvanized by a relentless drive for innovation and digitalisation.

Renewal has to be a dynamic and living plan, which also evolves on the basis of experience. FAO is needed now more than ever before. It must continue to be a dynamic and living work in progress, based on fact and experience, and strive to achieve its most noble mandate.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Chairs of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and the CCLM for following issues closely as they were discussed by the Committees they chair. I also am grateful to them for their support and wise Counsel.

I should also like to express my appreciation for those who enabled the Council Session to take place, the interpreters, translators, audio-visual technicians, the meeting services team, the verbatim hub, the reports office staff, and the Secretary-General Mr Rakesh Muthoo and his team, which provided support before, during and after the sessions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, while today is my last session of the Council, my mandate as Independent Chairperson will continue until the forthcoming Conference.

According to the guidance of the Council from this week, I will pursue consultations with Members and others with a view to achieving consensus on the outstanding matters of the Code of Conduct for Voting and the Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies.

In this regard, I will strive to serve the Organization and its Membership with undiminished commitment until the 42nd Session of the Conference, and I look forward to your continued support and collaboration until then.

Thank you all.

With those closing remarks, I bring this Session to a close.

I thank the Members again for their cooperation in this Council and I thank the Director-General and the Secretariat for the support, which I have had over the years.

With this, I close the meeting. The meeting is closed.

The meeting rose at 16:14 hours

La séance est levée à 16 h 14

Se levanta la sesión a las 16.14