

168th Session of the Council
Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version
Item 12 - Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies Collaboration

Member Name	Comments
<p style="text-align: center;">Australia (Wed 17/11/2021 7:03)</p>	<p>Australia welcomes on-going efforts to improve RBA collaboration, including – and importantly - at a country and regional level. We highlight the importance of on-going work in this regard in order to respond, both strategically and with concrete actions, to rising hunger levels.</p> <p>Australia notes that the UN Food Systems Summit implementation and follow-up is still under discussion but highlights the importance of RBA collaboration, along with other relevant UN agencies, in order to ensure tangible outcomes and avoid duplication. We respectfully request that Members be provided with regular updates and an opportunity to contribute to discussions.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Argentina (Wed 17/11/2021 16:21)</p>	<p>Firstly, Argentina would like to express its appreciation for the preparation of the report on this subject.</p> <p>As our Delegation stated during the informal meetings of the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) last September, we understand that collaboration between FAO, IFAD and WFP should aim at greater operational streamlining, cost reduction, avoidance of duplication and the promotion of synergistic approaches.</p> <p>In other words, we believe that the common goal should be to concentrate on increasing cooperation between and among the RBAs in the field to deploy their capacities and help overcome the scourge of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms.</p> <p>We understand that there are three essential elements:</p> <p>a.- Each Agency has a specific mandate, a specific technical competence and priorities assigned by its Governing Bodies.</p> <p>b.- Collaboration and coordination cannot be imposed on the RBAs. Prior alignment of their respective strategic frameworks is required in line with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.</p> <p>c.- Strengthening cooperation between the RBAs should be based on leveraging their unique strengths and virtues to enhance the overall actions of these agencies on the ground.</p> <p>Therefore, we believe that the future workplans of the Agencies should, as far as possible, be established with an approach of complementarity and mutual enhancement in order to improve their operational effectiveness.</p> <p>In the specific case of the follow-up to the Food Systems Summit, we also understand that any proposed mechanism must firstly enjoy the consensual view of the members and secondly make FAO central to any coordination actions due to its holistic capabilities.</p> <p>As a final comment, we would like to point out that competition between the Agencies, for example in attracting voluntary resources, should be avoided, as this would undermine the promotion of joint work. Instead, we believe that one way to make the Agencies more complementary could be through casework in the field, for example through pilot experiences under the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.</p>

<p>Russian Federation (Wed 17/11/2021 16:55)</p>	<p>Welcomed the Progress report and commended the efforts of FAO to provide a complex overview of RBA collaboration therein; encouraged FAO to further develop strategic collaboration following the recommendations of the evaluation report “Joint Evaluation of collaboration among the UN Rome-based Agencies” (dated October 2021), and continued to explore the areas of potential synergies and complementarities, economies of scale with the aim to the raise efficiencies of RBA collaboration; and strongly encouraged FAO to carry out a first assessment regarding the feasibility of integrating administrative functions and greater collaboration in some oversight functions in line with the request of the Joint Meeting of the 127th Session of the Programme Committee and 178th Session of the Finance Committee that remains long overdue.</p>
<p>United States of America (Wed 17/11/2021 17:20)</p>	<p>The United States welcomes this progress report on the UN Rome-based Agencies’ (RBAs) collaborative efforts, particularly noting achievements and progress made over the past year at the global, regional, and country levels. We appreciate the achievements highlighted in the “Update on Collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies” report on the five priority areas. The United States commends the RBAs’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic in ensuring continued attention and support to the most vulnerable. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the RBAs were able to conduct context specific assessments of its impacts on national food security and nutrition. We appreciate the RBAs’ joint support of the school feeding program in Guatemala in ensuring school children have healthy meals throughout the pandemic and your collaborative work in supporting the Government of Sierra Leone with its emergency Food Security Monitoring System to understand the impact of COVID-19 on food security. We appreciate the global work in nutrition, gender, and resilience undertaken by the RBAs, particularly through the exchange of technical knowledge, lessons learned and good practice. The report positively highlights that these initiatives have had direct humanitarian impact. Of particular interest, the United States welcomes the central role the RBAs played in the launch of UN Nutrition earlier this year. We welcome future updates from FAO on progress related to integrating and streamlining efforts in nutrition. While the United States recognizes the extensive global collaborative efforts by the RBAs in the preparations and implementation of the activities and processes for the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) and Pre-Summit, we note FAO itself conducted limited outreach to its Members on FAO objectives for the FSS. It is imperative that FAO secure Member State consensus on its role – in coordination with WFP and IFAD in particular – to ensure meaningful FSS follow-up on the ground. Looking ahead, we encourage continuous assessment of the enablers and challenges and the sharing of lessons learned from RBA collaboration to avoid competition and duplication of efforts. The United States welcomes updates on the RBAs collaborative efforts, particularly as they relate to UN FSS follow-up and implementation of the recommendations from the independent Joint Evaluation of RBA collaboration released in October 2021, which we understand Council will have an opportunity to consider in its Spring session.</p>
<p>Japan</p>	<p>Japan appreciates FAO's leading activities, such as hosting the Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit in</p>

<p>(Fri 19/11/2021 13:20)</p>	<p>collaboration with IFAD and WFP successfully with attendance of many stakeholders worldwide. Japan considers as necessary that FAO keeps following up on further development of the outcome.</p> <p>Japan requests clarification of conceptual framework and also assumed RBA collaboration model specifically, including FAO's agreement to host "Food Systems Coordination Hub" described in paragraph 12. "RBA Collaboration in the Context of the UN Food Systems Summit", in terms of the role of each organization involved, RBA's objective, and target outcomes.</p>
<p>Spain (Fri 19/11/2021 19:05)</p>	<p>With regard to the Progress Report on Rome-Based Agencies (RBA) Collaboration, we would like to highlight the following:</p> <p>Spain fully supports the statements delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <p>We welcome the Progress Report, which provides a good overview of the activities implemented at global, regional and country level. We appreciate the improved structure of the Report, which now includes specific outcomes and examples of activities implemented and progress achieved. We urge FAO to further improve collaboration with WFP and IFAD, focusing on tangible outcomes at regional and country level.</p> <p>We recall the request for a joint RBA study regarding the feasibility of integrating administrative functions, which has been pending since the December 2020 Council session. We ask the RBAs to provide this study as a matter of priority, reminding them that the study should focus primarily on administrative collaboration between headquarters.</p> <p>We appreciate the emphasis on aligning RBA collaboration with the repositioning of the UNDS and the fact that the RBAs have been able to identify and promote joint priorities in UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and in formulating UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). RBA collaboration should be sought in the context of broader UN collaboration aimed at generating results to help achieve the SDGs.</p> <p>We commend the RBAs for their coordinated efforts and collaboration in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, focusing on the most vulnerable groups. We appreciate the vital role they have played in supporting countries, local NGOs and other UN agencies, particularly through policy and analytical support to develop effective measures to mitigate the consequences of the crisis.</p> <p>We also commend the RBAs for their collaboration and participation in preparing the UN Food Systems Summit and the Pre-Summit. The RBAs have a crucial role to play in keeping food system transformation high on the 2030 Agenda and contributing, together with the CFS and other relevant UN bodies, to the Summit follow-up process.</p>
<p>France (Fri 19/11/2021 20:56)</p>	<p>France aligns itself with the statement by the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <p>We welcome the organization of meetings that bring together the executive bodies of the three Rome-based Agencies and facilitate the exchange of information and coordination among them. We reiterate our strong commitment to close cooperation among the three agencies, both in Rome and in the field, while respecting each other's mandates.</p> <p>Item 12 - Food Systems Summit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are satisfied that the preparatory process for the Food Systems Summit and the Summit itself have made it possible to mobilize the Rome-based Agencies jointly and include their work in a broader UN perspective.

• The follow-up structure resulting from the Summit has not yet been clearly defined and cannot be presented as such. We underline the fact that the “coordination hub” will need to be inclusive with regard to all stakeholders, United Nations agencies in Rome or elsewhere (WHO, UNEP, UNDP, etc.), who should be on an equal footing. Although the UNSG asked FAO to host the Summit follow-up mechanism, it in no way specified that this mechanism should report exclusively to FAO management. On the contrary, during the last Consultative Committee, the Deputy UNSG indicated that the “coordination hub” would be under the authority and would report to a “steering group” composed of several United Nations officials (heads of Rome-based Agencies, UNEP on behalf of the United Nations, DCO, etc.). The preservation of this UN system-wide approach in the framework of the Summit follow-up, including the hierarchical *reporting* lines, is essential. We welcome the cross-list statement to this effect made at the WFP Executive Board on November 15. We recall the wish expressed at the Joint Meeting that Members be at the centre of the process when monitoring Summit commitments.

• We recall the request from the Joint Meeting for further information on the coordination hub, particularly with regard to its staffing and funding.

• In accordance with the UNSG Statement of Action, we reaffirm our wish for close collaboration of the CFS with this “coordination hub” in charge of Summit follow-up, as well as with the steering group. We regret that the CFS is not mentioned in the FAO document and request that clear reference to it be added. We also recall our wish that the structures put into place for the summit preparation, including the Scientific Group, not be perpetuated, in accordance with what was indicated to Members during the last meeting of the Advisory Committee. The HLPE should be at the centre of scientific work coordination for the Summit follow-up together with the coordination hub.

Item 14 - Humanitarian Action

• We recall that action from the Rome-based Agencies in response to humanitarian crises must fall within the framework of their respective mandates, especially for FAO and WFP. The joint evaluation report of their collaboration points to the overlap of certain missions and competition among the organizations, which undermines the effectiveness of their action. As such, we call for better coordination among the agencies with regard to their actions in humanitarian crises not only in Rome but also with the rest of the United Nations and in the field. We are committed to the normative mandate of FAO, which must not be transformed into an operational development agency—a mandate which falls to other United Nations agencies—and even less into a humanitarian agency, for which it has neither the means nor the mandate.

Item 15 – Rome-based Agencies and the CFS

• We support the request of the Joint Meeting to strengthen cooperation among the three agencies in order to promote CFS products and ask that it continue in this fashion to allow for greater visibility of the CFS and its products, in particular “food systems and nutrition (VGFSyN)” and “Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches.” France also calls on the Rome-based Agencies to strengthen their support for the CFS, especially in terms of funding and the provision of human resources.

Item 21 - Joint Programme for the Sahel

• We recall the importance we attach to the implementation of the joint programme for the Sahel (SD3C), made possible

	<p>through coordination by IFAD, WFP and FAO. The Sahel is a priority area when responding to the challenges of food insecurity and malnutrition</p>
<p>European Union (Mon 22/11/2021 20:42)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States regarding item 12 on the agenda of the 168th Session of the FAO Council.</p> <p>The Candidate Countries Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia¹ and Turkey, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well the Republic of Moldova and the Republic of San Marino, align themselves with this written statement.</p> <p>We welcome the progress report, which gives a good overview of the activities implemented at global, regional and country level. We appreciate the improved structure of the report, including the results and concrete examples of implemented activities and progress made. We call upon FAO to continue to improve collaboration with WFP and IFAD, focusing also on concrete results at regional and country level.</p> <p>We recall the request for a joint RBA feasibility study on integrating administrative functions, which is outstanding since the December 2020 Council session. We invite the RBAs to provide this study as a matter of priority, recalling that the study should focus primarily on administrative collaboration between headquarters.</p> <p>We appreciate the emphasis placed on aligning RBAs' collaboration with UNDS reform and the fact that the RBAs have been able to identify and advocate for joint priorities in UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and in the formulation of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). RBAs' collaboration is not an end in itself and must be placed in the context of wider UN collaboration aimed at delivering results towards the SDGs.</p> <p>We commend the RBAs for their coordinated efforts and collaboration in the response to the COVID-19 crisis, with emphasis on the most vulnerable groups. We appreciate the central role they have played in supporting countries, local NGOs and other UN agencies, in particular through policy and analytical support for developing effective measures to mitigate the consequences of the crisis.</p> <p>We also commend the RBAs for their collaboration and involvement in the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit and the pre-summit. The RBAs have a crucial role to play in keeping food systems transformation high on the 2030 Agenda and in contributing, together with the CFS and other relevant UN bodies, to the summit follow-up process. In this regard, we underline the importance of continued RBA support to the CFS, including through strengthened financing and staffing, and of ensuring that the CFS and its products are an integral part of the RBAs' activities in the follow-up to the Food Systems Summit.</p> <p>We appreciate the annual preparation of the SOFI reports, together with UNICEF and WHO, as well as other joint initiatives such as the global reports on food crises and hunger hotspots, which serve as an important scientific basis for addressing food insecurity.</p> <p>We thank the RBAs for the update on the Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change, approved by IFAD in December 2020. We encourage the RBAs to build on this</p>

¹ The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

	<p>experience of regional cooperation in improving integrated actions with other UN agencies within the repositioning of the UN Development System.</p> <p>We express our full support for continued RBA collaboration, including the efforts to increase synergies and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their work, both at headquarters level and on the ground, avoiding duplication and competition, as well as in supporting the UNDS reform. With these comments, we endorse the progress report.</p>
<p>Africa Regional Group (Wed 24/11/2021 10:37)</p>	<p>The statement is delivered on behalf of the Africa Regional Group by South Africa, Zambia and Kenya on agenda item 12 on the Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies Collaboration.</p> <p>The Group wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the progress report on the collaboration between the Rome-based Agencies for the period 2020-2021. The outline of concrete examples of such collaboration across the global, regional and country levels is a confirmation of its value in contributing to end hunger in Africa by 2025. Efforts to provide access to sufficient, affordable and nutritious food for all are facing challenges that inhibit agricultural development such as extreme weather events and climate change, limited levels of adoption of yield-increasing technologies as well as the impact of COVID-19 and the spread of animal diseases and pests such as Fall Armyworm and desert locusts.</p> <p>On a strategic level, Africa is guided by the Africa 2003 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), as a continental policy framework for agricultural transformation to increase food security and nutrition and reduce poverty, which was reinforced in 2014 under the Malabo declaration on agricultural growth and transformation. The Group believes that the Rome-based Agencies should extend their joint collaboration to also engage the African Union on a strategic level to facilitate the implementation of this policy framework and in a collaborative manner to engage with relevant institutions to mobilise resources to address the challenges to advance agricultural development. The Group also believes that those examples of successful collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies, as demonstrated in their joint action to address hunger in humanitarian crises and addressing the impact of COVID-19, needs to be strengthened and expanded in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and in efforts on a regional and national basis to transform agri-food systems.</p> <p>In this regard, the Group appreciates the pro-active collaboration on the Joint Programme for the Sahel in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflict and climate change in that region. In addition, the actualisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the UN Common Country Analysis tool (CCA) in Kenya through the joint Rome-based Agencies collaboration in support of smallholder farmers is another noteworthy example of how such collaboration could be considered for wider implementation in Africa.</p> <p>However, the Group recognises that collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies is not an end in itself but a means to achieve increased efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, that such collaboration should be flexible, focus on technical work and respect the distinct mandates of the Rome-based Agencies. It is also recognised that collaboration already takes place in the context of the wider United Nations reform process to enhance collaboration including in the common services at country level.</p>

	<p>In conclusion, the African Regional Group takes note of the recommended path forward as outlined in the report contained in document CL 168/11, and encourages the Senior Management of the Rome-based Agencies to enhance their relevant collaboration.</p>
<p>United Kingdom (Observer) (Fri 19/11/2021 19.20)</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted more than ever the need for effective collaboration across the UN system and particularly between the Rome-based Agencies in their shared focus on SDG 2 and ending hunger. Collaboration is all about delivering better and more sustainable results and impact, ensuring synergies, sharing information and assessments, conducting joint analysis, and avoiding risk of duplication.</p> <p>The United Kingdom thanks FAO, IFAD and WFP for the <i>Progress Report on Rome-Based Agencies Collaboration</i> and appreciates the examples of collaboration provided.</p> <p>We support FAO's membership, together with WFP, of the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine. We encourage joint needs assessments and reporting, drawing on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analyses as highlighted, and strengthening of early warning systems.</p> <p>We note, however, from the Joint Evaluation (that we look forward to discussing at the next FAO Council) that a lack of shared understanding about roles can impair work, particularly between FAO and WFP. We underline the importance of addressing this finding; and building on complementarities and comparative advantages.</p> <p>We are glad to note that the <i>Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C)</i>, is now seen 'as a flagship example of the RBAs coming together to identify common objectives and activities at regional levels.' We would like to request the Agencies to share the joint Results Framework that they will use to monitor progress and measure results against these objectives. This is clearly important in terms of clarity and accountability over who does what – an area that has been highlighted for improvement.</p> <p>We encourage FAO in its commitment to strengthening strategic partnerships, both with the Rome-based Agencies, but also with others – including WHO and UNEP on One Health issues, for example – in the context of the UNDS reform.</p>