



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная
организация
Объединенных
Наций

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-sixth Session

Rome, 15 - 19 June 2009

Report of the Hundred and First Session of the Programme Committee Rome, 11 - 15 May 2009

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND FIRST SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

11 – 15 May 2009

Introduction

1. The Committee submits to the Council the following report of its Hundred and First Session.
2. The Chairperson informed the Committee that Mr Marco Valicenti had been designated to replace Mr James Melanson as the representative of Canada. A summary of the qualifications of Mr Valicenti is given in the addendum to this report¹.
3. The following Members were present:

Chairperson:	Mr V. Heard (United Kingdom)
Vice-Chairperson:	Mr R. Parasuram (India)
Members:	Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)
	Mr C.A. Amaral (Angola)
	Ms M. del Carmen Squeff (Argentina)
	Ms F. Bartlett (Australia)
	H.E. J. A. Marcondes de Carvalho (Brazil)
	Mr M. Valicenti (Canada)
	Mr A.A.M. Hosni Abdel Aziz (Egypt)
	H.E. P. Bacale Mbiang (Equatorial Guinea)
	Mr K. Shioya (Japan)

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable²

4. The Agenda and Timetable for the meeting were approved.

Election of the Vice-Chairperson for 2009

5. Mr R. Parasuram of India was elected Vice-Chairperson for 2009.

Elements for the draft Strategic Framework, Medium Term Plan 2010-13 and Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11³

6. The Committee appreciated the comprehensive document prepared by Management. It noted that the material presented had evolved from the tentative elements included in the Immediate Plan of Action for FAO's Renewal – IPA (Annex 1 of C 2008/4) as the result of several rounds of iterations, while still constituting work-in-progress.
7. The Committee further recognised that the formulation of the results frameworks (for the eleven Strategic Objectives and the two Functional Objectives) was benefiting from review at inter-governmental level *via* meetings of the Working Groups established by the Conference Committee for the Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (CoC-IEE).

¹ CL 136/9 Add. 1

² PC 101/1; PC 101/INF/1

³ CL 136/16

8. The Committee acknowledged that the results frameworks would provide the programmatic foundation for the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2010-13 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2010-11 proposals to be considered by the FAO Conference at its November 2009 session. Taking account of the planned discussion of the concept of “reform with growth” at the Joint Meeting, Members agreed to refrain from stating their views on the issue under this item.

Format of documentation

9. The Committee supported the proposed preparation of two physically separate documents for consideration by the next sessions of the Programme and Finance Committees in July 2009, and by subsequent meetings of the governing bodies. Therefore, a relatively concise Strategic Framework – and with a format closer to the needs of broader external audiences – would be complemented by a more substantial document containing the full MTP 2010-13 and PWB 2010-11 proposals. Members offered specific suggestions on how to improve the draft section on “*Challenges facing food, agriculture and rural development*” in the draft Strategic Framework.

Inputs from the Technical Committees

10. The Committee noted that, in response to its own invitation at its last session of October 2008, the applicable Strategic Objective results frameworks had been examined by the Technical Committees of the Council (COFI, COFO and COAG) at their sessions of March and April 2009.

11. The Committee recognised that the constraints experienced in the Technical Committees with regard to advice on prioritisation were due in part to the novelty of the enhanced results-based approach enshrined in the IPA, and also to timing constraints. In effect, the recommendations were generally more in terms of calling for additional activities and resources, without indication of areas of lower priority. Nevertheless, the Committee considered that the reports of the Technical Committees taken in their entirety contained useful guidance to assist with further refinement of the results frameworks. The Committee was advised by the Secretariat that work was underway to that end (particularly as regards COAG, which *inter alia* had recommended reformulation of Strategic Objective G) for consideration by the CoC-IEE.

12. The Committee recommended that the documentation for future Technical Committees and Regional Conferences be conducive to a greater input on priority setting. This could lead to a more adequate and coherent treatment.

13. The Committee agreed that the guidance to the Technical Committees should be more specific in the next round and stressed the imperative of delegations attending Technical Committee meetings to be well briefed on what was expected of them in respect of priority-setting. The Committee welcomed the positive signs already at hand that the enhanced results-based approach would facilitate the Technical Committees in addressing FAO’s substantive work and priorities in the future.

Discussion of substantive priorities

14. The Committee emphasised that priority-setting was a long-term exercise. Moreover, priority-setting depended on an adequate information base being available and on the convergence of complementary sources of advice, e.g. from the Technical Committees and Regional Conferences. The Committee also highlighted the importance of engaging in an in-depth review of the proposed Programme of Work and obtaining feedback from actual implementation, through interactions with the Secretariat.

15. The Committee recalled that the full draft MTP and PWB proposals, including the critical resource dimension, would be available to the Programme and Finance Committees at their next sessions in July.

16. Hence, the Committee underlined the limitations to the advice on priorities it could give to the Council at this stage. It considered that it would be in a better position to offer such advice based on the resource requirements attached to the Strategic and Functional Objectives.

17. Bearing in mind a more fulsome discussion of priorities at the July session, the Committee requested the Assistant Directors-General (ADGs) responsible for the Strategic Objectives to elaborate on the most important areas of immediate attention as could be foreseen at this stage. Information was also provided on how multi-disciplinary approaches would be ensured and on examples of key partnerships to optimise the achievement of FAO's goals.

18. The Committee appreciated the information received through its dialogue with the ADGs and senior managers. It felt that, without prejudice to the ongoing activities of the Organization, it was particularly useful to learn about key issues and related high-profile outputs linked to the Strategic Objective results frameworks in the document. The Committee intended to continue the dialogue with the ADGs in a more structured manner in order to conclude its work on defining priorities.

19. The Committee concluded that every avenue should be used to facilitate understanding by Members of the import of MTP and PWB proposals. Hence, it recommended that the information and explanations provided by the Secretariat through the dialogue at this session should be synthesised on behalf of the Committee and made available to the Council in June to facilitate its consideration of the present document, as well as for inclusion in the full draft MTP and PWB documentation under preparation for submission to the Committee in July.

IEE Recommendation on the Decentralization of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) - Implementation of IPA Action Matrix⁴

20. The Committee welcomed the paper submitted by the Secretariat and considered that it was consistent with the discussions of the COC-IEE Working Groups I and III in 2008 on the TCP.

21. The Committee reviewed the points for decision in the paper with particular attention to the issue of interpretation of the Criterion 1 for country eligibility. In this regard, it recognised the inconsistency created by the situation of countries which, according to both the existing and proposed criteria, belonged to the category of countries receiving priority attention for TCP assistance and at the same time to the category of high-income countries. The high-income countries can enjoy non-emergency TCP assistance on a full cost-recovery basis only, unless they are also on the special attention list. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat continue its current practice of considering such countries as eligible for TCP assistance on a full-grant basis, given the small amounts currently involved. The Committee also requested that the Chairs of the Regional Groups be contacted by the Secretariat to draw the attention of the six countries concerned and to ascertain whether they wish to continue being considered eligible for TCP assistance on a full-grant basis. The Committee will consider this further at its next session in July 2009.

22. The Committee requested the Secretariat to monitor developments on this issue and consult with the Committee again when the impact was considered to be significant. At that time, the submission to the Committee should include proposals on how to adjust the country eligibility criteria to eliminate the inconsistency.

23. The Committee confirmed that high-income economies are eligible to participate on a full-grant basis in regional and inter-regional projects that benefit also countries not falling into this category, but requested the Secretariat to monitor the impact of this decision on the use of TCP and to consult the Committee again if and when required.

24. The Committee welcomed the decision of the members of the European Union to consider themselves as being part of the high-income countries category for the purpose of eligibility for TCP assistance. The Committee endorsed the proposed reformulation of Criterion 1 to reflect this decision.

⁴PC 101/4

25. The Committee endorsed the proposed reformulation of TCP approval Criterion 2 aimed at ensuring the linkage between the TCP and the FAO Strategic Framework for development and emergency projects respectively.

26. The Committee also endorsed the proposed reformulation of Criterion 6 aimed at increasing the ceiling for TCP Facility projects from USD 200,000 to USD 300,000 per biennium. The Committee requested that the Criterion be formulated in a way that would clearly indicate that the limits in the duration of TCP Facility projects are the same as for other TCP projects.

27. The Committee welcomed the clarifications provided in the paper and orally by the Secretariat regarding the process of decentralizing the TCP, in particular on the minimum information requirements, the project cycle and the timeline for approval. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to ensure that the decentralization of the TCP appropriation and of the approval process be implemented by 1 January 2010 as scheduled.

28. The Committee considered that the action requested of it by the Conference regarding the TCP decentralization as reflected in the IPA had been completed.

Evaluation of FAO's Work on International Instruments⁵

29. The Committee commended the quality of the Evaluation as well as the comprehensiveness of the Management Response. It acknowledged the complexity of evaluating a strategic objective and, more specifically, the difficulty of assessing impacts of such a dispersed area of work in terms of sectors and content. The Report and the Management Response nevertheless addressed important issues of process and governance common to these various international instruments. The Committee noted that the overall response of Management was positive and supportive.

30. The Committee discussed the selection of countries for visit by the Evaluation Team. While recognising time and budget constraints, the Committee expressed concern about limited representativity of the selected sample of countries as it did not include some regions and included too few low-income countries. The Committee accepted the view of the Team Leader that the representativity of perspectives had been ensured by the use of surveys world-wide and that the information collected during these country visits allowed the Evaluation Team to make an informed analysis. The Committee stressed the need to pay more attention in the future to geographical and socio-economic representation in the setting-up of evaluations both in terms of the sample for country visits and the choice of external experts.

31. The Committee found that the Evaluation Report could have contained more analysis on the specific six areas and some of the challenges identified during the evaluation process, including topics such as the decision parameters between hard and soft law or the relationships of FAO vis-à-vis the Instruments' Secretariats that it hosts. It also acknowledged that given the scope of the Evaluation and the limited length of the report submitted to the Committee, it was not feasible to expect such a detailed analysis and that more information was available in the full report published on the FAO Web site.

32. The Committee concurred with the conclusion of the Evaluation that FAO needed to take a strategic view to define its engagement in legal instruments relevant to its work and to strengthen the coordination among the various instruments in order to facilitate their implementation. The Committee noted the suggestion made by Management of the proposed role of the Legal Office in this regard. However, it also noted that this will be carried out in a coordinated manner. The Committee stressed the need for full involvement of senior management and concerned departments, in respect of broader policy and strategic matters.

33. The Committee further supported the preparation of a concept paper on the proposed *State of Policy and Regulatory Framework for Food and Agriculture (SOPRFA)*. SOPRFA would

⁵ PC 101/5 a; PC 101/5 a Sup. 1

be examined on a rolling basis by all governing bodies of the Organization. It would identify gaps and needs for regulatory frameworks, inter-action with other organizations, as well as issues related to governance, participation, funding and capacity building in the various existing instruments.

34. The Committee noted the importance of addressing the funding issue of international instruments as none of the instruments are fully funded. The Committee considered that financial issues should be duly taken into account during the negotiation of a new instrument. The Committee further discussed the role of assessed contributions versus extra-budgetary funding in ensuring appropriate financing of initiating instruments.

35. The Committee underlined the importance of the review being undertaken as foreseen in the IPA (action 2.69) aimed at addressing issues regarding autonomy of statutory bodies, with particular reference to Article XIV bodies, placed under the framework of FAO and their relationship with FAO. The Committee noted that a paper would be submitted later in 2009.

36. The Committee emphasised the need to address the issue of low participation of developing countries, particularly of LDCs, in the meetings concerning international instruments. The contributing factors were lack of funds and insufficient technical capacity of delegations from LDCs. Despite efforts made in this regard in the framework of Codex and the IPPC, much remained to be done. However, the Committee agreed with Management that the issue of participation was complex and, funding issue aside, largely depended on the effectiveness of participation of the developing countries in the negotiation and the debate. The Committee stressed the need to enhance the role of developing country national institutions (e.g. research centres and universities) in this process.

37. The Committee was pleased with the emphasis given in the Evaluation Report and the Management Response to issues relating to capacity building in developing countries. The Committee noted that most of the capacity building activities in relation to international instruments depended on voluntary contributions and were almost always under-funded. It also stressed the need for greater coordination and funding of capacity building efforts among the various units in the Organization.

38. The Committee requested a follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations in two years' time.

Charter for the Office of Evaluation⁶

39. The Committee recalled that it had reviewed a draft version of the Charter at its 100th Session and appreciated that its suggestions for improving the document had been taken into account in preparing the revised draft version. Members made minor suggestions for further improvements to the text.

40. The Committee examined an amendment proposed by the Secretariat on the procedure for the selection and appointment of the Director of Evaluation⁷ whereby a panel, after screening candidatures, would recommend appropriate candidates for appointment by the Director-General. The Committee deferred consideration of this proposal pending the further advice of the CCLM which the Committee noted was to consider it at its forthcoming 87th Session on 25 and 26 May 2009. The Committee also requested the CCLM to examine further the issue of the procedures for the renewal of the appointment of the Director of the Office.

41. The Committee looked forward to reviewing a revised draft version of the Charter at its next session.

⁶ PC 101/5 b

⁷ PC 101/5 b) paragraph 42

42. The Committee received an update on the ongoing selection process for the Director of Evaluation.

JIU/REP/2007/10: Liaison Offices in the United Nations System⁸

43. The Committee appreciated the useful information in this report and took note of the comments of the CEB and the Director-General thereon.

Any Other Business

44. Under this agenda item the Committee discussed the need for more flexibility in the duration and frequency of its Sessions, in line with the IPA⁹. It also considered its current rule of procedure on the attendance of non-speaking Observers. In this regard, it was informed that the CCLM at its 86th Session in May 2009¹⁰ recommended the following wording for paragraph 9 of Rules XXVI and XXVII of the GRO:

“The sessions of the (Programme or Finance Committee, as the case may be) Committee shall be open to silent observers, unless otherwise decided by the Committee. The reasons for such a decision shall be stated in the report. Silent observers shall not take part in any debates”.

45. The Committee agreed to this approach and decided that the Hundred and Twelfth meeting would be open to silent observers. A further review of the Committee’s procedural matters was deferred to the following Session.

Progress Report on the Follow-up to Past Programme Committee Recommendations¹¹

46. The Committee took note of the Report.

Possible Items for Discussion at the Next Session

47. There was no discussion under this agenda item.

Date and Place of the Hundred and First Session

48. The Committee was informed that Hundredth and Second Session of the Programme Committee was scheduled to take place from 27th to 31st July 2009.

⁸ CL 136/INF/8

⁹ C 2008/4 paragraph 24

¹⁰ CL 136/19 Programme Committee (IPA Actions 2.44 to 2.47, 3.5 and 3.9)

¹¹ PC 101/INF/3