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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
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-second Session - Cent soixante-douzième session -
172.º período de sesiones**

Rome, 24-28 April 2023

VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

Rome, 24-28 avril 2023

PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL

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**ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
FIRST PLENARY SESSION PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
24 April 2023

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:40 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 40
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 09.40
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, it is more than an honour and pleasure for me to welcome you here to the 172nd Session of the Council. For many years, we have not seen such a crowded room in the Council. It is very necessary that all of you are here because the crisis we are in needs our full attention and our full efforts.

I am pleased to be able to welcome you back to this Council, both physical and in presence, in hybrid modality for participation in person or via Zoom.

Before beginning our meeting, I should like to draw your attention to the procedures we followed in our hybrid setting. We have to do it following our Basic Texts. For those participants attending the Session physically, you may request for the floor by pressing your button. For those attending the Council in a virtual mode, we kindly ask to follow the meeting in muted mode and click to unmute when you are able and given the floor. You can ask for the floor by raising your hands.

I will endeavour to keep an accurate list of speakers on a first come first served basis, taking into account both the physical and virtual rooms. The virtual participants will be able to see their colleagues attending the meeting physically through the cameras installed in this meeting room and, likewise, those participants in the meeting room are able to view the virtual participants on the large screens.

I would like to thank the technicians who made it possible to have this hybrid meeting, to have the most modern technology in this room. I very much welcome the interpreters for being with us. Thank you so much. I hope that we are not making your life too difficult, but we cannot do without you. Finally, I really would like to thank and welcome also the messengers who are always kindly serving us to make this meeting happening.

I wish to bring to your attention that the European Union is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraph 8 and 9 or 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, in matters within its competence, be exercising on an alternate 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 172/INF/3.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, during our first Food Systems Summit in 1998, we adopted a programme to fight those in hunger and then we had 800 million in hunger. Twenty-seven years later, this year we go above 1 billion people living in hunger. It means that we are confronted with the biggest food crisis ever. We know where it is coming from. We know the causes.

We know there is extreme and more frequent climate events. We know that still the continued impacts of COVID-19, conflict and wars, including the war in Ukraine, with devastating effects for all; soaring food prices and agricultural input prices; overall inflation; tightening financial conditions and increasing inequalities. At the same time, we have our commitments in Agenda 2030. We have our Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and although we know we are not going to achieve them in 2030, we have to come close to them.

We have our FAO institutional framework, we have our *four betters*, but what we have to do is to implement them. For that, we need a strong FAO, because FAO is the Organization within the United Nations to bring us where we have to be, to support that we take in even important initiatives not only in Rome but also at UN Headquarters to support countries at country level to implement their national pathways and transforming their food systems.

We can only do that if we give the means to the Organization and the means to the Members. In this Council, we have crucial issues on the Agenda. We have the Programme of Work and Budget. We already had the informal consultations. We had the Programme and Finance Committee informal consultations and what I see at this moment, we are not there yet but at least there is a sense that we have to increase the budget of FAO. To what extent we still have to negotiate.

We are going to discuss the global situation of food insecurity, the drivers and we are also going to discuss the consequences of the war in Ukraine. But one thing is clear – if we want to achieve what we have to achieve, we have to do it together. It has to be a joint effort and a joint effort means leaving nobody behind, but a joint effort means also that we do it by consensus. Only by consensus we know that everybody is committed to work together and to do what we have to do.

Let this Council be a Council of showing the way that together, united within the UN, we are going to implement the Strategic Framework of FAO, the Science and Innovation Strategy, the Strategy on Climate Change, Private Sector Engagement, mainstreaming biodiversity and much more, with the budget which is needed for that, in harmony and in consensus.

I wish this Council let us work strongly together and we will arrive, hopefully, on Friday late afternoon with a consensus on all the Agenda Items.

With that, I would like to give the floor to the Director-General. A warm welcome, Dr QU Dongyu.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Independent Chairperson of the Council, Members of the Council, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends, I am very pleased to be addressing you at the opening of this 172nd Session of the FAO Council. My colleagues at the Office of the Director-General (ODG) counted for me it is my 11th Council Session since taking office as FAO Director-General on 1 August 2019.

Today, I am proud to stand before you as Director-General of a more dynamic and more professional Organization. An Organization that is more fit-for-purpose to better support its Members, as we move closer to the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We have continued taking moving forward on our path towards achieving the *four betters* – *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life* for all, leaving no one behind. With more focus and attention to the ones further left behind, and the most vulnerable population groups, including rural farmers, women, youth and indigenous people.

We are one third of the way into 2023, the Year of Excellence, and I am proud of the excellent results achieved so far, since the last Council. Our challenge in 2023 is to continue working towards achieving our collective and long-term goal of transforming global agrifood systems to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable, while effectively addressing the multiple adversities affecting us globally.

FAO continues to be in the forefront of the global efforts to respond to the food security crisis. Over the past months, food and fertilizer prices at the global level declined. Happy to see that. In March of 2023, the FAO Food Price Index was 20.5 percent down from its level a year ago, generally reflecting improved global availabilities.

However, while the price has fallen in world markets, food price inflation is still a serious concern in many countries and food prices continue to rise in the local markets. It takes time to transfer from the global market to the local market. That is the reality and the nature of agrifood systems. It normally takes a one-season delay. That is why FAO should talk in a professional language and not in other languages and tell the truth, science-based data originate and support the conclusions - hindering access to the food, especially for poor and vulnerable populations.

In response to a request by the G20 leaders, FAO, together with the World Bank and World Trade Organization launched a Report, just one week ago, in April 2023, on assessing the global responses to the food security crisis. The Report emphasized the need for a unified approach and recommended improving the supply of the development finance to support agricultural investments and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in rural areas.

I returned yesterday afternoon from the G7 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting after 24 hours of travelling - it is still a challenge to travel across continents, even from Japan to Europe. So, I really appreciate all the Members from their capitals to come to this conference because I know, I realized it is not easy for you to travel and it takes time and energy and also I do not know even how many delays of the flights. Fortunately, in the past two and a half years of travelling I did not have that problem, thanks to God or

thanks to heaven or thanks to Allah. By the way, today is also first of the celebration of the Ramadan after one month. So, I send my best and sincere congratulations to those who celebrate Eid. It is happy Ramadan again.

And on how the G7 should take a leading role in leveraging the economy and the political power to enhance global food security. I asked them to first increase the investment in agriculture by promoting sustainable agriculture practices, increase the agricultural production and improve the food supply chain logistics to ensure adequate availability and affordable nutritious food for all.

Second, providing financial assistance to the developing countries that suffer from food insecurity to improve their agricultural productivity and food management systems.

Third, promoting research and development for innovative technologies to enhance resilience and adaptation of farmers to the climate crisis.

Fourth, addressing climate change by reducing their carbon footprint and mitigating the impact of the climate crisis that negatively affect food security. And, fifth, providing emergency food assistance during the food crisis, in coordination with relevant international organizations due to conflict and natural disasters.

I should tell you the first time a G7 Ministers of Agriculture meeting invited Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) Principals together, not only FAO Director-General, this time also the new WFP Executive Director, Ambassador Cindy McCain, and also the quite new President of IFAD. I really appreciated the Japanese Government at the G7 Presidency. I said many times you are Members, you control the steps and facilitate the RBAs collaboration from your Capital and then you come to the front here, as Ambassador, Representative. And happily I heard from my friend, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan. He told me officially Japan is the last country that established also a separate mission to FAO and other organizations in Rome.

Look at all the G7 countries and also some G20 Members that have a separate mission delegation here. But Japan made a decision, on 1 January 2024 they will have another mission. It indicates that the Japanese are more serious in RBAs collaboration and support. I really appreciate it very much. I had a very fruitful discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Yoshimasa Hayashi. Fortunately, he served two terms as Minister of Agriculture. We need more politicians to understand agrifood systems, agroforestry, and agro environment or, as our French friend always talk about, agroecology. We have to get all the politicians to understand the whole picture. Otherwise, it is very difficult to get strong, concrete support.

Structure drivers such as urbanization, are pushing agrifood systems towards new difficulties or new challenges. This will be the focus of the 2023 Report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world (SOFI), currently being prepared by FAO and which will analyse the links between urbanization and agrifood systems. As I said many times, we are facing the challenges and maybe it is not difficulties due to the quick urbanization, the quick industrialization and quick digitalization. In the rural areas, we face these three challenges. Maybe also it is a good opportunity, a revolutionary opportunity, if we handle it properly. No matter you are a developed country, no matter you are a developing country, we are facing the three challenges together.

By 2050, seven out of ten people are projected to live in the cities. For this reason, three years ago I launched the FAO Green City Initiative during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which has now entered the second year of implementation, aims to support urban transformation and a green economy, to ensure food security by developing new business models.

Ladies and gentlemen, FAO's work on resilience is ongoing, and it continues to grow and to innovate, as prospects for acute food insecurity in 2023 continue to be of concern. FAO continues to analyse and monitor the situation with highly vulnerable countries. For instance, a nationwide data collection on agricultural enterprises and rural households was conducted in December 2022 to better understand the impact of the war on Ukraine's agriculture sector and help design a tailored evidence-based resilience building programme.

Since the start of 2023, FAO has continued expanding its normative and operational work on anticipatory action, including through the development and implementation of the three-year strategic programme for 2023-2025.

Since December 2022, FAO has been continuing steady progress in its two major digitalization streams, namely Digital for Impact, to enhance the digital targeted interventions for agriculture in the field, and the Digital Workplace to ensure the cost-effective, sustainable and secure digital environment supporting the delivery of the FAO's mandate. By the way, FAO and G7 friends appreciate that FAO has become the digital UN specialized agency. That is something that lays the foundation for transparency and accountability. Because any people who support, who work in this Organization should be traceable by digital, not by the classical physical papers.

Furthermore, in the first quarter of 2023 the FAO Digital Services Portfolio has continued working with countries on strengthening advisory support for extension services to assist farmers.

Dear colleagues, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are among the mostly affected countries from the impacts of the climate crisis. Through the FAO-China Triangular and South-South Cooperation umbrella programme, we have implemented over 25 projects, and the new USD 5 million contribution received in early 2023 will be used to assist SIDS to accelerate transformation and build sustainable and a resilient livelihoods.

FAO is committed to supporting the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), including through our active contribution to the Roadmap, as set out during the 5th UN Conference on LDCs, which I attended in Doha in early March this year.

More and better public and private investment and finance solutions are critical to transform our agrifood systems, and the bold reform of the FAO Investment Centre has expanded its partnership and services to ensure it is fit for purpose. In 2023, with the start of the second year of implementation of its Transformation Plan, the Investment Centre is strengthening its focus at the country level, including through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

To advance its commitment to achieve the gender equality and women's empowerment, FAO launched the Report on the Status of Women in Agrifood Systems in April 2023, which provides a new data and analyses on the challenges rural women face in agrifood systems. I am so delighted, also Ms Beth Bechdol made this Report, now fully outreached to the key partners in North America. That will be also FAO's knowledge product, should be taken ownership and partnership as a scientific base to implement.

I think it is a good time for us to use the FAO knowledge product. Not only put on the computer, it was put on the bookshelf, but now you have no bookshelf. In my bookshelf I have very limited books but I put a lot of information in my iPad and my computer, of course, or even on the cloud, I do not know.

Water continues to be high on the FAO Agenda. FAO successfully engaged in the 2023 UN Water Conference held in New York in March this year, and submitted seven commitments to the Water Action Agenda. I really appreciated the co-chairs from Netherlands, Tajikistan, Singapore and the United States to make this UN Water Conference so meaningful, and so thoughtful and so prosperous for the future.

FAO also successfully organized the Second International Forum on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG), hosted by the Cabo Verde in February 2023, and the Praia Call for Action emphasized the need to step up collaborative actions in water scarcity in agriculture.

As a follow-up to the Rome Water Dialogue held in October 2022, FAO is supporting Members, upon request, in the design of the country-specific National Water Roadmaps through the country-led dialogues and participatory processes. A Regional Workshop for Africa on National Water Roadmaps was held in Zimbabwe in February this year to present and discuss the initiative in the region, with the participation of over 30 African countries.

The Global Forestry Resource Assessment 2025 reporting cycle started in the first quarter of 2023, and is the only official UN systems data on forests related to SDG indicators globally.

Through Blue Transformation FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture continues to promote the effective management of aquatic living resources and the development of the capacity to ensure the equitable outcome for all. The launch of the Global Sustainable Aquaculture Advancement Partnership in December 2022, in collaboration with Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences, aims to unlock the contribution of aquaculture in targeted countries by building partnerships and facilitating knowledge and technology transfer.

FAO continues to support the countries in their efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and in March this year the first series of regional workshops were held with focus on the new FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Trans-shipment.

With regard to FAO work on the livestock transformation and animal health, FAO completed the first Global Assessment on the *“Contribution of Terrestrial Animal Sources Food for the Healthy Diets for Improved Nutrition and Health Outcomes”* to be launched in April 2023.

Recognizing its reputation in One Health implementation, FAO was selected in February 2023 as an Implementing Entity of the Pandemic Fund. It is a big fund initiated by the World Health Organization. Now, FAO was involved in the submission of 63 expressions of interest by eligible countries and regional entities.

Dear colleagues, FAO is currently finalizing the Action Plan of the new thematic Strategy on Climate Change, taking into consideration inputs from the Members. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in December 2022 is the key for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors as half of the targets related to agrifood systems.

FAO launched the updated Framework for Environment and Social Management on 30 January 2023 that will ensure FAO projects do both “no harm” and support the transformation of agrifood systems by upholding the highest international standards for risk management.

The joint FAO/IAEA Centre launched its first astrobiology project in late 2022, designed to understand the impact of the cosmic radiation and microgravity in outer space, and the seeds that were sent to outer space are now in the joint central laboratories for the in-depth research.

Since the start of the year, several initiatives have also been launched to kick off the implementation of the Action Plan of the new FAO Strategy on Science and Innovation.

FAO recently launched the Innovation Fund supported by the Incubator, a pioneering programme to foster a culture of continuous innovation and learning, and in March this year FAO awarded funding to eight innovation proposals as part of this initiative.

The Science and Innovation Forum is now an integral part of the annual World Food Forum and this year's theme will focus on climate action.

Preparations are underway of the World Food Forum 2023 with the youth providing the inspiration and the dynamism needed to keep the momentum high, working collectively to change the scale of the Forum for it to become the world event on food and agrifood systems issues with a strong focus on youth, private sector partnership and investments, and science and innovation and others.

Dear colleagues, the past year has seen great progress in FAO's engagement with the private sector. As we build on lessons learned and prioritize a new direction, 2023 will be the year of expanding and transformative private sector engagement. Working across sectors to find solutions has never been more urgent.

To support implementation of the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, an Informal Private Sector Advisory Group was established to act as an advisory, consultative forum to boost FAO's engagement. The first meeting of the Advisory Group was held in January 2023, and was attended by selected Permanent Representatives and 25 Advisory Group members, including representatives from farmers' organizations, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and large multinational and industry associations. We expect to hold two meetings a year and to discuss how FAO can further expand and deepen its strategic partnership with the private sector, improve outreach and engaging with even more impact to support sustainable agrifood systems transformation.

We continue to see progress in mobilizing voluntary contributions. In the first three months of 2023 - normally it is the low season because of holidays, but for our staff it is no holiday. Of course they have a holiday but they work virtually, that is how Digital FAO helps. Normally it is not so much to report, but this year it is substantially increased, all the change. That is the overall harvest from the digital FAO.

I can tell you that FAO mobilized a total of USD 407 million in voluntary contributions in the first three months, which is a 30 percent increase when compared with the same period last year. You know that we face challenges. Everyone faces challenges. FAO even face more challenges. Due to our excellent and extraordinary efforts of our colleagues, we have a 30 percent increase and I remember that four years ago I promised you we had 10 percent. However, you can read our data. Last year, I told you the four years average on the 27th report, it is an almost 60 percent increase. You can imagine.

It is a challenge. If we use the challenge, maybe it is a huge opportunity. It is not only myself who is committed, also my colleagues to help you to implement. That is something you did not expect, I know.

In the 2024-2025 biennium, we foresee the delivery of extra-budgetary resources reaching approximately USD 3 billion. Four years ago, it was about USD 1.6 billion, so we are aiming to double. We will try our best, but of course, we need your support.

Following the launch event of the Country Projects for the implementation of One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative, the first meeting of the Regional Organizing Group for Africa was held on 8 March 2023, during which the group's Terms of Reference were endorsed. The meeting also kicked off the OCOP project in Malawi to drive the development of the banana value chain, and in Uzbekistan, an inception workshop was held also launching an OCOP project focused on sweet cherries.

Dear colleagues, this is the third year we have presented a comprehensive Human Resources (HR) annual Report to our Governing Bodies through the recent Finance Committee section on progress made in HR development with significant results in all areas. Updated flexible working arrangements were implemented in March this year, finding a balance between flexibility and office presence, supporting an inclusive environment, addressing needs of our employees and teamwork in the office.

We continue also to work closely with FAO Women's and Youth Committees as part of our overall engagement with employees to drive culture change and reform. This includes monthly consultation and meetings with Staff Representative Bodies on a wide range of issues of concern to employees.

FAO has progressed on the implementation of outstanding audit recommendations, and will continue to make every effort to maintain a momentum to achieve the high crucial rate by the end of the year. I think Deputy Director-General (DDG) Mr Laurent Thomas, he just sent me all the progresses, where we promised to agreed action plans to improve. I said it looks quite promising and serious change we are taking. So, I will ask Mr Thomas to share some findings and progress we have achieved and improved, based on the auditing recommendations during the past four years.

Of course, four years ago or ten years ago, some were left over but we will look the more holistic way. We had several internal discussions. We want to build a modern FAO, from different angles, different perspectives. In terms of internal audit, Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has also been actively cooperating with Management on the implementation for the open agreed actions.

The Ethics Office's 2022 annual Report, as shared with the Finance Committee in March this year, details many achievements of the past year, including management of personal conflict of interest risk. Furthermore, a number of the training sessions on the Annual Disclosure Programme were held over the past months to raise awareness and help increase compliance, and further drive a culture of transparency and accountability at FAO.

FAO is fully engaged with Members to strengthen the agrifood systems regulatory framework, in particular on the role of legislation in anchoring the policies and implementing international commitments at a national level. Over the past months, FAO has developed a dedicated umbrella

programme to support Members to develop capacity to ensure compliance with national agrifood systems laws.

Dear friends, the global context in which FAO's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025 proposal that was prepared is critical. As the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) mentioned some minutes ago, we have to look and face the new challenge. Let FAO fit the purpose and fit the mandate and the mission, what we set to work with.

The importance of food and agriculture given the current global situation to achieve SDGs cannot be underestimated.

We are facing ongoing, complex and overlapping crises, all of which continue to affect global food security, namely food availability, food affordability, food accessibility, especially in the poorest countries and among vulnerable populations. In this context, the transformation for global agrifood systems for the achievement of 2030 Agenda has become urgent. FAO is effectively using its unique role as a global knowledge organization, and its distinctive position as a UN Specialized Agency to inform and influence the global response that can seize many opportunities for needed transformation.

FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 provides a robust and flexible roadmap to help ensure that FAO can effectively contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Under the overarching objectives of the *four betters*, the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), ensure we capitalize on the wealth of FAO's multidisciplinary technical expertise to tackle longstanding challenges and to respond to the emerging priorities.

In 2022-2023 FAO stepped up to the challenge by harnessing the full scope of the Strategic Framework as well as through its leading role in global governance for food security and nutrition. In 2024-2025 biennium, FAO stands ready to further strengthen its response to the food crisis and other multiple and overlapping global challenges.

The recently approved thematic Strategies will further enable the Organization to increase impact in this critical cross-cutting areas of work in 2024-2025 biennium and beyond.

Through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, for example, FAO brings advanced geospatial modelling and analytics to accelerate market-based agrifood systems transformation to raise incomes and improve the well-being and the resilience of poor and vulnerable populations, with the 61 countries who are currently participating.

We will continue to work One FAO to optimize the human and financial capitals, ensuring a modern and efficient country office network. We have the elements in place to be able to respond efficiently, effectively and coherently to global challenges in line with FAO's mandate, but we cannot do it alone, we must do it together.

FAO's current regular budget funding situation has reached the critical "tipping point". It is critical that our core resources are protected from the further loss after 12 years of a flat and nominal budget. You asked us to do more, but it is much less compared to five years ago. There is a Chinese proverb that says "*no matter how skilful your housewife or house husband, without money how can you offer a nice meal to your kids, to your families*". 巧妇难为无米之炊。

For the 2024-2025 biennium, I am therefore presenting a net appropriation budget with cost increases to preserve purchasing power parity with 2022-2023. Even not 10 years ago, without any adjustment, no matter how much we have achieved will be gone because it is not consistent. We depend on PWB, it is our backbone as an Organization. Otherwise, it just gets one year high, one year low and then gone. I think that kind of organisation is not reliable, in my opinion. We need a consistent backbone to build up the excellent knowledge and with a basic structure, basic high quality of staff.

FAO has now faced six successive biennia of a flat nominal budget in its regularly assessed contributions, causing a decline of 7 percent in the Organization's purchasing power to over the past five years.

As requested by Members, we have prepared a number of budgetary reduction scenarios, under all the reduction scenarios, the Organization's technical capacity would be reduced. You do not want that, I know. Even while we continuously seek to identify efficiency savings, any further reduction will result

in the corresponding reduction of the Organization's capacity to deliver an immediate growing demands. That is not my personal judgement, it is based on the four years' FAO Oversight Advisory Committee. They have continued to follow.

Since I came, I have established the Oversight Advisory Committee. They are very experienced people from different organizations. They are mostly retired, only one from Italy, the host country. Therefore, it is from different continents. They follow up what the management look at. So, they have a very substantial recommendation to improve, so based on their assessment to reach their conclusions.

I am convinced that together, with the mutual collaborative commitment and with solid partnerships, we will be able to deliver on our shared ambition of ensuring a prosperous and equitable future for all, leaving no one behind.

Let us continue to work together in our fight against hunger and poverty, which is the real enemy in front of us. A consensual approval of the proposed budget level will be a powerful sign and strong signal for the FAO mission and for the humanity of the whole society. That is to ensure we will build One FAO more stronger, more accountable, more reliable and more useful for the Members, especially for vulnerable farmers and consumers.

Thank you for your support and let us move on.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Director-General, for your strong statement, your clear plea to start tackling and implementing programmes and projects for trying to achieve, within the mandate of FAO, Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) and many other SDGs. Indeed, what you said, for that we need a strong FAO here in Rome, at the global level, but also at the regional and national level, with the resources needed.

Thank you so much to you, your team and also all the staff Members of FAO, not only here in Rome but also at the regional and national offices, often in very difficult circumstances, and we have seen sometimes the devastating consequences of staff within the UN in some of the countries, even losing their lives.

Let us remember that as well and we should be so grateful and thankful to the staff of all UN organizations but especially all the staff of FAO. Thank you so much, Director-General.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Look at the Sudan issues, with my colleagues day and night to handle this situation. Two years ago in Afghanistan and some others, like the earthquake. Every day, as I said, we are committed to work for the people and for the Members. We try our best but we need some strong signal from you.

It is not a matter of money, it is a matter of political signal to support. We need some money, but we try to get more money from the market. You can see. We got so much increase on the volunteer contributions but we need the Members taking ownership of the Organization, not only partnership.

CHAIRPERSON

Before starting Agenda Item 1, *Adoption of the Agenda*, I have to inform you that Equatorial Guinea has considered to have resigned from the Council under the terms of Rule XII paragraph 7 of the General Rules of the Organization regarding arrears in the payment of financial contributions. Therefore, Equatorial Guinea will participate in the Council Session as Observer.

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 del calendario

(CL 172/1/Rev.1; CL 172/INF/1; CL 172/INF/3; CL 172/INF/5; CL 172/INF/5 Corr.1)

CHAIRPERSON

We are now going to the *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable*, which you can find in CL 172/1/Rev 2, CL 172/INF/1, CL 172/INF/3, CL 172/INF/5 and CL 172/INF/5 Corr. 1.

Under this Agenda Item, the Council is invited to suspend any rules incompatible with the hybrid setting, especially Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, which provides that “*each Session of the Council shall be held at the seat of the Organization*” in accordance with Rule VIII of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

Other relevant information of the Agenda and Timetable of the Session is set out in the documents I mentioned. I would like to propose that a Report of 136th Session and the Special Session of the Programme Committee be included under Item 9, which will then be entitled *Reports of the 135th Session, the 136th Session and the Special Sessions of the Programme Committee*.

I would also like to propose the addition of a sub-Item, *Statement by a Representative of the FAO Staff Bodies*, in line with established practice. If the Council is in agreement, this sub-Item may be addressed on Thursday under Item 22, *Any Other Matters*, as per the Provisional Timetable.

With regard to the Provisional Timetable, Members are reminded that Item 3, *Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)*; Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*; Item 15, *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization*; Item 16, *Code of Conduct for Voting*, as well as Item 17, *Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies*, will be delivered under their own respective Items and not when we consider Reports of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee, their Joint Meeting or the Committee on Constitution and Legal Matters.

Item 4, *Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2022*, will be addressed under the Reports of the Programme and Finance Committee. This is because of the particular nature of this topic, which was discussed separately by the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee. However, I will present the draft conclusions of the Council for this Item in a consolidated form after Item 10.

With regard to the special procedures to achieve time-saving at this hybrid session, it is also proposed that a number of Items on the Provisional Agenda of this Council will be addressed through a written correspondence procedure. Namely Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*; Item 14, *Arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference*; Item 18, *Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 171st Session of the Council*; Item 19, *Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO*; Item 20, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2023-2024*; and Item 21, *Tentative Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council*.

The Written Correspondence Procedure follows the procedure used by the Council since its 164th Session. In this regard, Members’ written inputs on the above Items have been received and compiled and may be found on the dedicated web page on the Council website. The draft conclusions for those Items to address the Written Correspondence Procedure shall then be addressed in Plenary on Thursday and Friday morning, if everything goes in accordance to plan.

The remaining Items on the Agenda of the 172nd Session of the Council, will be addressed in Plenary in their entirety.

Additionally, interventions by Regional Groups hopefully can be limited to five minutes and interventions by Members can hopefully be limited to three minutes. It is a practice in order to arrive at Friday afternoon with the Adoption of the Report.

May I take that the Council could approve the Agenda and the timetable for this Session?

Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND (Sweden)

We, the European Union and its 27 Member States, would like to take this opportunity to ask about the background for the addition of Item 5.1 to the Agenda of Council. We have understood that a Member asked a point to be added but the note from the delegation has not been formally made available to the Members of the Council.

We would, therefore, like you to inform us, Chairperson, or the Secretariat, of why the request for this Item has not been made available to Members, in the same way as requesting Item 6 to be inserted in the Agenda was published to Members.

Chairperson, can you or the Secretariat confirm which Member or Members requested the insertion of that Item and also we ask that the request be circulated to the Members of the Council as a necessary paper within the meaning of Rule XXV.6 (b) of the General Rules of the Organization, in the Basic Texts.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

En nombre de Costa Rica, y como Miembro de la Alianza para las Montañas, nos gustaría solicitar que se incluya un tema para información en la sección de "*Otros Asuntos*" relacionado con la reciente resolución adoptada en la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas, la cual incluye la programación de los cinco años de acción para el desarrollo de las regiones montañosas.

Creemos que es importante, aumentar la conciencia y la comprensión de la comunidad internacional sobre los problemas que enfrentan las regiones montañosas de todo el mundo y la necesidad de abordar esos problemas de manera integral.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Observer Kyrgyzstan.

Mr Taalai BAZARBAEV (Kyrgyzstan) (Observer)

On behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic, I am sincerely glad to welcome all the participants at the 172nd Session of the FAO Council. I would like to thank my colleague from the mission of Costa Rica who had raised a very important issue, to include under "*Any Other Matters*" section the five-tier plan of action for the development of mountain regions.

This important initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic was included into the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/172, Sustainable Mountain Development, which had been adopted in December 2022 in New York and co-sponsored by more than 110 UN Member States.

This resolution proclaimed 2023-2027 the five years of action for the development of mountain regions. In this regard, I would like to call on our informational partners to make active efforts to jointly develop a global action plan. We sincerely believe that our initiatives and joint activities will contribute to raising not only the ecological but also the economic and social levels of development of mountainous countries.

We appreciate your kind considerations on this matter. Taking this opportunity, I want to invite all of you to join us at the closing ceremony of the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development to be held on 26 April at the FAO headquarters.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor. Then I first go to the question as proposed by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The request for Item 5 was made by a Member of the FAO and if you look to the practice until now, and also in previous Sessions, almost all cases the request was made to the Director-General and a copy to me and either the Member who circulated the request itself or asked the Secretariat to circulate it.

In the case of Agenda Item 5.1 that was not the case and in consultation with the Legal Counsel it is clear that the correspondence between a Member and the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) is confidential and cannot be circulated, unless so requested by the Member. That is the reason why the letter to request Agenda Item 5.1 was not circulated. However, as it was requested in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, it was added to the Agenda.

Then, on the Item proposed by Costa Rica and Kyrgyzstan, of course, I think we can add this to the Agenda under "*Any other Matters*", and if the Council so decides, we will do it.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

J'avais en effet levé la pancarte avant que vous abaissiez votre marteau. Je voudrais tout d'abord saluer tous les collègues, et vous-même et vous souhaiter des débats fructueux.

Je voudrais tout d'abord revenir sur ce qui est indiqué et interroger la Conseillère juridique, pour savoir si elle considère en effet, conformément au texte de base de l'Organisation, si une lettre d'un État membre, exigeant, demandant l'addition d'un point de l'ordre du jour ne peut pas être circulée sans le consentement de l'État membre.

Il nous semble que cela est distinct de la pratique, y compris d'autres agences des Nations Unies, et il nous semble également que les textes de l'Organisation, en particulier l'article 25, paragraphe 6b, qui demande que le Directeur général circule un agenda révisé avec, je cite : *"Tous les papiers nécessaires."* Comprend bien une telle demande.

Cette demande est en effet la base juridique pour l'addition d'un point de l'ordre du jour et il nous semble que pour l'information de tous les États membres, pour vérifier que les procédures ont bien été respectées et, tout simplement, pour des raisons de bonne gouvernance, cela nous semble nécessaire que nous ayons cette information.

Deuxième question, l'addition du point de l'ordre du jour, la formulation demandée, qui est étrange, a-t-elle été demandée telle quelle par ledit État membre, et a-t-elle été reflétée tel quel dans l'agenda provisoire ?

Enfin, et c'est mon point, je pose cette question car le libellé n'est pas conforme à la réalité, nous y reviendrons sous le point 5.1 de l'ordre du jour, mais je souhaite que cette intervention soit reflétée dans les minutes de cette réunion. Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président, Madame la Conseillère juridique, de vos précisions à cet égard, qui, encore une fois, concernent tous les États membres, et en particulier ceux de ce Conseil.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to the Legal Counsel, I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

As a means of background information on how we have got to the Provisional Agenda, which is in front of the Council today, it might be worthwhile recalling that the Provisional Agenda was issued on 20 February in line with Rule XXV.6 (a). Subsequently, two separate requests were received from Members for addition of Items on to the Provisional Agenda, which led to two revisions of the Provisional Agenda – and ultimately to Item 5.1 and Item 6 being added on to document CL 172/1/Rev.2 which was circulated on 24 March, and is in front of the Council today.

This approach is fully in line with a long-established practice at FAO, most recently at the 170th Session of the Council when, subsequent to the issuance of the Provisional Agenda, one Member requested the addition of a new Item, which led to the revision of that Provisional Agenda, in the form of Item 18 in document CL 170/1/Rev.1.

Therefore, what I would say is that then, as now, the requirements of the Basic Texts have been met fully and faithfully, as well as in line with the established practice of FAO.

LEGAL COUNSEL

The question that was presented by Her Excellency, the Ambassador of France, was noting or observing that there may be a difference here in the procedure from other UN agencies. However, questioning whether or not Rule XXV.6 (b) had been complied with and the Ambassador recalled that Rule XXV.6 (b) which establishes that *"Any Member of the Council may request the Director-General, not less than 30 days before the proposed date of any session, to insert an item in the provisional agenda for that session. The Director-General shall thereupon, if necessary, circulate a revised provisional agenda to all Member Nations and Associate Members, together with any necessary papers."*

The question has thus arisen as to whether or not the letter that may have been received proposing the addition of this Item would constitute a “*necessary paper*” to be circulated, and indeed the question arises as to whether or not this would provide the legal basis for inclusion of this new sub-Item.

In this regard, I would note, and as observed by the Secretary-General, the Council has decided to include Items on its provisional Agenda, on its adopted Agenda, without circulation of the communication which may have given rise to that Item. Here the consideration or the deliberation was made that this was not a “*necessary paper*”.

I would note that there may be a difference of views here, but the legal basis for inclusion indeed in the Provisional Agenda is ultimately the request to the Director-General. The legal basis for the actual inclusion on the Agenda itself will be your decision to adopt the Agenda as presented.

I do not believe that there is any formal legal requirement though, that all documents that may have given rise to the inclusion of this Agenda Item need to be circulated. I refer you again to Rule XXV.6 (b), which leaves a margin of flexibility in that context.

As regards the question on the actual stipulation of the request, there I would have to defer to others; I am not aware of the exact wording of the request.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to make a correction or a clarification for the record, because the Secretary-General implied that a first letter was a request for a new Item. I think he was referring to our letter that we had sent from the United States of America, but just to clarify that was not a request for a new Item. That was a correction of an oversight from the Secretariat based on following the decision of the 171st Council in its conclusions, to include that Item in the Agenda of the 172nd Council. The choice to keep it as a separate Item was the Secretariat's, ours was not a request for a new Item.

CHAIRPERSON

I see the floor for France again but let us not prolong this discussion because on the Adoption of the Agenda we have still many Items to discuss which are crucial to be discussed and concluded before Friday afternoon.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Bien sûr, je le garderai court, mais puisque vous n'avez pas répondu à ma question, je la repose. Quelle était, s'il vous plaît, la formulation exacte demandée par l'État membre qui a sollicité ce point de l'ordre du jour, et par ailleurs, je voudrais soutenir ce qui a été indiqué par mon collègue américain. La demande avait été faite par ce Conseil et il nous semble essentiel que les demandes formulées par le Conseil lors des précédentes sessions soient mises en œuvre pleinement par la Direction.

CHAIRPERSON

The wording of Item 5.1 is the exact wording of the request of the Member. With that, can we now adopt the Agenda for this meeting? I do not see any objections. So decided.

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 turn to Agenda Item 2, *Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee*. Following consultations amongst the Regional Groups the following proposals for the three posts of Vice Chairpersons have been received, at least two of the three, and I know that the third one is being finalized at this moment.

We have the Vice-Chairpersons from Asia, from the Philippines, Ms Josyline C. Javelosa, and from GRULAC, Mr Guillermo Valentín Rodolico from Argentina, and probably this morning we are getting the Vice-Chairperson of the non-G77.

I have already congratulated those two nominations but let us say for the final adoption wait for the third person to be nominated. I will probably at the beginning of the Session, unless we get the nomination now, but I do not see any requests for the floor.

We continue with the Drafting Committee. Several nominations have been received for the Drafting Committee and I will read out what we have until now. We have received the following nomination for the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Guo Su from China. And we have received the following nominations for the Drafting Committee: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Sudan, Sweden, and the United States of America.

Are there any objections or comments?

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

The Candidates for the Drafting Committee were presented by the Regional Groups and there was a meeting of the European Regional Group during which we informed of the intention of the Russian Federation to present its candidature to the Drafting Committee. This communication was officially sent to the Coordinator of the European Regional Group and as I understood it, should have been communicated to the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the Secretariat.

Please take my statement as an official request for the Russian Federation to be included in the Drafting Committee.

Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND (Sweden)

The European Union and its 27 Member States disassociate themselves from consensus on the election of the Russian Federation as a Member of the Drafting Committee and request that this disassociation be reflected in the Report of the 172nd Session of the FAO Council.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America joins the European Union from a decision to allow the Russian Federation to be part of the Drafting Committee and request that disassociation be reflected in the Report as well.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Along the lines of the United States and the European Union and its 27 Member States, Canada also disassociates with the consensus on the selection of the Russian Federation for the Drafting Committee.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

In line with the previous speakers, Japan disassociates itself with the nomination of the Russian Federation as a member of the Drafting Committee.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

In line with other speakers and as a Member of the European Regional Group, the United Kingdom disassociates itself from the consensus of Russian Federation participation in the Drafting Committee.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Like others including Sweden, the United States, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, Australia also disassociates itself from any consensus for Russian Federation to be part of the Drafting Committee for this Session of Council.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation highly esteems the work of the FAO and considers this Organization at the vanguard of international efforts to move towards sustainable development in agriculture and to guarantee food security and accessibility of healthy food for all.

Independent Chairperson of the Council and Director-General, this was what you said during the course of your introductory remarks and we wholeheartedly support those remarks. Once again, we restate our position, that this Organization should not be the place for settling political scores. The results of these efforts would be the deviation of the Organization from more than 70 years of practise of taking decisions by consensus, even on strictly technical and organizational issues.

We have to follow the line towards confrontation that has been forced on us and therefore the Russian Federation disassociates itself from the candidacy of France, Sweden, and Luxembourg as Members of the European Union, and also Australia, the United States, Japan, as Members of the Drafting Committee.

We are forced to note unfortunately that this Session of the Council once again is opening in an atmosphere of confrontation which reduces the opportunity to achieve consensus, and to move back towards consensus in decision making despite the difficulty of the issues that we face.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Belarus would like to express its regret at the fact that our consensus did not last very long and to fully support the statement of the Russian Federation.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua quisiera sumarse a la declaración de la Federación de Rusia y de Bielorrusia. Consideramos que la Federación de Rusia es un país Miembro de la FAO, es un país soberano y, por lo tanto, tiene el mismo derecho de los otros países de integrarse tanto en el Comité de Redacción como en los otros Comités y órganos rectores de la FAO. Estando aquí presentes en el Consejo, igualmente tiene el derecho de poder ser parte de los demás Comités.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Observer Syrian Arabic Republic.

Mr Ayman RAAD (Syrian Arabic Republic) (Observer)

We would like to express our regret as the work of this Council is being politicized since the beginning. The Drafting Committee does not require such positions. Therefore, we echo the positions of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Nicaragua.

CHAIRPERSON

The mentioned disassociations are not only well noted, but will also be included in the Report of the Council as a minority view in line with the established practice. With that, can we agree to the Chair and the Members of the Drafting Committee? It is so decided.

Before moving to Agenda Item 3, I do hope we change the atmosphere in the room to much more progressive collaboration and consensus.

I wish to remind Members, if you have a written statement, please send them in advance if possible to FAO-interpretation@fao.org, to assist our well appreciated interpreters as well as the people working on the verbatim. Please make your statements to the point within the time limits.

Item 3. Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)

Point 3. Plan à moyen terme 2022-2025 (révisé) et Programme de travail et budget 2024-2025

Tema 3. Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 (revisado) y Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25

(C 2023/3)

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to go to Item 3, *Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)* which you can find in document C 2023/3.

The introduction of this Agenda Item by Ms Beth Crawford has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 3: Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)

Ms Beth Crawford, Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget

The Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 (MTP) is submitted in the second year of the biennium for review and approval by the membership.¹ It 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 FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 which focuses on supporting the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind.

The Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (PWB) builds on the key foundational elements presented in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 including the vision around the *four betters* and the updated results framework for 2022-25 with Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The PWB 2024-25 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.

Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25

After partially recovering in 2021 from the COVID-19 pandemic-induced contraction in 2020, the global economy has been experiencing a renewed slowdown in 2022 fuelled by a series of overlapping crises, including the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the exacerbation from the war in Ukraine, soaring food prices and overall inflation, and tightening financial conditions in most regions. The most recent estimates indicate that both the number of people affected by chronic hunger and the prevalence of undernourishment are on the rise.

In this context, the MTP (Reviewed) 2022-25, through the PPAs and the *four betters*, delivers results against its results framework through identified PPAs and – in line with the transformative nature of the Agenda 2030 – through a systems approach, considering social, economic and environmental development dimensions simultaneously, addressing the relevant trade-offs and optimizing synergies in achieving the SDGs.

The basic elements of the results architecture are described in *Figures 2 and 3. Annex 1* provides the updated results framework and *Annex 3* further describes FAO's contribution to the SDGs through the PPAs under the *four betters*.

The PPAs act as a transformational pathway towards SDGs, in alignment with national priorities and serve to assist country offices to position the Organization in the most strategic and leveraged way within the country dialogue and bring the wealth of FAO's expertise to support country work. The SDGs are the pivotal link between FAO's PPAs and the country results planned in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs)/Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) as shown in *Figure 4* and further detailed in *Annex 4* and *Figure 9*.

FAO organizes its work in the regions through Regional Priorities/Regional Initiatives, which serve as a multidisciplinary mechanism to ensure effective country delivery and impact of FAO's work in supporting countries in achieving the SDGs. The 2022 Regional Conferences supported the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework through the 20 PPAs, and all proposed Regional Priorities/Regional Initiatives are fully aligned with them as presented in *Table 9*.

Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25

The PWB 2024-25 has been developed around the following principles:

¹ Basic Texts, Volume II.F, Resolution No. 10/2009, Implementation of the IPA regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system (IPA Actions 3.1 to 3.11).

- a) present a budget which preserves purchasing power parity with 2022-23 (“zero real growth”);
- b) identify areas of programmatic emphasis, de-emphasis and realignment, based on developments and guidance received;
- c) cover all areas of emphasis and strengthening through re-allocation of funds from within existing resources; and
- d) maintain the organizational structure currently in place to accelerate the delivery of effective and demonstrable results.

Overview of resources planned and sources of funding

The PWB presents an integrated view of total resource requirements to carry out the Programme of Work comprising two distinct sources of funding. One source of funding is the assessed contributions by Members financing the net appropriation voted by the Conference in the Budgetary Appropriations Resolution. The other main source stems from extrabudgetary contributions provided by Members and other partners on a voluntary basis through direct support to the Organization, or through technical and emergency assistance to governments for clearly defined purposes within the FAO Strategic Framework and MTP.

The net appropriation budget is presented with cost increases to preserve purchasing power parity with 2022-23, as illustrated in the section *Overview of anticipated cost increases*. The budget also includes budgetary recoveries and re-allocations of USD 22.7 million as outlined in paragraphs 70 to 74.

The requirements to improve FAO’s financial health, liquidity and reserves include: the reinstatement of the approach of partial funding of USD 14.1 million towards the After-service Medical Coverage past liability as a separate additional assessment for the biennium; and a one-time assessment on Members of USD 19.3 million to bring the Working Capital Fund to the level of at least one month Regular Programme cash flow (USD 45 million).

Conclusion

The Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 are submitted for Council’s consideration and recommendation to the Conference, including on the budget level of USD 1 021.7 million at a budget rate of exchange of EUR 1 = USD 1.12.

CHAIRPERSON

We are all aware of the fact that this Item has been discussed at the 135th Session of the Programme Committee, the 195th Session of the Finance Committee, and the Joint Meeting. We already had two informal consultations on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and we all know that it is a crucial Item for not only this Council but also for the way forward for this Organization. It is important that we are inclusive, transparent and open, that we work now closely together to find the budget for the Organization.

We have to carefully listen to all of you, to see not only where your position is, but also to listen where we can find a middle ground. Out of the informal consultations we saw a tendency that at least many Members see the need for an increase of the budget, but the level of the increase is still quite heavily under discussion.

So please, clearly state where you are when you take the floor.

On the request of Regional Groups, I give a little bit more flexibility when it comes to the timing of statements on behalf of regional groups because it is such an important Agenda Item and it is covering so much, but please be as concise as possible. For this Agenda, I will be quite flexible, but I will be stricter for the rest of the Council, to arrive on Friday afternoon at the Adoption of the Report.

The floor is open for the Members, and I would like to start first with Regional statements.

Mr Gabriel MBAIROBE (Cameroon)

Cameroun, Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea are speaking on this agenda on behalf of Africa.

Our Regional Group welcomes the preparation, by the Director General, as a normal planning process, of document *Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25* and *Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25* (C

2023/3), which is intended to be presented for adoption by the 43rd Session of the Conference. We equally welcome the relevant Web Annexes and Information Notes.

The Africa Regional Group is happy to provide some guidance on the document for consideration by this 172nd Session of the Council, as outlined below.

We consider the document to be well drafted, convincingly rooted in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, and guided by the discussions that took place in the Regional Conferences in 2022, at the 171st Session of the Council and during the extensive and inclusive consultations of Members facilitated by the Independent Chairperson of the Council since February 2023.

We welcome the reports of the Programme Committee (PC), the Finance Committee (FC) and the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee, in their spring meetings, whose guidance is essential to the Council's consideration. We therefore take note with appreciations of the comments.

While recognizing the comprehensiveness of the document, where the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-2025 (reviewed) sets out the Strategic Objectives and Outcomes for achievement by Members and the international community with support from FAO, and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25 presents a quantification of costs under all sources of funds (net appropriation and extra budgetary resources) across the budgetary chapters and organizational structure, we are drawing the attention of Members on the following overarching basic considerations: the Medium Term Plan (MTP) provides an overview of the stronger linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the *four betters*; describes further the balance of the three pillars of sustainable development including through the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) with the streamlined and improved approach to outputs and their measurement to integrate Country Programming Frameworks more fully in the strategic results framework. The PWB takes as basic year the 2022-2023 as well as the previous five biennia during which the net budgetary appropriation level was USD 1005.6 million.

For six consecutive biennia (twelve years), the net appropriation level of the budget has remained the same.

The impact of global multi-faceted crises, some of which are protracted, combined with creeping inflation, on FAO's programmes delivery is heavy and hugely negative and could be irreversible if early proper and bold actions are not taken.

The consultative process and well-established Governing Bodies consideration of the proposed PWB have explored all possibilities and exhausted all technical discussions surrounding the proposed net appropriation budget for 2024-25, including requirements beyond the current nominal budget level to preserve purchasing power parity (PPP) with 2022-23 - that is, compensation for anticipated cost increases.

The Africa Regional Group notes that the Joint Meeting of the PC and FC, "*recommended that Management provide an information note before the 172nd Session of the Council, with additional scenarios with a lower budgetary impact, up to and including zero nominal growth, and their potential impact on the Programme of Work, by taking into account, for example, cost recovery and details on long-term vacancies*".

We also note that following informal consultations, Members made further request for additional scenarios.

The direct consequence of these requests is that our examination of the Director-General's budget proposal is rendered complicated by many scenarios. We now must work on the original proposal from the Director-General and four optional scenarios which are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

We endorse the recommendation of the Joint Meeting that "*encouraged all efforts towards reaching a consensus on the level of the budget, including through informal consultations between Members and Management, in the period leading up to the 43rd Session of the Conference*".

By endorsing this recommendation, the Africa Regional Group emphasises on the following reflexions: maintaining another biennium (the seventh consecutive) with the same budgetary appropriation, which lead to reduction of the technical capabilities of FAO, thus negatively affecting

its purchasing power parity globally. It is therefore becoming obvious that budget increase to cater for incremental cost requirements due to cost increases is unavoidable, and we take it for granted the perceived sentiments during informal consultations that Members may wish to support some level of budget increase.

It is advisable, therefore, to work with a lesser number of options in view of achieving the consensus on the budgetary net appropriation.

Obviously, the main objective shall be to agree on a budgetary level that will help the Director-General to deliver on the agreed programme of work.

Based on the above considerations, the Africa Regional Group stands ready to enter open discussion with other Members on the following grounds:

The Director-General's net budgetary appropriation that includes an incremental cost requirement of USD 55.8 million shall serve as the basis. This will therefore secure a net appropriation of USD 1061.4 million.

In any negotiation concerning the above amount, Members shall ensure that technical programmes are protected at the same level as normative activities.

The Members shall encourage the Management to maintain the actual organization chart to ensure continuity in programme delivery and accountability.

This Council shall agree on the fundamental high-level principles outlined above and leave room for further political discussions on the net budgetary appropriation, on the way to the 43rd session of the Conference.

It is understood that the Conference votes the net appropriation to be financed by assessed contributions, and in addition, encourages the Members to provide the estimated extrabudgetary voluntary contributions to facilitate implementation of the unified programme of work.

After adoption the net appropriation, the revised PWB will be submitted in the Council in November 2023. During that revision, we submit the following priority areas for our region: maintain and enhance the technical capacity of FAO in the decentralized offices to be able to improve its policy, programmatic, and operational delivery in order to continue to be a trustworthy partner for governments. Sustainable livestock development that respond to the particular context of our region, notably the small scale livestock.

Sustainable aquaculture development, forest, and soil management.

We also take note of the estimated extrabudgetary resources of USD 2979.3 billion. We encourage the Members to make voluntary contributions to facilitate the programme implementation and achievement of FAO's Strategic Objectives and cooperate initiatives.

In closing, we encourage other regional groups to support an increased net budgetary appropriation that will support programme implementation and work towards achieving consensus.

Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

We take note of the presentation of the Medium-Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for the next biennium.

We support the conclusions of the joint meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees calling for an inclusive process with Members to ensure a consensus decision at the Conference. Additional budget scenarios and briefings with the broad Membership are an important means to reach ownership of the final decision. We thank Management for the additional information provided in writing at the request from the Committees and from Members.

We recognise the need for Members to better understand the consequences of different scenarios and choices to be made, possible efficiency savings, necessary cuts to activities or postponements of new activities or the creation of new posts, in order to provide guidance to the Organization on what we

want FAO to do within the final budget. In a similar vein, budget allocations should rhyme with the shift in focus and should be communicated in all transparency, fostering a culture where Members are invested in the outcomes.

Today more than ever it is important that the core activities of FAO are at the forefront of the Programme of Work and Budget. We expect FAO to deliver, as a knowledge Organization, focusing on producing, managing, and sharing knowledge to enhance our understanding and ultimately achieve our common goals. This can be ensured not only by the Organization's technical expertise, but also through supporting functions such as oversight, human resources and logistics.

FAO's comparative advantage must be guaranteed. We need to be able to count on FAO to fulfil its role in contributing to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to deliver safe and nutritious food to all, to work within a One Health approach, and to spearhead sustainable food systems transformation.

We welcome the full coverage by the regular budget of commitments to Conventions, Treaty bodies and UN cost-sharing. This funding is especially important for the delivery of the Organization's public goods function.

We take note of the record-breaking result of attracting extrabudgetary funds for the 2022-23 period. Although voluntary funds account for 75 percent of the total budget, we need to be mindful of the stability and predictability of budget execution, enabling FAO to plan and implement the Programme of Work with greater certainty and consistency. We call for the development of a comprehensive vision for the funding of the Organization, including the use of assessed and voluntary contributions, the management of the various funding arrangements and how these contribute to the achievement of the Organization's objectives and the strategic framework in an effective, efficient and transparent way.

We stand ready to continue to work with others in the run-up to the Conference, to provide guidance to the organisation and to arrive at a consensus-based decision.

Since Sweden during this Council Session has presidency of the Council of the EU, speaking on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States, I would kindly ask you to pass the floor to Norway to speak on behalf of the Nordic Countries.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)

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

We welcome the presentation of the Medium-Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022-23 and that it is grounded in Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We are ready to continue to work with others to arrive at a consensus decision of the budget at the upcoming Conference. We welcome an inclusive process leading up to Conference to ensure Members' sense of ownership of the PWB.

We note the proposed strengthening of personnel services, especially Director positions at headquarter (HQ) and we would invite FAO to explain how it will balance resources between HQ and decentralized offices to ensure a stronger FAO capacity and delivery and footprint at country level.

We would like to provide some comments on what we see as important priorities for the work of FAO.

The world is facing compounded crises directly impacting global food security. In this regard, we strongly underline the importance of FAO continuing to monitor and address the consequences for food security stemming from Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

It is vital that the Programme of Work and Budget supports operational action and contributes to results at country level. FAO's work must be aligned with action by the broader UN system, the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF).

For the Nordic countries it is particularly important that the FAO Strategy on Climate change and the Science and Innovation Strategy are implemented forcefully across the Organization and at regional and country level, and that their impact is measured. One Health, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, healthy diets and food loss and waste must be given due attention. We also stress the importance of FAO's work on integrated water resources management and welcome that water is the biennial theme of FAO.

Furthermore, it is critical that FAO build on its comparative advantages within the areas of its mandate including its role as a normative and standard setting and a knowledge organization.

We want FAO to continue to be a global knowledge hub of excellence providing science-based evidence and statistics in the areas of food and agriculture in accordance with its mandate. Oversight functions must be prioritized.

We congratulate FAO on the increase in voluntary contributions which demonstrate the trust resource partners place in the Organization. Almost 75 percent of the projected budget consists of voluntary contributions, of which over 95 percent is expected to be earmarked at project level.

Against this backdrop, it is essential for FAO to increase its efforts towards attracting more flexible funding. Building trust with resource partners and exploring different funding modalities that meets the reporting needs and visibility of donors are therefore essential. We appreciate the efforts done in this regard with the flexible voluntary contribution mechanism (FVC) and the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) but further work is still needed. Improved financial flexibility can increase FAO's effectiveness and should be a priority of the Organization.

We also need to avoid that FAO becomes a service provider for earmarked initiatives and projects that might impact FAO's delivery of its core functions and the implementation of the agreed Strategic Framework.

In this context we reiterate the observation of the Finance Committee that adequate funding will be provided to oversight and administrative functions through the support recovery mechanism. This is important in order to ensure that the Organization can manage risk effectively, taking into consideration the increase in voluntary funding.

We note that more than half of the forecasted voluntary contributions in the PWB is expected to go towards emergency and resilience building activities. While we welcome FAO's role in providing emergency agricultural assistance and building resilience, this in our view further underscores the need for FAO to improve its attractiveness for flexible funding to ensure delivery of needs-based emergency programming.

The Nordic countries stand ready to continue working with others to reach an agreement on the budget for the coming biennium.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

It is my great pleasure to address you today at the 172nd Council and to review the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25. The importance of this comprehensive document is well known as it sets the direction of all of our work for the next few years.

We are deeply grateful to Ms Beth Crawford and her team for their endless efforts on preparing the document and leading the process. As the world faces unprecedented challenges such as climate change, economic inequality and food insecurity, Israel fully comprehends the global financial and economic climate. Israel expresses its appreciation for the dynamic nature of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) (MTP).

Israel acknowledges the necessity to shift in response from the COVID-19 pandemic to the new Strategies approved last year on Climate Change and Science and Innovation, as emphasized in paragraphs 39-40. We are confident that with this dynamic approach we will be able to address the challenges we face.

In addition, we acknowledge the great work that was done in Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (PWB) as well as identification of programmatic emphasis in 2024-25 as described in paragraphs 77 to 89. Above all, we stress the importance of applying all available funding to support the priorities established through the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.

This Framework outlined priority areas of action to achieve sustainable agriculture and food systems and resilient communities. Nevertheless, Israel recognizes the limited resources available to it as well as the challenging and economic climate in which we find ourselves.

As such it is still our firm belief that FAO must continue with its global commitment, only there has been a question raised in the last few weeks – at what cost. Have we reached a point where we draw a line between meeting the Strategic Framework goals and not implementing functions that may not be completely necessary? Clearly, one Member will provide a different response from another.

Israel thanks FAO for holding informal consultations with Members before this 172nd Session of this Council. It is reassuring that FAO values Members' inputs and works closely with them in order to accomplish its objective. In particular, we appreciate FAO for preparing information notes with four possible scenarios. By receiving these documents with different budgetary scenarios, we have gained a broader perspective on the issue.

Nonetheless, Israel requests FAO Management to attempt to refine the resolution regarding which FAO activities and programmes may be affected in these scenarios. We commend the efforts and work undertaken in a short period of time, as requested by Members. It is nevertheless our belief as representative of a country that succeeds in growing food in the middle of a desert, that if cutting the budget, it should not be viewed as a single value function. The non-filling of certain posts and positions should not be constructed as a sign that objectives have not been met.

We are well aware that for more than a decade now, FAO has dealt with zero nominal growth, which is clearly worsened by the current economic climate. However, necessity is the father of invention. We are forced to think outside of the box and to understand how to do more with less. It is important that we develop innovative, effective, creative and inclusive thinking. Neither the Members, FAO, nor we can afford not to meet our targets. This will not be forgiven by future generations.

In addition, as mentioned by Ms Crawford many times, it is clear that today's Council discussion is not the end of the story. Israel looks forward to further discussion and consultation with Members until the 43rd Conference Meeting in early July. Until then, we have time to find common ground and make a decision.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America appreciates the work that went into developing the budget proposals and appreciates the Director-General's focus on improving human resources, setting a positive tone at the top of the Organization and fostering an agile Organization focused on innovation.

There are 2.4 billion people not having access to adequate food, FAO has an important role to play in the food security crisis we are all confronting – and it is a crisis.

Russian Federation's unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine has put millions worldwide at even greater risk of hunger, exacerbating the negative effects of COVID-19, of climate change, and of other conflicts on our global food systems. As the Director-General noted in his opening remarks, FAO has stepped up in its efforts to respond to Member requests to do more to respond, given the important role that the Organization has to respond to this crisis. We recognize that FAO needs the resources to do so.

The United States specifically appreciates FAO's increased support to the standard setting bodies of CODEX and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), of science and innovation, and of climate change. The United States appreciates the additional resources to the office of the Inspector General and for oversight functions, as well as for the human resources division.

These are essential for the effectiveness of the Organization in carrying out its mission – and at the same time we have heard consistently in meetings such as the recent Finance Committee and Joint Meeting, about the financial strains some Members face. We do not have unlimited resources and we

will need to balance any additional support for FAO against other needs and commitments. As we closely consider FAO's proposed budget increase and what the proper amount for an increase is, we have a few comments on the budget proposal building on the excellent discussions that we had in the Finance Committee not long ago.

We appreciate the new scenarios from Information Notes 1 and 2. We note that with the exchange rate adjustment shifting the final budget total down, the original proposed increase would be a 5.6 percent increase, compared to 2022-23, but only a 1.6 percent increase compared to the nominal total.

Similarly, even scenarios 1 and 2 present an increase of 3.9 percent compared to the 2022-23 levels, before the exchange rate adjustment. Therefore, at this stage we are all in essence considering what increase to adopt in the range of 3.9 and 5.6 percent.

Management has asked for guidance on an acceptable budget level and where to make reductions in their current proposal if a lower level is adopted. We recognize the importance of the 42 new positions to be added using cost recovery funds and we want to keep those. We also do not want to cut any positions from the decentralized offices due to their important technical work.

We propose adopting a budget level that keeps stable the total professional positions at headquarters level, 922 positions, while keeping the number of posts in the original budget proposal for the decentralized offices, which is 335.

We note that even at this level there would still be a net increase in total posts, as additional posts at the general service and director levels, would be added using cost recovery funds.

The United States is however flexible, and we look forward to working with other Members on this Council to find a consensus position on this budget.

We also want to reiterate the guidance from the Finance Committee that considerations of the additional assessment for the After Service Medical Coverage and the onetime assessment for the Working Capital Fund, be deferred to future biennia. Colleagues, to be clear, the United States continues to hold a general Zero Nominal Growth (ZNG) policy in FAO and across all international organizations, but given the importance of FAO's work right now during a time of crisis and food security, we would support an increase beyond the ZNG level this year.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

South Africa associates itself with the statement made by Cameroon on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. Ms Beth Crawford and her dedicated team is thanked for the detailed background documents, the budgetary analysis and the inclusive interaction with Members States on the FAO Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25.

The *four betters* have proved to be effective in realizing the objective of reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, South Africa wishes to emphasize the importance of FAO to undertake action in support of national approaches, to upscale climate smart agriculture and enhancing the resilience of the food and agriculture production systems through adaptation, reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, and safeguarding national food security while supporting the attainment of the SDGs.

South Africa believes that the oceans are a significant asset that have the potential to dramatically reduce hunger. In this regard FAO's Blue Transformation as a key Programme Priority Area needs our collective support, as this initiative will enhance the contribution of fisheries and aquaculture to not only eradicate hunger but also to protect our coastal livelihoods. This is also a priority of the African Union.

It is recognized that the current global food crisis resulting from a combination of multifaceted and interconnected factors, including the continued impact of COVID-19, climate change and conflicts, have contributed to high energy and food prices leading to rising inflation and diminishing economic growth. These factors will have an impact on the ability of FAO to deliver on its technical and normative work, therefore the continuation of maintaining a Zero Nominal Growth budget at the FAO as was done since 2012, is no longer sustainable.

However, whilst national Governments remain under budgetary pressures, these factors have informed our careful deliberations on finding a level of increase for FAO's budget that would meet the increased expectations whilst taking into account and in consideration the ability of Members to pay their assessed contributions.

Furthermore, the FAO staff members are its most valuable assets and the anticipated budget would need to be adequately safeguarded for their post-retirement liabilities. This will require that the FAO maintain the minimum staff required to implement the agreed programmes and that a continued process of identifying and implementing efficiency measures and savings be encouraged.

Extra-budgetary contributions that now constitute approximately 70 percent of the FAO's budgetary income, contribute significantly to implement relevant operational programmes, which is highly appreciated. However, we need to also take into account how the management of these onetime contributions should not impact negatively on the assessed contributions.

Although it is appreciated that the Technical Cooperation Programme funding remains at 14 percent of the net assessed budget, if we have to address the negative impacts of the global food crisis, this percentage needs to be increased in future budgets.

In conclusion, South Africa have the trust in the Director-General and his Management to implement the FAO's Programme of Work and Budget efficiently and effectively.

With these comments, South Africa stands ready to join the consensus on FAO's Programme of Work and Budget for 2024/-25 based on a realistic increase in resources.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom (UK) takes note of the Programme and Work and Budget (PWB) for the 2024-25 biennium and thanks FAO Management for its preparation.

We welcome and encourage an increased focus in the PWB on climate change and the implementation of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change, working in partnership with others – including the other Rome-based Agencies, as they step up their engagement on climate adaptation.

We look forward to FAO focusing support on the poorest and most vulnerable countries, helping them to access climate finance in ways that accelerates their path towards sustainable agriculture practices and improved food security and nutrition outcomes. The UK looks forward to continuing to work with FAO to develop and strengthen this links across the international system - with other agencies, the Climate Funds, and relevant international financial institutions (IFIs) - to ensure effective coordination across the international architecture for more and better climate finance. This includes supporting anticipatory action activities that can reduce humanitarian caseloads. We are organising a conference on this subject in July in the UK and we have ensured that representatives of FAO and the other Rome agencies are invited to participate.

The UK also welcomes FAO's enhanced focus on One Health and the commitment in the PWB on Antimicrobial Resistance, working as part of the One Health Quadripartite.

We encourage FAO to continue to strengthen its nutrition work, especially considering the reversal of progress on nutrition since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of children affected by child wasting, the most visible and lethal type of malnutrition, is estimated to have risen to 60 millions in 2022 alone. That trend is worsened by the impact of climate change, conflict, and the ongoing global food security crisis. We recognise the important role FAO plays in this area and want to work with FAO and partners across the system to improve nutrition outcomes.

We strongly endorse the Programme Committee recommendations on the need to strengthen the links between the four betters, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators and FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPFs). Clear links between FAO's activities and their impact on the SDG indicators can also strengthen data collection and analysis. This can help more effective coordination between the many partners working to achieve SDG2.

On the budget, we appreciate FAO's work in responding to Member State requests to provide different scenarios for discussion. The UK will consider a budget increase.

For all the reasons other Members are mentioned but we feel there has been insufficient time to consider the scenarios that have been presented including the balance of each quarter that feel staff and the clearer sense of impact on core results and outcomes. We look forward to engaging with other Members and FAO between now and Conference with the aim of reaching a consensus on the PWB.

We have noted the continuing shift in the overall budget towards increased extra-budgetary funding. We would like to ask FAO about the implications of this trend and how the Organization – and potentially its Governing Bodies – could or should adapt to better monitor and manage the implications of that trend for the PWB in the future.

Finally, we underline the need to strengthen engagement with the private sector to implement and finance both the climate change and the science and innovation strategies, which cancel past last summer.

We recognise the work done by the climate change department, the Chief Scientist, and the Chief Economist for the quality of their analysis and engagement in this work over the past few years.

We encourage FAO to tell us where they need support in making links to the wider international architecture to better deliver more effective results with partners, in these areas and in others covered by the PWB.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration de la Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres, et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. Merci tout d'abord à Beth et à ses équipes pour le travail.

La France accorde la plus grande attention à une gestion rigoureuse et efficace des budgets des organisations internationales. Sa politique transversale à cet égard demeure celle d'une croissance nominale nulle (CNZ). Dans le contexte fortement inflationniste, et sous certaines conditions, la France peut envisager au cas par cas de déroger à cette règle et d'accepter une hausse modérée pour autant que de solides justifications existent et que toutes les mesures d'efficience et d'économie aient d'abord été explorées.

Comme déjà indiqué, l'augmentation de 5.6% proposée par la Direction de la FAO ne peut pas être acceptée en l'état. Selon ses estimations, la Direction va recouvrer 22.7 millions de dollars additionnels sur la gestion des ressources extrabudgétaires, permettant le renforcement de certaines divisions ou programmes considérés comme prioritaires, notamment par la création nette de 42 postes, tous au siège.

Dans ce contexte, les efforts budgétaires accrus demandés aux États membres ne sont pas opportuns. En outre, la proposition du Secrétariat ne contient pas d'informations sur les efforts d'efficience et d'économies notamment ceux normalement permis par l'utilisation du numérique et d'une FAO digitale.

C'est pour cela que le Comité du Programme et le Comité financier ont invité la Direction à fournir d'autres scénarios budgétaires, dont un en croissance nominale nulle, et un en croissance intermédiaire. Ils ont également invité la Direction à procéder à des gestes, justement pour compenser l'impact des augmentations de coût, notamment grâce à la réaffectation de ressources à partir d'autres chapitres du budget et grâce à de possibles nouvelles hausses de recouvrement de dépenses.

Nous relevons, comme d'autres, que le Secrétariat propose de créer sept postes de directeurs, tous situés au Siège, alors que la FAO se caractérise d'ores et déjà par un double déséquilibre. D'une part, une sorte de macrocéphalie du Siège par rapport aux Bureaux de terrain, comme souligné par d'autres collègues, et d'autre part une proportion trop forte d'encadrement supérieur, avec une proportion de postes de directeurs de niveau D est supérieure par rapport au nombre total de fonctionnaires de la FAO, qui est plus du double de la moyenne du système des Nations Unies.

Au-delà de la question du niveau du budget, nous souhaitons que les programmes et activités financés par celui-ci reflètent le cœur du mandat de la FAO, en particulier ses fonctions normatives, qui en font l'organisation de référence dans des domaines essentiels tels que l'agriculture et l'élevage, le climat et

la biodiversité, la protection des végétaux, les ressources phyto-génétiques, la lutte contre la pêche illégale, le Code alimentaire (CODEX), l'approche «Une seule santé » et cetera.

À cet égard, il faut renforcer les fonctions centrales de la FAO en tant que dépositaire des traités élaborés sous son égide. Cette fonction essentielle n'est aujourd'hui pas assurée de manière satisfaisante faute de ressources suffisantes. La notification des développements relatifs aux traités prend couramment plusieurs mois, alors qu'il ne faut que quelques heures au Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour le faire. Nous n'oublions pas pour autant l'importance du Programme de coopération technique (PCT) pour mettre en œuvre concrètement ses activités normatives au niveau des pays, nous plaçons pour qu'une proportion plus forte du PCT soit allouée aux pays à faibles revenus.

Il est également essentiel que le plan à moyen terme révisé, le programme de travail et budget prennent bien en compte les conséquences de la guerre en Ukraine et l'appui aux pays les plus exposés aux conséquences de l'insécurité alimentaire, comme demandé par le Conseil et la Conférence régionale Europe. Nous souhaitons aussi que les fonctions de contrôle soient renforcées et enfin, il importe que les États paient leurs arriérés de paiements.

En conclusion, la France estime que la poursuite des consultations informelles avec tous les États membres est nécessaire pour parvenir à un consensus et nous continuerons d'œuvrer en ce sens avec tous, pour être efficace nous demandons que ces consultations soient assorties d'une procédure écrite, permettant aux membres de poser des questions spécifiques et de recevoir des réponses écrites du Secrétariat, comme il se pratique couramment ailleurs pour faciliter l'information de tous les États membres et bien sûr, l'obtention du consensus.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

Brazil thanks the Secretariat, especially Ms Beth Crawford and her team, for preparing the Programme of Work and Budget, as well as the useful information notes on budgetary scenarios.

As we all know, FAO's budget has experienced zero growth for the past 12 years. However, the challenges we face as an Organization have spiraled in the same period.

Today, hunger, food, and nutritional insecurity are worse than 12 years ago. The climate and biodiversity crisis show no signs of abating. Underdevelopment and poverty dramatically impact food security around the world.

Responding to these growing challenges is a key priority for Brazil.

People need FAO's support in the field more than ever. Business as usual is not an option.

To meet these needs, Brazil agrees with the proposal made by the Director-General to increase by 5.6 percent the next FAO Programme of Work and Budget in order to preserve FAO's purchasing power parity.

My Delegation is not going to repeat our intervention delivered at the last session of the Programme Committee but would like to emphasize some areas that deserve attention. We consider that funding for the conventions, treaty bodies and intergovernmental arrangements should be contemplated in the programme, ensuring extra resources to areas like the Codex Alimentarius, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the International Plant Convention. On the same tone, Members must not underestimate the importance of providing adequate budgetary resources to the Committee on World Food Security.

Another area we attribute great priority is the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). The Organization needs to be able to deliver in the field; without this, the knowledge FAO generates will struggle to have an impact in people's lives. Technical Cooperation Programme funds should gradually increase.

In this context, it is fundamental that the Organization make every effort to raise the resources available to the programme from the current level of 14 percent to 17 percent, as discussed in previous Conferences. Before concluding, I would like to draw attention to the issue of extrabudgetary contributions.

These sources of funding have grown to play a sizeable role in the Organization. On the one hand, the execution of extrabudgetary programs might bring synergies to budgeted actions. On the other hand, we

need transparency on how extrabudgetary resources, governance and impact in the work of the Organization.

We would like to thank the Secretariat for producing information note number 3, which provides preliminary approach and information but we still believe further discussions on the subject are needed.

Let me highlight the importance we attach to the proposal of the Management to organize informal consultations with Members on the role and effects of earmarked contributions in delivering the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, taking into consideration the request made by the 170th Session of the Council in June 2022.

This Council should work to build a consensus around a budget that reflects the needs of the people, especially those most in need and in hunger. Brazil will be engaged in that effort.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Germany attaches great importance to the inclusive debate about the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 for the next biennium. We would like to underline that for Germany it is essential to better understand the consequences of different scenarios on the table.

In difficult times, we are aware that FAO with its mandate has currently an important role to play in the food crisis and to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We reiterate the request by several Members to FAO in the informal discussions to provide more information about past efficiency savings and about potentially remaining possibilities in this regard, for example through UN cost sharing.

Let me finish by providing our support to the proposal that FAO should engage with Members to initiate a review of FAO's financial and administrative structure to ensure that FAO is transparent and fit for purpose. We stand ready to continue to work with all regional groups in the coming weeks before the conference to provide guidance to the Organization and to arrive at an acceptable consensus decision.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Si algo es claro de los documentos estratégicos y programáticos que hemos aprobado todos los Miembros es que una de las ventajas comparativas de la FAO radica en que es un organismo intergubernamental especializado de las Naciones Unidas, cuya función es generar conocimientos técnicos de alta calidad de manera neutral, imparcial e independiente.

La FAO como organismo intergubernamental debe actuar en sinergia con otros organismos con sede en Roma y con asociados de las Naciones Unidas y de otros ámbitos para, fundamentalmente, ayudar a los países en desarrollo a encauzar esos conocimientos hacia políticas, programas e inversiones específicas para cada contexto, según cada realidad nacional a fin de respaldar el cumplimiento de los objetivos nacionales en relación con sus respectivos sistemas agroalimentarios.

Es en esa línea que incansablemente la Argentina reitera que existen diversos enfoques, sistemas y herramientas de producción sostenibles. La FAO, como plataforma neutral, debe 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 de la Agenda 2030.

Dichos estos elementos esenciales –ordenadores a nuestro entender–, para encarar la discusión del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-2025, nuestro país agradece al Management por haberse comprometido a realizar algunas correcciones al documento para alinear el Plan a plazo medio y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto a la solución alcanzada en el documento *C 2021/LIM/4* de la última Conferencia y a las soluciones sobre conceptos que ya fueron discutidos y superados por el consenso en los Miembros, en los Órganos de Gobierno de la FAO.

En particular, apreciamos la mención de transformación azul, como fuera expresado por Sudáfrica, que debería ser presentada como hoja de ruta o como esfera programática prioritaria en el párrafo 83 para evitar cualquier mal entendido.

Hasta aquí nos hemos referido a cuestiones conceptuales, pero ahora debemos entrar en el tema de presupuesto en sí. Argentina está padeciendo los efectos de cuestiones estructurales y coyunturales que afectan su economía, la producción, el control de la inflación, etcétera. Por lo tanto, sostenemos una posición sistémica en todo el sistema de Naciones Unidas para mantener el crecimiento nominal cero. Por ello esperamos que mientras la FAO trabaja sobre la recuperación gradual de gastos de apoyo y eventualmente de mayores ahorros, estaremos atentos a cómo los Miembros de manera constructiva buscan elaborar un consenso sobre esta cuestión. El diálogo será la solución y somos optimistas.

En esa línea y en relación con la solicitud de financiamiento parcial del pasivo del Plan de seguro médico después del cese en el servicio (ASMC) y del fondo de operaciones, acompañamos las conclusiones del Comité de Finanzas al respecto. Quizás el tema más importante está dado por el criterio de las asignaciones de nuevos recursos a algunas áreas dentro de la Organización. Nosotros, los Miembros, debemos asumir la responsabilidad que nos cabe, que es la de aportar guías, ideas, propuestas que ayuden al Management con su tarea. Pero de ninguna manera es parte de nuestro deber hacer algún tipo de micromanagement.

Considerando que la FAO es la manifestación institucional del compromiso de la comunidad internacional en lograr la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición, especialmente en los países en desarrollo que son las principales víctimas de la tragedia que vivimos, es por ello que formulo dos preguntas que son principios guías que mi Delegación pone a disposición:

Uno, en un mundo asignado por numerosas crisis que se suman a inequidades estructurales, ¿la FAO no debería asignar los eventuales nuevos recursos a los procesos que participan todos los Miembros y tienen resultados, implicancias de carácter sistémicas para todos? Obviamente, sin afectar los programas regionales en curso, cuestiones como el Programa de Cooperación Técnica, los nuevos Subcomités de pesca y ganadería, ePhyto, el Codex, la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria, incluso el Comité de seguridad alimentaria.

Dos, teniendo en cuenta el desbalance previsto entre las contribuciones ordinarias y las voluntarias, ¿las cuotas de los Miembros no deberían destinarse a compensar este desbalance, o a áreas con menor interés sostenidas fundamentalmente por contribuciones voluntarias?

Con estos comentarios agradecemos haber podido compartir nuestra visión y siempre encontrará a nuestra Delegación como facilitadora de los consensos necesarios.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina was the last speaker of this morning because it is 12:00 hours. I think we have the good spirit in our room, because we are not yet there of course, but everybody is clearly stating the direction where we have to go and all interventions clearly stated that we have to find consensus.

I think that is the atmosphere we need here in this room. It is now time for a break for refreshments; we energise ourselves for the afternoon Session.

Thank you so much for your constructive spirit in the second half of this morning. We break now for lunch and reconvene at 14:00 hours sharp in this room. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:02 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 02

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.02

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
SECOND PLENARY SESSION DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA
24 April 2023

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:05 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 05
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.05
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
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 (*continued*)**
- Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents et nomination du président et des membres du Comité de rédaction (*suite*)**
- Tema 2. Elección de los tres vicepresidentes y designación del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción (*continuación*)**

CHAIRPERSON

We have now all nominations for the Vice-Chairpersons for the Council. As I said, this morning we had already Asia represented by the Philippines, Ms Josyline Javelosa; and Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), Mr Guillermo Valentin Rodolico; and we have now the German Ambassador, Mr Joachim Bleicker on behalf of the non-G77 & China countries. May I take your approval that we can appoint them as Vice-Chairpersons of the Council?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

It is so decided. Good luck.

- Item 3. Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25) (*continued*)**
- Point 3. Plan à moyen terme 2022-2025 (révisé) et Programme de travail et budget 2024-2025 (*suite*)**
- Tema 3. Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 (revisado) y Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25 (*continuación*)**
- (C 2023/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We always need a good start in our discussions. I have 11 speakers on my list so let us continue and let us maintain the positive spirit of this morning where a clear sense or an indication about the budget has been given and also a clear wish of everybody to arrive at a consensus on the budget.

It probably was also clear, if you listened very carefully, but for the level of the budget we need some more informal consultations. But based on your remarks this morning, I know for sure that we can finalize a compromise by consensus before the Conference.

Mr. Henri OKEMBA (Congo)

Comme c'est pour la première fois que je m'exprime devant cette auguste assemblée depuis mon installation en qualité d'Ambassadeur, je tiens à vous exprimer tout mon bonheur d'être des vôtres et toute ma disponibilité à collaborer avec toutes les Représentations diplomatiques dans un esprit de compréhension mutuelle.

Nous remercions le secrétariat pour la préparation des documents de la présente session et saluons la dextérité avec laquelle vous, Monsieur le Président, conduisez nos travaux.

La République du Congo s'aligne à la déclaration faite par le Cameroun au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique au titre de ce point de l'ordre du jour de notre session et souhaite souligner les quelques éléments de contexte au moment où nous débattons du Plan moyen de travail 2022-2025 révisé et du Programme de travail et budget (PWB) 2024-2025.

Dans le contexte de crises multidimensionnelles actuelles, la FAO, Organisation dotée d'un mandat robuste en matière d'alimentation, de nutrition et de lutte contre la pauvreté, doit pouvoir : Premièrement, mettre en place un plan de travail ambitieux pour inverser la tendance sans cesse croissante des personnes souffrant de la faim et vivant dans l'extrême pauvreté, non seulement en comptant sur les contributions volontaires pré-affectées de ses membres, dont nous saluons la générosité, mais aussi à partir des contributions ordinaires des membres pour amplifier les activités du cadre programmatique. Nous saluons de ce fait l'augmentation des crédits de 15 pour cent relatifs au

Programme de Coopération Technique (TCP), même si le taux de 17 pour cent aurait dû être l'idéal pour nous, et l'appui apporté au cadre normatif. La vie n'a pas de prix dit-on, Monsieur le Président. Le quasi milliard de personnes affamées dans le monde appartient à la FAO. Comment pourra-t-elle les ignorer ? En effet, s'attaquer efficacement aux causes de la faim et de la pauvreté maintenant avec des coûts peut être moindres, nous évitera de panser désespérément les plaies avec des coûts élevés demain;

Deuxièmement la FAO doit décupler sa capacité d'intervention avec des ressources humaines compétentes sur le terrain pour plus de proximité avec les bénéficiaires de ses programmes et projets, parce que c'est le terrain qui dicte le combat ;

Et enfin troisièmement, la FAO doit maintenir sa capacité opérationnelle à travers le maintien de son pouvoir d'achat, qui a longtemps été obéré par la conjoncture économique morose que nous vivons depuis près d'une dizaine d'années.

A notre humble avis, autour de ces objectifs prioritaires graviteront ceux liés à la gouvernance et à la place des femmes et des jeunes dans les systèmes alimentaires et bien d'autres. Avec ces quelques commentaires, nous appelons l'ensemble des membres à examiner objectivement et dans un esprit de consensus la proposition faite par le Directeur Général, à qui nous exprimons toute notre gratitude.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Nuestra Delegación ha examinado el documento sobre el Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 (Revisado) y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25. Hemos apreciado las gestiones de FAO en los últimos años para organizar y ejecutar su trabajo con el monto de presupuesto de los últimos seis bienios.

Agradecemos las consultas informales, así como las notas informativas en las que se ha incluido los cuatro escenarios y las repercusiones en el programa y el presupuesto según las hipótesis expuestas. Reconocemos la importancia de FAO en su labor y mandato en la seguridad alimentaria mundial a través de las diferentes divisiones, programas, proyectos, procesos e iniciativas para la consecución de los Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS) de la Agenda 2030 y la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Reconocemos también que los desafíos actuales, tales como el cambio climático, los conflictos, la desigualdad, las dificultades económicas y la pobreza impiden alcanzar el ritmo deseado en sus Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible. Sin duda, es un reto poder apoyar bajo las circunstancias actuales a todos los Miembros en sus diferentes necesidades y bajo diversas capacidades nacionales o regionales teniendo en cuenta también los problemas incipientes que no podemos y no podremos dejar de atender.

Para nuestra Delegación, la labor de FAO y la asistencia a través de su personal técnico especializado son relevantes para construir o mejorar las capacidades nacionales y tener un impacto positivo en sectores vitales como la agricultura, la pesca, la acuicultura, la nutrición y los sistemas agroalimentarios. Por eso apoyamos el Programa de trabajo de la Organización manteniendo los puestos de carácter técnico y que se mantenga el Programa de cooperación técnica en al menos 14% del presupuesto total.

Para los países en desarrollo, los programas de cooperación técnica tienen un impacto positivo que repercuten también a nivel regional, y para Costa Rica, el intercambio que se pueda generar a raíz de ese tipo de cooperación puede llevar a resultados muy positivos. Nuestra postura con relación al presupuesto es de un crecimiento nominal cero, pero apoyamos lo que en consenso se apruebe, que permita que la Organización pueda desarrollar su mandato y las esferas de trabajo.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

At the outset, we thank the Management for the comprehensive document together with the Information Notes and the transparent and inclusive consultation process with Members carried out on this item prior to the this Council Session.

In reviewing the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025, we must take into account the global situation and the increasing challenges, such as conflicts and geopolitical tensions, extreme and

frequent climatic events, economic slowdowns leading to hunger and malnutrition in the world. In this context, FAO's important role is well recognized, so there is a need for a strong FAO, because of the importance of food and agriculture and agrifood systems in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

We note the document the PWB 2024/2025 is a “zero real growth” budget, which preserves purchasing power parity with the previous biennium; it identifies areas of emphasis and de-emphasis; covers all areas of emphasis through re-allocation of funds from within existing resources.

We also note with some concern that FAO has had six successive biennia, i.e. 12 years of a flat nominal budget in its assessed contributions and consequently, FAO's purchasing power has declined by USD 67.2 million or approximately 7 percent. Also, we were informed that since 2010-2011, FAO had efficiency savings of USD 190 million. Given these significant levels of savings already achieved over the past years, we would highlight that any further measures must not affect the delivery of the Programme of Work. In this connection, an important aspect, which also needs to be noted is that, in order to avoid any negative impact on FAO's technical delivery, past efficiency measures have focused on identifying efficiencies or savings in the Organization's “non-technical” areas which means administrative and other enabling functions, resulting in cuts in various posts in these areas.

We, the Members, as part of the Governance process, need to ensure that the negative impact on FAO of past years is not only redressed but that further cuts in these areas are avoided to enable the Secretariat to manage effectively the public funds put at its disposal. Hence, it is our responsibility to ensure (i) that FAO continues to play its role as a global centre of technical excellence and knowledge hub and working with Members and partners to further the achievement of the 2030 Agenda; (ii) that there is no negative impact on the adequacy of the Internal Control System or increase in internal control and compliance risks and (iii) that FAO redresses some of the staffing with appropriate grading structures of units which had suffered budget cuts and reduction in posts and grades. This problem had also surfaced even in prior years as a result of the budget cuts. I recall the Independent Evaluation of FAO had also drawn attention to this aspect of lower graded posts dealing with important programmes.

We also need to bear in mind what has been highlighted in the Information Notes, namely, that “*the cumulative effect of past measures, particularly on the administrative areas (i.e. finance, human resources, procurement), had already affected their capacity to support technical programme delivery, while at the same time increasing internal control and compliance risks. Similarly, the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee in its 2022 report, whilst commending FAO on achieving considerable efficiency savings over the years, also noted that budget constraints over an extended period risk working against efficiency and effectiveness*”. Further, the FAO Conference has also stressed that efficiency savings and gains should be identified without negatively impacting the delivery of the Programme of Work.

In this respect, based on my experience in past years in FAO, I can confirm that there have been periods in the past when lack of an adequate system of Internal Control led to a number of serious wrong doings, so much so, that on one occasion some Members were requesting a police investigation. Although the burden of fiduciary responsibility and accountability vis-à-vis the Members rests with the Director-General, we Members, as part of the Governance Process, cannot escape responsibility because as Governing Bodies we are supposed to oversee and ensure that adequate systems are in place. Considering the importance placed on the fiduciary responsibility and accountability by the regulations, we as the Governing Body must ensure that the resources made available to FAO are sufficient to enable an adequate system of internal control to be in place so that the public funds are managed efficiently and effectively.

In conclusion, in view of what I have said about FAO maintaining its role as a global centre of technical excellence as well as maintaining adequate systems to discharge its fiduciary and accountability functions, the Organization must have adequate resources at its disposal. Consequently, to ensure this, we would support the Director-General's PWB 2024/2025 proposal as set out in document, *Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (C 2023/3)* and we hope Members will be able to come together for a consensus decision in this regard.

Mr Antonius Yudi TRIANTORO (Indonesia)

The Indonesian delegation wishes to commend the Secretariat for the preparation of the document *CL 172/3* including Information Notes 1, 2 and 3, which provides for the information on budgetary scenarios of the proposed Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25 as proposed by the Director-General.

Indonesia appreciates the thorough review of an assessment of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Joint Meeting of the proposed PWB and would like to make a few comments.

Indonesia appreciates the Management's effort in maintaining a flat nominal budget in its Regular Programme contribution for the last six biennia. We understand the pressure in the current context with the many complex issues and recognize the need to support FAO's core function and mandate through resources from its regular budget.

In this regard, we are pleased to see FAO's continued partnership with Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) as important extrabudgetary resources to support our effort.

We encourage FAO with its comparative advantages, to continue to strengthen work in these areas.

Regarding staff recruitment it initially cast a balance in terms of general and geographical responsibility be ensured. We also believe that additional savings can be made at the regional and subregional levels if we consider recruiting local professionals with fewer costs, particularly consultants, bearing in mind the advantages of local expertise required for these posts.

While we appreciate that in the proposed PWB, a penchant is given to the Technical Cooperation Programme aiming at building capacity at the country level to ensure sustainability and long-term development. Yet, as recommended by the Joint Meeting we encourage further consultations towards reaching a consensus on the purpose of our budget level for the PWB 2024-25.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia)

Malaysia commends the Secretariat for the elaborate Medium-Term Plan (MTP) 2022-2025 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25. We would like to make a brief observation on some of the key aspects described in the document.

In particular, we took note with high interest programming emphasis and the emphasis in 2024-25, while noting the emphasis on Integrated Water Resources Management and further mainstreaming it in the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). We would like to call on a FAO to scale up its work in circular economy as one of the important solutions to water scarcity.

FAO support to its Members, and this sphere is consistent with pillar two of the Science and Innovation Strategy where innovation in science, including the potential of using treated waste water will significantly contribute to circular economy in agrifood systems as a whole.

On forestry, Malaysia applauds FAO's focus on cross sectorial work, including developing linkages between forestry and agrifood system and areas where forestry can contribute with measurable impact at scale on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the same vein, we support the emphasis on agroecology, and the real looking to shifting the organic agriculture based on principle of producing more with less.

Concerning fisheries and aquaculture, while we appreciate the focus on Blue transformation, we call on FAO to equally place emphasis on fisheries management and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Nexus. We are of the view such pathways is in line with and in support of the intent established the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management.

Turning to financial and budgetary dimension, while we appreciate the increment of net appropriation funding requirement of 5.6 percent for 2024-25 to support the PWB, due regards should be given to global financial scenarios and multitude of food security related challenges already faced by some Members.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua agradece la presentación del Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 revisado y la Propuesta presupuestaria y de trabajo presentada por la FAO. Valora el proceso inclusivo y transparente de las

consultas realizadas a través de los Órganos Rectores y las consultas oficiosas llevadas a cabo sobre ese tema.

Hemos analizado las distintas notas informativas y las propuestas alternativas presentadas a petición de los Miembros. Valoramos el aumento de los ahorros por eficiencia y otros ajustes en la esfera de trabajo. Consideramos el nivel de presupuesto aceptable y realista para garantizar las prioridades de los Miembros en las principales esferas: agricultura, alimentación, producción, salud y sanidad animal y vegetal, entre otros.

Reconocemos los esfuerzos constantes en fomentar la eficiencia de la Organización en el actual contexto de crisis simultáneas que requieren de una acción urgente y medidas para sufragar el aumento de la inflación que ha venido erosionando el poder adquisitivo, tanto de los países como de la Organización. Valoramos el nivel de confianza en la FAO reflejado en el nivel de contribuciones voluntarias alcanzadas y sin precedentes que animan a que se sigan aumentando en el siguiente bienio.

No obstante, apuntamos a que dichos recursos extrapresupuestarios sean de apoyo a las prioridades nacionales que mantengan un nivel de flexibilidad hacia los objetivos de los países en desarrollo y que de ninguna forma sustituyan las contribuciones ordinarias al presupuesto. Respaldamos las áreas programáticas identificadas, en particular, la integración de la biodiversidad en los sectores agrícolas en los planos nacional, regional e internacional de forma estructurada, siendo fundamental tras la aprobación en 2022 del Acuerdo Mundial de la Biodiversidad.

Recalcamos la importancia de que se asegure una financiación sostenible para su aplicación de forma inclusiva y para todas las partes interesadas. Asimismo, acogemos con beneplácito el mantenimiento de la proporción de recursos asignados al Programa de cooperación técnica en el 14%, sin perjuicio y con la aspiración que esos recursos puedan incrementarse aprovechando su función catalizadora vinculando el apoyo técnico a las políticas, planes y estrategias nacionales y al fomento de la Cooperación Sur-Sur.

Reconocemos también la importancia de la aplicación de la Estrategia de la FAO para la ciencia e innovación a la hora de prestar apoyo a los programas estratégicos nacionales, en especial hacia los países más vulnerables que requieren de asistencia técnica en diversos ámbitos como son la innovación, la transferencia científica y tecnológica, así como la financiación e inversiones relacionadas con el clima. Esperamos contar con planes de acción regionales que recojan las recomendaciones formuladas por las Conferencias Regionales y estén ancladas en la institucionalidad.

Por último, deseamos apoyar la asignación de recursos del presupuesto regular de la FAO a la convención internacional de protección fitosanitaria de vital importancia, para acompañar a nuestras labores de control y gestión de plagas y fortalecer nuestra capacidad fitosanitaria.

Con estos comentarios refrendamos el documento de Plan a plazo medio para 2022-25 revisado y el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25 presentado por el Director General.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

C'est un honneur participer à ce Conseil au nom du gouvernement de l'Angola, et je souhaite transmettre mes salutations cordiales à toutes les délégations présentes et exprimer mes meilleurs vœux de succès.

L'Angola a enregistré un taux de croissance de 3,0 pour cent.

Nous sommes confrontés à de nombreuses difficultés pour la transformation que nous visons et pour rendre les systèmes alimentaires résistants, en particulier pour la création d'emplois, la diversification de la production, la création et la modernisation des infrastructures, l'adaptation.

Afin de promouvoir les réformes de la stabilité, les plus grandes difficultés se situent au niveau d'assurer la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle et augmenter la productivité comme objectif de faire passer la contribution de l'agriculture au produit intérieur brut.

Nous soutenons le travail incassable du Directeur Général et la vision de la FAO pour faire face aux défis et nous saluons les stratégies approuvées qui vont certainement accélérer la transformation

effective des systèmes avec des spécificités nationales afin d'obtenir les meilleurs rendements et une plus grande autonomie alimentaire des pays et des populations.

C'est pourquoi l'Angola travaille à la stabilité macroéconomique étant passé de cinq années consécutives de récession économique à deux années consécutives de croissance économique et d'une dette publique élevée à une dette publique modérée afin de promouvoir la croissance productive, de faciliter le développement du secteur privé et de la compétitivité et d'entreprendre une nouvelle dynamique en termes économiques.

La promotion des exportations et la substitution des importations font partie d'une vision qui intègre la pauvreté, la faim et les acteurs multidisciplinaires, entre autres défis.

L'appui de la FAO pour l'implémentation du codex Alimentarius sera très important.

L'agriculture familiale de l'Angola correspond à environ 80 % de la production agricole totale.

Le gouvernement angolais a ainsi approuvé le Plan national de promotion et de développement des céréales; le Plan national de promotion et de développement de l'élevage pour stimuler la production et garantir la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle; et le Plan national de développement de la pêche pour rendre le système alimentaire plus résilient.

Nous attendons avec impatience un soutien technique accru de la part de l'Initiative Africaine et le Plan d'Action pour l'amélioration des sols, en particulier une stratégie impliquant toutes les parties prenantes clés, qui favorise les partenariats et les investissements, le financement, la structuration du marché et la capacité des petits exploitants à adopter des mécanismes de gestion durable des terres pour leur propre prospérité.

Nous pensons que le rôle de la science devrait être complété par les objectifs de la coopération mondiale pour l'étude des océans, la gestion des ressources halieutiques et une meilleure utilisation de notre base de données.

L'Angola félicite la révision du Plan à Moyen Terme (2022-25) et du Programme de Travail (2024-2025), ainsi que la pertinence prioritaire de la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau, en mettant l'accent sur le Grand programme d'irrigation, ainsi que la gestion des ressources halieutiques, qui permet également la croissance productive du secteur primaire et la gestion des océans.

Nous encourageons la FAO à poursuivre le processus de décentralisation, à faciliter les Dialogues nationaux pour la transformation réelle des systèmes alimentaires, et les Stratégies sur le changement climatique et la science et la technologie, la création d'outils stratégiques nationaux sur le changement climatique et la science et l'innovation, ainsi que les efforts visant à établir de nouveaux partenariats pour obtenir des financements et des investissements.

Pour conclure, je tiens à remercier la FAO et à lui faire part du vif intérêt de mon pays à poursuivre notre collaboration, en comptant sur la qualité de son assistance technique pour la mise en œuvre de notre Plan national de développement.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Before touching upon the budget issue allow me to extend Japan's sincere appreciation to the Director-General for his participation in the G7 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Miyazaki, Japan, just two days ago. We really thank you for that.

Turning into the budget issue, again Japan begins by extending its appreciation to FAO Management, in particular Deputy Director-General (DDG) Mr Laurent Thomas and the Director of the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP) Ms Beth Crawford for their preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) main documents and three additional information notes responding to the Finance Committee's requests.

Thanks to their dedication so far Members increase, the understanding on the structure of FAO budget and contents of the proposed PWB. However, Japan believes that there still remains time to improve the proposed PWB. More specifically, the possibility to curtail the budget increase with keeping FAO's function and capability.

We do not have yet a slim and strong budget, which we can support by strong consensus. Such budget proposal would be containing the following three elements.

First, with regard to the Funding for After-service Medical Coverage (ASMC) and Replenishment of Working Capital Fund, Japan fully endorses the Finance Committee's recommendation in paragraph 23 of the Finance Committee Report. This issue should be considered in the future, not now. We should focus on the main components of the PWB.

Second point, regarding the post issues, current budget proposal contains seven D-level post increase, 27 P-post increase, eight G-post increase. Total is 42 post increase. On the other hand, current PWB proposal does not include the restructuring of existing posts.

FAO now has a 277 vacancy posts of which 89 is vacant more than two years. Management gave us the explanation in the informal consultation, *“the functions of the vacancy posts are covered by other measures such as hiring a consultant”*. I think it is true for some posts, but it is not applied for every post.

Among the vacancy posts, I believe there are some posts which become less important and become a little bit obsolete, rather like in the past. I believe there are some posts which can be abolished, which can be combined into one post from the two posts, which can be done downgraded. Only the Management can identify such posts.

A third point is how to use cost recovery in particular under current PWB USD 110 million cost to recover income estimated, but concerning current increase of extrabudgetary resources, the current biennium cost recovery income will be increased. It is strongly expected. I think that could be used for curtailing the gross of the next PWB.

Our country is prepared to admit the budget which is beyond the “zero nominal growth (ZNG)” regardless of the principle of the zero nominal growth and beyond the 12 years. In that sense, now is a time for the Management side to propose slim and strong budget proposal new scenario, which Members can strongly support. We have enough time until the Conference, we would like to expect the constructive attitude of the Management side.

Finally, this is a message for the Members: admitting the budget increase means increased duty of our country. That means timely payment of assessed contribution in the future becoming more and more important. Discussing about FAO function is one of the part of the ownership, but we believe that payment of the assessed contribution monitoring of the implementation budget, all of them, we should take clear ownership of FAO by the Members.

Japan sincerely wishes to support FAO's activity strongly with other Members.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCIA WINDER (México)

Comienzo por agradecer al señor Director General la invitación al almuerzo, espero que todos podamos despertar después de él, y así podamos conversar.

México agradece la propuesta del Director General y el trabajo que la Administración ha venido haciendo en esta materia, incluyendo la preparación de notas y la realización de consultas informales. Acompañamos y apoyamos las conclusiones del Comité de Finanzas, del Comité de Programa y del Comité Conjunto en esta materia.

Permítame comenzar por expresar una sincera preocupación por este tema. La necesidad de aprobar el Programa de presupuesto 2024-25 de la FAO ocurre en un momento muy complejo. Por un lado los países, incluyendo el nuestro, enfrentamos limitaciones económicas por diversas causas que impiden aumentar los compromisos internacionales. También tenemos que reconocer que para muchos países existe un serio cuestionamiento sobre la eficiencia y sobre la transparencia de estas organizaciones internacionales y, por lo tanto, tenemos una política de cero crecimiento nominal. Esa es la realidad de las cosas. Esto, obviamente, hace casi imposible que el día de hoy pudiéramos apoyar cualquier incremento.

Por otro lado, poniéndonos del otro lado de la moneda, la FAO tiene una necesidad real de contar con recursos necesarios para su operación. En mi opinión personal —y no soy ni contador ni economista—

pero en mi opinión personal la necesidad de la FAO es muy superior al 5.6% que nos ha planteado y estimo que deberá andar entre un 12 y un 15% de incremento para que pueda ser una organización capaz de dar atención a los temas urgentes de la alimentación de la agricultura, lo cual complica aún más las cosas.

Entonces, el problema es cómo lograr un balance, ¿cómo logramos un balance que nos ayude a apoyar a la FAO y, al mismo tiempo, nuestros países puedan darnos su consentimiento? Me parece que, como hemos venido trabajando, no ha sido la mejor de las opciones. Hemos partido de una posición totalmente fatalista. "Si no crecemos, hay que cortar en esto". "Si no crecemos, nos vamos a quedar sin esto". Mientras que a lo mejor debimos haber hecho una propuesta positivista; es decir, "si tenemos el recurso, podemos avanzar en estos temas". Es quizá una estrategia de marketing.

Por lo tanto, me parece que debemos seguir construyendo una propuesta entre todos que permita a la Conferencia transitar hacia un presupuesto, no solamente eficiente, sino también realista para la FAO. Me permito sugerir algunas cosas que podrían incluirse en esta discusión. Primero es, cómo conocer en qué y cómo se fortalecería la cooperación técnica de la FAO a los países, incluyendo cómo se protegería el Programa de cooperación técnica. Cómo se pretende fortalecer y reorientar la focalización de los trabajos; en particular, cómo vamos a apoyar las Agendas de innovación, de cambio climático, de recursos naturales y biodiversidad que han sido parte de la columna vertebral de esta administración.

Segundo, cómo se fortalecería el trabajo regulatorio y los compromisos que la FAO tiene en los diferentes procesos mundiales, así como, cómo se fortalecería su rol como una institución del conocimiento. Aquí es muy importante, me parece, qué compromisos se adquieren por parte de la Administración para mejorar la transparencia y la entrega de resultados por la Organización. Por ejemplo, ¿qué se propone hacer para fortalecer la Oficina del Inspector General, la Oficina de Evaluación Independiente?

Yo creo que es importante pensar que eliminar plazas que no están directamente asociadas con la provisión de servicios técnicos puede resultar en una falsa salida para la Organización y en un aumento en el riesgo de la misma. Entonces, no podemos pensar solamente en decir, "porque están en la Administración no son importantes".

Creo que es importante que en la propuesta se pueda contar con un compromiso serio que se operará bajo la mayor eficiencia posible y que se hará un esfuerzo para evitar gastos excesivos. Por ejemplo, en viajes, hay que ver cómo están haciéndose los viajes. En ocasiones nuestros funcionarios tienen que viajar de lunes a viernes, regresar a Roma y volver a viajar el lunes a la misma ciudad porque no se les permite quedarse el fin de semana so pretexto de que es más ineficiente.

Yo creo que es momento de revisar todas estas cosas. Además, de que a ellos los acaba en sus cosas. Si se planea aumentar las posiciones de trabajo, ¿cómo se va a hacer? ¿Por qué no se da preferencia a las regiones y a las oficinas en países en lugar de [inaudible 00:44:03]? Hacer un compromiso serio para revisar la estructura financiera y presupuestaria de la FAO, dando mucha atención a las contribuciones voluntarias, cómo funcionan estas, cómo apoyan a la Organización, revisar las tasas de recuperación aplicadas a los proyectos, entre otras cosas.

Finalmente, creo que es muy importante contar con un programa de qué se piensa hacer para recuperar las cuotas atrasadas. Ahí hay una gran cantidad de recursos. Además, ¿cómo se va a evitar que cualquier aumento resulte en más cuotas? Yo creo que lo que acaba de mencionar el Delegado de Japón es muy serio. Si aumentamos el presupuesto y eso va a aumentar las cuotas atrasadas, pues bonito favor le estamos haciendo a la Institución. Yo creo que es muy importante que tengamos un compromiso entre todos.

Ante todas estas reflexiones, que son solamente reflexiones, yo creo que es importante que la Administración pudiera ayudarnos a nosotros con información pertinente para tener una visión integral del Plan de trabajo y su relación con el presupuesto. Con esto podríamos tener herramientas para conversar con nuestras capitales y poder definir la contribución de nuestro país a la FAO. Una vez que se pueda alcanzar un acuerdo sobre el presupuesto 2024-25, deberá seguir el análisis sobre en qué focalizarse.

A lo largo de la mañana y esta tarde hemos escuchado una serie de intervenciones, algunos quieren focalizarse en economía azul, otros en biodiversidad, otros en pequeños productores. Me parece que eso viene en un segundo plano. Una vez que tengamos los recursos, podríamos nosotros pasar a una segunda fase que es la fase de definir las prioridades, de definir qué se va a hacer y cuando se va a hacer.

Me permito presentar esto como reflexiones para continuar en este proceso en el que todos los aquí presentes estamos comprometidos en apoyar a la FAO.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia acknowledges the responsive and collaborative way that FAO management has worked with members in progressing the proposed Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25. We really appreciated Management's engagement during the Finance Committee, together with subsequent development of the information notes and presentation of additional scenarios in recent informal consultations.

Members have used these opportunities for a constructive dialogue to better understand the proposed PWB and the implications of alternative scenarios. We have also had a chance to express our priorities, both in terms of principles and specific areas of desired funding maintenance or growth.

This Council meeting provides us with an opportunity to take stock of where we add in the process and to determine a clear pathway to deliver a consensus outcome on the PWB at the Conference in July.

Throughout these discussions Australia has sought to understand FAO's funding needs and how FAO has maximised efficiencies and managed pressures for through existing means to implement the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. And shared Strategic Framework is what Australia believes remains fit for purpose as the backdrop for our discussions on budget.

Like others who have spoken before me, including the Director General today we also take note of the findings of the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) that budget constraints over an extended period risk working against efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly, we acknowledge the risks associated with the scenario of another zero nominal growth budget.

Going forward, our guiding principles relate to effectiveness of mandate delivery as outlined in the FAO Strategic Framework. Efficiency in the Allocation and Application of Resources. And of course, transparency and accountability to Members.

Australia seeks to work towards an outcome to ensure that in an environment where it demonstrated that costs have increased, FAO is adequately funded to effectively conduct the important work that it does. That is, resources that match the functions and performance that members demand of FAO in terms of technical outputs, governance and accountability.

On the other hand, we must remember that any decision above zero nominal growth will result in an increase in Members assessed contributions and given the global macroeconomic context and national budget pressures including in my region, the South West Pacific region, an increase in Members liabilities cannot be taken lightly.

As others have done, we will take the opportunity to highlight some priorities from our region, and these include boosting climate resilience, including against climate induced events such as cyclones, drought and flood. Leveraging science and innovation for sustainable agricultural productivity growth. A continued focus on FAO's normative and standard setting work, including Codex and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) noting their pivotal role in underpinning global trade in agrifood products to strengthen food security.

Further in our region effective technical work on soils, sustainable livestock, strengthening local and regional production and value chains, One Health, together with work on fisheries and forestries remain core to the interests of the South West Pacific region.

With the desire to see FAO's important work adequately funded, but a practical limitation on what increases in assessed contributions Members can afford, as my colleague from Mexico said, a balance

must be struck and we must strike this balance in an informed and inclusive manner and continue our discussions.

As we have continued today, I hope we can collectively provide guidance on our priorities, our limitations so that we can narrow in on how that balance can be achieved.

M. Tamba TOLNO (Guinée)

La République de Guinée s'aligne sur la déclaration faite par le Cameroun, la République du Congo, l'Erythrée et l'Éthiopie au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique sur le point trois de l'ordre du jour intitulé Plan à moyen terme (révisé) 2022-2025 et Programme de travail et budget 2024-25. Néanmoins, à titre national, nous tenons à faire quelques commentaires.

Avant tout, permettez moi de vous adresser de vraies félicitations pour votre excellente direction des travaux de cette session. La République de Guinée remercie la Direction Générale de la FAO pour l'élaboration du Plan à Moyen Terme (révisé) 2022 – 2025 et le Programme de Travail et Budget 2024-2025 qui indiquent clairement les engagements de l'organisation et les moyens nécessaires pour les réaliser. La Guinée salue également la mise à disposition des notes d'information bien détaillées sur les scénarios budgétaires et les ressources et destinations des contributions volontaires inscrites au Programme de travail et budget 2024-2025.

Ces documents mettent en exergue la diminution progressive du pouvoir d'achat de la FAO au cours des dernières années dans un contexte mondial marqué par les crises répétitives, l'inflation galopante et les effets du changement climatique qui impactent négativement la sécurité alimentaire. Malheureusement, cette situation survient à un moment où les États membres de la FAO, particulièrement ceux des pays en développement ont plus besoin de son expertise et de son accompagnement pour la transformation de leurs systèmes agroalimentaires mis à rude épreuve par le changement climatique.

Il est évident que notre institution se trouve à la croisée des chemins et que son efficacité future dépendra du choix que les membres feront au terme de ce processus.

Le maintien de la dotation budgétaire pour un septième exercice biennal entraînera sans doute une réduction des capacités techniques de la FAO avec une incidence négative sur la mise en œuvre des programmes élaborés.

La République de Guinée salue la volonté manifestée par les membres au cours des consultations informelles de poursuivre les négociations pour trouver un consensus sur ce point crucial.

Pour finir, nous encourageons les membres à s'accorder pour mettre à la disposition de la FAO les ressources nécessaires pour poursuivre convenablement son mandat qui est au cœur de la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable.

Ms KANG Hyo Joo (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea expresses its appreciation to the Secretariat for providing all the relevant documents under this Item. Overall Korea recognises FAO's ceaseless efforts for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through supporting FAO food systems transformation with a clear roadmap of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31. With due consideration for global challenges and opportunities as well as practical and pressing issues. My delegation wishes to share our perspective particularly on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25.

Firstly, Korea's basic position is to have a minimal change of the PWB budget from our understanding although it has always been difficult for FAO to efficiently respond to increased food crisis with zero nominal charges. FAO has successfully paved its own way. We need a balanced approach between FAO's essential roles and challenging and unexpected circumstances and Members' financial burdens which are mostly caused from urgent domestic needs and responses to global challenges, climate change, economic recession, inflation and political tensions.

We request FAO to deliberately consider bringing options in alignment with the Organization's fit for purpose principle. We suggest seeking a method for efficiently operating the budget by cutting the

basic expenses through digitization across the working area and collaboration with other organisations including other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

Moreover, with limited resources some roles need to be prioritised in the short-term or to consider flexible options where applicable during the next biennium.

Last but not least, if the project increase is inevitable anyhow Members need concrete reasons and explanations from the Secretariat in order to have a successful consultation with domestic stakeholders. A transparent and effective execution of the contributions to the international organisations has been the key areas will finance authority and the National Assembly of Korea.

To conclude, Korea stresses that FAO is United Nations specialised agency in Food and Agriculture with a comprehensive mandate from its members. We look forward to having a constructive discussion on our way towards a consensus up to the coming Conference.

Sra. Beatriz CÁCERES VALDEZ (Guatemala)

Mi Delegación desea agradecer a la Administración por la realización de las consultas oficiosas y por ofrecer información adicional. Esperamos que las mismas continúen posterior a este Consejo para que el Programa y presupuesto sea aprobado por consenso durante la Conferencia.

Reconocemos la importancia de la labor técnica y normativa de FAO, así como el incremento de los precios en inflación a nivel mundial, lo cual también ha afectado los presupuestos nacionales. Entendemos que para poder lograr los objetivos de la Organización es necesario aumentar su presupuesto, pero vemos la dificultad de los Estados de asumir mayores compromisos por lo que apelamos al crecimiento cero.

No obstante, estamos abiertos a evaluar las distintas posibilidades y apoyar un presupuesto que atienda las prioridades del Marco Estratégico. Es necesario tener en cuenta mecanismos para hacer más eficientes las actividades de gestión sin afectar a aquellos programas que tienen un impacto directo en el terreno y en las personas.

Consideramos como prioritario que los Programas de cooperación técnica cuenten con recursos propios de FAO, así como las actividades normativas en lo que respecta al Codex Alimentarius y a la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria (CIPF), además de poder apoyar la continuidad de eFito (ePhyto).

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation supports the policy pursued by the Director-General by strengthening the FAO amid the current crisis, and the draft Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) submitted in March of this year for the next biennium is a great reflection of that. We understand the desire of Management to depart from the principle of zero nominal growth to maintain of the purchasing power of the Organization, at least at the current level.

At the same time, we would like to say that the Russian Federation is consistently in favour of this principle on other platforms of the United Nations because we believe that this is the element of stability and the effective governance of the Organization because it guarantees efficiency savings that at current times require a flexible response to the crisis.

We see that the global economy is stagnating, inflation is increasing and purchasing power of currencies is decreasing, and as a consequence, the purchasing power of countries is diminishing. Against this backdrop, we believe that the Programme of Work and Budget needs to enjoy the broadest possible consensus of countries that would commit to increasing their financial obligation.

Against this backdrop, the Russian Federation, is ready to depart from the zero nominal growth principle for budgeting if the Secretariat commits to more efficiency savings in the coming biennium. In this respect, we would like to draw the attention of the Secretariat to the substantive discussion on the draft Programme of Work and Budget that took place on the 195th Session, the Finance Council, the main recommendations that enjoyed support during the Joint Meeting of the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee.

We would like you to follow these recommendations such as cover the increased costs through additional cost recovery from the extrabudgetary funding and use the reserves that are related to the vacancies that are unfilled - and there are 22 of them. We believe that each post, each vacancy, comes with a budget and for two years now this money has not been used and this could be used to cover the increase of costs demanded by the secretariat.

We also support the recommendation to postpone the replenishment of the Working Capital Fund and the After-service Medical Coverage.

We also believe that we need to look for alternative strategies to cover the existing costs within the upcoming budgeting cycles.

We would also like to say that we are grateful to the Secretariat for holding two informal rounds of consultations on the draft budget held before the Council, and we believe that the scenarios are provided as a possible basis for consensus. We are very timely, however, we have to admit that the proposed scenarios do not fully reflect the position of the Finance Committee including on efficiency savings that scenarios proposed by the Secretariat are aimed at reducing the level of costs by reducing the number of posts and the volume of funding provided for technical cooperation.

We would like to say that these are not the best possible solutions. We believe it is important to continue joint work on the draft budget based on the recommendations of the relevant Governing Body, which is a Finance Committee because the recommendations it has come up with, were the result of in-depth coordination with the Secretariat to end discussion on the reserves that the Organization possesses.

I would also like to use this opportunity to exercise my right to reply on statements by other countries with respect to the current food crisis. Unfortunately, we would like to say that the collective West is still trying to shift the focus of the Organization to its own political priority, and they keep on repeating the same old story about the root causes of the current problem and its influence on the situation of the world. The reality is quite different.

To end, let me explain what it is. The current crisis was provoked by the protectionist policies, structural imbalances in western economies, and was worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the crisis is accelerating because of the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation and its allies, and other destructive policies. Such restrictions have no legal foundations.

These restrictions push the world to a deeper crises and shocks, and the current actions by the West that are based on the policy of containment are only making tensions worse and increased competition on food and agricultural markets. The Russian Federation is often accused of as one of the major exporters of fertilisers and foodstuffs. It is quite often said that the sanctions they introduced against the Russian Federation as one of the key exporters of agricultural products and fertiliser have no impact on the situation in the global economy and have no impact on food security.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)

We believe we began on a very good note and we will continue on fantastic note. I welcome the remarks by the Director-General on this Agenda Item and I want to align my statement with Cameroon, who read the African Regional Group statement.

We welcome the inclusive informal consultation by FAO with Members on this Agenda Item. We recognize the ongoing food crisis occasioned by the adverse impacts of climate effects, conflicts, and economic downturns, among others, which impact directly on the FAO Strategic Framework. It is therefore critical that the Organization continues to evolve as an agile enabler of change by putting in place improved ways of working to demonstrate its unique role and competence as the agrifood systems agency in the United Nations family.

Implementation arrangements for the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 must therefore be put in place together to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation of agrifood systems for the *four betters*.

We recognize that the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and supporting strategies, policies and action plans ensure that FAO leverages its comparative advantage in responding to challenges in

agrifood systems and focuses its efforts to maximise impact, promote cross disciplinary collaborations. We take note that the 32nd Session of the Regional Conference of Africa (ARC) endorsed four new regional priorities to guide priority setting, programme operations, and reporting in the region.

These regional priorities stemmed from the previous three regional initiatives and reflect the recommendation of the 2022 Session of the ARC to fine tune the initiatives to make them more relevant in the context of new corporate and UN wide initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and the repositioning of the UN development system. The four regional priorities capture key themes emerging from country, sub-regional and regional levels, reflecting the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and priorities developed in consultation with members and key stakeholders.

The ARC also encourage FAO to strengthen inclusiveness considerations, especially women, youth, and other vulnerable populations in the implementation of the regional priorities. Kenya is implementing a bottom-up economic model that focuses on agricultural transformation targeting small scale farmers and the most vulnerable and the most vulnerable. This places agriculture at the core of our economic transformation.

Among the key priorities for my country, we have identified the need for science and innovation for sustainable agriculture production, and productivity strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change and growth of the large untapped potential of the blue economy. This is anchored in our 10-year agriculture transformation and growth Strategy.

The proposed net appropriation budget for 2024-2025 comprises requirements beyond the current nominal budget to preserve purchasing power parity with the 2022-2023 budget of FAO. An increase in the budget is clearly needed for FAO under the zero nominal growth for the past 12 years cannot be sustained. This does not give any scope for efficiency, nor savings. The Director-General's proposal focuses on supporting members to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to respond to global crisis. This increase actually only keeps purchasing power at the same level as the current biennium, otherwise FAO risks seeing a decline of the projects already identified in the programme.

Mr Marcel BEUKEBOOM (Netherlands, Kingdom of the) (Observer)

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. I would also like to mention the statement of Norway delivered on behalf of the Nordics and pick up on one subject from that intervention. Also, the Netherlands is concerned about the growing disbalance between assessed and voluntary contributions.

Having listened to colleagues today, I believe several Members have the same concern. Voluntary funding now makes up 75 percent of the proposed budget and might even grow in the future. This creates a significant administrative burden on the Organization. There is a risk that FAO becomes a service provider for donors and moves away from its core mandate.

With only seven years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the fundamental role FAO is asked to play in the sustainable food systems transformation, we are concerned about this development. Given the importance of flexibility in a time of growing needs, we would appreciate a comprehensive vision for the funding of the Organization, including the use of assessed and voluntary contributions, in view of the Organization's objectives and deliverables.

The Netherlands will continue to provide FAO with the flexibility it needs through quality funding and urges other Membersto do the same in order to allow FAO to deliver on the mandate it has been given.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá)(Observador)

Panamá respalda un incremento en el presupuesto de la FAO que mantenga las capacidades técnicas y financieras para suplir las necesidades de los Miembros en este periodo de inseguridad alimentaria. El recurso humano técnico es el valor más importante con el que contamos en nuestra Organización.

Para nosotros es imperante que el presupuesto garantice la contratación del personal que fortalezca las áreas técnicas que realmente contribuyan al desarrollo de los Miembros a través de asistencias técnicas.

Es importante destacar el valor del Programa de cooperación técnica (PCT) y la necesidad de mantener su participación en el presupuesto de 14% y en futuros ejercicios aumentarlo al 17%. Un PCT enfocado en proyectos que abarquen a más de un país, es decir, en proyectos regionales o subregionales permite un mayor aprovechamiento de los recursos limitados con los que contamos.

Se hace necesario incluir en el sitio web, además de las estadísticas, una reseña de los proyectos que el PCT financia a nivel regional y subregional. Panamá reitera este interés con miras de intercambiar los conocimientos y experiencias ganadas y que se incentive una participación multipaís en los proyectos del PCT.

Agradecemos las contribuciones voluntarias de los Miembros que actualmente son el 75% las que requieren una mayor flexibilidad. Es necesario garantizar mediante el presupuesto asistencias técnicas en temas novedosos, como son el acompañamiento de los Estados Miembros en la construcción de sus mercados de carbono y la interconexión entre ellos como herramientas para la financiación de las transformaciones de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Continuaremos dando seguimiento a los debates previos a la conferencia y esperamos que se dé un consenso en base al crecimiento del presupuesto requerido para que se garanticen los objetivos del Programa de trabajo de la FAO.

Mr Zaid Tarik AL-ANI (Iraq) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of Iraq and to appreciate the efforts of FAO in ensuring the food systems and the decent life for all.

Allow me to express our concern regarding the events unfolding in Sudan and the dramatic situation there. We call for a hold to all violence and fighting and to return to the root of reform. As you all know, Sudan is the food basket for the Arab world, and we call for the safety and security of all those involved in humanitarian action in Sudan, following the loss of life among the staff of the World Food Programme (WFP) and other organisations. We call for support to their families.

The FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 aims at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We, however, see that the time is limited and we face emergencies and unforeseen crises. We have to face economic, political, and environmental crises - these are multiple and they have been affecting the food systems negatively. We all have to respond immediately to the current situation through solidarity, humanitarian aims, and building peace. We should aim at the open dialogues to reach settlements to put an end to all conflicts and to promote the partnerships as one of the main elements under SDG 17.

Facing the current challenges and the exceptional circumstances in the world call for a proactive action to meet the humanitarian needs and to prepare for the future. This should lead us to working at all levels locally and internationally, and to take into account the importance of water management and to deal with the repercussions of climate change and to build capacities towards sustainabilities to achieve the *four betters* of FAO.

This is the basis for the Medium Term Plan (MTP) of the FAO trends for moving and shifting towards sustainable food production and consumption requires also to meet the needs and priorities of each and every country. We should also emphasise that the space accorded to women and the vulnerable groups in all countries.

In conclusion, we call for strengthened partnerships. This should be supported by sustainable policies that should lead us to the required reforms to achieve world food security and prosperity for all.

Mr Su GUO (China) (Original language Chinese)

Regarding the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), China has the following comments.

First of all, China highly commends FAO's achievement made in the past few years, especially faced with multiple challenges on the food security and adverse impact. FAO has committed to implementing the new plan of actions, the climate programmes, the 1 000 Digital Villages and One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) all contributing significantly and we feel the current FAO is

very dynamic and the way the new level of contributions and China would like to appreciate and highly recognize the work done by the Management and team of FAO.

At the same time, in faced with the increasing challenges towards food security, China urges everyone to take in predictions and we need to face the financing gaps and the potential negative impacts on FAO's functions. In 2024, the contribution of China will increase to 15.256 percent, which is the highest increase of all developing countries.

China would like to base on our currency specific and take up our necessary obligations and firmly safeguard the roles and status of FAO and provide our firm support to FAO in all possible means, and also about the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and animal pest controls, China would also like to further our collaboration with FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Observer, Mali.

M. Aly COULIBALY (Malí) (Observateur)

Le Mali voudrait à son tour féliciter la FAO pour la mise à disposition du Conseil des documents relatifs au Plan à moyen terme révisé 2022-2025 et du Programme du travail et budgets 2024-2025, notamment le document *CL 172/3* ainsi que la Note d'Informations 1, 2 et 3 y afférant.

Nous soutenons la déclaration faite par le Cameroun au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique et adhérons aux propositions, suggestions et recommandations formulées. Le Programme de travail et budget ainsi que le plan à moyen terme d'inspiration d'éléments essentiels du Cadre stratégique 2022-2031 de la FAO, ainsi que du Plan à moyen terme révisé 2022-2025 conduisent à l'atteinte des Objectif de développement durable (ODD), notamment l'ODD 2 cher à notre continent, l'Afrique.

Cependant, la conjoncture internationale caractérisée par une série de défis, notamment climatique, pandémie et de conflits entre autres, risque de porter un coup d'arrêt à l'atteinte des ODD si rien n'est fait. Néanmoins, la FAO dans le cadre de recherche de solutions a proposé pour soulager les populations fragiles, notamment celles d'Afrique. L'atteinte de ces ODD risque de ne pouvoir se matérialiser si nous n'avons pas pour ce faire mis à sa disposition les moyens nécessaires y afférant.

Il est évident qu'une politique de contrainte budgétaire prolongée risque d'avoir un impact négatif sur l'efficacité de l'Organisation. C'est pourquoi nous nous associons à l'idée d'une consultation continue d'ici la Conférence, afin d'aboutir à un consensus autour du budget et permettre à la FAO de pouvoir poursuivre son appui aux membres qui sont dans le besoin, notamment à travers les programmes de coopérations techniques.

CHAIRPERSON

We have now concluded our list of speakers, I will give the floor to Management to answer remarks and questions, but hopefully it can be very brief because I do want to conclude this Agenda Item today.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget)

I will indeed try to be brief but I did want to, first of all, just thank all the distinguished delegates and speakers today for their very good comments and feedback and really constructive discussion. Management stands fully ready to support Members on the journey towards Conference in order to reach a consensus on the budget, and we appreciated very much hearing all speakers stressing the importance of that consensus on a budget.

I will just address a few topics and then I know my colleagues Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol will come in on some of the important points around the extra-budgetary programme and Deputy Director-General Mr Laurent Thomas on the efficiency savings - all very important topics, I think, elements of this broader discussion.

Firstly, as many Members have pointed out, this budget has been presented in a very particular global context. The Director General spoke about this this morning as well. I will not repeat that, but I do think that there is a very strong recognition for the importance of a strong FAO and a strong response.

And this comes together at the time of- a period of 12 years of a flat nominal budget, a zero nominal growth budget.

This is really why this document, this time, has been presented - it looks different than the documents of the last biennium because what we are expressing in this document is that we would like to continue to be able to function at least at the same level that we have been in 2022-23 to meet the growing needs, the growing demands, the growing expectations from- on FAO and from the Members, and we believe that with this - I do not want to call it too relatively modest, but... - with this increase that we would be able to continue at the same level as in 2022-23.

So as as Members have understood it, this is not a real increase, so we will not be able to do additional things with these resources, although we, of course, always reprioritize with the resources that we have to make sure that we are always focused on the highest Priority Areas. But this budget, with the 5.6 percent increase, would allow us to not have to cut programmes, and I do think we need to be realistic when we are talking about what cuts would mean.

There will there will be no easy answers, let us say, to a reduced budget. We are of course, ready to work together with members to identify where and how these cuts should be made, but there will be no easy elements that we could identify where this could quickly be done.

Of the 55.8 million increase – that is that 5.6 percent increase - the majority of that, 44 million, is for personnel services. So that is an increase in salary costs that we are required to follow: we are part of the ICSC, the UN system, on salaries; we do not have flexibility here, and this is the increase forecasted for the next biennium. We have added in an extremely modest increase for the non-staff resources: only 11.8 million or 2.7 percent. This is actually significantly lower than what we are actually expecting as cost increases in those areas, but we have built in the need to continue to find efficiency savings everywhere that we can in the areas where we have where we have the, let's say, the decision-making authority to do so.

So this is built into the budget already, which is why we are very careful about talking about additional efficiency savings. Like I said Mr Thomas will give some history on that as well, but also as some of the speakers have also pointed out, our Oversight Advisory Committee has also stressed the need to be careful after such a long stretch of continued reductions.

I will just speak on the extra-budgetary programme from the point of view, first of all, how important it is as an integrated Programme of Work. So the budget that is presented for you and the the Results Framework that you find in Annex 1 of our main document, that has been developed assuming and counting on a strong extra-budgetary programme. So it is extremely important that we have the two elements, the core budget and the extra-budgetary programme. I think often in the discussions leading up to conference there is a strong focus on the core budget, which is important because that is the budget approved by Conference, but it really is the combination of those two that allows FAO to achieve the results that it achieves and that we will be reporting to you in our Programme Implementation Report.

Now, associated with that growing extra-budgetary programme, we also have growing support cost recoveries that come into our Regular Programme budget. So this is a support recovery mechanism to ensure that the Regular Programme is not subsidising the extra-budgetary programme. This is very important, and we feel that we have a strong model in place now that allows us to ensure that we have the correct recoveries.

So this is the element of the 22.7 million additional resources that are being programmed in the 2024-2025 Programme of Work and Budget, and that results in the extra posts, the 42 additional posts. We believe that these are top priority posts to ensure that we are set up to service and to implement that growing extra-budgetary programme, both from a support services point of view - so that is the HR, the finance, the logistics - but also from an oversight function, so that is the Office of the Inspector General, Office of Evaluation, as well as some of the very key technical priority areas or things like the the Data Protection Unit that we have been requested to to establish. So this is how those additional resources coming in would be supporting the overall Programme of Work.

One other thing I wanted to say was to thank the Members very much for the list of priorities. This is important information, of course for us to have as well, especially if we did have to move towards identifying programmatic cuts. I have been keeping track here and it is a very important and a long list, with many of the technical areas mentioned that needed to be supported, or not reduced at least, and these are things like - this is just in no particular order - sustainable livestock developments, forests, soil management, water, oceans, fisheries and aquaculture, nutrition, agrifood systems of course, circular economy, climate resilience, value chains, food security and nutrition.

The importance also of having the internal controls and oversight at the appropriate level, and that includes the Office of the Inspector General and HR were mentioned by several Members. TCP, of course our normative work: standard setting, public goods function, such as IPPC and Codex, statistics, One Health approach, AMR, operational capacity to translate the normative work at the country level, and of course, supporting the two Strategies on Climate Change and Science and Innovation.

This is just elements that I have taken note of the many priorities and we wish to, and hope to, support you in these priorities in 2024-25 without having to reduce what we can offer in those areas.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Ms Beth Bechdol.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

Thank you, Excellencies and Distinguished Representatives for your very valuable comments and perspectives. I would like to touch very, very briefly on the issues you have raised around extra budgetary commitments and our recent resource mobilization developments.

FAO's resource mobilization efforts in 2022 produced results far beyond any previous scale in the history of the Organization, with over USD 2.1 billion in voluntary contributions, representing a 51 percent increase over the previous year - also a record-breaking year. This reflects FAO's increased attention and efforts across the whole of the Organization to mobilize resources. It also demonstrates our commitment to taking care of increasing threats to global food security, and I also think the higher level of trust that you, as Members, and other partners, put in FAO to develop the necessary thought leadership and technical support to take on these threats and challenges.

The current attention of Members to FAO's extra budgetary voluntary funding in the context of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) discussions this morning and other meetings is therefore understandable. We have carefully noted your comments, in particular the perception of some that FAO is becoming more donor-driven than Member-driven, your concerns about contribution of rust fund projects to the FAO Strategic Framework, and also the perception that large volumes of extra-budgetary contributions could be a drain on Regular Programme resources.

We all recognize though, as Ms Crawford mentioned, that extra-budgetary contributions are critical for FAO to effectively implement the Strategic Framework and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, I think it is very important to assure you that we see voluntary funding as indispensable to deliver on our mandate, rather than something that is taking away from our mandated work.

To this point, all contributions do support projects and programmes that are in full alignment with, and contribute to, the Strategic Framework. For this reason, we do encourage un-earmarked, or lightly earmarked, funding through mechanisms like the FVC. Unfortunately, despite regular Member comments on the importance of un-earmarked and lightly earmarked approaches, these funds still lack the necessary support from Members to enable us to target funding strategically to where it is most needed.

We understand that Members need to be clear and have confidence in the approach we are taking to all funding of FAO's work, and so we will host, I have shared this with, I think, a number of you before, a first informal briefing from Members on our resource mobilisation landscape on 9 June, which I think will be a very important starting point to the assessments and the forward-looking plans or approaches that many of you have asked for here today.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Laurent Thomas.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

Allow me to concisely compliment the presentation made by the Director of the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP) and the intervention of the Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol just now, focusing on the many comments that were made regarding the possibilities for further efficiency savings in this Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) presented to you. Before making three points on this, let me reassure the Members that we are available, of course, to continue this conversation and to provide you with more detailed comments all along the journey until the Conference.

The first point is, it was mentioned - and I will repeat it - this budgetary proposal follows 12 consecutive years of a flat nominal budget environment. In fact, it is 12 years of real decrease of our budget, even though limited at that time by a low inflationary context which is not any more the case. I could add that, prior to this 12 years of zero nominal growth, we are 10 years of zero real growth budget, so just allowing us to barely cope and maintain the purchasing power.

This is a budgetary situation of the last 22 years in FAO. In these 12 years, FAO engaged in major efficiency savings, they were estimated at around USD 190 million over the period 2012-22, which is quite important when you compare it with the size of our biennial budget. The brunt of such efficiency saving measures were borne by core support services, the ones that are part of what is defined in the PWB as '*Functional Objective 10*', mostly Efficient and Effective Administration.

These services, as a result, have received a declining share of the more predictable Regular Programme resources. In fact, if we compare the PWB 2010-11 with PWB 2022-23, the share of resources allocated for administration have decreased from 12.3 percent to 6.2 percent of the Regular Programme allocation, so a major decrease.

In 2017, the Council at its 26th Session, reviewed a report that it had requested to management with an independent assessment of FAO's technical capacity, and in this report, it was reported that over the year 2012-2016 there was a reduction of 23.9 percent of the posts in administrative function of the Organization. In fact, my calculation is that we had, for the six last biennia, a reduction of 30 percent of positions related to administrative support services.

So all these efficiency savings have over the years impacted FAO's central administration capacity to swiftly adapt and to respond to needs in terms of adequate support to delivery and guarantee the adequate internal controls and risk management.

There was reference to the statement by the Oversight Advisory Committee of FAO and I have to repeat it. It was in the paragraph 23 of the 2022 yearly Report of the Oversight Advisory Committee, and the Committee commended FAO on achieving considerable efficiency savings over the years, but noted that budget constraints over an extended period risk working against efficiencies and effectiveness.

My point is: it is all about risk management. We know that you have an extremely difficult decision to take in context of national budget constraints, but we are calling your attention, especially following the intervention of Ms Bechdol, that in the context of increasing voluntary contributions, increasing demands of donors in terms of accountability, in terms of controls, more complex modalities, we have to be cautious with further efficiency savings that may result in, let us say, against the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

Apologies if I pressured Management but that is my task, so that we can finalize our work on this Agenda Item.

I am going to read out the draft conclusions for this Agenda Item. We were working on the conclusions all the way when you were putting your statements forward, and I think we have had an excellent discussion, a very positive discussion.

We know, I think, with all your statements, that we can arrive at a consensus, but not this Council because more work has to be done in informal consultations. Nevertheless, with your positive approach, I think we can, and please do not put it on the screen yet. I think now even the Secretary wanted to go faster than I want to go. It is always good.

We need more informal consultation, but I think we will get the job done. We had a very rich discussion, and you know that I am strongly favouring short, to the point conclusions, but we try to capture many of your elements because we need them for the informal consultations to arrive at a consensus.

Hence, it is a little bit longer than one page, and I am going to start reading them out and then they will be on the screen as well, at least in English, and hopefully we can then go through them one by one.

The draft conclusions on Item 3, *Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25) (C 2023/3)*. Now we can put it on the screen.

9. The Council welcomed the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25, and:
 - a) reaffirmed the Organization's unique position and role in transforming agrifood systems in accordance with national context priorities and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving no one behind;
 - b) appreciated the overview of global challenges and recent trends and risks to global food security and reiterated the importance of technology, data, innovation, and complements as accelerators in the work of the Organization;
 - c) noted Management's effort to foster efficiencies and deliver the Programme of Work in the context of increasing needs, unprecedented challenges, and the long-standing flat budget;
 - d) appreciated the Organization's agility under the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 in responding to emerging challenges, including the global food crisis and the impact of the war in Ukraine;
 - e) reiterated the important role of the scientific and evidence-based normative and standard setting work of FAO and appreciated the continued visibility and updates of this work in the FAO results framework;
 - f) highlighted the importance of implementing these Strategies on Climate Change and on Science and Innovation, as well as Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agriculture Sectors in a coordinated manner and as an integral part of the Programme of Work for improved effectiveness and impact;
 - g) highlighted the importance of the inclusion of Blue Transformation as a Programme Priority Area (PPA) and the Roadmap reflecting FAO's vision on its work for achieving sustainable aquatic systems;
 - h) stressing the importance of furthering the Organization's ongoing efforts to fully embed country level programming into global planning, monitoring and reporting processes;
 - i) noted FAO's growing extra budgetary programme and stressed the need for all funding received by the Organization to be deployed to support the priorities established through the FAO Strategic Framework;
 - j) stressed the need for the Organization's governance documents to reflect multilateral agreed concepts, approaches and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies and highlighted the importance to not paraphrase the guidance from the Governing Bodies, including all Regional Conferences; and
 - k) underlined the importance of adequate technical and other capacities within the Organization and Decentralized Offices, particularly at regional and national levels.
10. Regarding the budget level for 2024-2025, the Council:

- (a) noted the Director General's proposal for an increase in Regular Programme assessments to find the essential cost increase in 2024-2025 and noted that a lower budget level would require programmatic and other cuts;
- (b) appreciated the importance of supporting the Programme of Work of the Organization in this critical period, and after many years of flat nominal budget;
- (c) highlighted the need to reach a consensus on the level of budget, including through Information Notes and informal consultations;
- (d) stressed the importance of funding for the convention's treaty bodies and intergovernmental arrangements, as well as the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), and recommended resources to those areas continue to be prioritized;
- (e) highlighted the importance of sound oversight and support functions to implement the growing integrated budget;
- (f) recommended deferral to future biennia, the proposal for replenishment of the Working Capital Fund and incremental funding of the After-Service Medical Coverage past service liability;
- (g) encourage Members and other partners to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate the implementation of the integrated Programme of Work and the results framework; and
- (h) underlined the needs for growth of the budget and encouraged continued efforts towards reaching a consensus on the level of the budget, including through informal consultations between Members and Management in the period leading up to the 43rd Session of the Conference.

These are the draft conclusions. Let us start with paragraph 1, the *chapeau*. Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any requests for the floor.

We go to subparagraph (a)? Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any requests for the floor.

We go to subparagraph (b).

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I am wondering if perhaps we could get five minutes to sit and think about all of these before we jump straight through them. I think I would like to have some time to discuss with my team and I imagine some others might as well. It would only be maybe three minutes, if you could give it to us, but that would be very useful before we continue moving through these, if possible.

CHAIRPERSON

We will break until 16:00 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 15:54 to 16:00 hours

La séance est suspendue de 15 h 54 à 16 h 00

Se suspende la sesión de las 15.54 a las 16.00

CHAIRPERSON

Let us continue our work.

Sr. Guillermo Valentín RODOLICO (Argentina)

En vista de que es el último Consejo antes de la próxima Conferencia, creo que es importante que en el lenguaje del Informe se reflejen algunos acuerdos alcanzados por los Miembros en la Conferencia pasada para mostrar que hemos dado seguimiento a esas decisiones y que las hemos respetado como Miembros.

Y entonces siguiendo esa línea, luego de "*transforming agrifood systems*", recordamos que en la Conferencia a partir de un debate entre los Miembros se había acordado un caveat específico, que muchas veces la Argentina resalta y remarca en nuestras reuniones porque a veces no está tan presente de parte nuestra y de parte de los colegas.

Entonces, quisiéramos aquí aportar esa pequeña modificación que justamente hace al lenguaje acordado en la última Conferencia. Y es que después de "*transforming agrifood systems*", nos gustaría justamente traer aquí el lenguaje del párrafo 61 del informe de la Conferencia que dice "*Transforming agrifood systems in a coherent manner, as appropriate, in accordance with and dependent on national contexts and capacities*" Ese es el lenguaje, el caveat que habíamos acordado cada vez que nos referimos a la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I would just actually want to go back to the topper: "*The Council welcomed.*" I think, "*welcomed*" perhaps is a bit strong, maybe "*reviewed*" or "*discussed and reviewed, the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed).*" So, I would suggest "*reviewed*" as opposed to "*welcomed*".

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCIA WINDER (México)

Lamentablemente, con tres párrafos y sin tenerlo impreso por las regulaciones, es imposible revisar todo lo que nos pusieron, todos los párrafos. Pero me parece que tenemos que hacer un ejercicio. No tengo una solución al ejercicio, pero me parece que la propuesta hecha por ustedes en este momento es demasiado detallada, nos va a meter en demasiados problemas.

Lo que hemos hecho ha sido dos cosas: una, revisamos el Programa de trabajo; ese fue el Consejo que lo revisó y quizás hicimos algunos comentarios. Y segundo, con respecto al Plan financiero o el budget, lo único que hicimos fue hacer sugerencias sobre el budget y sugerir que lo vamos a aumentar.

Me parece que tener todas estas cosas de detalle nos va a meter más en problemas, porque si usted pone que es importante el blue economy para uno, otro va a decir que "para mí es importante suelos", otro va a decir, "para mí es importante indigenous people" y vamos a tener un grave problema con esto.

Me parece que necesitamos hacer un verdadero esfuerzo en revisar todo lo que se hizo y ser un poco más concretos. Solamente revisamos el Programa de trabajo y, honestamente puedo decirle, no hicimos ningún comentario sobre el *Medium Term Plan* aquí, ninguno. Lo único que hicimos fue un comentario sobre el budget, ahí pasamos toda la mañana. Entonces, veo con preocupación esto. Lamentablemente, siete minutos no fueron suficientes para mí revisar todo y nada más que tengo tres.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with the concrete suggestions and then I come back to the remark of Mexico. Can we agree to the proposal of the United States of America to replace "*welcomed*" by "*reviewed*"?

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I actually would like to strongly support my Mexican colleague in his comments. I think that these are entirely too long conclusions for this. I think his solution, to make this two, perhaps three, paragraphs maximum, for our conclusion from today would be useful. To say that we have reviewed this, that the Council discussed important priorities, that we would like to continue discussions between now and Conference to find a solution.

I think the Verbatim is there. We have what everyone said and we can all look at it. That is something that we could all agree to and move forward, so that we can continue these conversations and have a solution in time for Conference. That would be my suggestion as well, building on the suggestion from our Mexican colleague.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with the *chapeau*. Can we agree to the *chapeau*? Because then we will see what will follow.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I do not think I can agree with the *chapeau* because I would like to see these shortened. Agreeing with the *chapeau* implies that we are going to continue through 12 paragraphs for each number.

CHAIRPERSON

Even the subparagraphs to be followed will follow on the chapeau. That can be one subparagraph, it can be 30, it can be two. But you need a *chapeau*, so I think that is anyhow what we have to agree on.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Sure.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

For the *chapeau*, I think I am just reading what was the statement of the Africa Group and it is 54 Member States. What we said is the Africa Regional Group “*welcomes the preparation by the Director-General as a normal planning process of document C...*” and then we have the title.

I do not know whether we should emphasize on “*reviewed*”, on “*welcomed*” but this is what we said. I do not know whether other people said something different, if they mentioned “*reviewed*,” but what was said in our statement is this, we “*welcomed*” the document. It is in Verbatim, as the United States of America mentioned.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

I would support my colleague from Cameroon, that we “*welcomed*” the preparations. That is the key word. But then I think over and above that, having listened to the colleagues, the distinguished delegates both of the United States and Mexico, I would request that you give us a break, Chairperson, and we come back at 17:00 hours, maybe with a streamlined text as proposed, and we take it from there, if you do not mind.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense que nous aussi, nous avons trouvé les conclusions un peu trop longues. Mais concernant le chapeau, je pense qu'on ne va pas pinailler là-dessus. On peut dire que le Conseil, “*welcome and review...*” Et on met les deux termes au même moment, parce que nous avons accueilli et ceux qui ont accueilli favorablement l'élaboration du plan à moyen terme et ont appuyé la proposition du Directeur Général, et le Conseil l'a examiné. Donc on peut mettre les deux, “*welcome and review...*”. Je ne sais pas si ça peut régler le problème, pour qu'on puisse élaguer aussi les autres paragraphes pour que nous ayons vraiment un texte un peu concis.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

I would like to say two things. With regards to the verb used in the *chapeau*, I think I understand what Africa Group said but concerning how to capture all the discussion or the situation, “*review*” is more neutral for capturing the discussion situation.

Another thing, is that I also strongly support the proposal made by Ambassador from Mexico because we have a time limit for speaking time for three minutes for every Member. So, in that case, in the case of Japan, we should confine ourselves for the talking point about the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and we refrained from talking about the Medium Term Plan, considering that time limitation.

In that sense I think the short conclusion of that Report is more correctly reflecting the situation of our discussion. Otherwise we have to ask again the floor to talk about the Medium Term Plan issue or something like that. We would like to avoid such things.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

On behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, I would like to say that we could support what South Africa proposed. We “*welcome the presentation of the Medium Term Plan*” or something along those lines, then we are perhaps getting out of the discussion. If we are starting here to discuss what we discussed, it might be a very long session ahead of us.

Second point, we would really strongly support what was said and proposed by Mexico and seconded by the United States of America and others. Having just heard and not thought about every single paragraph here, this could be a very, very long and perhaps not so useful session ahead of us.

In one way or another perhaps coming back with a shorter version would be helpful for us to also give guidance. Because that is what we are supposed to be doing, it is to give guidance to the Organization of how we move further, and if we spend two hours on all of these paragraphs, it might turn out into something we did not really start out to have.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation believes that it would be preferable to focus on specific instructions and recommendations given to Management in terms of preparing the reviewed Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget. We would like to point out that the majority of delegations spoke of the financial elements of the Programme of Work and Budget. This is why we doubted that the full and rich range and scope of these draft conclusions would be indicative of the actual discussions.

We could take the recommendations of the Finance Committee as the basis for our draft decision. We were surprised to find out that the Finance Committee, that we have discussed, gave a number of recommendations - and the Russian Federation was among the countries that highlighted the recommendations during its oral statement, but they were not fully reflected in the conclusions.

I would also like to join those countries that were in favour of a more detailed approach to their view of the text and we would ask you, Chairperson, to show the draft conclusions on the screen, or print it out and distribute printed copies so we can discuss this draft decision in more detail, and work and draft it more carefully.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Two points. The *chapeau* that you have changed as a result of some delegation suggestions is fine for us, but the substantive point I wanted to make is to support those delegations who have asked for a shorter reflection of what we have discussed today, in my intervention.

I also heard other Members saying that there is a lot we still have to discuss in the detail of the budget and I think this is quite a long Report and my concern it might pre-judge those discussions that we have agreed that we want to have between this Council and the Conference on the budget. So, I would support a shorter, to the point, summary of our discussions today.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I would like to add Israel's voice to United States, Mexico, United Kingdom and European Union, I think it is a good suggestion to have a shorter version. I think there is no point of spending here two hours to discuss various agenda items, and paragraphs, and to go into details of something that we decided that all still needs to be worked on before the Conference and its just kind of a preliminary step for us, before us to come to a final kind of consensus towards the Conference.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voudrais simplement ajouter ma voix à ceux qui ont demandé des conclusions plus courtes. N'entrons pas dans le détail à ce stade, c'est précisément l'objet des consultations à venir sur le budget. Donc, nous réitérons fortement, le souhait d'avoir des conclusions beaucoup plus courtes sur ce point de l'ordre du jour.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

We would support the suggestion of South Africa that we break now and reconvene at 17:00 hours, and then have a look at a shorter version of the conclusions.

CHAIRPERSON

What we try to do is that we would like to arrest in this text things which we are agreeing on as Council as a guidance for the informal consultations.

It would have been quite easy to have perhaps only two subparagraphs, but then we did not give any guidance to the informal consultations to arrive at a consensus. Because then it seems that everything is still open and of course nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. But based on the discussions in the Programme Committee (PC) and the Finance Committee (FC), based on the informal consultations, we are narrowing down those elements in which we are not agreeing on.

As I said, we are not there yet. That is why we need informal consultations. However, we will break now until 17:00 hours. We will work on a more shortened version of the conclusions, focus on the elements which are needed for guidance for the informal consultations, and leave the other elements out and then it is up to you to decide whether it is shortened enough or that we only need one paragraph.

Meeting adjourned until 17:00 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 16:19 to 17:22 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 19 à 17 h 22

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.19 a las 17.22

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you to all the Partnership Award winners for the work they have done and continue to do.

Let us now turn to business again. Let us see where we are.

The Secretariat and I worked on your request and we could reduce the conclusions to half a page. What we tried to do is to find the middle ground of giving some guidance to the informal consultations because I think that is the task of the Council, to give guidance, to decide to give clear guidance, to decide on the recommendations for the Conference for the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

I do hope that we can do it because you saw clear indications of Members of the Council, who clearly stated, and there was quite some support for it, on Items, which should get priorities, and I think that we should at least arrest for the informal consultations to be worked further on. We can just say we discussed it and we go for the next Agenda Item. However, then we do not give any guidance.

Therefore, we tried to contain the most important elements of the discussion of today. I will put them now on the screen and read them out to you.

9. The Council welcomed the presentation of Item 3, *Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25) (C 2023/3)* and:

- (a) reaffirmed the Organization's unique position and role in transforming agrifood systems in a coherent manner, as appropriate, in accordance with and dependent on national contexts and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, leaving nobody behind;
- (b) reiterated the important role of scientific and evidence-based normative as standard-setting work of FAO;
- (c) stressed the importance of funding for conventions, treaty bodies and intergovernmental arrangements as well as the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP);
- (d) underlined the importance of adequate technical and other capacity within the Organization in decentralized offices, particular at regional and national levels;
- (e) underlined the importance of sound oversight, internal control and support functions;
- (f) recommended deferral to future biennia for the proposal for replenishment of the Working Capital Fund and incremental funding of the After-Service Medical Coverage past service liability;
- (g) stressed the need for the Organization's governance documents to reflect multilaterally agreed concepts, approaches and language and give preference to the those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies;
- (h) highlighted the importance of the Blue Transformation as a Programme Priority Area (PPA) and Roadmap reflecting FAO's vision on its work for achieving sustainable aquatic systems; and
- (i) underlined the need for growth of the budget and encouraged continued efforts towards reaching a consensus on the level of the budget, including through informal consultations

between Members and Management, in the period leading up to the 43rd Session of the Conference.

That is more or less half a page. Let us see whether or not this can meet your consensus. We go again subparagraph by subparagraph.

Can we agree to the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We thank you for what you have done but there is something that we wanted to see is how rooted into the FAO Strategic Framework this *Medium Term Plan (2022-2025) (reviewed)* and the Programme of Work and Budget are. There should be something related to that if it is possible, but we are not really too strong. However, I think it is important to relate it to the Strategic Framework more or less, in a sentence.

CHAIRPERSON

Do we have a concrete suggestion?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Yes, probably. If I may, before subparagraph (a), probably we can say, “*noted that the Medium Term Plan (2022-2025) (reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024- 25) are deeply rooted in the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and was guided by the discussions that took place in the Regional Conferences in 2022, the discussions at the 171st Session of the FAO Council (CL171) and the inclusive informal consultation of Members under the guidance of this Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC)*”. If we had these, probably we will avoid all the rest certainly.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Mine was just a one very small edit; it is “*Agenda 2030*” as opposed to “*2030 Agenda*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)?

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Japan can support this addition made by Cameroon but I would just like to add a very small amendment, because “*deeply*” is not necessary for this context and there is a little bit of ambiguity for that interpretation and connotation. With that, we are happy to join the consensus.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (b).

Mr Su GUO (China)

Just for subparagraph (a) if it is possible to change the “*noted*” into “*recommended*” because this is more positive because the *Medium Term Plan (2022-2025)* is among consultations between Management and Members, therefore, positive attitude is recommended.

CHAIRPERSON

The suggestion is to instead of “*noted*” replace it with “*recommended*”. Can we agree to this? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b) now? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (d).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Those two areas of work of FAO that are here, that is the technical programmes and the normative work, so we can probably reduce it, "*Stressed the importance of protecting and properly funding the normative work and technical work of FAO*". Because the technical work of FAO does not limit itself to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) only. Probably we may put it that way. It is a suggestion. We are not very strong about it. It is a simple suggestion to clear that balance between normative and technical work of FAO.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Nous avons dans nos interventions souligné l'importance de financer le travail des Conventions Dépositaires des Traités, qui est un rôle obligatoire pour la FAO et très important. Donc, nous souhaitons maintenir les paragraphes entre crochets, et après "*treaty bodies*" ajouter "*including depositary functions*".

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

I do not see any mention to the need to analyse and give transparency to the use of extra-budgetary resources and also I understand there was some mention also to the need to make sure that they are in line with the core mandate of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

Do we have a concrete proposal? We had a paragraph on that. Let us come back to it after we finalize this subparagraph as a separate one, because otherwise we will try to bring too much in one subparagraph.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

Everything that we are talking about here concerns 25 percent of resources and this one paragraph would concern 75 percent.

CHAIRPERSON

I am going with the proposal for this subparagraph after this one, because I do not want to have everything in one subparagraph just for trying to facilitate the work.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I believe that it has not captured totally our suggestion. Can we move the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) up?

That is the normative and technical work of FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

Would it be agreeable to maintain this in the text?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

We are not strong about it. We wanted this to be well addressed, normative and technical work. Therefore, if Members want to add conventions and treaties we are not strong about it.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I just wanted to support what France said that we would like the reference to the conventions and treaty bodies depositary function to stay. Maybe it works with the "*and*" there. It was just to express support.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I can echo what Sweden has just mentioned that we would prefer to have the retention of the Conventions Treaty Bodies, very happy to support France's proposal for depositary functions, and inter-Governmental arrangements. So, push for the retainment of that.

Mr Su GUO (China)

To my understanding, I think the technical work actually is including the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). So if it could change to "*stress the importance of protecting and properly funding*

the normative and the technical work of FAO including the conventions treaty bodies including the depositary functions in international governed arrangements as well as the TCP, among others”, if appropriate.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Les agradezco a todos los colegas las diferentes propuestas que han enriquecido el texto. La única cuestión que sugeriría es no incluir la palabra *"properly"* y dejar *"funding"* porque *"properly"* puede ser una palabra ambigua, muy amplia, difícil de poder precisar. Y, quizás, directamente decir *"funding"* es más fuerte que *"properly funding"*. Por lo menos es más directa, es más clara y creo que no es necesario agregarle un calificativo a *"funding"*. Por lo menos, no encontré un calificativo mejor que dejarlo directamente como *"funding"*. Pero sí, por supuesto, espero que tenga consenso con el resto de mis colegas. Soy flexible con todas las otras propuestas

CHAIRPERSON

Could we agree to the following paragraph then? *“Stress the importance of protecting and funding the normative and technical work of FAO, including the technical cooperation programme as well as the conventions, treaty bodies including depositary fundings and inter-government arrangements.”* Would that be the paragraph where we can agree on, if we can clean up the text? Would this be agreeable? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to the paragraph proposed by Brazil.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

I do not have opposition about subparagraph (d) but I would like to seek just one clarification whether or not the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) is technical. It seems to be TCP is a more capacity block but it depends on the definition, just for clarifications. I do not have any objections for that subparagraph (d) but I seek some clarification for that.

CHAIRPERSON

As the paragraph is formulated now, it does end *“normative work as well as the other work”*, so even if normative, that falls on the technical work. I think we capture it by specifying that at least it includes this work. It would work like this.

Can we then go to subparagraph (e)? Is this the text that Brazil would like to propose?

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

The Programme Committee had a paragraph on that, which said *“stressed that Voluntary Contributions should be aligned with implementation of the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and note that preferentially voluntary processes and initiatives should be funded by voluntary contributions”*.

CHAIRPERSON

Do you have the number of the paragraph of the Programme Committee that is always helpful for the Secretariat?

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

It is paragraph 5.

CHAIRPERSON

Can the Council agree to include this paragraph?

I will give you some time to read it although probably you have read it in preparation of the Council, but still, can we agree to this paragraph?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Solo para agradecerle a Brasil la propuesta que fue acordada en el Comité del Programa.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

My neighbour, Brazil, has brought something from the Programme Committee (PC) on which we agree, but there is one dimension that we would like to bring up, the issue of unearmarked contributions. Somewhere it should appear because we, in as much as possible, want those voluntary contributions to be less compulsory on specific domains, so they should be unearmarked. I do not have any clear proposal but this is an idea that can compliment the proposal of the Finance Committee (FC).

CHAIRPERSON

I was looking to the shortest because there are several ideas that make the text quite long and I was hopefully waiting for Cameroon to make a suggestion.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I think the end of the paragraph confuses things somewhat and I do not want to get too far into it with management but I think saying “*voluntary processes funded only by voluntary countries*”. I mean there is a certain percentage that is charged on certain things for this. I would just end this paragraph as “*Strategic Framework 2022-31*”. I think that still covers it, voluntary contributions should be aligned with the implementation of the Strategic Framework, and the rest of that is kind of a given, given how things are already used and moved around.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Ese párrafo que fue discutido en el Comité del Programa en realidad lo que refleja al final, que es lo que mencionaba mi estimado colega de Estados Unidos, es la idea de diferenciar aquellos procesos de carácter voluntario que no incluyen a la totalidad de los Miembros en las diferentes actividades que la FAO propone o promueve. Por lo tanto, la idea es que se priorice que las contribuciones ordinarias sostengan las actividades que son básicamente inclusivas de todos los Miembros y que tienen efecto sobre todos los Miembros.

Eso es lo que está detrás de todo el concepto de por qué fue redactado de esa manera en el Comité del Programa. Pero yo, en realidad, como había pedido la palabra para recordar que en la Conferencia anterior existe un texto que captura lo que mencionó mi querido colega de Camerún, que quizás pueda ser útil, Presidente, para la eventual conversación de este tema a posteriori y me refiero al ítem (i) del punto 68 de la Conferencia del 2021, donde dice:

“Stressed the importance of flexible likely earmarked and earmarked voluntary funding to support the priorities as outlined in the integrated programme of work”

Solo lo menciono si es útil en función de lo que decía mi estimado colega de Camerún. Si no es, no tome en cuenta lo que digo.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first go to the shortest version because I think the more text we bring, the more text will be included. So, could we agree to have a fullstop after “*Strategic framework 2022-31*”? Would it be agreeable to the Members? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (e). Can we agree to subparagraph (e)? I do not see any objections.

Can we then go to subparagraph (f)?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I was reflecting because “*adequate technical in other capacity*”, I do not really put it clearly in my head. Are we talking of resources or financial resources or human resources or what? Because in the past three Africa Regional Conferences or so our Ministers have always stressed the fact that we need adequate resourcing and high-level technical capacities in our decentralized offices in Africa.

Therefore, I was just thinking about “underlying the importance of adequately resourcing decentralized offices”. So decentralized meaning regional, national level to improve the capacity of the Organization.

Mr Su GUO (China)

I do not have any issue about subparagraph (e) now but I do want to add a new subparagraph just after the “*Strategic Framework 2022-31*” because as you know, China does think this is very important the way of resource allocation, resource cooperation.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with subparagraph (e) and then we come to your subparagraph.

It was the proposal of Cameroon to reformulate subparagraph (e) by “*underline the importance of adequately resourcing the rights offices to improve the capacity of the Organization*”. It is a shorter subparagraph. I think that reflects the proposal of Cameroon if I am correct.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I think the only thing about the change in the subparagraph is that it loses the idea of technical capacity in something that the Director-General has highlighted and I think a lot of us have highlighted throughout the course of this.

I think maybe it could just say, “*underline the importance of funding adequate technical capacity within the decentralized offices to improve the capacity of the Organization*” or “*to improve the Organization*” or even just “*adequate technical capacity within the decentralized offices period*”. Although I do like particularly “*at the regional and national levels*”, but I can live without that.

CHAIRPERSON

Would it be agreeable to Council, including to Cameroon?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Let me thank very much my United States of America colleague for bringing the idea of technical capacity, which we agree on, but the issue of resourcing is missing. We should find a way of adding that and I think we can also complete it by “*including to improve the implementation capacity of the Organization*”.

But let us see how we can add the issue of resourcing because this is to fund adequate capacity is far from funding, I do not know, whether it is the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), sometimes you have material to acquire and so on. I think it is not only technical capacity.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We do not really have a strong position on this but one takeaway from the discussions earlier today was the risk of focusing exclusively on technical capacity. I think in the original version of this other capacity was mentioned because oversight was one key element that was at risk from being under funded and under resourced.

My sense is here we are speaking of two different things. One is the human resource base upon which the Organization delivers, and that is a mix of both its technical capacity and its other capacity that provides that oversight and administrative support that is essential for it to be able to deliver its technical programmes.

Then the resources at a country level that are both human and material that deliver the outcomes that it tries to achieve. So, I think if we go too much one way or too much the other way I think we risk losing the richness of that discussion.

I think with the way the Secretariat's adapted it right now I think we can live with it, but just to offer that element.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Following Canada's comments, coming through Finance Committee (FC) we have heard about the need to have supporting capacity particularly at the decentralized offices and national and regional levels.

We would suggest including reference to other capacity. Our proposal was supporting capacity because I think that gives a little bit of context around but very much think that we do need to have not an entire focus on technical capacity as it has been highlighted.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think we are reiterating the same area with different words. I go on with the statement that says “*underline the importance of funding adequate technical*”, and we have to eliminate “*in other capacities*”, because if you say “*funding adequate technical capacity*”, there is no need to say “*other*”, because every technical capacity is within that.

Then, within the decentralized office. That is I think enough. “*Underlined the importance of funding adequate technical capacities within the decentralized offices*”.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I know you are trying to reach a consensus here and we will go along with the consensus but we seem to be getting into the kind of wheats of the discussion that I thought we were trying to avoid with the shorter conclusion.

I wanted to come back to what my delegation said earlier on that. There is a lot of detail on the budget that we still have to iron out, and I have no doubt some decentralized offices need to be supported with adequate technical and other capacity, but there is a discussion there about the trade off between how you do that, vis-à-vis posts at headquarters, for example. That kind of issue is going to be discussed between now and Conference I think, because we have said that we need more deliberations in the budget.

It seems to me that we might be better just sticking to a general reference here. I do not have a specific proposal but we are talking, we seem to be focusing on decentralized offices, which are very important, but we are singling that out in the context of a wider discussion which we have agreed we need to get into more detail on.

I am just pointing out the unintended consequences of trying to be too specific at this point.

CHAIRPERSON

I do remind everybody what was said by the United Kingdom, that we have to be careful not to be too specific.

Because we still have to work in the next coming weeks of finding consensus on all, not only on one item, but on all, but could it not read as following, “*underline the importance of adequately resourcing the decentralized offices, including with adequate technical capacity, to improve the implementation capacity of the Organization*”.

Would that capture the thinking and support of the Council? I do not see any objections.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I think Australia also said it, that we are now focusing on “*adequately resourcing the decentralized offices*”.

What we would like to see is that the decentralized offices are able to deliver better and that has a lot to do with the technical capacity but also with the oversight. You really want to make sure that you do not put the Organization at risk. That is at least the discussion we had in the Finance Committee.

I was quite happy with the first wording of the Secretariat, and I think I prefer the “*funding adequate technical*” rather than “*resourcing*”, but maybe I have to think a bit about what I would like to suggest. However, I thought we were losing a bit of the sight when we were just moving onto the technical capacity and not the oversight side.

CHAIRPERSON

The oversight side comes in the next subparagraph.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I thought these paragraphs were supposed to be a guidance for the discussions that will take place between now and the Conference but we seem to be arguing over words. That is not so much of a guidance; that is actually agreeing on the wording. I thought we were going to discuss and come to a consensus but here each word is being commented on as if this is the final Report.

CHAIRPERSON

Of course, it is only guidance because we still have to agree on the total guidance given to the Conference on the level budget. I give you a moment to see whether or not Sweden could go along with the text as it is now, then I give China the possibility to introduce their subparagraph after subparagraph (e).

Mr Su GUO (China)

I think the new subparagraph (e) and the new subparagraph talking about the way of resource allocation. We just want to add a new subparagraph and provide a way of resourcing especially very important for the developing countries and the triangular cooperations. So the new subparagraph is: *“recognize the important and instrumental role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in realizing the 2030 Agenda and encourage FAO to invigorate further enhanced South-South and Triangular Cooperation”*. This is from the Report of the CL165 and supported by Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

El texto ofrecido por la Delegación de China es un texto que ya hemos acordado oportunamente y, además, es un tema importante para los países en desarrollo que hemos planteado en diversas oportunidades, por lo cual, me parece oportuno incluirlo en este Informe.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

I wanted to go back to the earlier subparagraph but now that you have given a ruling to distinguished delegate of Sweden I would like to then focus on the proposed new subparagraph *“recognizing the importance and instrumental role of South, South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in realizing 2030 Agenda and encourage FAO”*.

I would agree with it but I just wanted us to re-frame the language a little bit on invigorating. I do not quite have an alternative but *“to enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation”* is what we support just on the wording without wasting a lot of time. I am not sure if my colleague would live without having invigorate, just to only have to enhance because in the process of enhancing you can invigorate.

CHAIRPERSON

It was already agreed text by the Council. So we can of course always improve the text. Can we then agree to this subparagraph and of course we will come back to subparagraph which is now (f).

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Just the same comment I had before. It is Agenda 2030 and not Agenda 2030.

CHAIRPERSON

I was going to say that as well.

Can we agree now to subparagraph (e)? I do not see any objections.

I will come back to Sweden on subparagraph (f).

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

If we could just add one word, *“adequate technical and other capacity”* then we would be okay with that.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

I share the flexibility by Sweden, just in enhancing what Cameroon was raising for the developing countries resourcing in tangible and it is important that is reflected. Therefore, if we have after that *“funding adequate technical capacity”*.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we now agree on this text? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (g), *“underline importance of the oversight internal control and support functions”*. Can we agree to this paragraph?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

No problem if we can do away with sound, because as I was saying earlier, given an adjective to some words maybe counter productive. So *“underline importance of oversight in internal control of support functions especially in the decentralized offices”* because that is what I heard you saying.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we go along with the proposal?

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I was just wondering this is not a must for me by any means. I think maybe something stronger than *“underline”*, maybe *“emphasise the importance of oversight internal controls and support functions”*. That way it gives a little bit of oomph to that paragraph whilst still solving the problem that our friend raised with the idea of sound not really having a lot of meaning.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we go along as the text as it stands now on the screen emphasizing the importance of oversight internal control and support functions? I do not see objections. Let me go to subparagraph (h) which was also recommendation of the Finance Committee (FC). Can we agree to subparagraph (h)?

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

This is not reproducing fully what has been said. So, with regards to the recommendation from the Finance Committee (FC) we would like to continue, and add to it, the wording that was approved by the Finance Committee namely after the semi colon we would add, *“requested Management to continue to explore alternative strategies to address these requirements”*. In this way, we reproduce the recommendation from the Finance Committee, paragraph 23 of the Report.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

I would like to also make a small addition in line with the recommendations by the Finance Committee (FC), after *“the biennium”*, to add *“consideration of”*.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I have another problem with this sentence. Would it not be better to be placed in the Report of the Finance Committee (FC) rather than here? Because I have read the entire Medium Term Plan (MTP) and so on. It does not appear anywhere, the After-Service Medical Coverage, past service liability. It appears just in passing, but it is the Finance Committee Report itself that mentioned it. It might be better to mention it when we will be examining the Report of the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

The idea was to capture the agreement. I think there was an agreement in the room, to the referral to future biennia of this issue. I think that is as a guidance to the informal consultations. We still have the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC) conclusions, but that was the idea of arresting what was said today by several Members, that we give guidance that we want to defer this to a later stage.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to take the floor to make one point, because I agree with the suggestion made by the Russian Federation.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the text as it is now? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (i) now. Can we agree to subparagraph (i)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (j). I do not see any objections.

We go to the last subparagraph (k). We will try to get it in full on the screen.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

As I understood and heard from the discussion today, I think there was an understanding that we need to continue the deliberations between Members to come to a final view on where we want the budget to land. We would not be in a position where we would be able to say that we found that there was consensus for the need for a growth.

We are here to continue the discussions and we will do this in good faith and with a compromise in mind. So, what I would like to propose, as an alternative text on this, *“agree to consider a budget level that would ensure for the Organization to fulfill its core activities as a knowledge Organization, reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within its mandate, using its comparative advantage in the UN system, and encourage continued efforts toward reaching a consensus”*.

The idea would be that we are willing to continue, and we see that there is a need, the discussion to fulfill something that we all want to see with the Organization. So that, I am sure there are others that can put this more elegantly, but this would be a proposal.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We are also ready to agree when there is a constructive proposal, and therefore we support the proposal from the distinguished representative of Sweden. We would like to note that talking about the guidance that we have included in the draft decision.

We have to mention the row of reaching consensus here. We need to agree on the level of the budget. However, we should also take into account that this level of budgetary spending is also achieved. And this is what is concluded in the Finance Committee's measures by making savings from our point of view.

This recommendation from the Finance Committee is the result of deep and open discussions with the Management of the Organization. Therefore, I would like to add with the agreement of the representative of Sweden to the subparagraph that is now on the screen, the recommendation of the Finance Committee, which says, outlines the use with a sealing of the budget for also including savings measures.

Considering that, the proposal would be as follows and encourage continued efforts towards reaching a consensus on the level of the budget. And here I would add the following wording from the financing committee, including through reallocation of resources and any further anticipated increases in cost recovery to be considered at informal consultations with Members, including through them as follows.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

I had another proposal, but after listening to the proposal made by Sweden and addition made by the Russian Federation I can support the new subparagraph (l) and Japan can go along with that.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I agree with our Swedish colleague that this perhaps is the most important paragraph that we have discussed this evening because it is so important that we provide real guidance as we move forward on these discussions. I think we heard very clearly from the Africa Regional Group, from others today that there is support in this room for something that is more than the current budget. Something that is perhaps more than Zero-Nominal-Growth (ZNG).

I think it would be important for us to put that out there if there is in fact agreement that there should be something more. I do not disagree with the language that was put up on the screen as an alternate additional subparagraph but I do not think it provides the guidance that would be necessary or important for us to move forward.

So, I would instead in the current subparagraph (k) suggests dropping the “*need for growth of the budget*” and instead replace it with, “*underline the need for a budget level beyond the 2022-2023 nominal level*”. That at least gives some indication that we are willing to be flexible. We are willing to look forward as to where we are going, and we are willing to listen to some of the, many of the Members in this room who made that statement or even beyond today.

I think that that is a step forward and a step in the right direction toward our conversations later. Therefore, I would be fine with the subparagraph below without “and encouraged”, because I I would keep the rest of the subparagraph as it is. But that would be a proposal I would make respectfully.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Without consulting the United States of America, this is exactly what I had in mind. First of all, we cannot talk of growth while Ms Beth Crawford has been hammering every time, this is Zero-Nominal-Growth (ZNG), which takes into consideration inflation and additional cost. That is what we had. Therefore, the guidance that we need is to have a level of the budget, which is above the 2022 nominal level.

That is the guidance we need to give for the informal consultation. I totally agree with the United States of America, the way it is formulated now. I do not know which of the sentences you want to correct. I will go for rather the shortest one, but if we have to go into the second ‘alt’, then there are something that I may want to add later on. But we are in hands first to know where you want to go.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me voy a tomar unos segundos para leer la propuesta que hizo Estados Unidos con los comentarios de los colegas. Me voy a referir en este momento a la propuesta alternativa que propuso la Delegada de Suecia en representación de la Unión Europea. Solo alguna corrección técnica, en la primera línea: “*Ensure for FAO, [not for the Organization], to fulfill its core activities as a specialized agency*”.

Son pequeños cambios técnicos que había observado y que me gustaría incluir. Ahora me voy a tomar unos segundos para mirar la propuesta de Estados Unidos.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

There has been so much correction since I wanted to make my point. I looked for quite some time at the original subparagraph (k) and I thought there was consensus in the room. I consulted with a couple of colleagues to see if I was not hearing incorrectly. However, it would seem to me that what has been proposed in subparagraph (i) for the most part, has been already stated in subparagraph (k) and we seem to have a appetite in this place for adding, creating additions and then continuing to amend those additions. I simply wanted to make the point that from where I sit, that the original subparagraph (k) seems to have captured what the sentiments were and that is my point.

Mr Su GUO (China)

I think the previous colleague gave very constructive input about the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). However, I just want to ask procedure questions because the PWB is very meaningful to each Member so I do not refer to turn to Legal Counsel. If the informal consultations are enough to provide guidance for the Management to submit to the 43rd Session of Conference or if not, should we have some more procedures about that?

CHAIRPERSON

We were preparing for it a lot. This question came later than expected. Many options can be followed towards the Conference. Normally, it is the Council that gives recommendations to the Conference - that is in the Basic Texts.

If we can arrive at a consensus in the Informal Consultations, we can have a special Session of the Council to formalize those into a recommendation of the Council to the Conference. It makes it stronger than only informal consensus, because informal consensus is an informal consensus, but is not a strong legal basis.

If we arrive at a consensus in informal consultations, which I do expect even after today, we can have a brief extra Session of the Council to formalize that consensus with a strong recommendation of the Council to the Conference.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We would like to see subparagraphs (k) and (l). We are ready to support the proposal from the representative of the United States on the understanding that the second part of subparagraph (k), beginning with the words “and encouraged” from our point of view, this is the route to a consensus understanding of how the consultation should look in preparing the draft budget. These paragraphs give us the starting point in order to build this consensus or these consultations to have greater effectiveness and greater coordination when agreeing the budget level.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voulais apporter mon soutien, puisqu'il y a deux versions à ce stade à l'écran, à la version (l), modifiée par plusieurs collègues. Durant les discussions, certaines délégations ont indiqué qu'elles n'étaient pas en état de s'engager à ce stade sur un niveau de budget, et je pense que le sous-paragraphe (l) permet de laisser les options ouvertes, tout en soulignant la nécessité pour la FAO de pouvoir financer ses activités. Donc, pour toutes ces raisons nous soutenons le paragraphe alternatif tel que modifié par plusieurs collègues, notamment l'Argentine, la Russie et le Japon.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Todos hemos sido atentos a las posiciones que cada uno de los Miembros expresaron durante estas conversaciones y, por supuesto, el espíritu constructivo nos obliga a tratar de evitar incluir un Report que requiera que algún Miembro o algunos Miembros, de acuerdo a lo que han expresado en el debate, tengan que ir a pedir instrucciones nuevamente. Por lo cual, quisiera sugerir para evitar cualquier tipo de circunstancia de ese tipo y que pueda afectar el consenso común, el consenso total, es si pudiéramos incluir en la propuesta del subpárrafo (k): “*Underlining the need for exploring a budget level beyond exploring*”.

Es decir, “*exploring*” es una palabra que nos da la posibilidad a países que hemos tenido instrucciones en un sentido dar la posibilidad de seguir teniendo conversaciones sin tener que ir a pedir nuevas instrucciones y, a mí me parece que, no afectaría el sentido del párrafo ni afectaría el interés de buscar una salida de consenso constructiva. Si esto puede ser comprendido, creo que podríamos perfectamente acompañar el consenso de los colegas.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

I prefer the new subparagraph (l) because it is incorporating many issues. However, if we talk about paragraph subparagraph (k), I would like to suggest the following word to add after “*budget level*”. So, between the currently proposed budget level in the document C2023/3 and beyond. My sense is that first we need a capping over the increased budget because we are now thinking about the middle ground of the currently proposed budget and the general growth budget.

I see the point the United States laid, that we need some guidance for the consultation process so far, but we need to also cap the level of the budget as a guidance for our further consultation. That is my suggestion. Maybe wording is not so sophisticated, but maybe the secretariat can support me.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

We tend to be pushing on a very cumbersome process, and everybody knows what the process is. What is going to the Conference is the Director-General's proposal today. That is what is going to the Conference. Nothing else.

We should be cognizant of that fact. So, talking about negotiating, we still have to go to the Conference with the document, which is available today because it is C 2003/3. That is the document

that is going to the Conference and has the budget level. We have negotiate that budget level now and see if we can accommodate it or not. Now, that is one thing that I wanted to say.

The second thing that I would like to say is that we definitely have to reach a consensus on the budget level, but it might be difficult to discuss the relocation of resources. The relocation resources is done within the planning process, is done in the Council in December. We cannot reallocate resources now if we have not reached the budget level. Once we have reached the budget level, then we give the mandate to the Director-General (DG) to go and make budget reallocations wherever it fits. So, we should not confuse the Conference here by adding things that may not be operational in the Council.

The third thing is that we will be obliged to have a special Session of the Council because we need, a document that will approve the budget, and it is the Council that sends it to the Conference. If we do not have a resolution here today. We need a resolution, is the Council to send the resolution to the Conference. I do not know whether the formal constitution will send it. So, these are things that we need to be clear on.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia retains flexibility in whether to go with subparagraph (k) or (l) and we will be happy to support consensus. If we are to focus on subparagraph (l) we do have some specific wording changes that we would propose, and I will read those out.

Agree to consider a budget level that would ensure that FAO can conduct its core activities as a specialized agency to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is not for FAO to achieve or reach the Sustainable Development Goals. That is really looking to support Members achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. That is the limit of our proposal.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I really appreciate this conversation because like I said, this is so important that we get this right. I appreciate the kind of sentiment in the room that we do all want to work together to get this right. I left the last afternoon Session feeling very optimistic and positive about where we were going as a Council. I really feel strongly that subparagraph (k) and (l) are both very important, but subparagraph (l) by itself does not really do much more than what we did in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees. It does not take us any further or closer to where we need to go. I think as we heard from most people in the room today we do need to go further. I think that the suggestion from Argentina about the need for exploring a budget level, solves some of the problems that I heard today as well.

I think the Japanese proposal *“between the currently proposed budget level”*, and I would take out the word *“beyond”* because at that point it is not necessary – *“between the currently proposed budget level and the 2022-2023 nominal level”*, that gives us a range that we are willing to look at. It is a broad range, but it is a range that we are willing to discuss. I think that is really good. Then what I would do is I would take everything after encouraged from subparagraph (l) and pop it up in place of what is in subparagraph (k).

Therefore, I would drop all of that. I would pop it up in the place of, *“and encouraged”* in subparagraph (k), deleting everything to the end because it is essentially the same thing with some good suggestions that came from the Russian Federation and others. Then if we need to, I would keep subparagraph (l). I think the language in there is good, it is strong, but I think without it, it does not need to have the *“encouraged continued efforts”* because it is up above.

Therefore, it would just stop at *“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within its mandate using its comparative advantages in the UN system”*. I think that with that, we have a really nice conclusion here that gives us a jumping point to come off of, to work together informally amongst ourselves to work together informally as a Council and then to come together as an extraordinary Council and find a way forward before the Conference.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

I guess I would agree with the proposal as refined by the United States of America. Basically, building on what our distinguished delegate of Argentina, Japan and Cameroon.

They have set the floor and the ceiling and that is enough guidance. The floor being then “the nominal level as of 2022-2023”, and the ceiling being the proposal as presented by the Secretariat. I think that is something that distinguished colleagues we should appreciate and within the mandate of FAO. I think that that covers all including the Russian Federation's proposal. Therefore, we should probably settle for subparagraph (k) if I may encourage.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I would ask for one last change but I would be also happy to keep the wording in and subparagraph (l) as suggested by the United States of America because this is really where we would like to show a strong commitment to the Organization and what we expected to do.

I would like to ask under subparagraph (k), if colleagues agree, to change the word “*underline*” into “*took note*” and with that it would be acceptable for us.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Can we reflect a little bit on putting into bracket “*through reallocation of resources*”? Because I was thinking that we can say “*consist on the budget level*”, including any further anticipated increases and cost recoveries and so on. Because the idea of reallocation of resources does not sound well at this level of the discussion.

I think it is coming too early here, heading to the 43rd Session of the Conference. I will suppress that part. I will suggest to do away with “*through the reallocation of resources*”, but including “*any further anticipated increases in cost recoveries*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, could you go along with it because as was stated, we have another Council at the end of this year where I have to fill in and consider reallocations if needed. However, that does not have to be done by the Conference itself yet.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Unfortunately, I cannot agree with the proposal made by the distinguished representative of Cameroon. During the course of the discussions of this issue, at the meeting of the Finance Committee (FC), we outlined reserves which would allow us to redistribute resources, and from the point of view of the financial possibilities that the Organization might receive through redistribution of resources or from making use of additional contributions from extra budgetary financing. The sum that might be utilized to cover the reabsorption of growth is an issue when it comes to the resources.

However, if the distinguished representative of Cameroon has some doubts about this, then we are ready to defer the paragraph until we look at the Report and then, we will be able to look at the content of the proposals that were at the 195th Session. And after agreeing the recommendations with the Finance Committee, we can return to considering this point of the paragraph. I hope that the representative Cameroon will find my arguments convincing.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not want to postpone the adoption of these conclusions for today otherwise we will be sitting on Friday evening trying to adopt everything because everything will be linked to everything. I am not ready to do so as Chairperson. We have to find the consensus on the steps.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Colleagues, I think our goal here and our job here is to be brave and to take the steps necessary to make sure that this Organization has the resources it needs to do the work that we are asking it to do. We cannot continue to ask more from this Organization without funding it and without looking at it. Now, what does that mean?

That is going to be a conversation for later, but the need to continuously weaken the beginning of subparagraph (k), now it is “*took note of the need to explore a budget*”. It is so weak. Why cannot we say that there is a need to explore a budget level between the current proposed budget level and the

nominal level? I was going to suggest, “*stressed*” or “*encouraged the need*”, but I think we could still be somewhat weak without being weak.

Give agreed on the need to explore. That way we still agree on something. We are still doing something and taking action on something without just taking note of an idea that we need to do something. We need to do something and it is our job to do it. W that, I would make that suggestion respectfully.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to remind everybody that we are just giving guidance to informal consultations. We are not agreeing on anything yet. However, if you cannot agree to give guidance at this moment, what can the informal consultations do?

Therefore, we would like to make a plea to show a lot of flexibility to go along with the latest proposals, not to insist on parts of the element because everything is still open and on the table. We are giving guidance to informal consultations between you all and the whole Membership. So, let us give that guidance.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

I will begin by repeating your phrase. Let us give guidance. We need clear recommendations because in that way we will guide our work. They should not be vague. The wording that was in the text “*through reallocation of resources*” does not give us the opportunity to get that guidance. If nothing is missing and if we have a few different options on the table, then why do not we give the guidance that would probably enrich our discussion.

If we exclude this recommendation, then we would get rid of one of the possible ways to achieve compromise during our discussions on the budget. We would like to note that for us reallocation of resources is a specific instruction for consultations on the budget. Therefore, we would advocate keeping that wording, taking into account the recommendation from the Finance Committee (FC), which was supported by the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee (PC).

CHAIRPERSON

If you read carefully the text, it states “*reaching consensus on the budget level*”. If we give some specification about what could be on the table, but not everything, because I can think of five to 10 other issues, which could be included. If you make an emphasis now already to the reallocation, it gets emphasis above others and we will not reach the consensus on this text.

Therefore, everything is still on the table because we did not agree to anything. We can have reallocations, we can have cuts, and we can have increases. Everything is on the table. So, let us try to find consensus on the guidance and let us continue our discussion whether it should be reallocation, whether it should be an increase, whether it should be something else.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I would like to show some flexibility and the proposal from the United States of America would be acceptable to us.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We would like to be flexible, therefore we would propose keeping the wording from the Finance Committee (FC). We said that all options are possible for looking for a compromise, “*including through possible reallocation of resources and any further anticipated increases*.” In this way, we are not focusing on a specific set of means for achieving a new option for the budget “*possible reallocation of resources*” and then further according to the text.

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, we are going now around the circles. At the end of today, we have to decide whether or not as the United States, the Russian Federation would like to block consensus on the guidance. That is the question we are heading to.

Let us leave it up to you because the text is already so flexible, and we know that we have the Report of the Programme Committee. We have to Report on the Finance Committee, of the Joint Meeting, of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). All those Reports have to be taken into account when we are going to explore a budget, which is somewhere between the options which are given.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think what you have said is very clear. At this point of time, we cannot give only a guidance and then the options, they can be digested by them. It could be through reallocation of the budget or any others, but if you point out only reallocation of the budget, it means for the other sources or for the other lines. We are deteriorating.

I think it is good to include this one, only the two lines, which are in the first one. With that, we are guiding them to explore any type of kind of budget to increase. Therefore, I think that is full stop and we do not have mention the allocation and others and so on.

CHAIRPERSON

In the meantime, we try to clean up the text that we can focus on the two or three elements we do not agree on.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

When I was making my suggestion, I did not think that it will bring such a hard position among Members. I was making it in good faith and people should understand that you know, you allocate resources if you have already a budget with different chapters. You can move in between the chapters. If you cannot move in between the chapters, then you resources in terms of priority areas, that one too. I do not have any problem through allocation resources, but we have to be clear enough what kind of reallocation of resources we want to have.

We do not have any problem. We are doing just with good faith, knowing perfectly the planning process and how it goes towards the Council in December. So, probably there are other things that we do not have, we do not know. So, we want to be flexible. If the Russian Federation really think that is a red line, we have no problem. We are marking it with good faith knowing perfectly the process leading to reallocation of resources.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Ahora acabo de escuchar las sugerencias de Eritrea y de Camerún. La sugerencia que quiero hacer es muy pequeña, pero quizás ayuda. Si es que vuela, si no, déla por no presentada. Cuando dice "including", agregar: *"Including but not limited to"*.

Quizás eso refleja o da una posibilidad a que la Federación Rusa también pueda estar de acuerdo en términos de ese esquema de flexibilidad. Pero solo si esto vuela, si no sirve para el consenso, obviamente, retiro la propuesta.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I entirely agree with what you said. This is guidance and when we come to discussions before the Conference, we will be taking all Reports into account, the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee. So, if this reallocation of resources is mentioned in the Finance Committee's Report, in those discussions, we will be taking into account, why do we have to insist on mentioning reallocation here? And besides for something to appear in the Finance Committee or the Programme Committee's Report is not the last word for the Council. The Council can disagree with the Finance Committee or the Programme Committee. Therefore, this thing of saying, because it is the Finance Committee said it, the Council has to accept it. It is, it is not that way.

Over the years, there have been several occasions when the Council did not agree with the Finance Committee or the Programme Committee and had its own views. Otherwise, what is the point of the two Committees Reporting to the Council? If the Council just has to rubber stamp what the two Committees are saying.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense que le Cameroun et le Pakistan nous ont un peu éclairés la lanterne, et je remercie aussi les Etats-Unis, pour leur esprit positif, qui nous ont proposé un bon test. Est-ce que la réallocation pouvait résoudre le problème, donc à partir du budget 2022-2023, que nous avons actuellement ? Si nous faisons la réallocation, nous allons donc résoudre tous les problèmes que nous avons soulevés ici, dans la salle ? Je ne pense pas. Donc, le problème ce n'est pas seulement la réallocation.

Donc, on ne préjuge pas déjà de ce que nous allons faire. Si la réallocation seule ne suffit pas à régler le problème, il y a plusieurs options à examiner. Je pense que la Fédération de la Russie doit faire quand même preuve de consensus, de flexibilité plutôt pour qu'on arrive au consensus. On ne peut pas focaliser notre attention seulement sur la réallocation parce que nous sommes en train de discuter sur un budget qui sera autre que le budget 2022-2023.

Est-ce que la réallocation se fera sur la base de ce budget là ? Ou du budget que nous sommes en train de discuter ? Il est là le problème, c'est ce que le Cameroun a dit. Donc, vraiment que la Fédération de Russie fasse preuve de flexibilité. Je suis d'accord avec vous Monsieur le Président, que nous puissions avancer.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je pense qu'on attend des signaux de flexibilité de la part de plusieurs collègues, y compris sur ce dernier sujet de la part du Cameroun notamment. Et je voudrais remercier le collègue de l'Argentine, pour sa proposition qui me semble permettre de réconcilier différentes propositions. Il est dit clairement que cela peut être à travers une réallocation des ressources, mais pas seulement. Et si c'est important pour certains collègues de le mentionner, et nous l'avons entendu de la part du collègue Russe, nous n'avons pas de difficulté pour le laisser. Encore une fois, nous estimons que la proposition argentine permet de réconcilier les différentes positions, et nous espérons qu'elle pourra avoir le consensus.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Japan is also the Member of the Finance Committee. I see the point the Russian Federation pointed out. I think the suggestion made by the Ambassador of Argentina is quite fantastic for building the consensus for all Members.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We are grateful to you for your attempt to achieve a consensus text. We do not quite understand why consensus should only occur on that part of the text that is in brackets even though this is just one of the options for saving and finding a consensus solution. Having said that, we are grateful to the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina and we are ready with pleasure to go to that proposal and to admit the possibility in finding ways of achieving a consensus version of the text.

The sense of our proposal was that within the Finance Committee, there was a substantive discussion and the participants of that discussion maybe were not all Members of the Council, but those discussions led to a conclusion that there are reserves, which can be used for redistribution of existing funds. And we were talking about a high level of vacancies and that was what we talked about. We were talking about the posts that were unoccupied for two or more years. This is what was meant under the proposal on redistribution of resources.

Nevertheless, we are very grateful to the distinguished representative of Argentina, and we are ready to go with that proposal that was made by him. From our point of view, this does not distort the sense of the recommendation from the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to remind everybody and also the Russian Federation that the Programme Committee and Finance Committee are advisory bodies to the Council. It is up to the Council to decide as was said by Pakistan, what to do with the reports, etcetera. So, let us give ourselves the flexibility to work in the spirit of consensus, compromise to find at a certain moment in the next two months, a budget which can serve all.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I again repeat what you had said. I totally agree with you that this is guidance by referring to the reallocation of resources, whether you say including reallocation or whether you say, but not limited to, it is still a prescription for the discussions to follow.

I would rather follow what you said, that when discussions take place, all the Reports on the issue will be taken into account and discussed so why do we have to prescribe it here? I also note that many Members keep referring to the vacancies and the vacant posts, and that is where you should take the resources from.

However, they are ignoring what we were told in the informal consultations by the Deputy-Director General, that the vacant posts, although vacant, the work is being either done by the consultants or an internal person is selected and another internal vacancy is created. That does not mean the vacancy has been there for two years. The information given to us in the informal consultation is being totally ignored. So, what is the point of having these consultations then?

My suggestion is to agree exactly what you said, delete this reallocation of resources because it is prescribing what the discussions should do. And when the discussions take place, we look at the Finance Committee's (FC) Report, we look at what the informal consultation information was, and then move forward from there. And, as you said, and as I said, the Committees are advisory to the Council.

Their Report is not the last word. It is the Council, which will decide on the Committee's recommendation and move forward and give its views to the Conference. Therefore, we should not treat the Committees as if once they have said that we have to rubber stamp it.

CHAIRPERSON

We know that the informal consultations on the budget needed will address many issues and hopefully at a certain moment narrows the issues to be discussed and agreed upon. May I make a last attempt to get out of this deadlock? If we remain including, my fear is that we are going to include many documents, which should be included in the informal consultation, but we already know what is on the table.

Therefore, could we not just delete the “*including*”? So, delete “*including*” until “*to be considered at the informal consultations*”. That will have to remain, otherwise we do not have informal consultations. Could we not keep it like this? Because then we have the broadest way of discussing the element we need to get where we have to be.

Would this not be agreeable to the room?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I agree totally with what Pakistan said. I will add another argument in that may probably justify why we should do away with what was in bracket. We do not want to get entangled into the discussion on the carryover. That is my fear. Because we are discussing the 2024-2025 budget. Then, if we have to reallocate the resources, are they from 2022-2023? Or are we going to have in mind the discussion on the carryover, the possible carryover?

How much is the possible carryover from one biennium to the other? Is it 10 percent? I do not recall. That is where my fear is, that we may be entangled into further discussion on this. Therefore, it is another argument to support what you have said.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Japan prefers the previous version including, but not limited too because it captures many things. I very much respected what was carried by Pakistan. However, from Japan's point of view, they cannot post issue. We are not satisfied with that the explanation for the Secretariat. Therefore, in that sense, previous version, including but not limited two would be better for the consensus from my point of view.

CHAIRPERSON

I was hoping that we were getting there because “*including but not limited to*” does not need consensus in the room. So, I am trying to seek consensus. Otherwise, we still break down and I do not want to carry over this, for not to use the parts of the budget, but not to carry over this discussion until tomorrow morning.

That is why I said we have a broad range of issues to be discussed during the Informal consultations. Let us not limit ourselves to 1, 2, 3, or 4. That is why I said “*including*” was just for helping, but it is not now helping us. So, that is why I tried to shorten the text when I say, okay, this is what we have to discuss. There are argument for the other text but did it meet consensus?

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

I think what you have proposed is very acceptable and it is very open. If we find it like this, it means we will give them a very open for discussion, then we can discuss and they can bring it. But if we say here, including or excluding this one, it means we are giving decisions and then give them to discuss. So, what have proposed is I think very important, comfortable. I think we have to agree on that term proposed.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to say the United States of America can support the proposal that you have made here. It provides a good jumping off point to get us moving forward, to get us going to a place where we can provide the needed support and guidance to this Organization.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I would like to suggest a caveat on this. If we put a period after budget, then we create a separate subparagraph probably after (l) where we give the bandaid to the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) to carry on former consultations on the above. That may be less legal than the, I do not know, I am looking at Ms Donata Rugarabamu. She can help us here if that could be acceptable.

CHAIRPERSON

We will formulate a paragraph on the spot. However, I do hope that based on what was now said, that we would have an agreement on the first part of paragraph (k) and that also Japan now can go with the consensus.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

What I would like to say the main point was they can post issue is not so good for the discussion that it is necessary to discuss. Just I would like to express my intention for that. Having said so with regard to the consensus sentences of this paragraph I listened carefully as Members intervention and I can show flexibility to go along with the sentence proposed by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) you wisely and kindly proposed.

CHAIRPERSON

We do know that we will address several issues, which were tabled today and were not included in the text, but that is the minute at which we are giving now for the informal consultations. I give the floor to the United States of America, followed by the Russian Federation. Moreover, I really would like to conclude this discussion because we are going to 19:30 hours and I promised everybody to stop at 19:30 hours, but hopefully there is consensus on this Agenda Item.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

With complete respect to my friend from Cameroon, I do not think we need to make this more complicated than it is. I think the subparagraph as it read, “*of the budget to be considered at informal consultations between Members in the period leading up to the 43rd Session of the Conference*”, both gives you the authority to convene informal consultations, it gives us as Council Members, individuals, the authority to pull together informal consultations, it gives us everything we need to be able to move forward. Therefore, respectfully, I would encourage us to just stick with the subparagraph (k) and (l) that we have and get to consensus and move forward.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation will not stand in the way of the consensus support for this text. We would like to make the following statement or comment on the role in the participation of the Finance Committee (FC) in preparing the draft budget. The Finance Committee is in the auxiliary body that act in the interest and on behalf of all of the Members and provides assistance in finding decisions on issues in particular agreeing the budget level. Therefore, from our point of view, ignoring the decision of that Body and limiting it to such a dry wording is an omission. We think that we should continue to discuss this on the basis of the outcomes of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee, but the Russian Federation will not block this draft decision.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I know that you want to close, but our esteemed colleague from the United States of America made a suggestion, which I think it is okay if we take it for granted that informal consultations among Members are convened by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC). However, that is not a fact here. Nothing is said here that it is the ICC to convene those informal consultations. That is why I wanted to make it a different paragraph, to say that *“invited the ICC to convene informal contextual to discuss those matters”*. Something like that. That may give now the power or the authority of convening, who should convene those informal consultation. Here is consultation between Members. Who will convene that? How will they they be organized?

CHAIRPERSON

We have done this in the past in the Council. We put the text now on the screen to reflect this, *“requests the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) to conduct informal consultations”*, but it is not standing in a way that anybody everywhere can do informal consultations to support the process. However, sometimes you have an ICC to help that process.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

It is fine to request for you to do that, as long as the language remains in paragraph (k) as well and not be deleted from paragraph (k) because informal consultations between Members can mean lots of things. I can sit together with one other Member and have a conversation, 20 of us can get together, 40 of us can get together. We can have informal consultations whenever we wish. So, I think as long as it stays in (k) as well, I do not mind this additional (m).

CHAIRPERSON

If that is okay with the Council. I think we have a final agreement on the text. No, I understood that we keep the old text as was requested by Sweden. Can we agree now to the text as it is? I do not see any objections. Thank you so much. We have agreed on the Agenda Item 3.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Thank you so much for an excellent day today. We worked hard, in a spirit of compromise and consensus. Let us continue like this tomorrow. Have a very good rest. Re-energize yourself for another in depth discussion tomorrow on Item 5 and Item 6.

Meeting adjourned until 09:30 hours sharp tomorrow morning.

The meeting rose at 19:30 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 30

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.30

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
THIRD PLENARY SESSION TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
25 April 2023

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:36 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 36
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 09.36
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 5. Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change**
- Point 5. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes : conflits et guerres en Ukraine et dans d'autres pays, ralentissements et fléchissements, et changement climatique**
- Tema 5. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en Ucrania y otros países, desaceleraciones y contracciones de la economía y cambio climático**
- (CL 172/5)

- Item 5.1 Sustainable global food supply chains: comprehensive implementation of UN-brokered two Istanbul Agreements signed on July 2022 (known as Black Sea Grain Initiative) for maintaining global food security and nutrition for all**
- Point 5.1 Chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire mondiales durables: mise en œuvre complète des deux accords d'Istanbul signés en juillet 2022 sous l'édige de l'ONU (connus sous le nom d'Initiative céréalière de la mer Noire) pour préserver la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition pour tous au niveau mondial**
- Tema 5.1 Cadenas mundiales de suministro alimentario sostenibles: aplicación integral de los dos acuerdos de Estambul auspiciados por las Naciones firmados en julio de 2022 (conocidos como Iniciativa sobre la Exportación de Cereales por el Mar Negro) con miras a mantener la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición para todo el mundo**

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I hope that you had a very refreshing evening after an excellent day of yesterday. I think for the first time in many years we were able to finalize an Item on time. This is a very good result. Let us maintain this practice. Moreover, what is even more important, we finalized the Item by consensus. Let us try to maintain the spirit of finding consensus. It is easy on the easy Items but also on the most difficult Items, let us try to strive for consensus.

Today we have another long day, but we also know we will stop at 19:30 hours, no night sessions. That is the good news. We are going to discuss Item 5, *Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change*, as well as Item 5.1, *Sustainable global food supply chains: comprehensive implementation of UN-brokered two Istanbul Agreements signed on July 2022 (known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative) for maintaining global food security and nutrition for all*.

The relevant document for both Items is CL 172/5 and the idea is that we take both Items at once, also for the sake of time. I will open the floor for interventions by speakers but as of today we have to maintain the practice, and I have to enforce it, that we have five minutes per Regional Groups and three minutes for Member statement. It is very much needed to arrive and finalize our work on Friday.

We know that Item 5, both Items, are heavily politicized and we know that they are not only discussed here in Rome, but also in New York and Geneva. Therefore, my request and my plea to you is let us focus and do our work within the mandate of FAO. The mandate of FAO as a specialized agency is food security for all. Let us work within the mandate of FAO.

Introduction to Item 5: Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

In 2022, the global economy continued to cope with overlapping shocks and upsetting recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on Council document CL 171/3, which provided an update on the global food insecurity crisis and FAO's response, the present document (CL 172/5) considers global food security challenges and its drivers. It identifies current and longer-term risks to

global food security, including the specific impacts of the war in Ukraine, and it describes the actions needed to mitigate their impact, especially on the most vulnerable.

The challenges of ending hunger and food insecurity keep growing. The 2022 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI) report estimated that the number of undernourished people in the world rose to as many as 828 million in 2021, up 150 million people since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, over the last seven years, acute food insecurity has also witnessed an increasing trend, in terms of both absolute number of people and prevalence.

Mounting trends of chronic hunger, acute food insecurity and malnutrition are the result of a confluence of factors, namely conflicts and wars, climate variability and weather extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns, increasing resource constraints, and social and political instability. Underlying conditions, such as poverty and inequality, sometimes underpinned by unfavourable policies, hamper improvements in food security and nutritional outcomes.

Conflicts and wars destroy livelihoods and displace populations, often for long periods with uncertain prospects of return and recovery. Conflicts and hunger are mutually reinforcing. Without significant improvements in conflict resolution, based on strong and sustained political will, no substantial and lasting food security gains can be achieved.

Climate change not only impacts food and agricultural production, but it also carries increased risks of extreme weather events, changing planting patterns, and pest and disease outbreaks. Over the longer term, changing weather patterns also contribute to greater pressure on limited natural resources, provoking local disputes that negatively impact food security and nutrition, and eventually drive migration and displacement of people when agriculture fails to provide adequate livelihood opportunities.

Economic shocks initiate economic slowdowns or downturns with broad food security impacts. At the household level, they reduce livelihood opportunities and real incomes, while at the national level, they affect the capacity to maintain long-term investments or even pay for immediate import needs. Economic slowdowns, downturns and deep recessions can also be triggered by conflicts and wars, as is the case with the war in Ukraine, compounding the severity and duration of the food security crisis.

Population dynamics also represent a key driver of changes in food consumption patterns and demand for food. Population ageing and increased urbanization have important repercussions for agriculture and rural communities, as well as for food security and nutrition.

In the short term, countries most affected by hunger need to be supported with urgent and adequate humanitarian assistance and be able to provide effective social protection measures to safeguard food security and nutrition of their populations. Over the longer term, investments in agriculture, rural development, trade systems, innovation, information and communication technologies, health and education are essential to reduce the vulnerability of households and build their resilience to withstand shocks. Market transparency and the coordination of policy response are also critical.

There is an urgent call for the transformation of agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life* to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind.

CHAIRPERSON

With this short introduction, I will explain later on how we conduct our work. After we have heard the interventions, we continue our work.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I will go a bit over the three minutes but this is a large Item and it involves two different topics, so just a little bit of advance notice.

The United States appreciates the efforts to produce the comprehensive report that FAO has produced that highlights many of the drivers exacerbating food insecurity around the world.

The world is facing unprecedented challenges. The combination of climate shocks, conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted global food production and distribution, driving up the cost of

feeding people and their families. Acute global food insecurity is getting worse, not better. And now we are even confronted with a new crisis.

The United States is concerned for the millions of Sudanese in need of critical humanitarian assistance. Attacks upon humanitarian aid staff, offices, vehicles, equipment and food stocks, like what we have seen in the past week, have disrupted humanitarian operations and are always unacceptable.

We appreciate the efforts of many delegations in this room to pre-coordinated toward consensus on this Item, and also the efforts of the Independent Chairperson of the Council to reach consensus. However, we submitted a proposal for decision by this Council in *CL 172/INF/7* and we call for its *en bloc* adoption by a vote. We oppose the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation and similarly oppose the Russian Federation's additional proposal, both contained in *CL 172/INF/8*. We encourage others to similarly oppose it.

FAO's work consistently reminds us how global conflicts and wars, climate change and economic shocks have intertwined to worsen the food security landscape around the world. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts continued to be the most significant factor driving acute food insecurity and suppressing global economic growth. Russian Federation's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine has greatly exacerbated global food insecurity, just as the world was beginning to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United States remains committed to working with our partners and fellow Membersto confront the continued need for urgent humanitarian assistance and to build more resilient agro food systems that are prepared to address the cascading effects of climate change. We are dedicated to building a lasting global food security. We provided USD 13.5 billion in humanitarian and development food security assistance in the last year alone.

However, we acknowledge that no one country can address these multiple crises. We strongly encourage continued global collaboration and coordination on food security and for Membersto reach new heights in their giving.

The status quo is not enough to meet the unprecedented needs that are facing us now. And we stress the importance of publishing the next edition of the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, the SOFI Report, in advance of the 43rd Conference so that delegations can reflect on its findings in preparation for their discussions about food security.

Moving to Item 5.1. We thank the United Nations (UN) and Türkiye for their sponsorship of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), which has been critical to lowering global food prices and getting urgently needed grain to hungry people around the world. According to the United Nations data, the Initiative has exported over 27.5 million metric tons of grain and oil seeds from Ukraine to global markets since it began operations on 1 August 2022.

Sixty-four percent of wheat exported through the BSGI has gone directly to developing countries. Furthermore, it has lowered global food prices after they spiked following Russian Federation's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This lifesaving initiative is essential to ensure global food security. It must be extended and expanded by the parties to continue providing its essential benefits to the people of the world.

Unfortunately, the Russian Federation has called the BSGI's renewal into question. Media reports indicate that Russian Federation recently blocked all Ukrainian exports leaving port for the first time since the inception of the Initiative and while we know reports that exports have begun to depart again, Russian Federation's intermittent obstruction of BSGI operations harms global food security by delaying shipments, restricting supplies and keeping prices high for food-importing countries, harming the poorest countries the most.

It is critical to global food security that Russia cease its obstruction of the Initiative and end uncertainty around its extension. Doing so will move more grain, it will bring prices down further and will increase Ukrainian planting for the next crops because the shortage of grains is unduly burdening developing countries around the world, particularly in Africa where people are already suffering from drought and other impacts of climate change, conflict and economic shocks.

We know that Russian Federation frequently claims that its food and fertilizer exports are impeded by Western sanctions. This is false. Western sanctions exclude Russian food and fertilizer goods and have excluded agricultural products from any banking sanctions. Media reports and trade data indicate that Russian grain exports in the second half of 2022 were on par with its pre-war levels.

If anything, Russian Federation is the one voluntarily restricting its exports. It imposed export quotas on certain fertilizer, it recently extended them through the spring and has stated it is considering another extension of those restrictions through November. Russian Federation has demanded that in exchange for its extension of the grain initiative, Ukraine must allow Russia to export ammonia through a pipeline which runs from Russia's Volga region to the port of Odessa.

The United Nations is investigating the possibility for this in good faith with Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Russian Federation signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations last July in which Russian Federation committed to, I quote, "*facilitate the unimpeded export of food, sunflower oil and fertilizers*", end quote, from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. The UN and others have upheld their commitments and for the interest of the world, it is imperative that Russia do the same.

So, in closing, we urge Russian Federation to extend and expand the BSGI. The BSGI must work at a pace that meets global demand. A hungry world cannot wait. A smoothly operating BSGI will, as it did last fall, move more grain, bring prices down further and increase planting for the next crop. The time for action is now.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Kindly give the floor to Lesotho, who will be speaking on behalf of Africa on Agenda Item 5 only.

Mr Thesele John MASERIBANE (Lesotho)

This statement is made by Lesotho on behalf of the Africa Regional Group (ARG).

This update, which started at the 171st Session of the Council to provide Members with information on the global food security situation, is welcomed by our Regional Group.

We appreciate the informative narrative on the challenges to global food security and its drivers outlining current and longer-term threats to global food security, and exploring actions needed to mitigate their impacts, particularly on the most vulnerable.

Hunger is on the rise everywhere, particularly in Africa, which is subject to various protracted conflicts, climate variability and weather extremes, soaring food prices, economic slowdowns, COVID-19, among others. Some projections suggest that the situation may worsen.

We agree with the report that the challenges as outlined require close monitoring and the creation of an adequate and sustained financial and political capacity to respond effectively.

While it is important to reinforce the existing mechanisms to respond to each shock, we need to turn all these crises into further opportunities with an emphasis on taking mitigating actions to safeguard Africa's food security among the required actions. Therefore, the Africa Regional Group support the following short, medium, and long-term operations:

Urgent humanitarian assistance for countries in crisis to provide effective social protection measures to improve food security and nutrition for their populations and protect livelihoods.

Long-term investments in agriculture, rural development, trade systems, information and communication technologies, health, and education to support Africa's aspiration for food sovereignty and resilience, which is not at odds with promoting trade with the rest of the world.

Work towards transforming Africa's food systems that will not only provide food to Africa, reduce exposure to erratic food markets that provide unreliable, but also will provide food for the world through trade. The ultimate end being to reduce vulnerabilities and build households' resilience to withstand shocks.

Adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and other innovative approaches, including climate-smart and conservation agriculture, and strategies and investment plans. In this regard, reference is

made to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), meant to develop key trans-boundary agricultural value chains, especially for orphan crops and other staple food, promoting agro-processing and take advantage of the opportunities created by the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to use trade as a means of ensuring food security by facilitating movement of food across the continent.

Supporting subsequent updating of the CAADP Framework as well as fine-tuning the required accountability evaluation and reporting mechanism, including the biennial review report.

Strengthening food standards to improve food safety in the continent.

Supporting implementation of the national pathways inspired by the Africa Common Position that was developed to increase the pace of CAADP implementation and introduced during the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in September 2021.

Strengthening market transparency and promoting policy dialogue.

Advancing digitalisation of agriculture and support to market information systems.

Support should be given to countries that do not have adequate data on the status of food security or insecurity and the agricultural sector as a whole in order that these countries budget accordingly based on accurate data.

Need for proper legal frameworks are essential for middle income and landlocked countries to support the establishment of sustainable agrifood systems which will in turn lead to greater food and nutrition security.

With the above comments, the Africa Regional Group takes note of the information contained in document CL 172/5.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine.

Let me start by underlining the close connection of Item 5 on our Agenda to Item 6, which is based on the decision adopted by the Council at its 171st Session in December 2022, highlighting the Council's strong concerns about the impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine in terms of increased world food security and malnutrition.

While noting the interrelated nature of Items 5 and 6, in order to avoid repetition we will focus our intervention under this Agenda Item on the wider global food security challenges and its drivers and more specifically address the impact of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and global food security under Item 6.

Before addressing this Agenda Item in more detail, let me express our strong concerns regarding the current situation in Sudan. We urge for an immediate ceasefire and the protection of civilians. In the context of this Council, let me mention particularly the humanitarian needs and the implications for short and long-term food security of the people of Sudan.

The alarming increase in the prevalence of severe food insecurity is a matter of great concern to us all. We appreciate and stress the importance of FAO's work in monitoring and reporting on the situation, including through this update and its contributions to the *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI) Report and the Global Report on Food Crisis. The major drivers of food insecurity are already well-known. Conflicts, climate extremes and economic shocks, combined with growing inequality and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which are affecting vulnerable countries the most.

In addition, the update provided by FAO in document CL 172/5 again confirms war of aggression against Ukraine has severely aggravated the crisis. The European Union and its Member States take note of the actions proposed by FAO in response to the crisis and agree with the importance of resilience and sustainable food systems as well as the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and

innovative solutions. We trust that FAO will make full use of its strategies on climate change, biodiversity, nutrition and science and innovation to identify targeted and timely action in the current situation.

The sharp increase in total number of conflicts in the recent decades and the damaging effects on food security and nutrition is alarming, as evidenced by conflict and security being critical drivers of acute food insecurity in all of the ten largest food crises, in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Northern Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, as identified in document *CL 172/5*.

Regarding the need for urgent humanitarian assistance, we urge FAO to work closely with World Food Programme (WFP) and other relevant United Nations (UN) organizations in its emergency and resilience programming to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication and contribute to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus based on comparative advantages.

We agree that improving the transparency of global agricultural commodities markets, in particular prices and stocks, and promoting an open and predictable trade environment remain critically important to stabilize markets. We therefore appreciate FAO's support for initiatives such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).

We underline the importance of existing initiatives and multilateral solutions to address the food security crisis, such as the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, the Global Alliance on Food Security, the Global Network against Food Crises and the Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission. We call on FAO to intensify cooperation with other UN agencies, particularly Rome-based agencies to mitigate the current crisis and avert future ones. We reaffirm our full support to the Grain from Ukraine Initiative, which has already benefited Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya.

We again reaffirm our strong support for the initiative on the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from Ukraine's ports, known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Keeping the Black Sea maritime route open is crucial for bringing grain and fertilizer to the world and avoid the vulnerable input-dependent countries are pushed deeper into hunger.

As stressed by the UN Secretary-General, the Initiative has already had noticeable positive effects on world food security by bringing the price of food commodities down and allowing WFP to resume its supply of grains from Ukraine for its humanitarian operations.

Therefore, the Black Sea Grain Initiative must continue to be fully implemented in all its provisions and prolonged for as long as necessary without limitations, nor condition. We underline the importance to increase the availability of ports and route coverage. We call on Russia to fully cooperate on the timely implementation of the initiative without impeding or creating delays in the inspection of vessels.

The EU and its Member States remain fully committed to addressing global food security challenges and are running a comprehensive Team Europe Global Food Security Response which covers humanitarian aid, short-term and long-term responses under which FAO is a key implementing partner. Most of the support goes to countries in Africa and the Middle East.

Concretely, this support enables vulnerable and food import dependent countries to assist their populations, despite price increases and currency devaluation as well as to increase their resilience and reduce their food input dependency in the longer term.

Lastly, we would like to thank the United States of America (USA) for having put forward the proposal for decision for the conclusion of Items 5 and 6 set out in *CL 172/INF/7*, which we fully support for adoption en bloc. We oppose the Russian draft decisions. They present factually incorrect information and aim to divert Russian Federation's responsibility from the current food crisis and, like the USA, we oppose the additional proposal from the Russian Federation.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Obviamente, si yo no tengo confusión, estamos en el punto 5.1, así que me voy a referir a ese punto. En primer lugar, me gustaría agradecer al Economista Jefe, Sr. Máximo Torero Cullen, por la

elaboración de este documento que describe con precisión la grave situación que atravesamos y también, de alguna forma, anticipa el contenido de la próxima edición del Informe El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI).

Enfrentamos una situación de tormenta perfecta —o policrisis—, sobre este punto, es probable que todos podamos coincidir. Este escenario no es nuevo, pero sí está agravado. Ya durante la pandemia hablábamos de las múltiples e interrelacionadas causas estructurales o subyacentes que afectan a los países en desarrollo y los alejan de la meta del Hambre Cero. Extrema volatilidad climática, tensiones regionales, inestabilidad económica, expansión monetaria en divisas duras, conflictos, barreras para arancelarias y subsidios distorsivos, entre otros elementos estimulan el incremento de la inseguridad alimentaria. Porque, al final del día, la realidad impacta e interpela a los países en desarrollo que sufren hambre real entre sus poblaciones.

Entonces, quizás, para este ejercicio sería interesante intentar abordar causas estructurales o subyacentes para avanzar en respuestas concretas. En esta línea, y como lo hemos dicho en sesiones pasadas, la creación de capacidades, la transferencia de tecnología, la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular, el comercio internacional sin distorsiones injustificadas, el acceso a financiamiento justo y la aplicación de soluciones tecnológicas, entre otras, son de hecho respuestas para superar las deficiencias estructurales de los países en desarrollo.

Y, si prestamos atención, podemos ver que estos puntos con mayor o menor énfasis están presentes en los abordajes e intervenciones de las distintas delegaciones que componen el G77+China. Es decir, los que sufrimos la inseguridad alimentaria ya hemos realizado el diagnóstico y sabemos lo que necesitamos. Ahora es momento de concentrarnos en las respuestas.

Por otro lado, sin ánimo de extenderme demasiado, me gustaría concentrarme en algunos puntos del documento. Vemos que en el párrafo 22 se habla del impacto grave que tienen las sequías en los sistemas alimentarios. Mi país en la campaña pasada sufrió la peor sequía nacional en años. Y este factor condicionó el volumen de nuestras cosechas. Celebramos que la FAO reconozca su mandato para trabajar en el indicador 6.4.2 de la Agenda 2030 y, al mismo tiempo, invitamos a profundizar el abordaje sobre biotecnología. Por ejemplo, el trigo resistente a la sequía, HB4, demostró un excelente performance en Argentina, incluso en este difícil contexto.

Quizás sea hora de buscar una mejor articulación para superar el estrés hídrico en combinación con soluciones de diseño biotecnológico. En principio, nos cuesta entender el mensaje del párrafo 26 del documento. Nos parece algo confuso, pero como somos constructivos preferimos interpretar que la propuesta es eliminar las distorsiones que sufre el comercio internacional de alimentos, por ejemplo, mediante la eliminación de subsidios injustificados a la agricultura. Lo interpretamos de esa manera, entendiendo lo positivo de las ventajas comparativas dinámicas en la economía porque, claramente, resulta económica y ambientalmente ineficiente proponer que todos los países sean autosuficientes en materia de alimentos. La interpretación que tomamos nosotros es realista y nos invita a discutir, por ejemplo, el impacto de las distorsiones en la configuración del mercado agrícola y, subsecuentemente, los precios internacionales de las materias primas.

Con relación al párrafo 48, nos gustaría recordar que, en el marco de la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC), las restricciones a las exportaciones pueden operar en términos cualitativos o cuantitativos bajo criterios específicos y previas notificaciones. Por lo tanto, creemos que es incorrecta la valoración que se realiza sobre las circunstancias de las acciones descritas.

Para terminar, por supuesto queremos destacar los aportes del Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) y del índice de precios de FAO para informar las decisiones de los países, así como para fomentar un comercio internacional abierto y transparente. Y, coincidimos, con el párrafo 73 y 74 en cuanto a que es indispensable mayores inversiones, incluyendo en sistemas comerciales como, por ejemplo, a través de la solución ePhyto y la necesidad de adopción de prácticas agrícolas sostenibles y otros enfoques innovadores, entre ellos la agricultura de conservación.

Por último, sobre la sección 6, como lo mencionamos principio, siguiendo los patrones de consenso de los países en desarrollo, pero tomando en cuenta contextos, capacidades y prioridades nacionales, la FAO debería poder colaborar dentro de su mandato para diseñar soluciones a medida que permitan superar las deficiencias estructurales a lo largo de los diferentes sistemas alimentarios.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

Eritrea appreciates FAO, the Secretariat and Independent Chairperson of the Council for preparing the 172nd Session.

Eritrea, aligns itself with the statements presented by Lesotho on behalf of Africa Regional Group.

The trends of chronic hunger, acute food insecurity and malnutrition are a result of compounding effects of conflicts and wars, climate variability and weather extremes. As a result, increases, economic slowdowns, resource constraints, social and political instability and hunger continues to rise mainly in developing countries and especially in Africa.

Conflicts and insecurity destroy livelihoods and displace populations, often for long periods with uncertain prospects of recovery. Conflict and hunger are mutually reinforcing and need to be tackled together in peaceful manner; because without significant improvements in conflict resolution based on a strong, sincere and immediate political will, no substantial and lasting food security gains can be achieved.

At the same time, greater climate variability not only impacts the level of agricultural production, but it carries increased risks of extreme weather events, changing planting patterns, and pest and disease outbreaks. As a result, smallholders, whose resilience capacity is subject to multiple shocks, are particularly vulnerable.

At present, the challenges of the world food security, to be eliminated require close monitoring and adequate and sustained financial and political capacity to respond effectively. Hence, FAO needs to scale up its efforts to reduce humanitarian needs and break the cycle of recurring famine risks through a strong focus on risk reduction. Therefore, it is urgent and pertinent for a radical transformation of agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Hence, we need a long-term investment in agriculture to support Africa's aspiration for food security and nutrition, which requires to enhance agricultural value chains, especially the orphan crops and other staple foods to promote to agro-processing.

Eritrea, underlines the valuable input of FAO in solving the global food security challenges and its drivers such as conflicts, wars and climate change. Therefore, Eritrea appreciates FAO and requests for further support and commitment.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

These two Agenda Items are complicated. We want to thank FAO for the paper on global food security challenges and its drivers. The Report highlights the severity and magnitude of the challenges that we see around the world today. The confluence of crises, COVID-19, climate change and conflicts is, of course, affecting all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but the impact on food and nutrition are leading to greater levels of acute food insecurity and emergency.

Our delegation has always recognized the combined impact of these various threats to food security. We have another crisis in Sudan that risks spilling out wider than the region and worsening an already desperate food situation there. Russian Federation's illegal war in Ukraine is providing another avoidable stress on a system that is already stressed to its limits. We call on Russian Federation to end its illegal invasion of Ukraine and to allow the country to grow and export its products without restrictions.

The Report makes clear that we need to be better at anticipating interventions that build resilience and stem the worst impacts of hunger that are driving humanitarian needs beyond the system's ability to respond to them. We have talked about this a lot in World Food Programme (WFP). In that respect, the United Kingdom (UK) wants to commend the work that FAO's Office of Emergencies and Resilience is doing to get ahead of humanitarian needs, providing the right inputs at the right time to build resilience in affected communities so that humanitarian caseloads are reduced.

We underline the importance of developing a track record of evaluation in this area. That will build up an evidence base for this work and help show donors what other most cost-effective interventions. I am saying that because it is really important at a time when aid budgets are under strain so that we know what interventions are most effective.

The other thing the Report does is show that the scale of needs are way beyond anyone's agency or ability to respond to them. What that means for us is learning the lessons of the international financing institution (IFI) packages of support that have been delivered over the past year, to better understand how FAO is working with the Rome-based Agencies and with the wider international system to better respond to those needs. And FAO has already done this.

The Chief Economist was working last year on a food import finance facility or ideas for something like it. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) took it up, designed it into its food shock window. So, we need to be looking for opportunities to extend on that work, so the international system as a whole is responding to these needs in the most effective and efficient ways.

The UK welcomes the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and it is clear that it is easing the disruption caused in global food, fuel and fertilizer markets. It is allowing grain to flow from Ukraine to feed the world. We applaud Türkiye and the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General for their efforts to broker the agreement and its subsequent extension.

It is crucial that the initiative is maximized and that all parties cooperate with the terms of the deal to make sure that this happens. Our delegation encourages Member States to read United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) latest report on the impact of the initiative produced in March. That report shows clearly that developing countries are benefiting from the agreement. We should not waste the Council's time by suggesting this is not the case or entertain claims that fly in the face of hard evidence and facts.

We support the proposed United States of America's text on this Agenda Item and call for the Council's adoption of it *en bloc*. We oppose the Russian text.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union Européenne et de ses États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit, à titre national sur le point 5 dans son ensemble, et comme mes collègues, je dépasserai un petit peu la limite. J'aurais cinq points. Premièrement, sur les causes.

Comme le souligne la FAO, l'augmentation de l'insécurité alimentaire et de la malnutrition est dû aux effets conjugués de nombreux facteurs. Certains structurels, d'autres conjoncturels, notamment les conflits, le changement climatique, la perte de biodiversité, et la pandémie de COVID-19. L'agression Russe contre l'Ukraine a aggravé davantage encore l'insécurité alimentaire, comme ce Conseil l'a souligné à ses 169^{ème} et 171^{ème} Sessions.

Cette guerre illégale occasionne, outre d'immenses souffrances, des perturbations majeures sur le prix et la disponibilité des denrées alimentaires, de l'énergie et des engrais. Nous exprimons notre préoccupation concernant la situation au Soudan, et remercions également les autorités djiboutiennes de leurs aides pour l'évacuation des ressortissants. Deuxièmement, sur la réponse de court terme, la France, avec ses partenaires, notamment européens, a répondu présente et a accru ses efforts face à la crise alimentaire.

Dès mars 2022, le Président de la République a lancé l'initiative Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) pour répondre à l'urgence de la crise, tout en accélérant la transformation des systèmes agricoles et alimentaires sur le long terme. La France a plus que doublé son soutien au PAM en 2022. Nous avons soutenu l'acheminement par le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) de céréales ukrainiennes vers les pays les plus affectées par la crise, comme le Yémen ou la Somalie. Au titre de l'opération Save the Crops, lancé par le Président en septembre dernier, la France a soutenu à hauteur de 7.5 millions d'euros l'acheminement par le PAM d'engrais vers certains pays d'Afrique, y compris des engrais appartenant à des entreprises commerciales russes.

Nous ne faisons en effet pas de différence, lorsqu'il s'agit d'opérations à visées humanitaires. Au contraire, alors même qu'elle porte une responsabilité écrasante dans la crise alimentaire actuelle, la Russie a divisé par deux ses financements au PAM et n'honore pas sa contribution au Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA), en invoquant des prétextes futiles. Plus encore, elle réserve ses exportations agricoles aux pays dits "amicaux".

Faisant de la faim une arme de guerre, et une arme politique. Troisième, s'agissant de l'initiative céréalière de la Mer Noire, ce fameux point 5.1, rajouté par une délégation fantôme, sans transparence, et je souhaite à cet égard réitérer notre position selon laquelle la lettre demandant ce point aurait dû être transmise.

Là encore, la Russie exerce une désinformation manifeste et un chantage, nous réaffirmons notre plein soutien à cette initiative qui, en dépit, des allégations russes et du libellé trompeur du point de l'ordre du jour, désigne factuellement le seul accord tripartite entre l'Ukraine, la Turquie et la Russie sous l'égide des Nations Unies, et il suffit de regarder les listes des Nations Unies.

À ce jour, cette initiative a permis selon les Nations Unies, d'exporter plus de 29 millions de tonnes de produits agricoles sur le marché mondial, facilitant l'approvisionnement des pays les plus vulnérables, et réduisant les tensions sur les prix globaux. L'initiative céréalière de la Mer Noire doit donc être prolongée aussi longtemps que nécessaire et sans condition.

Nous exhortons la Russie à remplir pleinement ses obligations en vertu de cet accord, et à cesser le chantage qu'elle exerce à chaque renouvellement de cette initiative, un chantage sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale. Quatrièmement, dans ce contexte d'incertitude, il est crucial de renforcer la transparence des marchés, notamment la transparence des prix et des stocks, et c'est pour ça que la France a renforcé son soutien à l'Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), et appelle la FAO à continuer à renforcer ce soutien.

Cinquièmement, nous avons besoin de solutions de long terme, pour transformer de manière durable les systèmes alimentaires, réduire les dépendances, investir dans une agriculture plus résiliente, notamment dans les pays les plus exposés aux cours des marchés agricoles et au changement climatique. Le soutien de la France dans ce domaine, c'est élevé à 700 millions d'euros en 2022, la guerre en Ukraine n'a pas entraîné d'éviction de notre aide au détriment des pays plus vulnérables. Au contraire, la France a accru de manière générale son aide publique au développement, dont elle est désormais le quatrième pourvoyeur au niveau mondial.

Les stratégies de la FAO en matière de biodiversité, de changement climatique, de science et d'innovation sont autant d'outils qui doivent être pleinement mobilisés pour appuyer cette transformation. De même, la collaboration entre les agences romaines sur des sujets concrets, comme le Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C) au Sahel, la grande muraille verte, ou encore l'alimentation scolaire.

En conclusion, la France soutient l'adoption *en bloc* du projet de décision déposé par les États-Unis, et rejette en bloc les amendements présentés par la Russie. La France appelle également à voter contre la proposition de décision présentée par la Russie.

Contrairement à ce qu'elle prétend, la question n'est pas celle des sanctions générales, mais au bien au cas d'espèce, celles de mesures restrictives spécifiques, dirigée contre un pays qui viole la Charte des Nations Unies, des sanctions qui ne visent pas les produits agricoles et alimentaires russes. Personne ne doit être dupe de cette tentative d'instrumentalisation de la Russie.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

Let me begin by my remarks with expressing my gratitude to the Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, and his team for their hard work of closely monitoring the global trends and developments affecting the global food security. We appreciate FAO's new document, CL 172/5, and we encourage FAO to continue to provide timely evidence. We wish to recall the discussion held in the 170th Council and its Report, in particular paragraph 19 on global food security.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize that the Council reiterated this paragraph at its previous meeting in December 2022. In light of this, we again request Management to provide additional information regarding coordination in cooperation with other United Nations (UN) entities and relevant bodies, especially vis-à-vis the following: the establishment of a Food Importing Financing Facility (FIFF), in line with FAO's mandate; the promotion of efficient usage of fertilizers and reducing food loss and waste.

As we all know, the world is facing a number of complex and severe challenges that are impacting our ability to feed the world's ever-growing population. These are distancing us further and further away from achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2. Israel reiterates FAO's role in responding to the challenges and adapting to the crisis with supporting and transformation of agri food systems to be more efficient, resilient and sustainable.

Israel, like others, expresses concern about the trends described in *CL 172/5*. The last few years have seen alarming trends in the number of people who experience food insecurity in those who cannot afford a healthy diet. Moreover, we are extremely concerned about the prospect that these trends will only worsen in the future.

A few weeks ago Jewish people all around the world celebrated Passover. During the Passover holiday dinner, we retell the story of the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom, a story that began with their migration to Egypt due to hunger and drought in the biblical land of Israel. In this narrative, escape from famine plays a significant role. It demonstrates how environmental and climate disasters such as drought and hunger can force people to leave their homes and travel to a foreign land in search of food and security.

Their journey in the desert back to the promised land, which is retold every year during Passover dinner, is a powerful reminder, a reminder of the challenges many people need to face today when they are forced to leave their homes due to natural disasters caused by climate changes and crises. It is unfortunate that the recent climate crisis has been accompanied by a number of economic risks that do not contribute to market stabilization in the slightest.

In particular, Israel is concerned that the last ten years have been marked by slower yield, growth and foreign productivity in agriculture. As stated in paragraph 71, this might degenerate the entire world, wealthy and poor, into a vicious cycle of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. Hence Israel urges FAO to find short and long-term solutions that will ensure freedom and safety for all.

We commend FAO's commitment to break the cycle of hunger by reducing risks and enhancing resilience. In Israel, for example, in order to do so we aim our efforts to promote innovative alternative protein. With a regulatory framework in place, this technology can thrive and contribute to global food production and feeding the world's population.

To this end, we encourage FAO to keep strengthening efforts to develop innovative and sustainable solutions. Israel stress the need for FAO to investigate more options for acceleration of innovation and technology as well as education and policy dialogues.

Ms Nsiphiso Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

South Africa associates itself with the statement made by Lesotho on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. This statement will cover Items 5 and 6 on the Agenda as South Africa believes that in future the Council should consider these Items as one. The Secretariat, and in particular the Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, is thanked for this updated background that builds on the past Reports of FAO on this matter, which also responds to the requests of the Council.

The continued proactive response of FAO in addressing the impact of global food crises, including by providing factual and neutral information thereon and the implementation of relevant response programmes reinforces the indispensable role of FAO in global food security governance.

South Africa is concerned about the impact of global food security by conflicts, climate change and diminished economic growth, thereby contributing to the alarming and unacceptable rise in the number of undernourished people. Although Africa is the least contributor to climate change-related emissions, it suffers from the disproportionate impact of climate change, including extreme weather events and unpredictable cycles of drought and floods.

As mentioned by Argentina, G77 plus China places importance in dealing with the water-stressed links in this regard. Therefore, the viable management of freshwater withdrawals, innovative systems of water harvesting, saving and recycling by all stakeholders is inextricably linked to climate change response and the advancement of food security.

Also, if water is not managed to the benefit of all concerned as a common good, it has the potential to unleash conflict and confrontation. FAO's emphasis on water resource management is therefore fully supported as the initiative on national water pathways has the potential to contribute to food systems transformation and nutrition in the context of climate change challenges.

As mentioned by Eritrea and other delegations, conflict has a direct impact on food security in this regard. South Africa firmly believes that conflicts are best resolved through political dialogue. It is noteworthy that the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417/2018* recognized the linkage between armed conflict and food security and recalled the prohibition by international humanitarian law of the use of starvation as a method of war and the obligation and as such law of taking constant care to spare objects necessary for food production, food processing and storage sites and the means for food transformation.

In this context, South Africa is acutely aware of the impact of global food security by the conflict in Ukraine on especially those vulnerable African countries that experience challenges in obtaining especially wheat and fertilizers.

It is also encouraging that these shortages are being addressed, including through the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative which is contributing to the availability of these commodities and the decrease in their price index. This underlines the importance of this initiative for the developing world.

However, it is also recognized that this initiative has two distinct but complementary components, and that it is equally important that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations (UN) to facilitate the unimpeded export of food and fertilizer be implemented in all its aspects. Also, to facilitate the availability of fertilizer, it is vital that the corridors for the export of ammonia from the Russian Federation remain open.

In conclusion, the gravity of the global food security challenges requires that we act in unison to provide guidance on how FAO will address these challenges. South Africa stands ready to cooperate with the FAO and other Rome-based Agencies to address these challenges that fall within their mandate and together with all Members to forge a consensus on action to be taken in this regard.

South Africa takes note of the document *CL 172/5* on the global food security challenges and its drivers and believes that the actions recommended in this document have merit.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. We support the proposed United States of America's text and call for a rejection *en bloc* of the Russian proposals, as we already did last December. Nothing has changed since then.

Given the close connection between Items 5 and 6 on our Agenda, we will address the impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security under Item 6. Regarding Item 5.1, we continue to attach greatest importance to maintaining Ukrainian grain exports via the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has proven so vital for lowering grain prices worldwide after the record high following Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and also to maintaining alternative export routes via rail, road and inland ports.

Under Item 5, we would like to stress two important additional messages about global food security and nutrition challenges. First, we believe the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), plays a key role in providing a response to the global food crisis due to its convening power.

As a multistakeholder platform, the Committee strengthens coordination among states and non-state actors and contributes to policy convergence through its guidelines and recommendations to realize the rights to adequate food. The continued support of all three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) is of utmost importance for the well functioning of this unique committee.

Second, we advocate for a human rights perspective in advancing the transformation towards resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems. In this context, Germany is seriously concerned about conflicts and geopolitical tensions, Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine but also the increase of other regional conflicts, about increasingly frequent extreme weather events, economic

slowdowns and downturns and growing inequalities as key drivers of hunger and all forms of malnutrition in the world.

In our national capacity, we are organizing an international multistakeholder conference titled Policies Against Hunger on 27/28 June in Berlin. The aim of the conference is to provide recommendations for food systems transformation from a human rights perspective. It will be chaired by Ambassador Mr Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Chairperson of the CFS. The results will be fed into the CFS in the United Nations' (UN) Food Systems Stocktaking Moment here in Rome in July. Let me also emphasize our appreciation for FAO's support for the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the intensive efforts of the G7 currently under the leadership of Japan. The recent Agriculture Ministers' Meeting had a strong focus on food security issues. The G7 Global Alliance for Food Security Initiative initiated by Germany under its G7 Presidency remains and all measures implemented in accordance with this initiative, important tools to support the work of FAO and the other RBAs in the current crisis.

Moreover, we should keep in mind the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit in New York in September, which is an important milestone, is halftime for the Agenda 2030, not only for stocktaking but also for creating new momentum for reaching the SDGs and in particular SDG 2.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset it is my honour to be with you here today. This is the first Session I am attending at the esteemed Council after my presenting my credentials as Ambassador of Egypt to Italy, and the permanent representative of Egypt at United Nations (UN) Organizations in Rome. I am looking forward through my presence here to contribute to the work of FAO and the Council in order to develop cooperation between our countries in order to end hunger, malnutrition, poverty – especially in rural areas as well as implementing the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.

Today we are facing regional and international challenges, including climate change, pandemic, and crises. While we are recovering, or are about to recover from the consequences of COVID-19 and trying to address the Ukrainian crisis and global food security, we are facing a new humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

All these challenges pose a negative impact on the situation of global food security as a result of the imbalance of the global markets of agricultural products, as well as the blockage in supply chain. These have led to unprecedented rise of the commodities' prices, as well as basic agricultural commodities, and despite all the achievements in the field of agricultural development in our countries, we still have a lot to be done in order to achieve the minimum level of self sufficiency, of food commodities in a way that would enable us to stand in the face of the various shocks that are affecting the food security.

In this regard I would like to pay tribute to the quality of document *CL 172/5*, presented by the Chief Economist of the FAO. I would like in particular to mention the future scenarios that are related to global food prices as well as the prices of fertilizers and grains. I would like also to pay tribute to the important strategic role played by the FAO under the leadership of the Director General (DG), Mr QU Dongyu. The establishment of sustainable food systems that would achieve food security to our commodities is a priority to all of us, especially in the face of the deterioration of the phenomenon of climate change, as well as the increase of temperature, the scarcity of water, deterioration of soil, desertification of huge spaces of our agricultural land. All these have economic and social consequences on food security, let alone the complex political situation in some areas.

The famine threat is facing a lot of areas in the world, especially in Africa. It requires rapid and effective solutions in order to save millions of human beings, most of them women and children. We have to protect them from these threats that are limiting the capabilities of countries as well as governments to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Egypt, by hosting 27th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), was keen to link between food security and the climate change. There rose a very important Session at the level of the leaders, specialized for this purpose. Egypt launched the

Initiative of Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation in cooperation with the FAO. In this regard, I would like to say that Egypt adopted many initiatives in order to achieve food security and address malnutrition.

These include a Decent Life Initiative, which is considered the project of the century in Egypt. I would like to explain this initiative. In Egypt we believe that the Decent Life Initiative is the project of the century, but not only in Egypt but at the world level. It is a project which is addressing 50 percent of our population, more than 60 million people, in all service-related fields.

This initiative has a component on agriculture in cooperation with the FAO, which is related to animal husbandry, water and soil – as well as supporting small- and medium-enterprises. It also includes supporting small farmers. The cost is more than 700 billion Egyptian Pounds, which is more than USD 30 billion, in a time where we are facing global economic crisis and at a time in which Egypt is facing hard and harsh circumstances.

We had difficulty 10 years ago and we had the economic reform, the COVID-19 pandemic and then the Ukraine crisis. Egypt is hosting six million non-Egyptian refugees from neighbouring countries. We are hosting those refugees as guests, as brothers – they are working in Egypt freely and they are enjoying all rights, like all Egyptians. Egypt did not receive any support in this regard. Egypt did not request such support.

We are in front of a huge project which is Decent Life, we are covering all 27 governorates in Egypt, covering all of Egypt. This project is adding 3 million hectares that would achieve food security in Egypt.

At the end, and in conclusion, I would like to highlight the importance of the continuation of FAO in order to cooperate with international financial institutions so that developing countries can get sustainable funding and easy lending terms. This would create social safety nets in order to achieve social cohesion and there should be mechanisms in order to facilitate mobility, increase supply and reduced prices.

CHAIRPERSON

We still have more than 15 speakers to go. May I make a plea to you? Please could you be concise in your statements so that we can finish our work today?

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

We would like to join the distinguished representative of Egypt and many other colleagues, in thanking Mr Máximo Torero Cullen and his team for drafting document *CL 172/5*.

Brazil especially appreciates the segment of the document entitled Actions Needed, where we see a clear focus on much needed resilience building programmes. There are also numerous evidence put together by Mr Torero Cullen's team, calling attention to the urgency of medium- and long-term actions. We thank Mr Torero Cullen and his team for that.

I would like to begin with some general principles. Brazil believes the current food crisis must be faced not only with emergency and short-term actions but mainly through the implementation of medium- and long-term public policies, which offer lasting solutions to the problem of hunger which is an extreme manifestation of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment.

We need to bear in mind the resistance on the one side of incidental circumstantial causes, and on the other, structural causes such as climate change, extreme weather conditions and basic social problems such as internal inequalities.

As continuously highlighted by FAO with regard to the four dimensions of food security, the current levels of hunger and food insecurity are not a consequence of food scarcity or availability, but rather a result of decreased access. From that point of view, one must bear in mind the crucial role of broad social protection programmes and safety net responses like cash transfer and other policies like the Brazilian School News Programme, which offers daily meals to 44 million people each day.

It is also crucial to keep good track of how and where food is being produced in the world, as well as how the metrics on different forms of food production are being put together. FAO has a great

challenge ahead in collecting, processing and disseminating data from sustainable tropical agriculture and its contribution to food security worldwide.

FAO Food Index is also an excellent parameter to guide us through price flows. Moreover, platforms such as Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), should be not only encouraged but also deepened in order to foster market transparency and coordinate policy actions in times of crisis, which has also been mentioned by the representatives of the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK).

We should be keen on the use of multilaterally agreed language in all FAO documents, according to the Kungming-Montreal global diversity framework, it is desirable to use for instance, agricultural and other innovative approaches and sustainable intensification, instead of expressions which were not negotiated as climate smart or conservation farming.

We cannot talk about food insecurity without touching on major relevant forms of overcoming it, and I name them: a) Free, fair and rules-based international trade, b) Access to fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, c) Access to concessional resources to adaptation so that we can adequately fight climate change, and d) South-South and triangular cooperation.

Now I would like to take the liberty to quote Lesotho's representative who talked on behalf of Africa and say that we also support them when they also mentioned the importance of supporting sustainable agriculture, promoting agriprocessing, facilitating movement of food, strengthening food standards, supporting national pathways, strengthening market transparency, enhancing information systems which have always also been mentioned by the EU and the UK among others.

We believe that we are facing an intertwined crisis and we agree about that with the US and France, and we see that is why we must be creative, and we strongly agree with you Mr Chairman, when you said, and I quote *"that we should try and work within the mandate of FAO"*. You can count on Brazil to continue to be a constructive and engaged actor.

FAO has been dynamic and active in programmes for developing countries, for example by developing the science and innovation in climate change strategies as well as the hand in hand. We do believe that by focusing on FAO's mandate we will not leave behind the most vulnerable ones.

Sr. Ennio VIVALDI VÉJAR (Chile)

Los sistemas agroalimentarios de todas las regiones se encuentran bajo una gran presión. Los impactos de la crisis climática han llevado a desafíos abrumadores: patrones climáticos erráticos cada vez más extremos, lluvias reducidas, largos períodos de sequía, huracanes intensos, glaciares que se derriten y altas temperaturas que provocan incendios forestales, por nombrar algunos. Los conflictos y guerras alrededor del planeta han traído otros tantos.

Lo anterior no constituye una novedad en absoluto, pero en este contexto de sabida urgencia, debemos reiterar llamados a la acción colectiva en todos los niveles a favor de la innovación, porque lo que enfrentamos requiere coordinación y eficacia para lograr resultados eficientes y duraderos, a la luz de la sostenibilidad y de la resiliencia. No podemos habituarnos a un estado de preocupación permanente que no se traduzca en acciones efectivas, más todavía cuando la gravedad de dichos desafíos se agudiza. Necesitamos innovación tecnológica, institucional y social para asegurar que los sistemas agroalimentarios continúen desempeñando un papel protagónico en la agricultura, el comercio y la seguridad alimentaria. Este es nuestro llamado, de manera coincidente con el informe que nos ha presentado el Economista Jefe de la Organización, sobre el que se genera este diálogo especial y el que agradecemos en esta instancia (CL 172/5).

Nada es más doloroso para un médico que constatar que hubo una ventana de tiempo en la cual pudo hacer algo que no hizo y que hubiera cambiado críticamente la evolución de su paciente. Debemos valientemente diagnosticar los factores estructurales que determinan las amenazas que conllevan el cambio climático, la desigual distribución de recursos y las disímiles condiciones de trabajo.

Mediante la movilización de conocimientos y buenas prácticas, la generación de alianzas y el fomento de sinergias y colaboración, la FAO puede lograr innovación disponible para todos. En particular,

proyectos como la Iniciativa *Mano de la mano*, que está acelerando la inversión y el desarrollo rural; el programa *Mil Aldeas Digitales*, que está ayudando a pequeños pueblos a dar un gran paso adelante en digitalización; la *Plataforma Técnica para la Agricultura Familiar*, que apoya la fertilización cruzada de región a región para la innovación política; o la iniciativa *Un país, un producto prioritario*, que acelera el desarrollo de nuevos productos agrícolas; son todos ejemplos de lo que FAO puede hacer en nuestras regiones por la seguridad alimentaria, teniendo como telón de fondo el Marco Estratégico 2022-31. Precisamente, porque creemos y confiamos en la transformación hacia sistemas agroalimentarios más eficientes, inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles, es que también aspiramos a mayores y mejores respuestas desde la FAO y con la FAO, que favorezcan y enfatizen la cooperación sur-sur y triangular, y respalden un comercio internacional abierto y transparente, sin distorsiones artificiales y en sintonía con las reglas y principios promovidos por la Organización Mundial de Comercio (OMC). Chile se encuentra comprometido en generar una oferta exportable de alimentos sanos, seguros y nutritivos, junto con fomentar la seguridad y la soberanía alimentaria.

También nos mueve la motivación por trabajar más en pro de la igualdad de género, particularmente en el tradicionalista y conservador sector agrícola. Tal como lo reconoce expresamente el último informe de la FAO sobre “*La situación de las mujeres en los sistemas agroalimentarios*”, la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios depende de la igualdad de género, y los progresos para cerrar las brechas de género en los sistemas agroalimentarios en los últimos 20 años han sido lentos e irregulares. Peor todavía, se evidencia que en demasiados lugares las brechas de género no variaron o aumentaron. Es claro, asimismo, que transformar la forma de trabajar de las mujeres en los sistemas agroalimentarios —y en particular reduciendo las brechas de género en los salarios y la productividad— tendría repercusiones positivas en la producción agrícola, la seguridad alimentaria, las dietas y la nutrición infantil, y contribuiría sustantivamente a la economía mundial. Esto implica poner en práctica varias recomendaciones y subsanar las carencias relacionadas con acceso a activos, tecnología y recursos. Como lo señalaba la Secretaria de Agricultura y Ganadería de Honduras en su informe de la semana pasada, las mujeres deben ser el factor más importante de la propia solución a este problema, y el acceso a la capacitación y a la educación para mujeres y niñas es vital.

Instamos a que nuestros países mejoren la calidad de sus datos desagregándolos desglosados por sexo, edad y otras variables, lo que resulta fundamental para supervisar y acelerar el avance hacia una igualdad de género en los sistemas agroalimentarios. Si bien la equidad de género es un valor en sí mismo, en nuestra región el desempleo femenino suele golpear infinitamente más, pues es altamente significativo el porcentaje de hogares en que la madre es la única proveedora del hogar, y el ingreso del hogar es el ingreso de ella.

Queremos también hacer un llamado a que lleguemos con un renovado compromiso al Momento de Balance de la Cumbre de Sistemas Alimentarios que nos reunirá en julio próximo en esta sede. Tendremos ocasión de compartir experiencias vinculadas a la transformación de nuestros Sistemas Alimentarios como un acelerador de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Pensando en las próximas generaciones, hemos de seguir trabajando para reducir las emisiones de CO₂ y de metano; disminuir la pérdida y los desperdicios de alimentos; planificar nuestras políticas públicas con enfoque de sustentabilidad; o aumentar las coberturas de los programas de alimentación escolar.

Finalmente, conscientes de la necesidad de cambios y reformas legislativas que promuevan cada vez una mayor inclusión, los días 15 y 16 de junio próximo Chile albergará la sede de la Segunda Cumbre Parlamentaria Mundial contra el Hambre y la Malnutrición, con el copatrocinio de España y de esta Organización. Agradecemos la distinción de ser sede de este evento centrado en la malnutrición, área en la cual nos enorgullecemos de haber tenido siempre una conducta proactiva tanto en el ámbito político como científico. Destaco, como ejemplos respectivos, las medidas históricas de suplementación alimentaria a infantes así como el trabajo del Instituto de Nutrición y Tecnología de los Alimentos de la Universidad de Chile creado por el Dr. Fernando Mönckeberg. Esperamos contar con una participación destacada de parlamentarios provenientes desde distintas regiones y que desde dicha plataforma sea posible alcanzar consensos, formular recomendaciones y tomar acciones para incentivar, apoyar y transformar los sistemas agroalimentarios.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us work within the limits we have set for each other, otherwise we have to go to Saturday. For me it is not a problem but I do not think you would like to go to Saturday, and you all know how it works. I am going to intervene more strictly now, and I really ask Observers because I have the list growing. I will give you three minutes each but then I will have to stop you for the sake of time.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)

At the outset, Kenya aligns itself with the Africa Regional Group (ARG) Statement presented by Lesotho.

We recognize that in 2022 the world continued to cope with overlapping shocks and upsetting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. We take note of FAO's Council Document *CL 171/3* which provided an update on the global food security situation and associated risks, as well as the overview of FAO's work in response to crisis.

We further note that the present document considers global food security challenges and its drivers, including conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns as well as climate change. Sure, the interlocking challenges of conflicts coupled with triple planetary crises, as well as the global food crisis, have impeded our momentum and obstructed our focus on achieving fundamental transformations towards sustainable development. With increasing risks and uncertainties, it is essential to strengthen market transparency and promote policy dialogue.

Uncertainty associated with increased climate vulnerability calls for the adoption of sustainable practices and other innovative approaches. These include climate smart and conservation agriculture, resilience of smallholder farmers, in a very sustainable way.

In the Horn of Africa region, severe drought and destruction of supply chains in the region and beyond due to COVID-19 pandemic, as well as conflicts, have left the region food insecure.

The latest Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reminds us that we cannot afford to waste another moment debating the merits of doing something *vis-a-vis* doing nothing.

The agricultural sector has an important part to play in reducing the severity of climate change. A number of practises have a bearing – positive or negative – on various dimensions of the environment. The Government of Kenya believes in an economic transformation model which uplifts those at the bottom of the pyramid. It is in this context that my government has unveiled agriculture as its top priority, hence elevating the importance of food systems transformation.

Indeed, my President, His Excellency, William Ruto of the Republic of Kenya, believes that supporting farmers to raise productivity will not only enable them to feed themselves, but also generate a surplus that contributes to food and nutritional security and in the end, improve livelihoods.

Investing in modern agricultural technology therefore is one important avenue towards tackling prevailing environmental challenges. Consequently, in Kenya we have been constrained to repurpose our strategies to prioritize drought and famine relief, insulating education from disruption, and improving social protection and healthcare systems to secure the wellbeing of our people.

No country, large or small, has ever attained significant growth without modernizing its agricultural sector.

In conclusion, as we rededicate ourselves to this target, we must in the medium-term find answers to severe deficit in the availability, flow and accessibility of fertilizer to our farmers worldwide.

With the above interventions, Kenya takes note of the information in document *CL 172/5* and supports action needed as stipulated in numbers 72, 73, 74 and 75.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

Permettez-moi de féliciter en premier lieu le peuple d'Italie et le peuple du Portugal. À l'occasion de la journée de la liberté, 25 avril. Permettez-moi aussi de saluer la tenue pour la première fois en Afrique de la Journée Africaine de la Paix et de la Réconciliation Nationale, 31 janvier.

L'Angola s'associe avec la déclaration du Lesotho au nom du Groupe Africain. La paix, la sécurité, la stabilité sont essentiels pour le développement socio-économique, et l'intégration des objectifs et des

programmes. Nous saluons les décisions de l'Assemblée Générale des Chefs d'États et Gouvernements de l'Union Africaine, qui s'est tenue en février, dans laquelle le Président João Lourenço a estimé qu'une nouvelle stratégie, un nouveau plan nation, devait être adoptée pour garantir la paix, la stabilité et la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle en Afrique.

Les impacts de conflits sur l'économie mondiale devaient appeler les défis majeurs, la production de céréales, la transition énergétique, la célérité des résiliences des systèmes alimentaires, afin d'affecter davantage la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle. Nous sommes préoccupés avec la situation du Sahel, de la Corne de l'Afrique, de la République du Congo, en Mozambique, et nous préconisons la nécessité d'adopter des mesures pour corriger les conflits.

Le renforcement des initiatives et des programmes visant à atténuer les défis doivent être communs. Les impacts ont conduit à des stratégies d'implantation complète, afin que la FAO, soit le partenaire essentiel et qui pourrait nous donner un plan technique, un plan financier, et nous continuons à voir l'importance que la crise actuelle fait dans le monde, mais aussi la FAO comme un partenaire essentiel et excellent.

Nous devrions aussi voir les risques pour les économies, et pour nos ambitions en matière de la lutte contre la pauvreté et la faim, en particulier dans la zone rurale qui s'ajoute aux risques déjà résistants de la crise climatique, de la crise économique et alimentaire que nous traversons.

Des initiatives comme, améliorer la gouvernance, le renforcement du secteur privé et le financement, la protection des enfants, l'adaptation, l'atténuation des risques climatiques, transformer les pays en développement en pays producteurs d'engrais et bio fertilisants et fertilisants, pour que nous puissions répondre ainsi que pour renforcer les systèmes alimentaires, renforcer la protection sociale, en particulier pour les femmes, pour les familles des agriculteurs, le renforcement de notre secteur privé et une réponse conjointe macroéconomique, sociale et productive et pour cela, la FAO et les agences sont les partenaires indispensables.

Enfin, nous réaffirmons que le dialogue, la culture de la paix sont essentiels pour la stabilité et pour combattre la pauvreté et la faim. Comme un compromis, Angola devrait ici assurer ce compromis avec le développement durable.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation for the Chairpersons and the Secretariat to convene this important meeting. Unfortunately, we are not able to be in the room to attend in person, but again, it is quite an important meeting for me so I am joining this Council Meeting from Japan. Also, I would like to appreciate the hard work done by the Secretariat, including my friend Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, and we appreciate the FAO's contribution to address this food crisis.

This food crisis was there even before the Russian aggression against the Ukraine. This is the complex crisis, the issues that come from multiple reasons for that. At the same time, we would like to reiterate and make it very clear that the worst cause of this crisis is the Russian aggression against the Ukraine, and that has already been disrupting the global food systems and supply chains, and we saw this as the cause of the slide to the global food security.

Japan would like to make it clear again, to condemn the Russian illegal action, but also we would like to strongly urge the Russians to withdraw all forces and military equipment from the Ukraine immediately and unconditionally.

The other important thing for food security globally at this moment is the grains exports from the Black Sea, and we strongly support the United Nations (UN) initiative to restore these exports. So it is very important to make an agreement amongst the countries concerned that this is carried out. So we expect and ask for the FAO also to support this initiative and make this initiative go successfully.

In this regard, Japan has provided approximately USD 76 million for the agricultural assistance for FAO for 18 countries which have been affected by the Russian aggression, and that has been since last February and it is continuous.

For example, as agricultural assistance for the Ukraine at home Japan has provided a storage facility for seed distribution and the temporary storage of grain with the cooperation of FAO.

Japan has presidency for the G7 this year, where they focus their attention to global food security and the fertilizer distribution and supply chain issues. In this regard, we decided to provide some financial assistance to Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), which is in close cooperation with FAO, to strengthen its functions and that we, Japan, would like to continue to work together with FAO.

Mr KIM Hyungsik (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea would like to express its appreciation to the Chief Economist and his team for the informative Report. As the price index averages 126.9 points in March, it has been showing a stable trend since the record high figure in last year March. However, there is still a concern that instability could continue to grow.

The Republic of Korea recognizes as major drivers of current and long-term global food insecurity – conflicts, climate change and weather extremes, and economic shocks. With the ongoing food crisis arising from climate change and the prolonged pandemic, the increased price of inputs such as fertilizers, fuel and seeds, has become a risk that could worsen further. In particular, Korea expresses serious concern over the impact of the war in Ukraine on the supply of global food, fertilizer and energy.

We would like to thank FAO for its efforts to respond to the global food crisis. In particular, we appreciate the provision of information to enhance transparency over the global food market and support policy response.

FAO needs to continue analyzing the status of global food security and its challenges in an accurate and prompt manner and strengthen cooperation with the UN organizations and the other groups for humanitarian support, especially through efficient role assignment with the Rome-based Agencies, FAO should play an active role in addressing the global food insecurity.

Moreover, we call for FAO to regularly issue Reports through analysis on global food price and supply situation, in connection with the initiative such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) or G20, and to support Members establishing appropriate and accurate information based on measures by sharing the Reports.

In such difficult times, it is important for each country to maintain the function of global food supply chain to ensure food security. In this point of view the Republic of Korea highlights the importance of the stable and strengthened Black Sea Grain Initiative, and we ask for FAO's support for the Initiative by means of technical and data support.

The international community needs to collect forces, including the Members, to provide substantial help to those in need, including nutritionally vulnerable groups and countries.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la preparación del documento, mismo que vislumbra un panorama con crecientes desafíos y tendencias preocupantes debido a las múltiples causas, como son el cambio climático, las recesiones económicas y el número de conflictos que han generado crisis alimentarias prolongadas en diferentes países, el desplazamiento de las poblaciones, pérdida de medios de subsistencia.

Como bien lo indica el documento, la combinación de esos factores siguen perjudicando la seguridad alimentaria asociada a la fragmentación del comercio mundial por razones geopolíticas que afecta a la cadena de suministro provocando escasez y subida en los precios de alimentos. Nicaragua comparte la preocupación por las repercusiones de los conflictos en curso en la seguridad alimentaria a nivel mundial, en particular, cuando se ven afectados países como la Federación Rusa y Ucrania que representan una de las zonas más importantes del mundo en cuanto a la exportación de alimentos básicos.

En esas circunstancias, valoramos que se haya prorrogado por voluntad de las partes interesadas la iniciativa del Mar Negro, como el Memorando de entendimiento sobre la promoción de productos alimenticios y fertilizantes rusos en los mercados mundiales fundamentales para mitigar las

dificultades del comercio y el abastecimiento de alimentos. Aún conservamos que la geografía real de los países receptores sigue siendo muy incierta y desbalanceada.

Asimismo, nos preocupa en el actual escenario el recrudecimiento de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales, bloqueos económicos que siguen siendo obstáculos a financiamiento, la logística, el transporte, los seguros y las exportaciones perjudicando el comercio internacional y el abastecimiento mismo de alimentos. Esas acciones sancionatorias e ilegítimas se han convertido en una práctica empleada de forma vertiginosa y alarmante que, de facto, afecta directamente algunos de los sectores más importantes del comercio internacional.

La FAO, como organismo independiente que lidera el esfuerzo internacional para lograr el Hambre Cero no puede ser ajeno a las dificultades que perjudican a un gran número de países víctimas de políticas de bloqueo de sanciones, ya que su existencia y persistencia no pueden seguir invisibilizadas, más bien deberían ser analizados dentro de las causas que afectan a todos los sectores de la economía.

Nicaragua reconoce la labor que la Organización ha venido realizando al llevar ayuda de emergencia en el sector agrícola presentando asistencia a más de 35 millones de personas en contextos de crisis, subraya la importancia de seguir fortaleciendo su programa de respuesta con acciones puntuales mediante estrategias multisectoriales que aborden las necesidades inmediatas al tiempo que se realicen las inversiones adecuadas destinadas a fomentar la resiliencia a fin de lograr paz, seguridad alimentaria y nutrición duraderas para todos.

Finalmente, Nicaragua rechaza la adopción *en bloc* de la propuesta de decisión presentada por Estados Unidos sobre este tema.

Mr GUANG Defu (China) (Original language Chinese)

China thanks FAO and its team for its presentation on the global food insecurity situation, the increasingly challenging global food insecurity situation of the last two years, in particular the issue of hunger and malnutrition in developing countries – we attach great importance to that.

Currently, we are halfway towards achieving Agenda 2030, yet long-term food insecurity still exists and the number of countries with severe food insecurity outbreaks is still on the rise. The number of people suffering from hunger continues to grow. In the face of such difficulties, the international community needs to stand together, strengthen cooperation and adopt pragmatic initiatives collectively.

China agrees with FAO's analysis on the main causes of global food insecurity and believe they are a combination of the pandemic, sluggish economic growth, extreme weather, and regional conflicts. These multiple causes create a tremendous effect. We should not emphasize or exaggerate the effects of one factor over another and should maintain a comprehensive objective and scientific position.

China affirms FAO's leveraging of organizational strengths and technical expertise and carrying out a series of timely and effective work under its mandate through emergency response and resilience building programmes providing assistance to 35 million people.

We agree with FAO for enhancing emergency and humanitarian assistance for striving to advance agrifood system reform, and also for adopting sustainable agricultural practices and other innovative initiatives, as well as other counter measures in order to improve market transparency and promote policy dialogue. We appreciate FAO for recognizing that there is no one size fits all solution, and that the development and implementation of all measures must be based on the national realities of our countries with enabling environments, rational policies and inclusive governance.

China encourages FAO to fully leverage its leading role in addressing global food insecurity, to fully maintain communication with all Members, and especially to provide assistance to developing countries so as to ensure their food security. China takes note of the role played by the Black Sea Grain Initiative in stabilizing the global market for agricultural products and agriculture inputs, and hopes that the initiative will continue to be implemented in a balanced, comprehensive and effective manner.

Last year China proposed an International Food Security Cooperation Initiative and is willing to strengthen communication and cooperation with Members of FAO, promote the formation of additional international consensus, and make positive contributions to ensuring global food security.

Lastly, China emphasizes again that FAO as a specialized agency responsible for global food and agriculture, it is not an appropriate forum to discuss regional political issues. Against the backdrop of complex and difficult challenges all parties should support and encourage FAO to focus on its mandate and spend more resources and efforts on pragmatic topics and to avoid politicizing our work.

Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement of Lesotho on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. We are grateful to FAO for presenting to us the challenge to global food security and its drivers, and the impact of war and conflict on global food security.

We appreciate that the document identified current and long-term threats to global food security and describes actions needed to mitigate their impact, particularly on the most vulnerable.

We do not only agree, but have experienced that the major challenges identified by FAO that are causing chronic hunger, acute insecurity and malnutrition, are the results of compounded effects of conflicts and wars, climate vulnerability and weather extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns including resource constraints and social and political instability that most of the vulnerable countries faced, are still facing.

We strongly urge the developing countries that we work very hard to make better use of our natural resources, namely soil, forest and water, while still working on the restoration of our degraded lands. It is when we do this and use proper agricultural input, that we will be able to maximize production and productivity, that we can ensure food stability and reduce climatic impact.

We note that conflict and insecurity destroy livelihoods and displace populations, often for long periods with uncertain prospects of returning and recovery. Conflict and hunger are mutually reinforcing and need to be tackled together.

Let us use our local conflict resolution mechanisms combined with regional and international assistance, to resolve it before it causes untold harm to our society and the social fabrics.

We agree that, although the degree varies, all conflict big or small, causes damages to human life and property directly, and to livelihood destruction and food insecurity by virtue of being a hindrance on the capacity of people to produce and creating problems of accessibility to the food and agriculture inputs like fertilizers, chemicals, improved seeds and energy and an increase in food and energy prices.

The impact is more when the countries involved in the conflict are major producers of food and commodities in the world. Therefore in all forms, let us denounce all sorts of conflict regardless of where it augurs. For the sake of humanity, let us work for conciliation and work proactively to find solutions to every source of conflict before they cause untold harm.

Let us make all together, and I hope it is possible that all corners of our world be the best place to live for humankind.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

In order to stick to the rules, I will get to the substance immediately. "*Lies have short legs*" – that is a proverb, and there is a Russian equivalent of it – I was convinced that the FAO Council was going to use 2022 to finally realize that sanctions and unilateral coercive measures around fertilizers and foods were an issue, and that they do not have any connection with the crisis in Ukraine for the simple reason, and that is they were introduced significantly earlier, and that the presence of sanctions is one of the reasons for the increase of prices.

Therefore, I think that we should leave this part of the discussion to the past, especially given that the meeting of the Committee on World Food Security agreed with the fact that there is an issue around this, they were ready to agree even with [...] – they wanted to remove this concept of sanctions from

the discussion, despite the fact that it was something that was really taking place. So this is a way of showing that the sanctions have an influence on the situation.

There are a billion people living in countries that are under sanctions. There are another 7 billion people however, and 800 million people are hungry, and they are found among these 7 billion. The 7 billion can also see that FAO talks about the reasons of hunger but forgets about unilateral coercive measures.

This is what my letter was about. Friends, we cannot convince certain countries to stop hurting other countries. FAO should identify this factor as an influence on food security and should try and minimize the damage caused by these unilateral measures. I know very well about the situation in Belarus, there have been sanctions against the production of nitrogen fertilizers in Belarus that were introduced by the European Union, the United States of America and Poland.

Lithuania has closed access to the sea for our fertilizers, therefore we have had to find other ways of delivering fertilizers and foods that are not subject to sanctions. And so on and so on. But we expect FAO to help us with the situation - that is what the 7 billion people are hoping for, who are paying for the ambitions of others.

We are against the United States option which is once again trying to place the accent elsewhere; what we want to see is an honest admission by all of what the true influence is that is causing the problem.

Ms Nina P. CAINGLET (Philippines)

The Philippines notes document *CL 172/5*, which considers global food security challenges and their drivers, identifies current and longer term risks to global food security, including the specific impacts of the war in Ukraine and actions needed to mitigate their impact, especially on the most vulnerable.

We add our voice to those expressing concern at continuing trends of chronic hunger, acute food insecurity and malnutrition as a result of compounding challenges such as climate change and weather extremes, the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, and the African Swine Fever and Avian Influenza, exacerbating research constraints, economic difficulties, and social and political instability.

There is a compelling need for concerted action to address the drivers of food insecurity. The Philippines would like to underscore the importance of keeping open the trade of food and agriculture inputs and products, preventing export restrictions, trade distortions and unjustified trade barriers to global supply chains, so as not to introduce uncertainty and increase both the level and volatility of prices.

On the identified actions needed, the Philippines further encourages FAO to assess by focusing on the following priorities: Its analysis on the need for urgent humanitarian assistance and interventions, to provide effective social protection measures, to improve food security and nutrition for populations, and protect livelihoods; facilitate collaboration among Member States to invest in monitoring the productivity and resilience of their respective agrifood systems, especially integrating climate change adaptation and mitigating measures.

We look forward to effective partnerships that foster synergies between food, nutrition, health, the environment, and the livelihoods, in order to transform agrifood systems towards resilience.

The Philippines is on the look out for best practices as we work towards the provision of innovative solutions for farmers and fishers, especially those that face evident economic and climate risks. Creating a supportive environment can assist them in becoming successful participants in regional, national and global food value chains. We recognize the importance of sustaining and supplementing efforts to follow through on the UN Food Systems stocktaking moment in July and continue efforts to empower people to contribute efficiently to a food-secure world.

In confronting the challenges of global food security, inclusivity is critical to foster ownership of the collective goal for the agrifood system. We recognize the roles that women, youth, family farmers, indigenous peoples and other marginalized sectors can play as active food producers and capable participants in the food value chain.

Sustained emphasis and the importance of data- and evidence-based policy making and programme development – FAO should further strengthen assistance to countries, including middle income countries like the Philippines in having easier access to global climate information, technologies and science-based innovations and best practices, as well as in collecting and organizing high quality data and analytical tools and capacities for effective food security and nutrition policy and programme decisions.

FAO is encouraged to continue its efforts to strengthen the Agricultural Market Information System, (AMIS), for greater market transparency and promotion of policy dialogue.

We stand ready to collaborate with FAO and its Members to jointly address the problems and difficulties confronting agrifood systems, the tender food security, and poverty alleviation – not only for today's population but also for the generations to come.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I would like to advise that New Zealand aligns itself with the following statement on Agenda Items 5 and 5.1.

Australia remains deeply concerned about the compounding effects of the drivers of food security, particularly on the most vulnerable. We thank the Chief Economist for the preparation of the paper, in the interests of time we will only address limited aspects of the analysis.

It is clear that climate variability and weather extremes are placing pressure on limited natural resources and presenting significant challenges to farmers, including smallholder farmers in the small island developing states of the South-West Pacific who remain particularly impacted at both the household and community levels.

Further, the direct contribution of conflict as a driver of food insecurity is impossible to ignore. The macroeconomic consequences of conflict are transboundary, leading to detrimental impacts that are global in nature. We see this clearly now in global grain and fertiliser supply and pricing, which heavily impacts countries that are highly dependent on imports.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) has contributed to increased supply levels and easing of trade disruptions for Ukraine. We emphasise the necessity of the Black Sea Grain Initiative to remain in place for as long as required to avoid further exacerbation of food insecurity.

The drivers of global food insecurity highlight the need for a predictable, transparent, rules-based and non-discriminatory global trading system that is free of distortions such as export restrictions, and as Argentina mentioned the distortionary impact of environmentally harmful agricultural support. Free and open global trade, underpinned by the multilateral rules-based system and risk- and science-based decision-making, is essential to facilitate long-term resilience in agriculture, and meet global food security needs.

We recognise that the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) has been instrumental in stabilising developing countries' food supply in the wake of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Australia fully supports the continued strengthening of the AMIS to increase price transparency, reduce market barriers, promote viable livelihoods and support global food security.

Further, we recognise that FAO's efforts in emergency interventions are made possible thanks to the Organization's role as a global centre of technical excellence and knowledge hub. In this regard, we appreciate and support FAO's critical and ongoing role in implementing concrete actions to support the transformation of agrifood systems to improve their efficiency, productivity and sustainability, which will help to build resilience against drivers of food security.

Australia rejects misinformation on the BSGI and the effect of sanctions. Australia joins the collective action by the international community to impose sanctions on Russia, but let us be clear that food and agricultural commodities are not sanctioned by Australia.

In conclusion, Australia supports adoption *en bloc* of decisions proposed by United States of America and rejects Russian Federation's proposals.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUÑEZ (Peru)

El Perú agradece al Sr. Máximo Torero Cullen y a su equipo por la información y el amplio análisis desarrollado en el documento *CL 172/5* relativo a los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas al que haremos referencia en esta declaración. El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI) 2022 nos muestra que, a pesar de los esfuerzos por poner fin al hambre y a la malnutrición en el mundo, la décima parte de la población sigue padeciendo hambre y la previsión es que al 2030 alrededor de 670 millones de personas seguirán estando subalimentadas. Una radiografía que transparente cuán alejados estamos de alcanzar los Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) y el ODS 2.

A nivel global, los sistemas agroalimentarios están atravesando un momento determinante en un entorno donde se tiene una población en continuo crecimiento. Además, por los impactos derivados de la confluencia de diversas crisis que amenazan la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Los sistemas agroalimentarios están siendo sometidos a grandes presiones como las mencionadas, cambio climático, pérdida de la biodiversidad, plagas, enfermedades, conflictos, desastres naturales, pero también están experimentando cambios impulsados por una conjunción de tendencias como cambios tecnológicos, exigencias sanitarias y comerciales, así como hábitos alimentarios.

Las diferentes crisis agravadas por los recientes conflictos están repercutiendo en la seguridad alimentaria mundial provocando que los precios de los alimentos se hayan incrementado ostensiblemente. Por ello, la asequibilidad y la accesibilidad siguen constituyendo una preocupación importante que debe ser abordada con suma prioridad.

El Perú considera que estamos llamado a transformar los sistemas agroalimentarios hacia modelos más sostenibles y resilientes mediante buenas prácticas de producción, mejores estándares sanitarios y un comercio libre y abierto conforme las reglas internacionales.

Pero esta transformación no debe solo ser una cuestión política, económica y ambiental, sino también social y cultural. Al reconocer la destacada labor de la FAO en apoyo a los miembros para afrontar el enorme desafío de erradicar el hambre, proporcionando información y conocimiento especializado e impulsando iniciativas, políticas y programas que han sido mencionados a favor de la seguridad alimentaria y el desarrollo rural, alentamos a la FAO a intensificar sus esfuerzos para transformar esos conocimiento en medidas concretas con la participación conjunta de los gobiernos, organizaciones de Naciones Unidas competentes, asociados para el desarrollo, sociedad civil y sector privado.

Para el Perú no habrá desarrollo sostenible si no hay desarrollo rural. Por lo que reafirmamos nuestro compromiso con la FAO en un mundo donde las dos terceras partes de los pobres extremos son precisamente los trabajadores agrícolas y los que dependen de estos. Los sistemas agroalimentarios tienen la capacidad de generar las condiciones para reducir la pobreza y contribuir a alcanzar una seguridad alimentaria de manera sostenible y resiliente.

Finalmente, el Perú toma nota del documento y de la excelente calidad del análisis realizado en el Tema 5.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Canada)

Canada's hope had been to have a constructive discussion under Item 5 on the multiple drivers of the global food security crisis so that we can work together in this room to identify solutions to one of the most pressing issues facing humanity today. We trust that that vision can still be achieved.

Last year has seen sustained attention by this Council to the global food security crisis and its various drivers, whether in relation to increasing severity or duration of droughts due to climate change, forced displacement from conflicts, balance of payments challenges due to growing indebtedness, exchange rate devaluation and inflation, or a combination of these drivers, then exacerbated by Russian Federation's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

However, there is one key driver of food insecurity that must not be lost in this landscape: gender equality and related disparities, as was rightly noted by my colleague from Chile.

Canada has long focused on gender equality as a vital ingredient to sustainably address poverty. We therefore welcome the refresh of the 2011 data in this year's flagship the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, which reiterated the clear business case for empowering women in agriculture and

rural employment. The 2023 SOFA data shows that the gap in food insecurity between men and women continues to widen from 1.7 percentage points in 2019 to 4.3 percentage points in 2021.

Closing this gap could increase global gross domestic product by one percent, or nearly one trillion dollars US. This is an astounding figure when we consider it alongside the resources allocated through the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) for food security in agriculture. Moreover, if we can close the gender gap on productivity and wages, we will reduce the number of food insecure people by 45 million and improve the resilience of some 235 million more people to climate change and conflict as others have noted in their statements this morning.

And so, we cannot afford to ignore such a driver of such a scale and the opportunities that it presents, notably if we hope to walk together on the road to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Of course I recognise this is not a short-term fix. Shifting societal norms means better appreciating what roles people play in agrifood systems, systematically seeking to address the barriers to gender equality in food systems and proactively seizing opportunities that exist to lift millions from food insecurity. In the document underpinning today's discussion, *CL 172/5*, gender equality is not mentioned at all, and there are only two passing mentions of inequality more broadly.

We must do better if we truly seek to address the fundamental underlying drivers of the global food security crisis. We owe all women and men working in agrifood systems in all of their diversity nothing less.

In closing, and turning briefly to Item 5.1, Canada encourages all parties to ensure full implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) as extended, including enabling unobstructed operations for daily inspections in a timely fashion. As the FAO has noted and as the UN Secretary-General has noted, the BSGI has been vital for calming and reassuring markets and it is an incredible multilateral instrument in the midst of a crisis environment.

With regard to conclusions to this morning's debate, let me conclude by noting that we support adoption of the proposal from the United States of America for a decision *en bloc*, and oppose the amendments and alternate decision proposed by the Russian Federation.

Sr. Beatriz CÁCERES VALDEZ (Guatemala)

Agradecemos la elaboración del documento *CL 172/5*, el cual, de manera concisa, nos presenta el panorama mundial de la situación de la seguridad alimentaria el cual nos lleva a pensar que cada vez nos alejamos más de lograr los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). No obstante, Guatemala ha dado un paso histórico en el cumplimiento de la hoja de ruta nacional en el marco de la Agenda de desarrollo sostenible, principalmente logrando la primera actualización de la política nacional de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional en la que se resalta la necesidad de fortalecer los sistemas alimentarios en todo el territorio nacional.

Para Guatemala, la pandemia de COVID-19 impactó significativamente la economía nacional por la reducción de la actividad económica. A pesar de que el sector de la agricultura continuó sus actividades, el poder adquisitivo de la población se vio afectado. La dificultad que plantea la ampliación de la Agenda de los sistemas alimentarios principalmente gira sobre los efectos del cambio climático. En el año 2022 fuimos afectados por tres fenómenos meteorológicos que impactaron directamente en la producción e ingresos de las familias más vulnerables. La oportunidad está en fortalecer las cadenas de suministro de alimentos y en la promoción de entornos alimentarios saludables.

En este momento nos estamos preparando para hacer frente al hambre estacional en el país en lo que se espera la próxima cosecha en septiembre. Esto significa realizar actividades específicas para atender el deterioro previsible de la situación alimentaria-nutricional de los hogares, especialmente en los pequeños agricultores en la infra- y subsistencia del Corredor Seco. La elevación de los precios de los combustibles y los fertilizantes, tras el inicio de la guerra, también han contribuido a la inflación en el país.

Menciono estas particularidades de mi país, pero sabemos que COVID-19, los fenómenos climáticos, el conflicto en Ucrania y las perturbaciones económicas afectan gravemente la seguridad alimentaria a nivel mundial, en especial de los más vulnerables. Por esta razón, cada vez es más importante la labor

de esta Organización en áreas humanitarias y de asistencia para lograr sistemas alimentarios sostenibles y resilientes.

Por otra parte, valoramos las acciones de FAO respecto a la iniciativa sobre la exportación de cereales por el Mar Negro. Si bien sabemos que no es la solución definitiva, sí es importante para la reducción de precios y garantizar la seguridad alimentaria de la región. Asimismo, agradecemos el apoyo del gobierno de Turquía a la iniciativa.

Finalmente, mi Delegación apoya el proyecto de conclusiones presentado por la Delegación de los Estados Unidos.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCÍA WINDER (México)

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, gracias por tu trabajo y el trabajo de tu equipo. Lo apreciamos mucho.

Si bien el tema 6 fue un componente de la gran problemática que definimos como inseguridad alimentaria, en mi intervención me voy a referir solamente al tema 5, ni siquiera al 5.1.

Y tomo un enfoque un poco distinto al resto de mis colegas porque me pregunto, ¿para qué queremos un Informe como este? ¿Qué queremos con este Informe y cuál es la función del Consejo?

Me parece que la función del Consejo es recibir estos informes para orientar a la FAO en sus acciones. Podemos tomar la decisión muy rápida y decir, “Sí, nos gusta el Informe”, y ya, o “No estamos de acuerdo con el Informe” o sugerimos algo para cambiar el Informe. Creo que es lo que la Señora Embajadora de Canadá ha sugerido y hay algunos temas que quizá valga la pena incluir en los Informes.

Pero si estoy en lo correcto, creo que este Consejo debe tomar estos informes para orientar las acciones de la FAO hacia el futuro. En este sentido, y tomando el documento como base, me pregunto, de las causantes de la inseguridad alimentaria que son tres que se proponen en el documento, ¿Cuáles pueden ser realmente atendidas por la FAO y cómo? De las acciones propuestas, ¿cuáles pueden ser en realidad apoyadas por la FAO y cómo, a pesar de que algunas suenan lógicas? Suena muy lógico alimentar los sistemas de protección social, pero la FAO tiene muy poco que hacer en eso porque, al final de cuentas, los países son los que requieren los recursos y ellos son los que definen.

Entonces, en este sentido, para mí es muy difícil creer que la FAO tenga un impacto realmente significativo en la resolución de los conflictos armados o de los conflictos de manera directa. Puede participar y alentemos la participación en foros de análisis, en procesos de implementación de acuerdos, pero los conflictos —si somos claros—, son solo resueltos por voluntades políticas y por procesos democráticos que rebasan a este Consejo. Eso se requiere, una voluntad política y procesos democráticos.

Yo creo que, en este sentido, la FAO ante los conflictos solo puede participar en coordinación con las agencias de las Naciones Unidas en Roma en procesos de intervenciones humanitarias y evitar, hasta donde sea posible, la pérdida de vidas humanas por falta de alimento. En este sentido, creo que este Consejo deberá alentar la participación de la FAO en misiones humanitarias y evitar, hasta donde le sea posible, la pérdida de vidas humanas por hambre.

Por otro lado, nosotros debemos de tener cuidado en este sentido de no dar mandato a la FAO que no va a cumplir o que le va a costar mucho trabajo cumplir porque después la vamos a hacer responsable y eso me parece poco serio de nosotros. Sugiero que el tema de conflictos sea llevado a los foros correspondientes e invitamos a los gobiernos a tener el coraje y el valor de negociar sin tener que recurrir al poder de las armas. Este es el gran reto, negociar sin tener que recurrir al poder de las armas.

En relación a los otros dos temas propuestos como causantes de la inseguridad alimentaria que son la crisis ambiental y los factores ambientales, en ambos, personalmente creo que la FAO tiene importantísimos roles que jugar. Por lo que me permito respetuosamente sugerir que, en las conclusiones de este tema, el Consejo pueda hacer algún tipo de menciones a temas como:

Que la FAO continúe actuando y fortaleciendo su capacidad para ser una institución de conocimiento y, en particular, continuar apoyando iniciativas, tales como el Agricultural Market Information System

(AMIS), con la finalidad de ayudar a lograr una mayor transparencia en la operación de los sistemas agroalimentarios, incluyendo los temas de comercio y, así, poder ayudar a los países a generar respuestas de política pública adecuadas.

Que continúe actuando en su rol de convocante a foros que, basados en conocimiento, no solamente en ciencia, ayuden a mejorar los sistemas agroalimentarios, incluyendo su productividad, la inclusión social y el desarrollo económico sustentable.

Que fortalezca y ponga en marcha inmediata sus estrategias de innovación y de cambio climático, ya que estas dos prometen dar atención a estos dos factores críticos presentados. Los factores económicos y los factores ambientales.

Que fortalezca su cooperación en la creación de capacidades, particularmente en aquellos países y regiones de menor estadio de desarrollo y dando atención prioritaria a los temas de equidad de género e inclusión de pueblos indígenas.

Sugerir que en los Informes futuros no solo se presente el estado de la situación de seguridad alimentaria, sino que también se pueda presentar cómo es que las intervenciones de la FAO a nivel nacional, regional o hemisférico han impactado o no en asegurar la disponibilidad y la calidad de alimentos, el mejoramiento de las condiciones de bienestar de los productores y pobladores rurales, su impacto en la conservación de nuestros recursos, el clima, etcétera. Pasar de una posición descriptiva macro a una posición de impacto de la FAO.

Creo que es necesario cambiar las dinámicas y poder tener un mejor conocimiento sobre los indicadores de la contribución de la FAO para apoyar a esta Organización a continuar siendo relevante para el futuro de los países.

Nuevamente, Sr. Torero Cullen, gracias a tu equipo por el trabajo. Es un excelente trabajo que nos da la oportunidad de construir visiones.

Mr Antonius Yudi TRIANTORO (Indonesia)

Numbers and data have shown us that the global food security situation is not improving. More and more bad news drive us further from achieving zero hunger.

The COVID-19 pandemic, war, geopolitical tension and conflicts, climate change and extreme weather as well as inflation and economic downturns have indeed prevented us from recovery let alone improving the global food security.

Today, for most countries ensuring food availability, accessibility, and affordability continues to pose some challenges.

Last year, the increasing price of basic commodities forced countries to apply export restrictive measures as a necessary response. In this regard, the imbalance in the domestic palm oil supply compelled Indonesia to impose a temporary export ban to improve the critical shortage of palm oil-based foodstuff and other essential products. We made sure that this measure was justified, in accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, and was immediately withdrawn after less than one month of its issuance.

Immediate actions are required to improve our global food security situation.

In doing so, we as FAO Council must continuously foster dialogue and consensus building to help find amicable solution.

In this regard, we support the Independent Chairperson of the Council's (ICC) leadership for proposing such convergences for Agenda Item 5 and 6 and to focus on FAO's efforts in mitigating impacts of this multidimensional crisis, under its main mandate as a UN specialized agency.

Moreover, while focusing on the mitigation efforts, it is also critical for us to focus on the prevention with the aim of preventing the future crises, which will affect the global food security situation.

We must move from "*managing crises*" to "*managing recovery*".

Indonesia's G20 presidency last year successfully gathered international commitments towards this.

We, therefore, must commit to take urgent actions by among others implementing G20 Bali Declaration to support international efforts to ensure the mobilization of resources and capacities for food security and nutrition.

This year, we hope that by hosting the 4th FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) this May in Bali – Indonesia can contribute to the improvement of the blue economy to support global food security.

FAO must remain at the forefront in addressing global food security and nutrition. And every one of us must contribute positively towards this end.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

En primer término, mi Delegación desea agradecer al Sr. Máximo Torero Cullen y su equipo por la preparación del documento *CL 172/5* el cual expresa muy claramente los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria mundial que tenemos por delante.

En otro orden de cosas, hubiera preferido no referirme al Tema 6, pues vengo de un país de paz que ha logrado mantener un equilibrio social comandado por los más estrictos valores en favor de la democracia, el estado de derecho, así como el respeto al multilateralismo efectivo, el derecho internacional, en particular el derecho internacional humanitario y el derecho internacional de los derechos humanos. Un país sin ejército cuya defensa se sustenta en un sistema de seguridad colectiva siendo ésta, paradójicamente, nuestra mejor defensa.

La palabra guerra no está en nuestro diccionario. Sin embargo, en otras latitudes del mundo insisten arreglar sus diferencias con violencia y el uso de la fuerza contraviniendo el espíritu de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas afectando así al mundo entero con sus efectos colaterales que, además de terminar con la vida de muchos seres humanos, producen serios efectos de escasez, inflación y, por supuesto, inseguridad alimentaria.

Todos somos conscientes de que la seguridad alimentaria mundial enfrenta nuevos desafíos, no solo las repercusiones a causa de la pandemia por COVID-19 sino por situaciones anteriores que se agravaron con la pandemia y a la cual, luego, se sumaron más conflictos, más guerras, más problemas económicos y un cambio climático con impactos mundiales cada vez más destructivos.

A través de los datos obtenidos del estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI), confirmamos que el hambre, la subalimentación y la malnutrición y el acceso limitado a los alimentos y a dietas saludables sigue aumentando en mayor o menor grado en el mundo. Alcanzar los Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) 2, Hambre Cero, está cada vez más lejano. Por ello, es imperativo que, en esta Organización, fiel a sus principios rectores, presente soluciones que de alguna manera a través de políticas nacionales, regionales y mundiales, tengan un impacto positivo en los millones y millones de personas que al día de hoy sufren inseguridad alimentaria.

Debemos concentrarnos más en inversiones, innovación, tecnología para un verdadero desarrollo rural. Una agricultura inteligente y la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios y que estos sean más eficientes, más inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles. Sabemos que no todo el peso recae en la Organización, ya que las repercusiones por los conflictos armados o el cambio climático dependen también de otros factores.

No obstante, Costa Rica como democracia desarmada y neutral, que desde hace más de 70 años mantiene su posición firme en favor de la paz, reiteramos la necesidad de que los países trabajen y concentren sus políticas a lo largo de un bienestar sostenible que impacte positivamente a todos. Cualquier conflicto armado en cualquier lugar del mundo tiene graves consecuencias y bajo el mandato de esta Organización recae en la seguridad alimentaria, elemento vital de la humanidad. Todo lo que se deriva y desencadena a raíz de un conflicto o de medidas económicas no sostenibles lleva a mayores riesgos en los mercados, la producción, los precios y el acceso a los alimentos y la incertidumbre.

Costa Rica, un país pequeño en territorio, pero grande en sostenibilidad ambiental, ha logrado en un marco de paz y democracia revertir la deforestación alcanzando más del 50% de su territorio en bosques protegidos, ha logrado —según los últimos Informes de FAO— reducir el hambre a Hambre

Cero con todo y los tiempos de pandemia. Esta es la prueba de que sí se puede mejorar el mundo en condiciones de paz y desarme, nuestro principal activo.

Para finalizar, mi Delegación, más que una intervención sobre este tema, desea manifestar su deseo para que algún día, más temprano que tarde, todas las naciones cesen las acciones bélicas, reduzcan el gasto militar y, en su lugar, destinen esos millones de millones de dólares en apoyo a los más vulnerables. Soñamos con el día en que, en vez de aviones de guerra, surquen los aires gaviotas, guacamayas y gorriones; que, en lugar de buques artillados podamos apoyar a los pescadores y a la protección del océano para que sosteniblemente puedan ser fuente de vida; que, en lugar de tanques de guerra, podamos construir escuelas y centros deportivos para nuestros niños y niñas.

Ojalá el mundo reaccione para que este sueño sea una realidad. Solo así podremos salir adelante.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

I would like to apologise to you and colleagues for the fact that I am clearly going to go beyond the speaking time allotted, but in this case I am going to answer the questions that were put by certain regional groups, despite the fact that they stated that they did not intend to double their statements. I also would like to apologise to the interpreters because what I am going to say now is going to differ significantly from the text that was submitted in advance for them.

Today, Italy is celebrating its day of liberation from fascism. Unfortunately, in these years, we have not been able to defeat fascism and it is raising its head. We see that including through the example of the situation that is developing in Ukraine.

Yesterday, at the United Nations, they celebrated the International Day of Diplomacy and Multilateralism. This was approved only five years ago in 2017 in *Resolution 73/127*. Among other things, this day and this Resolution stipulates that we international organisations and international fora should resolve issues through dialogue and should endeavour to achieve consensus. Let us look at how we managed that today here at this forum at the FAO.

The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, Mr Sergei Lavrov, yesterday spoke at a Security Council meeting under the Russian Presidency, and where this subject was discussed. Russian Federation looked at the FAO Member Gateway where his statement will be submitted so that you can read what our position is and you can see our vision of what state multilateralism and international cooperation is in and how we can achieve consensus.

Now to our issues, we are grateful to the FAO Secretariat and to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen for the fact that for the first time we, the Members, have received information, statistical information on the number of conflicts and hungry people in those countries affected by conflict.

Nonetheless, we expected more from the Organization, namely a view on the influence of conflicts in specific countries and the influence on agricultural production with an indication of the specific damage caused, all the more so given that the FAO has a methodology for evaluating damage, including damage from conflict. Furthermore, it carries out this work, for example, in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan.

We hope that in the future we will see a more developed analysis that will allow the Council to react in targeted fashion to the influence of conflicts on food security, which is what the distinguished representative of Mexico talked about. Now, in my statement on the Report we will give to Mr Torero Cullen.

I would like to talk about the influence of conflicts in Ukraine on global food security and Item 5.1 of the Agenda. Yesterday, there were lots of different questions about this phantom state. Who is this phantom state that made a proposal? This is not a phantom state and it is not a phantom full-stop.

It was the Russian Federation that, in line with the rules and procedures, made the corresponding proposal to add the Item. The only thing that is surprising is that it is on this question that those states who were indignant today have spoken. The United States presented a corresponding draft decision and it was very interesting.

Now, to the issue of this question, we have heard lots of statements about deliveries of agricultural products from Ukraine through the Black Sea Grain Initiative, through the line of the World Food Programme, which is the only deliverer through this initiative.

The overall volume of deliveries has been the course of the ten months that we have just been through, not gone beyond three percent, which is the real figure that the UN itself supplies, and this is after all the largest humanitarian agency that has a direct mandate in this area. According to the statistics from the Istanbul Centre, which is responsible for the implementation of the initiative, what has been delivered is agricultural products, what we have seen is 21 million tonnes of them delivered, and we can look at the percentage then that less than a million tonnes were delivered to developing countries.

With regard to the second part of the initiative, namely the memorandum of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the UN Secretariat, with the aims of facilitating unimpeded export of foods and fertilisers, yesterday Minister Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, met with the UN Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Guterres, and they discussed the initiative and the role of the United Nations.

The UN Secretary-General said that he cannot do anything to achieve the implementation of this initiative since the initiative has a commercial character.

In this initiative, there is a third element on the export of grain, and that is being carried out through the so-called solidarity corridors, in other words these are food deliveries from Ukraine to European countries, 25 million tonnes have been exported through these corridors, more than through the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI).

What has the reaction been? Eastern European countries, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, in factual terms, have looked at closing the solidarity corridors because they have caused the collapse of the agricultural markets in these countries. But for some reason, we do not hear about this information from the European Union.

Now, on what has been proposed by the United States of America, namely the draft decisions. In my letter to you, to the FAO Director-General as well, I drew attention to the fact that the United States of America is not a participant in this commercial agreement, in this trade agreement.

Imagine if we took decisions on the trade deals that we are not a state party to, and they were called on to be adopted *en bloc* without any discussion, without any amendments, without any additional information. We think that that is unacceptable. The Russian Federation has not made any counter proposals.

We have made a separate proposal which is dedicated to the issues of the impact of sanctions on the global food network, but not on the Ukraine initiative. Therefore, what we propose is that either we have a fully-fledged consultation on all of the drafts that have been submitted and then we adopt them, or we put all of the proposed decisions to a vote.

Mme Michèle PRANCHÈRE-TOMASSINI (Luxembourg)

Je vois aujourd'hui des populations qui sont massacrées tous les jours en Ukraine, je ne discute pas si c'est du fascisme ou non, c'est le mépris du droit international. Le Luxembourg s'aligne sur la position exprimée de façon détaillée par la Suède au nom de l'Union Européenne.

L'initiative céréalière de la Mer Noire, négociée par les Nations Unies, la Turquie, avec la Fédération de Russie, ne peut être conditionnée par l'avancée ou non sur d'autres problématiques, quel que soit le mérite propre de ces dernières et le besoin de s'y confronter dans le respect du droit international.

Nous ne pouvons accepter la logique du chantage, quand notre objectif partagé est de trouver une issue à la guerre d'agression de la Russie contre l'Ukraine, et non de rendre cette guerre durable.

Pour cette raison, le Luxembourg soutient l'adoption en bloc du projet de décision proposée par les Etats-Unis, et rejette les amendements russes.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

Food security is being seriously challenged globally by conflicts, climate change events, inflation and rising cost of food. It is further exacerbated by the current war between two major food producers, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

The war is negatively impacting global food security as it relates to the cost and access to fertilizer and especially for the developing countries of the Caribbean region whose population has suffered greatly from this unnecessary and unjustified war.

The cost of food production is increasing, import costs are up and supply chain disruptions are all adversely impacting food security in the Bahamas and the Caribbean region. To make matters even worse, the Bahamas and the region is still trying to recover from the economic and psychologic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The global state of food security is concerning as chronic hunger, undernourishment and food insecurity is increasing. We are at a critical point and these trends need to improve if we are to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

The UN must be commended for its involvement in the Black Sea Grain Initiative as it plays a vital role on global food security, food prices and trade stability. It is hoped that FAO will continue to support the Black Sea Grain Initiative by the provision of technical and data support consistent with the Organization's mandate and that the initiative can continue to remain in effect as long as it is necessary.

FAO must be commended also for its efforts in handling the global food crisis. Member states have been supported by its many interventions, such as urgent humanitarian assistance, provision of timely data information and analysis, and global appeal. FAO is encouraged to continue to do its work in dealing with the global crisis as we all work toward greater food security. The Bahamas and the Caribbean region fully supports and endorses the text *CL 172/5* as proposed by the United States.

I wish to reiterate statements I made at the very onset of this crisis in 2022, our region is suffering from the effects of this war. We have no enemies in the world, only friends. We make our living by serving as a place of heavenly tranquillity for the world's population. Therefore, the people of the Bahamas and the Caribbean region more than any other place on God's earth is dependent on a peaceful and tranquil world.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I hope that you will allow the representative of Iraq to address this assembly on behalf of the Near East region.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Iraq. Please, for the rest of the Council, if those who are speaking on behalf of a Region or Group, give a signal to the Secretariat so that we can put you earlier in the statement list, because we always have to practice to give groups first the possibility to speak and then the Members.

Mr Zaid Tarik AL-ANI (Iraq) (Original language Arabic) (Observer)

It is our pleasure to participate in this meeting and to deliver this statement on behalf of the Near East and North Africa. The environment in its three elements, water, air, and soil, is essential for all living creatures.

During the past decade, they were subjected to threats due to human activities and this has resulted in the phenomenon of climate change, the impacts of which have been increasing during the past years and they are posing a threat to the life of humans, animals and plants. A number of countries are at the intersection with the effects of climate change.

This has led to great variabilities in nature. The temperature is rising and this has led to new challenges, including desertification, water scarcity, and urban exodus, in addition to the exacerbation of food insecurity that is now concrete.

Allow me to express once again our concern as to the developments in Sudan. As you know, Sudan is the food basket for the Arab world. We hope that we can go back to a negotiation. This is a great problem that may have effects on food and agricultural security. Our region is not in need of more challenges.

Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan have recently signed a memorandum of understanding for agricultural and animal production, and in order to enhance trade cooperation in order to achieve agricultural integration. This includes the climate change in addition to measures of trade between Arab countries. We look forward to cooperating with the FAO and the other Member states in order to address desertification and in order to apply measures that address water scarcity.

We hope that the Organization would consider adopting a new Strategy that addresses equity and water distribution, especially when it comes to transboundary rivers. As a matter of fact, upstream countries are monopolising water supplies and this is affecting many countries and we hope that there will be policies in order to share the burdens and in order to create new opportunities for cooperation between the countries with the same rivers.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway) (Observer)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. I am aware of the fact that we stand between lunch and this intervention.

We fully align ourselves with the European Union (EU) statement. Let me begin by underlining the close interrelation between Items 5 and 6, and by noting that we will address the undeniable and severe detrimental impact of Russian Federation's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security under Item 6. This is, as amply documented, a war which is directly hitting the world's poor through price hikes, disruption of supply chains, and numerous other effects.

I will in these brief remarks provide six quick points that are key messages from the five Nordic countries on the other structural drivers of global food insecurity, and what we feel FAO should prioritise. We would like to express our gratitude for numerous statements this morning that indicate a broad agreement on the mainlines of what needs to be done.

We want to thank FAO for the document *CL 172/5*, which we found to be a useful and informative overview of global food security challenges, which again reiterates the importance of FAO's work and multilateral action.

Firstly, the Nordic countries emphasise that preventative and resilience-building measures are crucial to improve global food security, and also that a food systems approach is of utmost importance. I would like to thank the Ambassador of Brazil for her remarks on this point. In this regard, FAO has an instrumental role to play and we take this opportunity to express our strong support for the full implementation of the Organization's strategies on climate change and science and innovation, and on mainstreaming biodiversity.

Secondly, we encourage the FAO to continue monitoring the rising levels of global food insecurity and to provide its Members with regular updates and technical advice to support countries. Thirdly, it is critical to analyse and address the gender gap across food systems and its impact on food security and women's rights and needs.

The Nordic countries strongly agree with what was said by the Ambassador of Chile and the Ambassador of Canada on this. We are grateful for the Report provided by FAO recently and we encourage the FAO to power forward on gender issues. Gender is a win/win/win for the FAO and for global food security.

Fourthly, conflict is one of the main drivers of food insecurity and it is a common denominator in each of all the ten largest food crises in 2021, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Added to this, we have witnessed this last week, a horrifying situation in Sudan with nationwide armed conflict with dire consequences for the population of a country with systemic and deep food insecurity and massive humanitarian needs. We agree with the interventions made by the United States, the EU, the United Kingdom and others on this.

We underline that FAO has an important role to play within the development of the humanitarian peace nexus to address the crisis through collaborative action, working with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and the wider UN system. Lastly, in this regard, we encourage the FAO to continue its work

on agriculture in emergencies and we encourage other Member states to make financial contributions to FAO's emergency and resilience work as others and we have this here.

The Nordic countries support the proposals for decision by the United States and its adoption *en bloc*, and we oppose the Russian draft decision, which includes factually incorrect information and aims to divert Russian Federation's responsibility for the current crisis.

CHAIRPERSON

After the lunch break, we have still eight Observers to speak. However, before breaking for lunch, I really would like to read out the draft conclusions so that we have that in the language versions which will be circulated to you by email directly after I have spoken it out. Then, you can consult what to do after the lunch break, and after the Observers, how we arrive at a consensus or a decision.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I would just like to make a point of order and ask a question as to it seems odd to start with conclusions before the end of a Plenary or to have draft conclusions before the Plenary has ended and we have had discussion on the issues at hand. I am wondering how that could be done and under what authority you are doing it?

CHAIRPERSON

I do it in my authority as Independent Chairperson of the Council, and I am not going to discuss at this moment the draft conclusions but just to give you time to at least read it before we finalize our meeting; we can always change it. That is the prerogative of the Chairperson of the Council to do so.

First, I would like to remind everybody that it is not the first time that we are addressing these issues. We have had three Councils already with two decisions by vote and one decision by consensus. I think we should do our utmost to finalize our work by consensus, as I heard by many, and if not feasible, it is clear that there are two decisions to be voted on.

At least to give you time to see whether or not there is the possibility to arrive at a consensus, and we still have to finalize our work, I would like to propose the following, which will be sent to you by email.

1. The Council welcomed document *CL 172/5, Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change*, and in particular:

- a) expressed concern about the mounting trends of chronic hunger, acute food insecurity and malnutrition, and the deteriorating food security situation in an increasing number of countries;
- b) highlighted that conflicts, wars and geopolitical tensions, extreme and more frequent climatic events and inequalities – in particular because of the COVID-19 pandemic – are the main drivers of undernourishment, acute food insecurity and malnutrition in the world, especially for the most vulnerable populations;
- c) noted that poverty and inequalities are drivers of food insecurity, and concerted action in addressing these, both within and among countries, would help to alleviate food insecurity in the long term;
- d) noted with concern in this regard the growing rate of acute global food insecurity and malnutrition, and the need to reverse this trend to make progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2, end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- e) expressed grave concern about the continued devastating impact of the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine on global food insecurity as well as on availability and affordability of food, fertilizer, and energy, particularly for the poorest countries and most vulnerable populations;
- f) welcomed the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, which has increased global supplies of grains and other foodstuffs and contributed to easing the pressure on global markets;

- g) recognized the positive and essential impact of the BSGI on global food security, food prices, and the easing of trade disruptions, especially for the most vulnerable populations, as highlighted by FAO, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Secretary-General of the UN, among others;
- h) urged FAO to support the BSGI by providing technical and data support consistent with the Organization's mandate and requested regular updates to Members in this regard;
- i) underlined the importance of keeping open the trade of food and agriculture inputs and products to obviate the negative impact on food security globally, while also avoiding other distorting and restrictive measures, and other trade impeding measures on foodstuffs and fertilizers;
- j) recognized that the challenges are enormous and require concerted and sustained efforts to meet both the short- and longer-term objectives, including through urgent and adequate humanitarian assistance and increased investments in agriculture, rural development, trade systems and information and communication technologies;
- k) expressed appreciation for FAO's efforts as a leading agency and a reliable partner to support Members in the global effort to end hunger and malnutrition; and
- l) acknowledged and appreciated the positive role played by the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) in enhancing market transparency and guiding policy responses for world food security, and highlighted the need for continued investment in market monitoring and assessment, and in policy dialogue and coordination.

These will be circulated to you.

Of course, we will finalize our work by listening to the Observers after the break, we hear the response of Mr Máximo Torero Cullen to your questions and remarks, and then it is up to the Members to see how we proceed with conclusions or decisions.

I really would like to thank the interpreters for giving us this overtime to facilitate our work. You are doing so great, thank you so much.

I also would like to remind everybody that at this moment there is a side event starting, which is called *Contribution of Terrestrial Animal Source Food to Healthy Diets for Improved Nutrition and Health Outcomes*.

It will be in the Sheikh Zayed Centre and is also taking care of your internal food security because lunch is provided there, which is always good.

We start at 14:00 hours sharp in this room, and I have asked Management to make sure that we can start at 14:00 hours sharp in this room again.

Thank you so much for an intensive morning. See you at 14:00 hours. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:02 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 02

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.02

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
FOURTH PLENARY SESSION QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
25 April 2023

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:08 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 08
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 14.08
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 5.** Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change (*continued*)
- Point 5.** Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes : conflits et guerres en Ukraine et dans d'autres pays, ralentissements et fléchissements, et changement climatique (*suite*)
- Tema 5.** Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en Ucrania y otros países, desaceleraciones y contracciones de la economía y cambio climático (*continuación*)
- (CL 172/5)

Item 5.1 Sustainable global food supply chains: comprehensive implementation of UN-brokered two Istanbul Agreements signed on July 2022 (known as Black Sea Grain Initiative) for maintaining global food security and nutrition for all (continued)

Point 5.1 Chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire mondiales durables: mise en œuvre complète des deux accords d'Istanbul signés en juillet 2022 sous l'édige de l'ONU (connus sous le nom d'Initiative céréalière de la mer Noire) pour préserver la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition pour tous au niveau mondial (suite)

Tema 5.1 Cadenas mundiales de suministro alimentario sostenibles: aplicación integral de los dos acuerdos de Estambul auspiciados por las Naciones firmados en julio de 2022 (conocidos como Iniciativa sobre la Exportación de Cereales por el Mar Negro) con miras a mantener la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición para todo el mundo (continuación)

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished delegates, dear friends hopefully we are all still friends with each other. I hope you had a refreshing lunch, and you are energized after a very intense morning.

My proposal of what we are going to do is first finalize the list of speakers and Observers. Then I give the floor briefly to answer some of the questions and answers. Then I will follow the Rules of Procedures when it comes to the call on two votes by two Members and explain how the Rules of Procedures say this has to be conducted.

Let us first finalize the list of speakers and I would like to ask the Observers to stay within the time limit of three minutes because we still have quite some work to do today.

Mr Hasan Enes MABOCOGLU (Türkiye) (Observer)

The war in Ukraine has caused extreme human suffering. The war's global impact is also becoming worse. It already weakened global growth, deteriorated food security and increased inflation. Our strong support of Ukraine remains steadfast, but we maintain our view that a lasting viable and principled peace for Ukraine can only be achieved through negotiations.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative that we have brokered together with the United Nations is the strongest proof that negotiations can work. It allowed more than 28.4 million tons of various grains products to reach world markets. It has stabilised international food prices and eased access to food products by countries with the lowest income.

Türkiye is fully committed to ensuring the continuity of the Initiative. In this respect, I would also like to thank Members who have expressed their support for the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We will also continue to support the United Nation's hard work to facilitate the export of Russian grain and fertilizer, another important element of global food security. There is a progress in this regard, but some obstacles remain.

Additional steps need to be taken sooner rather than later. We need to adopt a pragmatic and constructive approach and not to mix grain issues with politics. In the period ahead, we will continue our comprehensive support to Ukraine. At the same time, we will also continue to encourage dialogue.

Mr Yuriy GRYNEVETSKYY (Ukraine)(Observer)

Since Ukraine is the party of one of the Istanbul agreements, I would like to focus my attention on sub-item 5.1. Since the beginning of Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, our country's seaports have been blocked and exports of Ukrainian agriculture products to world markets have almost completely stopped.

In its reports and statements, the Russian Federation manipulating defects, deliberately omits the key fundamental issue that prompted the conclusion of the Initiative: the attack on the territory of Ukraine; the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation; the violation of freedom of shipping in the Black and Azov seas; as well as the fundamental international legal documents in the field of merchant shipping.

By signing the Initiative, the parties committed themselves to providing maximum security guarantees for all vessels participating in the Initiative and to facilitate the flow of food from Ukraine. At the same time, it is the Russian Federation that is deliberately hindering its implementation. Representatives of this country, as part of the joint inspection teams at the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, constantly delay and disrupt the process of conducting relevant inspections of ships sailing to or from Ukrainian seaports.

Initially, the number of inspection teams was reduced without any reason and without explanation, amid the growing cargo flow from Ukrainian ports. Russian inspectors began checking the performance of vessels that are not regulated by the Joint Coordination Centre's (JCC)'s guiding documents, refusing to work during working hours, without explanation, and inventing conditions that allegedly threatened their health, although other parties did not confirm this.

For example, in March, all parties of the JCC approved to carry out 303 inspections, but only 168 took place. All this leads to weeklong or even months long idleness of vessels in the territorial waters of Türkiye. As a result, the lot of Ukrainian ports fell to 30-35 percent. Ukraine under exported almost 15 million tonnes of cargo. Cargo owners and Ukrainian farmers suffered significant losses and needy counties of the world do not receive Ukrainian agrifood products on time.

We have witnessed two times when the Russian Federation completely blocked inspections. This threatens the functioning of the Grain Initiative. Russian representatives of the JCC have been trying to interfere in the activities of Ukrainian ports and exporters by imposing their own criteria for determining specific vessels that will participate in the Initiative. Ukraine categorically rejects Russia's latest demands and opposes its interference in the operation of Ukrainian ports. We continue consultations on ways to ensure the full implementation of the Grain Initiative, in compliance with the obligations of all parties and JCC procedures.

Distinguished participants, the Russian side accused parties in the Initiative of supplying agricultural products for other purposes and insufficient volumes. But, it should be noted that this is a manipulation, as the Initiative does not define the type of agriculture products, the purpose of the cargo or the markets to supply. The humanitarian importance of the Initiative is undeniable, as its main goal is to reduce global food prices and ensure that people's right to food is realized. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) two out of three tonnes of Ukrainian wheat destined for low or lower developed countries.

It is worth noting that today's shipping for one of the warring parties, the Russian Federation, is free. Ships passing through Bosphorus Strait and heading to and from Russian Federation ports and are not subject to inspection and checks, unlike ships heading to and from Ukrainian ports identified by the Initiative.

The Ukrainian side emphasised that the current agreement does not provide for extensions for 60 days, but only for 120 days, as stipulated by paragraph (h) of the document. The Initiative also does not contain conditions put forward by Russian Federation on March 20.

Regarding the so-called harmful implications of unilateral sanctions against the Russian Federation on world food security, I remind what, on April 13, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation wrote in his article for the Latin American media. I quote: *"despite the sanctions imposed on Russian Federation and the political pressure our total exports to the Latin American countries*

grew by 3.8 percent last year. Fertilizers and refined oil product trade is up as well and, in 2022, Russia increased wheat exports to Latin America and the Caribbean by 48.8 percent.”

He also proudly noted that without any help from the United Nations, the Russian Federation supplied 23 million tonnes of grain and 20 million tons of fertilizers to international markets. I would like to remind that, in 2022, the share of imposed restrictions by the Russian Government in global exports of fertilizers was the following: 10.1 percent for nitrogen, 18.7 percent for potash and 8.64 for phosphates. According to data from the Agricultural Market Information System, as of January 2023, the Russian Federation applies a 23.5 duty on all fertilizers exports if the price is above 458 per tonne.

We would like to reiterate that there are no sanctions for food exports. On the contrary, it is Russian Federation which restricted its grain and fertilizers. The above mentioned demonstrates again that Russian Federation is an unreliable and unpredictable partner using important agricultural commodities as a political instrument of pressure.

Concluding, we will support the draft of the decision proposed by the United States of America and completely refute the proposals of the Russian Federation.

Sra. Claudia GONZÁLEZ TOLEDO (Cuba) (Observador)

Agradecemos la información proporcionada en el documento CL 172/5 sobre los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas al tiempo que compartimos la preocupación por la situación mundial actual.

El documento expone una alarmante situación global que nos sitúa cada vez más lejos de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) que nos hemos propuesto en la Agenda 2030. Si bien coincidimos en que las crecientes tendencias del hambre crónica, la inseguridad alimentaria aguda y la malnutrición son el resultado de los efectos combinados de los conflictos, la variabilidad del clima y los fenómenos meteorológicos extremos, las crecientes limitaciones de recursos, las dificultades económicas y la inestabilidad social y política, consideramos que la aplicación de medidas coercitivas unilaterales forman parte de las agravantes a la seguridad alimentaria para los casi 40 Estados que las sufren; la mayoría, países en desarrollo. Y debe tenerse en cuenta en los análisis reflejados por la FAO.

En el caso de Cuba el bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América ha ocasionado afectaciones en la rama de la alimentación y la agricultura estimadas en 369 millones, 489 mil y 550 de dólares solo en el período comprendido entre enero y julio de 2022. Y es incuestionable que ese bloqueo es el sistema de medidas coercitivas unilaterales más abarcador, complejo y prolongado que se haya impuesto contra país alguno en la historia.

No obstante, Cuba mantiene su compromiso de alcanzar la seguridad y soberanía alimentarias. Dos metas que se encuentran entre las prioridades del gobierno cubano directamente vinculadas con la implementación de la ley de soberanía y seguridad alimentaria y nutricional y el cumplimiento de los objetivos acordados en la Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible.

Reiteramos nuestra disposición de continuar trabajando de forma mancomunada para fortalecer el multilateralismo, la solidaridad y la cooperación internacional, incluida cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular. Solo de esta forma podremos enfrentar los desafíos globales.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá) (Observador)

Panamá agradece, reconoce y respalda las contribuciones de la FAO para presentarnos soluciones para atender los retos que afrontan nuestros sistemas alimentarios y nos unimos al agradecimiento al Economista Jefe por el informe presentado.

A pesar de los continuos desafíos de la pandemia de COVID-19, que aun está presente, y las incertidumbres globales, Panamá pone la seguridad alimentaria de prioridad. Es una realidad que el conflicto en Ucrania y otros agravan los efectos existentes de la seguridad alimentaria en el mundo. A la misma vez nos enfrentamos al cambio climático y sus consecuencias, como el alza de temperaturas y los crecientes desastres naturales. Todos estos factores desestabilizan la manera en la que vivimos y, gradualmente, distorsionan el acceso de familias, principalmente de áreas rurales y de pueblos indígenas, a comidas nutritivas y opciones de sostenibilidad económica.

Los efectos del cambio climático, la creciente limitación de recursos, las dificultades económicas, la inestabilidad social y política, los conflictos y la inseguridad alimentaria aguda también influyen en el incremento gradual de la migración irregular. Tal como lo indica el Programa Mundial de Alimentos, uno de cada tres hogares que tienen la intención de migrar tienen inseguridad alimentaria. Y esta es la segunda causa más citada de migración en la región de América Latina y el Caribe hacia América del Norte. Este es el origen de la situación crítica que existe en nuestra frontera con Colombia y de la región del Darién que está afectando el Parque nacional del Darién declarado reserva de la biósfera en 1982 por su variedad de ecosistemas y biodiversidad y que, resalto, no es un paso migratorio.

Insto a los Miembros a poner nuestros esfuerzos en atender las causas de la situación actual de inseguridad alimentaria. Es necesario financiar las respuestas que permitan contar con sistemas agroalimentarios que aseguren el acceso de alimentos para todas las personas. Acompañamos la solicitud de Canadá y de Chile e incluir el empoderamiento de la mujer como una solución. Un cuarto de la población mundial son mujeres rurales y son responsables por más de la mitad de la producción de alimentos en el mundo.

Es necesario poner en marcha soluciones con acciones reales para la adaptación al cambio climático y salvaguardar la biodiversidad. Tenemos que enfocarnos en la seguridad alimentaria del mundo y cesar los conflictos armados que solo agravan más las situaciones actuales.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)(Observer)

Allow me to start this intervention by recalling that, today, Italy celebrates the Liberation Day, the cornerstone of our democratic and republican history. My congratulation to Portugal as well, and many thanks to the distinguished Ambassador of Angola for her kind words.

Italy fully aligns itself to the declaration made by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. In my national capacity, I would like to express Italy's deepest concern for the ongoing food crisis, the worst in many decades. Food systems have proven to be vulnerable as they can be severely affected by a range of different shocks, including climate shocks, economic shocks, pandemics, conflicts and wars.

I would like hereby to thank the FAO Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, and his team for the comprehensive report they have prepared. The document is clear and direct to the point in analysing the multiple factors conquering and eroding food security across the world.

Coming to the situation in Ukraine, the report says, and I quote: "the war in Ukraine continues to be a source of uncertainty for global agricultural markets. Reduced plantings in Ukraine means that other countries will need to produce additional grains and oilseeds to help rebuild global stocks and moderate price levels".

Since this war is the result of a deliberate and illegal act of unprovoked aggression toward a sovereign country, once again we call upon Russian Federation to end it now. We have many challenges ahead of us. We need to act collectively by delivering humanitarian aid to save people and, at the same time, we need to provide development funds to tackle structural problems and bottlenecks. Effective national pathways, cash based transfer policies and school meals policies are amazingly effective tools to operationalize the changes we aim for. But again, we need to act together.

Italy strongly supports the Black Sea Grain Initiative. In July, Italy and the United Nations will host in FAO, the Food System Stocktaking Moment 2023, which is intended to be a contribution along the way forward. All in all, a collective action is necessary to win the current challenge and make the humanitarian development peace nexus operate for the benefit of all of us in the long term.

Italy, therefore, suggests the adoption *en bloc* by consensus of the draft conclusion put forward by the United States of America and advice for the rejection *en bloc* of the draft texts presented by the Russian Federation.

Mr Ayman RAAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (Observer)(Original language Arabic)

I would like to express thanks to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen and his team for his efforts and for the report that was presented to us.

The report explains the drivers leading to the lack of food security in the world. The report, however, overlooked the destructive effect of the unilateral sanctions imposed on a number of FAO Members. This leads to a deterioration of food security for millions of people. The effects of the unilateral coercive measures do not only lead to a lack of provision of food and energy, but they also lead to other losses, and affect agrifood systems in the long term.

These sanctions and embargos create a vicious cycle leading to the destruction of the agricultural sector. When one fails to provide the tools and requirements for the agricultural system, this leads to the failure in providing for the needs of producers and farmers on a daily basis.

In the end, they abandon their lands and holdings, and they seek to migrate to cities or to other countries. This in turn leads to the destruction of rural infrastructure and these regions remain unable to cope with the situation.

In addition to all that was mentioned in this report, we also suffer from the unilateral coercive measures imposed unjustly on the Syrian people, and we suffer from the occupation of our territories. The situation has resulted in a large number of displaced people and migrants. The Government of Syria believes that the report should address the catastrophic impact of these measures and sanctions in addition to the military aggression and its impact on food security.

That way, the Council can see the full picture of the main drivers of food security in the world. We should focus on these aspects instead of wasting time in politics, without giving due regard to the main reasons behind the lack of food security.

The sanctions imposed on Syria and the Russian Federation affects the provision of fertilizers and food grains in my country. I can give you an example. We are prohibited from receiving any aid or assistance. Therefore, I believe the proposal made by the Russian Federation for Items 5 and 6 should be taken into consideration.

Ms Sadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Observer)(Original language Arabic)

I would like to thank the Members for caring about the situation in Sudan. At the outset, I would like to clarify to the assembly that the dire situation in the Sudan is the result of the rapid force's rebellion against Sudanese forces. They attacked the central command. The attack took place while a meeting was taking place regarding the differences among parties regarding the framework agreement based on a civilian government.

Unfortunately, many vital utilities have been attacked. The Sudanese armed forces were trying to recover sovereignty. The legitimate party was trying to combat the rebels. In light of the on going conflict, the armed forces are trying to fulfil their duties. They are trying to defend their territory by providing security for civilians. They adopted a strategy to mitigate risks among civilians and in residential areas, including diplomatic missions and international organizations operating in Sudan.

We would like to confirm that the Sudan would like to defend international organizations and diplomatic missions according to international law and diplomatic agreements. As such, the Sudanese Government has pledged to evacuate all foreigners and personnel of diplomatic missions. The Government is taking various measures to do so.

Unfortunately, the rebels are trying to hamper and hinder evacuation operations and not the armed forces. The current situation is a clear proof that the rebels are violating the safety and security of the American embassy and various diplomatic missions. Unfortunately, many personnel from the World Food Programme have been victims of those attacks. This is additional proof that this behaviour is a flagrant violation of international law.

Therefore, I would like to call upon the assembly to support the legitimate armed forces. Sudan appreciates the efforts of the international community to calm the situation in our country. We would like to mention that food insecurity is linked to armed conflicts. Sudan is a clear example because it has rich natural resources that can ensure food security and face the challenges around the globe.

Allow me, on behalf of the Government of Sudan, to call upon you to provide support to Sudan during this situation, in order to save lives, ensure the livelihoods of the population and lay the foundations for resilience.

Sra. Haifa Aissami MADAH (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

Agradecemos a la FAO, particularmente al Economista Jefe, Sr. Máximo Torero Cullen, por la presentación del informe contenido en el documento *CL 172/5* referido a los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas, que es objeto de debate en este punto del temario; el Tema número cinco.

El documento, cuya finalidad es actualizar la información en relación a la situación de inseguridad alimentaria en el mundo y la respuesta de la FAO en este contexto conforme al mandato que fue emanado de este propio Consejo, nos brinda una panorámica amplia en la que se examinan los distintos desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria a nivel global y sus causas señalando, entre otros, los riesgos actuales, sin olvidar las medidas necesarias para mitigar los efectos de la crisis, especialmente sobre los más vulnerables, y sin dejar fuera del panorama las medidas a largo plazo también.

Las crecientes tendencias del hambre crónica, la inseguridad alimentaria aguda y la malnutrición son el resultado de una confluencia de factores. Así nos lo hacen saber. Los conflictos, las guerras y la variabilidad del clima y los fenómenos meteorológicos extremos, las desaceleración y recesiones económicas, las crecientes limitaciones de recursos y la inestabilidad social y política, son algunas de las causas a las que en ocasiones se suman políticas desfavorables que dificulta los esfuerzos encauzados a mejorar los resultados en materia de seguridad alimentaria y nutrición.

Con respecto a este informe, mi Delegación desearía hacer dos aportaciones: una para el análisis y otra que pretende se parte, también, de las medidas necesarias que se deben tomar. Y en cuanto a este análisis, nos corresponde indicar que a esta panorámica que nos ofrece la FAO debe sumarse también las medidas coercitivas unilaterales o mal llamadas sanciones, puesto que es una contradicción plantear la creciente inseguridad alimentaria global mientras se aplican y alientan medidas coercitivas unilaterales contra más de 20 países Miembros de esta misma Organización. Más contradictorio aún es pretender hacer una distinción con respecto al objeto de tales sanciones alegando que las mismas no afectan a productos agrícolas, alimentos o medicinas. Me remito a todo lo que hemos escuchado a lo largo del debate del día de hoy. Es cuanto menos un eufemismo.

La utilización del sistema financiero mundial para sitiar económicamente a países, las sanciones económicas, bloqueos, medidas coercitivas, la manipulación en el abastecimiento de alimentos y materias primas, en general, son medidas que promueven el hambre y la inseguridad alimentaria. Sin embargo, ninguna de estas distorsiones y desequilibrios expresados como políticas sostenidas han sido consideradas en este documento y por ello exhortamos a la FAO a incluirlas para que esta panorámica tenga un enfoque más amplio e integral.

Muchos países podemos contribuir a aumentar la estabilidad de la seguridad alimentaria en el mundo si se nos permite desarrollar a plenitud nuestras capacidades en condiciones apropiadas. Es por esto que Venezuela propone, como parte de las medidas a las que hice mención previamente, el levantamiento de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales impuestas ilegalmente contra los Miembros de las Naciones Unidas como una acción urgente y que forme parte de un plan global que debe adoptarse para enfrentar la crisis alimentaria. Es por ello que exhortamos a su inclusión.

Para concluir, quiero hacer mía una frase que está contenida en el resumen que nos presentara Máximo Torero referida a que, “los conflictos y el hambre se refuerzan mutuamente”. No podría estar yo más de acuerdo con esta expresión. Y es por ello que consideramos pertinente, y como lo hemos afirmado anteriormente, el papel de esta Organización no es alimentar las tensiones y las divisiones. Las agencias de Naciones Unidas no deben ser utilizadas para profundizar los conflictos y, en este sentido, hacemos un llamado a respetar el mandato de la FAO, a mantener la igualdad de trato y respeto para todos los Estados Miembros e invitamos a todos a realizar un debate amplio, inclusivo y plural y a preservar el consenso en la toma de decisiones.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

Yes, this is exactly the statement on the right of reply. If you mention timing, well, in Soviet days we had a saying: “*Swiss watches are the most expensive watches, while Soviet watches are the fastest watches*”. I believe that our Ukrainian colleague is wearing a Soviet watch. His statement was more than six minutes.

Continues in Russian

In his statement, the distinguished representative of Ukraine spoke for a long time about how the Russian Federation is blocking the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. He referenced many statistical data. So, I would like to draw your attention to the draft decision which had been proposed by the United States of America on this Item. I quote paragraph (g) of this decision, in English.

Continues in English

“Recognised the positive and essential impact of the Black Sea Grain Initiative on global food security, food prices and the easing of trade disturbances, especially for the most vulnerable people, as highlighted by FAO, UNCTAD and the Secretary-General of the UN, among others.”

Continues in Russian

It is my understanding that the representative of Ukraine and representative of the United States of America must have read different versions of the Secretary General's report and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report on this issue. As for the implementation of the Initiative, on 23 April, the port of Odessa on the territory of Ukraine, which is participating in the Initiative, was subjected to two attacks by above-water drones.

These attacks targeted corridors for exporting grain in the Sebastopol base, which is being used to actually ensure the safety of these corridors. Of course, this leads to the question, does the Ukrainian side wish for this Initiative to continue in a peaceful, regular atmosphere or will they continue their military activities?

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen for briefly responding to some of the items raised.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Let me start by thanking all of you Members, for your kind words which are extremely important for the teams behind, the teams that are working on this topic and trying to multiply themselves to produce the number of Reports that you are looking at.

Let me start by talking on resilience which have been raised by several of you. Resilience has two dimensions. The first dimension is to minimise the risks. That means vulnerabilities and for that we need to increase and invest more in early warning systems. We need to increase and invest more in One Health approach and increase access to insurance, which will help us to minimise costs under when we face catastrophic problems in food security in the world, and where this can be an element to minimise and increase efficiency.

In this respect, for example, let me give you an early warning alert right now. What happened in Sudan is terrible and before the conflict there were already 3.7 million people displaced. Before the conflict, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification 3 (IPC) and above were 7.7 million people which could substantially expand and move up to IPC4 and 5 and could increase up to 11 million more. This is an early warning that we as FAO has to provide because we know the information and this is a risk that we have in place.

Moreover, on the first dimension of resilience, Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) has been and will continue to be an excellent mechanism to help to reduce and assimilate information and to let us know the levels of the stocks we have today and what challenges we are facing.

Here it is very important to keep supporting AMIS and we thank the Japanese Government for the enormous support promised this year and to all the Members that have been supporting AMIS in the last year. This will allow to strengthen AMIS to increase and expand it to cover fertilizers and oilseeds, logistic information and also there is additional support to bring all the network of models that will give more information to AMIS in the mechanism.

The second component of resilience is coping with risks when they occur. And here is where the world targeted social protection programmes, as was mentioned by the Ambassador of Brazil, and where we

need to prioritise investments and where we need to reduce food loss and waste and align incentives and especially increase rate to move the goods at a velocity that is needed and at the same time, ensuring sustainability of our environment and reduction of emissions.

In paragraph 26, when we refer there was to the social capacity which is linked to the second component of resilience, which basically is one of the elements of resilience, where we need to have diversity from where we import to avoid the problems like the one we face when the war in Ukraine started with Northern Africa especially.

However, we also need to diversify what we produce according to our comparative advantages and also have some capacity of emergency, stock for safety net programme, so that we can supply to emergency situations safety net stocks. That is what we called absorption capacity, which one is one of these components that require to be able to allow us to cope better with the risks.

We also need to produce more with less. And essentially what we have found is that the reduction of inequality that has been exacerbated during the COVID-19 will be central for this. In this respect a clear example which we call out during COVID-19 was the inequality of women, which 22 percent of them lost their jobs in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, versus 2 percent of males. That is what brings up in the Report of woman that we just issued a couple of weeks ago.

Third, on cooperation, we work with all the Agencies and we are trying to maximise and optimise our mandates and our efficiency to complement with them. We have developed a network of chief economies with the UN system. We coordinate monthly with International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and we are trying to expand our combination also with Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and we are co-publishing many documents with all of them.

For example, we just produced the Gaps Report together with the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the G20 meeting in India, which is an example of how we are trying to cooperate. Let me plea also on the other hand, it is important for Member countries and donors to give the proper incentives for this and not the opposite. Because we need all incentives to be aligned so that we can extend our cooperation.

Fourth on food access the Black Sea Grain Initiative has shown that it is extremely impactful. 971 shipments have passed since its approval. That means around more than USD 9 billion, more than USD 9.5 billion and 28.9 million metric tons. 49 percent of the maize is going to developing countries and 65 percent of the wheat is going to developing countries. 34.8 percent is for food and 65.4 percent is for feed, which of course will end in a certain way in food.

Today the challenge is that the velocity of mobility has been substantially reduced in more than 20 percent and that is something that we need to keep our attention because we need the Black Sea Grain Initiative to continue.

It is also important to understand that there are two agreements signed in Istanbul in July 2022. The first one is the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and the full title is The Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretary of the United Nations on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to the world.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was signed in July 22, stated the initiative will remain in effect for 120 days from the date of signature by all parties and can be extended automatically for the same time period unless one of the parties notifies the other of the intent to terminate the Initiative or to modify it, and it was already twice renewed and we hope this will continue.

The Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) on the exports of the Russian Federation, also signed on the 22 July 2022, stated that it will remain in effect for a period of three years. The two agreements are different in terms of scope and operation, so we need to be very careful on those.

Fifth, I want to call attention to the document refers to sanctions in what it is affecting. Sanctions do not include food and fertilizers but create risks for the mobility of financial resources through Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) accounts. There have been

improvements in terms of that and we have been reporting that in all our information notes, that has allowed to reduce those risks and as result of that we have seen prices of fertilizers, urea and even potassium reducing, although still they are high, but they have significantly reduced in the last month.

Nevertheless, to better assess, we need all countries to report their trade statistics, because we can trace most of it through the mirror images. But in some cases, especially when transportation happens through land, it is impossible to use the mirror images to assess straight. Therefore, information reporting from countries is essential.

Finally share on conflicts, I think that several crisis overlap, it is not just because of one of the elements, conflict is the most frequent as I mentioned there are slow downs and down turns and also climate are extremely important but they normally combine each other and that is where the mirror effects over food insecurity happen. We need to analyse those and although they are methodologies sometimes it is very difficult to decompose what is because of what.

Now, we have done factual objective quantification of damages and losses linked to conflict that has been already implemented, but as I mentioned before, this is a complex assessment and requires a lot of detail information to be able to measure the root cause of each of the different elements. FAO monitors and works in all conflict environments and colleague's flagship publications that highlight the main drivers of food insecurity such as the Global Crisis report which looks at the past year and the Hunger Hotspots report, which looks at the current country situation where food insecurity is likely to deteriorate in the near future.

In these Reports, the role of conflict is discussed in greater detail with a lot of data and information provided. I hope I answered and referred to most of the comments being implemented.

CHAIRPERSON

Thanks very much, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, not only for your excellent answer to remarks, but also the excellent work you and your team are doing.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen. In accordance with the General Rules of the Organization, I have to suspend the deliberations of this Agenda Item in order to take up the requests by two Members for a vote. Before doing so, I give the floor to Brazil.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

We attentively heard all forty-something interventions from distinguished delegates and from the FAO Chief Economist. We believe there is room for consensus. We believe there is a sincere engagement to combat hunger. From our point of view, trying to reach consensus, especially in a United Nations agency, is a strong message towards multilateralism and it should be valued.

Brazil believes that the text that was presented in the morning is a good-enough preliminary draft. It is possibly also the only draft that has a chance of being negotiated in order to try and achieve consensus for items 5 and 6.

Brazil believes we can use this text as a basis for discussion, but also to focus on the core mandate of the Organization. Multilateralism is a balance of frustrations. For the sake of the 828 million people that are facing hunger now, maybe we should consider the possibility of living with some frustrations.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quisiera referirme al escenario que está frente a nosotros. Durante toda la semana pasada fuimos invitados a diversas reuniones que tenían como objetivo el de buscar una propuesta que logre el consenso entre los Miembros y nos evite tener que ir a un escenario de votación. También, debo decir, fuimos promotores de ese ejercicio. No tengo que explicar mi vocación permanente por tratar de construir puentes entre los colegas.

Todos los ejercicios tenían como fin ofrecer a usted, Presidente, una propuesta que pudiera ser enriquecida por parte de los colegas y así salir institucionalmente más fuertes de este Consejo. En este debate hubo propuestas muy positivas para ser incluidas en el Informe. No solo las nuestras, debo decir. Lo dicho por Chile, por México, por Canadá, creo que también por Noruega y otros, merecen ser incorporados en este Informe final.

Ahora, si tuviéramos que ser forzados a un escenario de votación, quizás, Presidente, pudiera otorgarnos al menos 24 horas para poder hacer las consultas a nuestras capitales a fin de poder transmitir claramente las propuestas en discusión a ser votadas porque durante toda la semana cada uno fue enviando un poco las diversas propuestas que iban y venían con las diferentes sugerencias que pretendían enriquecer la propuesta de base. Entiendo perfectamente que algunos países puedan tener límites a esa flexibilidad, pero por eso es necesario enviar a nuestras capitales con claridad cuáles son las propuestas que van a estar sobre la mesa en caso de que exista un escenario de votación.

La verdad, no estamos prejuzgando. Es posible que los que necesiten, por lo menos esas 24 horas, puedan votar a favor de las propuestas, puedan votar en contra, puedan abstenerse, pero sin instrucciones es muy difícil votar. Por ello, espero que mi sugerencia pueda volar, pero siempre pienso que, si existe una sola posibilidad para conseguir que logremos un consenso, con el enriquecimiento que los colegas han hecho en sus intervenciones, yo absolutamente sería un colega muy feliz de que ese sea el resultado final de esta discusión.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I would say, in concept, the United States of America absolutely agrees that when we can find consensus, we should find consensus. We actually chaired one of the exercises that the Argentinian colleague mentioned today. For three weeks, we worked with more than 30 Members of this Council to try to find a way forward that would enjoy consensus, at least amongst 33 Members of this Council, that we could use as a basis to find consensus. Within that smaller group, we were unable to find consensus on this item.

As you noted Chairperson, we called for a vote on our proposal, and it was seconded by a number of delegations. We can check the Verbatims, but I think it was over a dozen who mentioned it. The one place where I do disagree with my colleagues is that I also listened to all the interventions that were given today very carefully. I took notes on every one, whether I agreed or not with it. It is very clear that consensus will not be achievable on this item.

I think that, in negotiating the text that you put forward today, would do the opposite of what you have said all morning has been your priority, which is concluding this item today, so that we can deal with all the other important work of this Organization through the rest of the week. I think this will be the most efficient way forward, especially since most of the issues that you put into the text before us are already dealt with in the one that we put forward.

Therefore, I want to repeat my call for the vote *en bloc* now of the proposal contained in CL 172/INF/7 related to this item. But, I want to make one additional point. We did hear during discussions today a number of issues that our text did not anticipate.

After the vote and, when we moved to conclusions that we can find consensus on, I think we would be able to easily negotiate additional conclusions on some of these great ideas that came from our colleagues. Gender and disaggregated data was raised by Chile, Canada and the Nordic countries, among others.

The suggestion by Mexico, Canada and the Russian Federation that FAO's future analysis include specific focus on the outcome and evaluation of its work and programmes in crisis settings so that the Members can help guide the Organization's future programmes to apply in these contexts. There are several items where we could reach consensus and have some additional conclusions after the votes are concluded.

With all respect to my colleagues, we put our proposal forward more than 72 hours ago. There has been ample opportunity for people to go to capitals and get their instructions for voting. I would propose that we move forward with voting and then we move to finding consensus on the things we can find consensus on.

Sr. Ennio VIVALDI VÉJAR (Chile)

Pensaba que, efectivamente, han surgido temas que enriquecen y ponen énfasis en distintos aspectos del excelente preinforme que recibimos. Sin embargo, yo quiero valorar la propuesta de Brasil y valorar el esfuerzo que se ha hecho desde la presidencia para buscar un consenso.

Yo estoy de acuerdo, por principio, que muchas veces es mil veces peor callar una verdad que proclamar una mentira. Y, por lo tanto, no me gustaría que quedáramos con la idea de que estamos aquí tratando de ocultar un problema. Pero la verdadera pregunta es, si a la luz de lo que hemos escuchado de Brasil y a la luz de lo que es la propuesta, ¿estamos efectivamente ocultando algo?

Me parece que es una propuesta que --si me permiten un anglicismo--, no es *wishy-washy*. No es una cosa ambigua, sino que establece una posición respecto al tema y abriría, quizás, la posibilidad de evitar esta confrontación. Ahora, tener estas confrontaciones puede ser bueno también. Ya eso lo juzgará cada uno, pero a mí me pareció convincente la argumentación que dio Brasil en términos que podría ser mejor para el ambiente que se va a vivir en este Consejo, el que hiciéramos un esfuerzo por encontrar una solución o un consenso.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

This morning, I had the chance to congratulate everyone on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy, in accordance with the G8 resolution adopted five years ago, which encouraged us to make decisions based on dialogue consensus and in the interests of the international community.

For this reason, I fully support the direction proposed by Brazil, so that we can leave this hall with a sense of accomplishment, with the understanding that we tried to achieve consensus and mutual understanding in order to address serious problems. If we are speaking about FAO, of course, we are talking about fighting hunger.

The Russian delegation was not an initiator of the draft conclusions. We were forced to react to the decisions proposed by other delegations. Today, we find that, apparently for some time, 33 countries have been discussing some kinds of draft conclusions; whereas yesterday we heard completely different interventions made by so-called civilized countries, first and foremost the European Union saying that we need to be transparent in our decision making, that we should be disseminating documents ahead of time, that we should have the opportunity to engage in discussion and using all kinds of beautiful language.

The Russian delegation will be happy to work on the basis of your proposals and your comments and to contribute to the constructive decisions during our session in order to achieve consensus.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je vous serais reconnaissante de donner d'abord la parole à la Suède, et ensuite de me redonner la parole.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

While the European Union and its Member States participated constructively in the discussions last week, that the colleague from the United States of America just mentioned, it was clear that it would be difficult to find consensus and enough basis for it. This is why we, like many others, stated that we support the proposal of the United States of America be adopted en bloc. We maintain this position.

Again, we reiterate that we reject the proposals by the Russian Federation.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voudrais soutenir ce qui a été dit à l'instant par ma collègue de la Suède. Remercier bien sûr les collègues dans la salle qui essayent de trouver des solutions. Je pense qu'en toute honnêteté, nous savons tous qu'il y a des sujets sur lesquels nous ne trouverons pas de consensus, je pense que nous le savons depuis un an. Nous avons vu au Comité de la sécurité alimentaire, ce que cela donnait.

C'est la raison pour laquelle nous réitérons notre soutien au projet de décision américain. Nous réitérons notre opposition aux propositions d'amendements russes et au projet de décision russe dont je retiens qu'elles n'ont pas été formellement retirées par la Russie. Elles sont donc formellement sur la table et donc devront être votées.

Je pense que déferer de 24 heures les débats, déferer d'une semaine, ne rend pas non plus justice à la nécessité pour nous d'être efficace, et à la nécessité pour nous de nous concentrer sur les travaux prioritaires. Enfin, et sur un point de vue procédural encore, il n'y a pas procéduralement besoin de

formuler une suspension, pour procéder à des votes, puisque les votes font bien partie de l'examen de ce point de l'ordre du jour.

Je voulais réitérer ce point, parce qu'il y a une certaine ambiguïté dans les propos que vous aviez tenus précédemment.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

First and foremost, I would like to welcome your efforts to achieve a consensus in drafting the conclusions, which you read this morning, and which you sent to us in electronic format.

I would like to reaffirm the importance that Egypt places on the need to achieve a consensual solution, when it comes to all Items discussed at this Council, at this Session, not just this point. This is why we believe that the proposal of Brazil, for us to work together, to negotiate, to arrive at a consensual solution, is a good one, even if this brings about challenges and difficulties. I believe that we can arrive at a consensual text. This would be stronger and more powerful, would grant more force to our decisions.

Moreover, I would like to refer to the proposal by Argentina postponing the vote by 24 hours. For our countries, our countries that are Muslim countries, we have just celebrated Eid, the end of Ramadan, so it is difficult for us to contact our Capitals to discuss our opinions and to vote. If we vote, I believe that we need to postpone it, so that we have ample time to contact our Capitals and provide our positions.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

We would also like to commend your efforts in creating an environment so that a consensus could be reached. We are in favour of trying to reach a consensus, because consensus decision-making always strengthens the Organization, it unites the Membership. We are in favour of attempting to see whether we can reach a consensus, and in this case, we support Brazil's proposal, and a good starting point would be the list of conclusions you have prepared.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I have already spoken about USD 7 billion today and the minority which we have here, but of course, we can vote again. We are all very aware of what the results of such a vote would be.

For our part, we would like to thank you, Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), for your contribution. We believe that we could base ourselves on your proposal to achieve consensus, and we could reach consensus on two Items, 5 and 6, because we have already discussed them. In essence, if we are trying to seek consensus, that is the consensus. If we are not trying to achieve consensus, then we should go ahead and vote.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I am reminded of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) sessions last October and December. We got ourselves into a similar situation by risking to crowd out a discussion of substantive issues that CFS needed to discuss, and my fear is that having heard discussions from various delegations, I think that is going to happen here as well.

We have still substantive issues to discuss this week in Council, including Reports from the Finance and the Programme Committees. It is not that we do not want consensus, it is just that it looks quite difficult that to we are going to reach consensus here.

In the interest of efficiency, I would join the United States of America, France and Sweden and calling for us to vote, unfortunately, vote on the proposal that we supported this morning and ask for that to go forward.

Mr Antonius Yudi TRIANTORO (Indonesia)

Indonesia has always called for dialogue and consensus. Today and yesterday, we heard many delegates mention the importance of reaching consensus and this is the time for us to walk the talk. We should prevent a take it or leave it approach.

In the end, we are afraid that it will become the norm of the day in the FAO Council. From our view, that zero sum approach would not help in any way to help us in addressing the real situations, real challenges, that we are facing. Therefore, we would like to support the statement made by the the Ambassador of Brazil, and Argentina, that we can use the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) proposal as a basis for our discussion.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

I wish to plead, if possible, that just in support of the Brazil proposal followed by Argentina, Pakistan and Indonesia, within the G77 & China, and the Africa Regional Group, we plead for an ambitious attempt to reach consensus at FAO.

The mandate of FAO is quite clear, that we should be able to work together to reach consensus to advance that, notwithstanding the facts raised by our colleagues, especially the delegation from the United States of America and the European Union in respect of earlier attempts to reach consensus and I think your text could be taken as a basis to reach consensus.

Consensus, colleagues, I think, if we employ each other is to make all of us unhappy at the end of the day, and in that, the elements of that unhappiness are very reflected in the text. At this point in time, I would suggest that we avoid voting and the results as the Africa Regional Group, we do not expect them to be different from what we have seen in the past, but that we are challenged today to step up to the plate and find a way to reach consensus at this Governing Body of FAO.

It does not mean that the delegations that have raised important factors, those are not seen as significantly important, but let us attempt to find the language that could make us all unhappy but at least to reach consensus.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En primer lugar, permítame agradecerle una vez más sus esfuerzos. Compartimos la propuesta que ha hecho usted y que ha sido ampliamente apoyada por Brasil, Chile, Argentina, Federación Rusa, Indonesia, Pakistán, Egipto, Sudáfrica y otros países. Creo que el número de países que está apoyando la propuesta que se discuta su resumen, es lo que nos va a permitir llegar y, tal vez, lograr un consenso aunque sabemos bien, como dice usted, que no vamos a salir satisfechos todos. Por lo menos, podemos intentarlo.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

I have the unfortunate impression that we cannot even reach consensus on the question of consensus, and this really makes me very, very doubtful that we can achieve something on the substance matter. What is contained in the United States of America (US) draft has been discussed before, many, many times, there is nothing very new on the table, and I am just afraid we will waste our time.

We can sit here today, we can sit tomorrow, we can discuss and discuss and discuss this, but I am afraid we will not reach this consensus. For the sake of efficiency, I think I would very much plead just to have this vote, and then maybe taking up the offer that also the US delegates mentioned, then to add other things into our conclusions that are important to many of us that maybe are not there in the text already.

This can be done, and this will be something new and this is achievable by consensus, then we really have a really a new fresh discussion on this, and then we can make progress. But we cannot make progress on the things we have discussed for more than a year by now and already put on vote a couple of times.

CHAIRPERSON

I note the concerns about consensus, for that we have developed the Rules of Procedure, and that will give an answer, but I will explain to you what we have to do later on if there is no consensus.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

Japan supports adoption of the proposal for decision from the United States of America, and Japan opposes the proposal for decision from the Russian Federation. Japan supports the adoption with a

proposal for decision from United States *en bloc*. There is no consensus for that, for the sake of time and efficiency, Japan calls for both.

Mr GUO Su (China)

Considering the current situation now, we think it is important to find a way to coordinate it to reach a consensus and as you mentioned, it is very important to respect procedures. Therefore, we would like to echo Brazil's proposal that might be the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC)'s proposal can be served as a preliminary basis for discussions to reach a consensus.

M. Seydou CISSÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

La Côte d'Ivoire est pour le consensus, évidemment. Mais, dans la recherche du consensus, je constate ici que la méthode qu'on a l'habitude d'utiliser durant les sessions du Conseil, est de mettre ce texte-là sur l'écran et dire quels sont les points de désaccords et quels sont les points de consensus, pour en arriver à approuver pratiquement, le texte qui a été proposé, la décision qui a été proposée par les États-Unis.

Mais nous sommes dans une contradiction, puisque, combien de Membres nous sommes au Conseil? Et le représentant des États-Unis vient de dire qu'il y a eu une consultation préliminaire sur 33 délégués qui n'ont pas réussi, n'est-ce pas ? À avoir un consensus sur le nombre de 49 sur 33, vous comprenez déjà qu'il y a un problème à la base.

Donc, moi, je pense sincèrement, qu'il faut lever toutes les ambiguïtés et passer au vote. Si c'est possible, parce que nous sommes en train de perdre du temps. L'ordre du jour du Conseil est connu. Donc, la Côte d'Ivoire propose tout simplement que le texte qui a été proposé ou les deux textes qui ont été proposés, nous votons. Parce qu'il faut sortir de cette discussion, parce que tant que le conflit russo-ukrainien va être en cours, tous les organes directeurs, toutes les réunions des organes directeurs vont subir le même traitement, le même problème.

Donc, il faut passer pratiquement au vote.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Escuché atentamente a mis colegas. Incluso, particularmente y especialmente, al Delegado de los Estados Unidos que me pareció que en la última parte de su intervención se mostró disponible a incorporar otros elementos que fueron expresados por varios colegas en este debate y que, creo, cuentan con un respaldo muy importante.

La pregunta que me hago antes de pasar a mi último punto es ¿si el orden de los factores no altera el producto? Quiero decir, si en lugar de tener que estar forzados a votar primero y luego incorporar o acordar aquello que estamos de acuerdo, por qué no invertimos y acordamos lo que estamos de acuerdo y luego, en todo caso, si es necesario que los países que planteen la votación continúen con su posición.

Adelantándome a cualquier escenario y no pretendiendo prejuzgar ni opinar por otros, insisto en que ha habido varias veces situaciones en el pasado, en otros Consejos incluso, en las cuales países que han requerido de cierto tiempo, que no es como algún otro colega mencionó para continuar el debate o para continuar sine die la discusión, simplemente para que podamos, en el respeto a las consultas de procedimiento que corresponden, pedir instrucciones concretas y precisas sobre las propuestas que se coloquen sobre la mesa, y podamos tener el mínimo tiempo suficiente para hacer esas consultas. Yo creo que eso es una práctica absolutamente que se ha aplicado en otras reuniones del Consejo. Yo no quiero dar ejemplos porque no me gusta mencionar a países en particular, pero hay innumerables ejemplos sobre esto.

Es decir, nada obstaría que podamos seguir avanzando en la Agenda del Consejo y tener simplemente un espacio para votar, en todo caso, si esa es la única alternativa en el día de mañana. Repito, quizás el orden de los factores no altera el producto.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Canada)

Having listened very carefully to what colleagues have said, I think you know well that Canadians are, if nothing, always willing to negotiate and to seek a consensus.

It is in the water, it is in our DNA,- but there are some things that cannot be wordsmithed, those things that are about adherence to the UN Charter; those things that are about respect for international law, those are things that we consider to be primordial, and those are things that we would consider to be essential to any outcome to the discussion that we would have on Item 5 and Item 5.1.

While certainly, if delegations require time for instructions, that is understandable, but I am sympathetic to the views put forward by the delegate of Cote d'Ivoire.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Canada covered my points.

CHAIRPERSON

Give me one moment to consult.

The meeting was suspended from 15:26 to 15:34 hours

La séance est suspendue de 15 h 26 à 15 h 34

Se suspende la sesión de las 15.26 a las 15.34

We have consulted about how to proceed, and we have looked carefully to the Rules of Procedure of the Organization, as with no consensus on how to proceed either way, there is the request of one Member, done within the timeframe and conditions of the Rules of Procedure, for a vote, which we then have to proceed.

It would mean that we have the proposal of the United States of America, but amendments are made by the Russian Federation in accordance with Paragraph 26 of Rule XII of the Organization. We first have to take up the amendments to the proposal of the United States.

I see the proposals with the Russian Federation for amendments to the decision of the United States as one set of amendments, unless one Member of the Council would like to deal with them separately. It would mean instead of one vote on the set of amendments, it would mean eight votes, because then we have a vote per amendment. Then, we take up the proposal of the United States, and then, if necessary, take up the proposal still on the table of the Russian Federation.

That is as it is in the Rules of Procedure, unless you reach consensus, but there is no consensus on either other way, and the Rules of Procedures are clear that the Council has to take up to call for a vote on a decision.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I also want to draw your attention to the Rules of Procedure.

First of all, there is another option that must be if we come to a vote, which is not the choice of my delegation, is to take a "no action motion". We can vote on "no action motion" first, and it gives an opportunity for those countries, and from what I heard, this is a majority of countries, who need time to further consult with their capitals or not to be dragged into this kind of a discussion.

We will vote on "no action motion", if needed. Then according to the very same rule, you just mentioned, which is Rule XXVI, and I quote, "*when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted first*". The proposal of the Russian delegation to the American decision was an amendment to the American decision. Then we will vote on the Russian proposal to the American decision, then we will decide further on how we go to further decisions.

If it comes to a vote, we will vote on a "no action motion".

CHAIRPERSON

I said that your amendments are amendments to the proposal of the United States, that means in accordance with Paragraph 26 of Rule XII, indeed, that they have to be voted on first.

We can only avoid in two ways, calling a lengthy voting procedure either to find consensus in the Council in another way - that I do not see at this moment, or if there is an objection to this procedure. A Member can ask for a vote on the vote, which means that we have to vote whether or not we want to

vote, which is more or less what you interpret as no motion, of no action. However, let us see where we are now.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I have heard the remarks from the Russian delegation. I also listened very carefully to the remarks from Argentina and from a lot of others today.

You are absolutely right. It is clear that there will be no consensus on this Item and there will need to be a vote, but if in fact people do need 24 hours, as was mentioned by the Russian Federation and others, I think a non-action motion is not necessary. We could just reconvene in 24 hours.

We can move onto Item 6, we can start moving forward, get things to happen, and then as our friend from Argentina suggested, we delay 24 hours, people get the information that they need, and we go to a vote tomorrow. We would be willing to accept that as a way forward and as a good compromise in terms of moving forward on this text.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I just have a question on this “no action motion”, which paragraph in the Basic Texts?

CHAIRPERSON

It is not a paragraph in a text. It means that there was an objection to go to a vote, and the Legal Counsel will explain it, but then we go to Paragraph XXIV of the Rules of Procedure where there are elements mentioned in Paragraph 24, which supersedes the vote.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Yes, the term “*no action motion*” is one found in the United Nations, but not in the FAO Rules of Procedure. However, what it refers to essentially is the adjournment of debate on an Item for an unspecified period. In that context, in the General Rules of the Organization, Rule XII Paragraph 22, it is stated that, “*During the discussion of any matter, a delegate or representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two delegates or two representatives may speak for, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The Chairperson may limit the time allowed to these speakers.*”

In that connection, and as referred to by the Independent Chairperson of the Council, according to Paragraph 24, a certain stipulated set of motions take precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting, and these include under item (c), “*to adjourn the debate on the item under discussion*”.

I hope that provides some assistance.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us now be pragmatic because I see a list of speakers growing. It is a heated discussion and if you sit here I see more and more heated faces, and we have to cool down a little bit.

My idea would be to take up the proposal to suspend the deliberations for 24 hours, so that we take it up tomorrow afternoon to see where we are. We still could have the vote, but sometimes in Rome miracles happen, perhaps a miracle of consensus!

Let us postpone our deliberations for 24 hours. We start tomorrow afternoon at 14:00 hours. We still have a list of speakers, but I think it is not needed, because we need our time to finalize our Agenda with more than only Agenda Item 5 and 6. Can we agree to this postponement until tomorrow? I see no objections. At least for that we have consensus.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Canada)

A point of order, I just want us to be clear that the pause for 24 hours as you say, is consistent with Paragraph XXIV (c), that this is a temporary adjournment on the Item. We have to be very clear that this is not a “no action motion”, that has no basis in the Basic Texts.

CHAIRPERSON

It is an agreement, a consensus, that we postpone our discussion until tomorrow at 14:00 hours, and then we continue our work on this Agenda Item 5, including 5.1, then we go now to Item 6.

M. Seydou CISSÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

Merci pour la proposition d'ajourner à 24 heures sur ce point de l'ordre du jour. Je voudrais poser une question, s'il vous plaît. Est-ce que dans la recherche du consensus, les délégués qui ont proposé qu'il y ait un consensus, vont-ils travailler sur le texte durant ces 24 heures? Ou bien nous passerons dans l'après-midi de demain au vote directement sur le texte qui a été proposé ou par les États-Unis ou par la Russie ?

Parce qu'il va falloir que l'on soit clair, puisque l'Argentine avait demandé la consultation de sa capitale, et c'est tout à fait logique, c'est tout à fait normal. Mais il va falloir être clair. Si on cherche un consensus, alors dans ce cas-là, on va devoir travailler dans les 24 heures à venir sur les points sur lesquels nous ne sommes pas d'accord sur la proposition américaine ou sur la proposition russe.

Et puis, ensuite, demain à 14 heures, s'il y a un consensus sur le premier texte proposé, alors on avance, sinon, s'il n'y a pas de consensus, on passe directement au vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Sometimes I would wish that I could look into the future, but I cannot predict what is going to happen in these 24 hours. That is why I said, we live in Rome and sometimes miracles happen. If the miracle happens that everybody is in agreement on one text, we do not have to go to a vote, but if there is no agreement, we are not going to repeat the discussion again and we go to the vote.

- Item 6. The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**
- Point 6. Impact de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO)**
- Tema 6. Repercusiones de la guerra en Ucrania sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)**

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to take up Item 6, *The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*.

This Item was already addressed by many of you in a previous Agenda Item, so I do hope that interventions can be very brief. This time really within the time limits of five or three minutes, and now I will be strict, because we need extra time tomorrow. So please be very concise in your statements, within five or three minutes, because many of the Items have already been addressed and Item 5, including 5.1.

With that, I would like to open the floor for Members to react or to make statements.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States welcomes FAO's analysis on the impact of global food security resulting from Russian Federation's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Section 4 of CL 172/5.

Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked, and unjustified war against Ukraine has greatly exacerbated global food insecurity, in addition to causing immense human suffering and uncertainty in global agricultural markets.

Among the most impacted are vulnerable populations and least developed countries and low-income food deficit countries, which are already facing food insecurity and the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These countries are highly dependent on imported foodstuffs and fertilizer, including from the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

We call on the Russian Federation to end its illegal war against Ukraine. Russian Federation's immediate withdrawal of its forces from Ukraine would provide immediate improvements to the availability and affordability of food, particularly for the poorest countries and most vulnerable populations, and it would enable the world to focus on tackling the other drivers of global food insecurity.

The United States remains concerned about the global food security outlook as Russian Federation prolongs its war. We highlight the Reports update that Ukraine is planting less food and has a degraded ability to store and export grain due to mine contamination and infrastructure damage caused by the Russian Federation.

We support FAO's role in addressing the consequences of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine within its mandate and appreciate FAO's impact assessments and data analysis. We encourage FAO to provide further data and information specifically targeted to developing countries and the most vulnerable populations disaggregated by region and where possible, at the national and sub-national levels.

Finally, the United States of America highlights a glaring omission in Section 5 of *CL 172/5*, quote, "*action needed*". FAO lays out a comprehensive account of how the Russian Federation's war is causing global food insecurity. However, it fails to call an end to the very thing resulting in global food insecurity, the Russian Federation's illegal war.

The United States urges FAO to join us and other Members to call on the Russian Federation to end its war immediately. The Russian Federation and Ukraine are two of the world's largest agricultural producers. We cannot achieve a lasting, sustained, global food security without the Russian Federation first ending this war of choice against Ukraine.

In conclusion, while we appreciate the efforts of many delegations in this room to move toward consensus, it is very clear on this Item that there will not be consensus. We have submitted a text proposal for decision by this Council and *CL 172/INF/7* and we call for its adoption *en bloc* by a vote by this Council.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Today, we have already heard many statements on Ukraine. Unfortunately, we have not heard any discussion of other issues, and other consequences for food security and other crises.

Item 6 of the Agenda and its addition is just the latest demonstration of how certain countries want to politicize the work of the Organization, and not to resolve specific issues. That said, the root of all of the misfortune that is brought by conflicts, including the conflict in Ukraine, is to be found in the reasons for this conflict, and I hope that our brothers and sisters in Ukraine will at some point understand the root of all of this. The reasons of this conflict, unfortunately, are to be found in the many errors of countries in Europe and the United States in macro-economic, financial, and energy, and food and other policies.

These mistakes have already led to the uncontrolled increase in the debt burden of developing countries that have been forced to cut their spending on programmes for social support, or to eliminate them altogether. The sanctions fever of western countries, and the extra territorial character of the restrictions, represent a further threat to the economy and to trade at global level, including in the Bahamas.

There are attempts to try and force the Russian economy and other economies out of the global economic relations by making use of methods of dirty competition and by destroying established mechanisms and established logistics chains.

The countries of the European Union and the United States of America have already admitted that they have exhausted their sanctions possibilities for Russian Federation and you can see that our agro industry is only increasing its deliveries to the global market. Now they are targeting third countries, developing countries.

In March 2023, during a meeting between the President of the United States of America, Mr Joe Biden, and Chair of the President of the European Commission, Ms Ursula von der Leyen, , they

stated that they intended, and I quote: “*to deepen our joint work to aggressively enforce our sanctions and export control measures.*”

One of the measures that they intended to use, and once again, I quote, was: “*steps to target additional third country actors*” across the globe. In this way, they are going against United Nations General Assembly Resolution 76/191, which is titled, Unilateral Economic Measures as a Means of Political and Economic Coercion against Developing Countries. This was adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2021. In other words, a long time before the conflict in Ukraine broke out.

Among the potential victims of these sanctions are economies in countries in Africa, Asia, Central Asia, and Latin America and other countries. They placed their commitment to their own populations first and foremost in the area of guaranteeing food security, higher than the interest of the United States and the European Union.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino and Ukraine.

We thank FAO for producing document *CL 172/5* and for putting this Item on the Agenda as requested in the decision adopted by the Council at its 171st Session in December 2022, highlighting the Council's strong concerns about the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in terms of increased world food insecurity and malnutrition.

We already mentioned a number of messages in Item 5, and we will not repeat them in this Item. I just wanted to add that the only one to blame for the war in Ukraine, is the Russian Federation.

Document *CL 172/5* unequivocally reaffirms what we already know, that the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine in blatant violation of the UN Charter, has had severe negative effects on food security, not only in Ukraine, but indeed worldwide, and has substantially aggravated the global food crisis. Of special concern is the impact of the Russian Federation's war on food security in least developed countries and low-income food deficit countries, many of which are highly dependent on imports of foodstuffs from Ukraine.

To quote the document, in the absence of an end to the conflict, significant uncertainty continues to surround Ukraine's ability to farm, harvest and trade in upcoming growing seasons, meaning the detrimental impact on food security in vulnerable countries risks continuing unless Russian Federation puts an end to its unprovoked illegal war of aggression.

We note with concern and consternation that the information in document *CL 172/5*, which highlights that in addition to damaging agricultural infrastructure and obstructing access to fields, the Russian Federation's war has contaminated extensive areas of agricultural land in Ukraine with explosives and land mines.

Targeting civilians and their food supply, disrupting agricultural production, and destroying key energy, transport and export infrastructure, is totally unacceptable and constitutes flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, according to the UN Security Council Resolutions on the protection of civilians, notably *Resolution 25/73*, from 2021, which also call for all parties to ensuring the proper functioning of food systems and markets in situation of armed conflict.

In addition to the immediate impacts of the Russian Federation's war of aggression, we take serious note of the related increase of macro-economic risks outlined in the document, including the fall of global growth and added strain on national budget, resulting in increased public debt and elevated risk of debt crisis in 2023.

We appreciate FAOs' response to mitigate the impact of the Russian Federation's war on global food security in Ukraine, including the FAO Ukraine response programme for January-December 2023. We recall the decisions adopted by the Council at its 169th and 171st Sessions, and stressed the need to continue their full implementation.

We call on FAO to continue monitoring the impact of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on the global food security and nutrition situation, particularly in affected vulnerable countries, and to keep this Item on the Agenda for future Council Sessions until the Russian Federation ceases its hostilities.

We have collectively stepped up our efforts to support Ukraine and the most affected countries with additional financial support and shipment of grains and foodstuffs to countries most in need. Solidarity towards Ukraine, and solidarity towards developing countries, are not mutually exclusive, they are mutually beneficial, thus the European Union remains committed to working with international organizations and partners to achieve food security and nutrition for all.

This is, for instance, a key domain of the collaboration between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), which will be discussed at the upcoming EU-AU Agricultural Ministerial Conference.

We would support for adoption *en bloc* the proposal from the United States of America, and I would kindly ask you if I can pass the floor to the European Union for some comments, which is within their competence.

Ms Alexandra VALKENBURG (European Union)

I want to focus on three points that were raised today, solidarity lanes, sanctions, and correct the quote that our Russian colleague just made on the announcement of the Commission President Ms Ursula von der Leyen and the President of the United States of America, Mr Joe Biden.

First of all, solidarity lanes. The European Union (EU) solidarity lanes in parallel to the UN-led Black Sea grain Initiative have played a key role in stabilising the global markets and driving the food crisis down to the pre-war levels to the benefit of all.

The solidarity lanes are a consequence of the Russian Federation's war of aggression on Ukraine, inevitably with some side effects being felt within the EU. The EU is working towards solutions in the context of our unwavering support to Ukraine. We will also make sure that EU farmers do not pay the cost of the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine. We are making all efforts to identify concrete, rapid and effective solutions in coordination with Ukrainian authorities with whom we have a constant dialogue and cooperation on the issue.

Then on sanctions. EU sanctions contribute to filling a void in a situation where certain countries prevent the UN Security Council from taking action. EU restrictive measures are a tool of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy enshrined in the EU Treaty and in full conformity with our obligations under international law. EU sanctions have no extraterritorial application, and the EU is committed to avoiding to the maximum extent possible, any potential and unintended negative impacts on humanitarian action. Food, medicine and other emergency supplies do not fall under EU sanctions.

Lastly, just let me read the correct quote of the President Ms von der Leyen and President Mr Biden announcement. *"We are taking new steps together to target additional third country actors across the globe to disrupt support for Russia's war from any corner of the world where it is identified. We are working in lockstep to limit Russian revenue even further while ensuring continued energy supplies to emerging markets and developing countries via the G7 plus price cap for seaborne Russian energy origin crude oil and petroleum products."* Just to have the quote right.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) thanks the Chief Economist's Office for producing this Report.

FAO's motto reminds us that food security begins with adequate food production, *fiat panis*, let there be bread. Access and affordability are vital, but the food needs to be there in the first place.

I say that because FAO and other Reports continue to show alarming impacts of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine on food production in Ukraine. They show that infrastructure damage, obstructed access to fields, and unexploded ordnance may lead up to a 40 percent year on

year reduction in the 2023 winter wheat area in Ukraine. Storage capacity is down 20 percent compared to pre-war levels.

Meanwhile, there are doubts about the Russian Federation's support for a further extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We have seen that unhardened FAO analysis shows that the initiative has been effective in calming food markets and keeping food prices down. It is also helped WFP to keep costs down. We should remember that WFP largely depends on the commercial markets to supply their food aid operations, so commercial impacts of the initiative are very important.

The UK has not sanctioned food or fertilizer exports from Russian Federation to third countries. UK sanctions include available licences for companies or financial institutions to enable anything to be done in connection with the production or distribution of food for the benefit of the civilian population of a country.

If sanctions were a significant factor behind recent food price spikes as the Russian Federation has said, we would have seen a significant fall in Russian grain and fertilizer exports last year, but we have not seen that. Data from the Russian Federation's Ministry of Agriculture showed that Russian agricultural exports in 2022 were higher than those in 2021, and FAO data showed that the Russian Federation's fertilizer exports dropped by only 10 percent in 2022, while its fertilizer export revenues increased by 70 percent.

The UK thinks it is essential that FAO continue to monitor the impact of the Russian Federation's war in Ukraine so that FAO Council meetings are aware of its impacts on global food security conditions. We are not saying that because we are ignoring other conflicts, we recognize that conflicts are a major driver of hunger and that progress on hunger starts with progress towards peace, but a continued focus on Ukraine is important because of Ukraine's role as a global breadbasket.

FAO's Report from last year showed that some of the poorest countries are dependent on wheat and food oil imports from Ukraine. Until the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, WFP bought 50 percent of its wheat from Ukraine. That statistic alone shows how vital Ukraine is to supplying, and to stabilising, world food markets.

We call on the Russian Federation to end its illegal war in Ukraine immediately and let Ukraine's farmers go back to their fields to help feed the world.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et ses États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. Nous appuyons d'emblée la demande formulée par plusieurs délégations de voter en bloc la proposition de décisions déposée par les États-Unis.

J'ouvre les guillemets, citation, *"L'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Russie en violation de la Charte des Nations Unies et du droit international, provoque une souffrance massive et la dévastation du pays et de sa population, ajoutant au bouleversement économique mondial causé par la pandémie de COVID-19."* Fin de citation. Ces mots, ne sont pas les miens, ils sont ceux prononcés hier par le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies au Conseil de sécurité en présence de Sergueï Lavrov, que mon collègue russe mentionnait tout à l'heure.

La violation du droit international par la Russie dont parle le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, c'est aussi celle des obligations résultantes de la constitution de la FAO, comme ce Conseil l'a constaté et dénoncé à deux reprises, de même que la Conférence régionale Europe. La Russie mène en effet une guerre délibérée non seulement contre l'Ukraine, contre la Charte des Nations Unies, mais aussi une guerre contre la sécurité alimentaire de tous. Plus d'un an après le début de l'agression, nous continuons d'en voir les effets partout dans le monde. En particulier sur les populations et les pays les plus vulnérables.

La production agricole ukrainienne et ses exportations ont été fortement affectées, provoquant une envolée des prix des produits alimentaires en 2022, et les prix restent encore fortement volatils. L'impact est aussi considérable sur le marché des intrants agricoles avec une augmentation sans précédent des prix des engrais qui menacent les récoltes futures notamment en Afrique, nous

remercions le Secrétariat de la FAO pour les documents d'analyse préparés en réponse aux demandes de ce Conseil.

Les décisions adoptées par le Conseil lors de ses sessions 169 et 171 doivent continuer d'être pleinement mises en œuvre. Les attaques répétées de la Russie contre les infrastructures civiles ukrainiennes ont déjà causé des pertes et dommages pour l'agriculture ukrainienne, qui s'élevaient à 30 milliards de dollars selon les estimations préliminaires publiées par la FAO en décembre. Nous appelons la FAO à mettre ce document à jour régulièrement. Il servira en effet le moment venu de référence pour la reconstruction du secteur agricole ukrainien et le paiement des réparations dues par la Russie conformément à la résolution ES11-5 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies adoptée le 14 novembre dernier.

Le soutien technique de la FAO à l'initiative céréalière de la Mer Noire doit également être amplifié et poursuivi. Nous réaffirmons notre soutien à cette initiative et à son prolongement aussi longtemps que nécessaire et sans condition car les analyses des Nations Unies montrent sans aucun doute l'impact positif de cette initiative. La France et l'Union européenne restent pleinement investies dans la mise en œuvre de réponses à court, moyen et long terme en réponse au défi de la sécurité alimentaire.

Nous venons en aide aux pays les plus affectés par la crise alimentaire et celle des engrais, notamment via les initiatives FARM, Saves the Crop, ou Grain from Ukraine. Nous avons augmenté, et non réduit nos efforts en faveur des pays les plus vulnérables. À cet égard, je voudrais saluer la solidarité dont fait preuve l'Ukraine, alors même qu'elle fait face à une agression d'une brutalité inouïe avec les pays les plus touchés par la crise alimentaire.

Enfin, cette solidarité de l'Ukraine forme un contraste flagrant avec l'attitude de la Russie qui utilise la faim comme arme de guerre, instrumentalise les exportations agricoles comme moyen de pression politique, divise par deux ses contributions au Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) et n'honore pas sa promesse de contribution financière au Fonds international pour le développement agricole (FIDA). Au contraire, elle profite de cette guerre et a augmenté sa production et ses exportations agricoles, comme elle vient de l'indiquer.

En conclusion, nous soutenons la proposition de décision déposée par les États-Unis et appelons à son adoption en bloc.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Canada)

Canada welcomes FAO analysis for this Agenda Item.

The unassailable fact is that Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine has been a major shock to a system that has already been strained in record setting food, fuel, and fertilizer prices.

Its action disproportionately affects the poor who spend most of their income on food and other basic needs. Moreover, high fertilizer and energy prices are likely to result in decline agricultural productivity, reduced food availability impacting farmer livelihoods and the economies of countries who can least afford it.

And, the longer Russian Federation persists, the greater the direct and collateral global damage. In addition to some 25,000km² of Ukrainian agricultural land being contaminated with mines and un-explosive remnants of war.

A world bank rapid damage assessment has shown that in 2022, an estimated 25 percent decline in winter wheat planting occurred in Ukraine and many farmers switched to oil seeds crops, further reducing Ukraine's 2023 grain exports.

The widespread impact, alongside deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure is certain to affect Ukrainian production in years to come, and this in turn will remain a shared burden for significant component of humanity that rely on Ukraine as a vital source of grain and vegetable oil inputs.

Given the unique global ripple effects of Russian Federation's war we continue to count on FAO to monitor its' impact, and to help mitigate the worst impacts as it does in other contexts.

We are pleased with the results of the Canadian funding FAO initiative on grain storage and animal health laboratories, which addressed two early concerns aimed at safeguarding global food supplies.

We also remain supportive of efforts to mitigate export shortfalls and actions that reduce global food prices, and Canada will continue to emphasize the need to avoid counterproductive export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers when shocks occur.

I can assure partners that the emphasis on the crisis in Ukraine has not detracted from the attention Canada is giving to address other conflicts, or other key drivers to food and security like climate change or biodiversity.

We know that these issues are vital, and we have responded to those challenges with unprecedented levels of Canadian funding in the last year, to support a coherent response and to reinforce resilience across continents. Nevertheless, remaining seized of the specific impacts of the war on Ukraine is necessary as the UK pointed out, as the region has been, and needs to be again a breadbasket for the world.

In closing, I must say that it is unconscionable that the delegation of the Russian federation would suggest that its' illegal invasion of Ukraine is a fight against fascism. That statement must not be allowed to stand unopposed in this Council, it is disrespectful to the memory of millions who lost their lives to address fascism, notably in context of World War II, including Russian Citizens and soldiers.

And, as the United Nations secretary general said to the UN security council yesterday, Russian's invasion of Ukraine in violation of the United Nations charter and international law, is causing massive suffering and devastation to the country and its' people and adding to the global economic dislocation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To conclude, my delegation supports the approval of the United States of America proposed draft decision on item 6 *en bloc*.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I would like to advise that New Zealand aligns itself with the following statement on Agenda Item 6, 'we recognize this agenda item reflects the decision of council 171 to discuss this matter at this session of council, and we welcome that discussion'.

Today in Australia and New Zealand we commemorate, Anzac Day, this is day which recognizes the anniversary of the Australian and New Zealand army corps, known as, ANZACs, who served in the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

The first engagement in World War I, it is a day that commemorates New Zealanders and Australians who served and died in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. And, today, a long way from home there is an unfortunate need to discuss war in contemporary times, but no matter when and where war occurs, it is a tragedy.

Australia condemns Russian Federation's illegal and immoral full-scale invasion of Ukraine; it is a gross violation of international law. Aside from terrible damage and loss of life in Ukraine, the war is compounding human suffering and propelling the global crisis in food and energy security.

Australia appreciates the analysis in the paper, in particular sections 4 and 5 of, 'the impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security'.

We remain deeply concerned about the adverse impact of the war on food security across the globe and note that the report finds that the war has resulted in a number of new risks to food and agriculture markets and trade.

The damage to Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure, transport networks and storage and processing facilities has significantly lowered Ukraines' production and exporting capacities, and of course raises the cost of production and trade.

As a leading supplier of grains to world markets, this situation significantly impacts countries highly dependent on grain imports, with prevailing grain prices remaining high.

FAO's Ukraine assessments capture the detrimental impacts on agricultural enterprises, as well as rural households who are facing a distress situation in accessing essential needs.

The estimated repair and replacement costs of storage facilities alone is USD 1.1 billion, and this is just indicative of the significant scale of damage to agricultural infrastructure in Ukraine.

The effects of the war in Ukraine have been and will continue to be widespread, we appreciate FAO's data and the analysis of impacts particularly on developing countries and vulnerable populations, and we encourage the production of further data on reporting on impacts at the regional level, including the Southwest specific region.

Finally, as noted in our, 'intervention to Agenda Item 5' we acknowledge the ongoing efforts of FAO in implementing in concrete actions in response to this crisis, in-line with its' mandate.

In particular, we welcome FAO's work to restore essential agri-food systems in Ukraine, including support to critical veterinary services under the 'one health approach' to mitigate the spread of animal diseases.

As we have landed in our discussions on, Agenda Item 5 and 5.1, unfortunately it is clear that there will no prospect for consensus on this agenda item either. Accordingly Australia supports adoption *en bloc* of the decisions proposed by the United States of America.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus)(Original language Russian)

I was not intending to speak on this subject, and I did not plan to say again what I have said, time and again, but evidently it was necessary to react to the statement from the European Union on sanctions.

Continues in English

Number 2021/10/30.

Continues in Russian

On the 24th June 2021, through this decision the European Union introduced sanctions on Belarus' fertilizer, contravening the Security Council's own decision. These sanctions are still in force, the sanctions from the United States of America on Belarus and produces of nitrogen fertilizer, sanctions were introduced before the conflict in Ukraine and are still in force. Colleagues, please respect the other members of FAO, do not confuse them.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the UN and its 27 Member States.

The topic of this Agenda Item remains crucial in-line with the Councils' grave concerns about tremendous impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on the global increase of food insecurity and malnutrition.

We join those calling respect for international humanitarian law and immediate sustation of Russian's aggression against Ukraine's critical agricultural infrastructure.

We call on FAO to continue monitoring the impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on the global food security and nutrition situation, and we are thankful for all action taken so far concerning Ukraine.

Germany for its part also acts in concrete support like many others as well as a contribution to elevating humanitarian needs Germany has provided EUR 468.5 million for humanitarian aid in Ukraine and neighbouring countries in 2022 and increased its' funding for food security worldwide to EUR 5 billion in 2022.

We are the second largest humanitarian donor overall. Germany supports three FAO emergency projects in Ukraine with a total volume of around USD 17 million. The first project worth USD 2.7 million supports export capacities at Ismaya port. The second project worth USD 5.1 million aims to foster animal health in Ukraine through the provision of animal health services and essential veterinary supplies.

The third project in the amount of USD 9.6 million provides vulnerable users with access to energy to enable them to maintain their production capacities and thus improve food security. Moreover, we

support Ukraine through five bilateral projects including agricultural policy dialogue, projects on organic farming, vocational training, fruit, and vegetables as well as forestry with a total volume of EUR 15.5 million in the period from 2022-2025.

But we need not forget the long term and structural over the necessary immediate support. Therefore, in addition to the immediate response to the current crisis, the long-term transformation of global agri-foods systems towards more resilience and sustainability remains a key focus for Germany.

In the area of overall development cooperation for food security, Germany in addition to EUR 2 billion that are being invested every year from the development cooperation budget, made a special funding of some EUR 1.4 billion available in 2022 for the fight against global hunger and for the countries most affected, including significant funds through multi-lateral channels.

Germany through its G7 Presidency in 2022 initiated for global alliance for food security to ensure that support reaches those in most urgent need.

Supporting the UN global crisis response group on food, energy and finance and helping to coordinate eight measures relating to food security.

Global food and nutrition security dashboard, drawing on existing data consolidates and presents up to date data on the severity of the food crisis, on global financing, and global and country level research and analysis in response to the crisis since late 2022.

Germany sees this as an ongoing effort together with other initiators with putting increased emphasis on in-country engagements to transform national food systems towards greater resilience and sustainability. Finally, we stress the need for improve Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration to address the consequences of Russian Federation's war on food security and agriculture within Ukraine and worldwide.

Last but not least, we give of course our support on adoption *en bloc* of the United States of America draft decision.

Mr Nobuyuki KIKUCHI (Japan)

To be brief, Japan's statement under the Item 5 this morning included the element relating to the Agenda Item 6.

I think there is no need to repeat Japan's statement since everyone can check it by Verbatim. That is all.

Finally, with regards to the Council decision of this Agenda Item, Japan supports the adoption of the proposal by United States of America *en bloc*.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Veó cuál es la dinámica de las intervenciones y del debate. Yo preferiría, en caso de que el final de este debate sea un escenario de votación como es previsible, con la misma lógica que planteamos en el otro Tema, poder tener esas 24 horas para que ambas propuestas puedan ser, en todo caso si se llega al escenario de votación, poder hacer el ejercicio en el mismo acto en el día de mañana.

Mme Michèle PRANCHÈRE-TOMASSINI (Luxembourg)

Je ne veux pas battre le Japon parce qu'il est brillant, mais j'ai la même chose à dire. Je voudrais soutenir le Canada, mettre en jeu le fascisme ici, ne fais pas sens. Nous savons tous de quoi nous parlons alors évitons de récupérer ou de condamner avec des concepts qui sont déplacés..

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I just want to record that we support the proposal *en bloc* by the United States of America and we wish to say, that we too join Argentina in saying that we recommend that this go to a vote.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)(Observer)

I deliver this brief statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway.

We fully align ourselves with the European Union (EU) statement. The comprehensive EU statement provided by Sweden covers a large number of issues with which we are in agreement, and I will not repeat them. FAO document *CL 172/5*, for which we are grateful spells out how global food insecurity has been directly aggravated by the Russian aggression, in numerous ways.

The facts are amply documented, and they are crystal clear, there is no sense in attempting to divert attention from this or from Russian Federation's responsibility for the war and its' global consequences. The most vulnerable populations and countries most dependant on food imports are hit the hardest, we have heard this again today from numerous delegations.

The effects of Russian Federation's war on the world's poor is of deep concern to the Nordic countries. We strongly support FAO's efforts to help alleviate these consequences. The Nordic countries have, like others, significantly increased their support to populations and countries most hard hit, including through the FAO Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SPERA) Fund.

We thank FAO for the Organizations' work on the global food security including data collection, briefings, response plans, assessing investment needs for agriculture reconstruction and recovery, and addressing the risk of cyanotic disease in Ukraine and numerous other measures.

Mr Yuriy GRYNEVETSKYY (Ukraine)(Observer)

Before the onset of my speech, I would like to say that same brothers and sisters are not barging into the house with the main purpose to kill you.

Participants in revenge for its' military losses on the ground, Russian Federation continues to rise in Ukrainian civilians by attacking critical infrastructure and residential areas resulting in significant casualties and destruction.

According to expert estimates since the start of full-scale invasion, Russian Federation has fired about 4750 missiles at Ukraine worth USD 60 billion.

The most missile attacks resulted in emergency blackouts, infrastructure damage and civilian casualties. Ukraine's agriculture today is a subject to Russia's aggression as well.

According to recent assessments made by the Government of Ukraine together with the Kyiv School of Economics, the damage toll of Ukraine's agriculture reached USD 8.7 billion, nearly 30 percent of its' capital stock.

The highest value of damages in the sector was caused by the destruction and damage to agricultural machinery. The second largest category of damages in the sector is related to the destruction and theft of manufactured goods.

The infrastructure for storing agricultural products also suffered significant damage. The total capacity of the destroyed granaries is 8.2 million tonnes. Indirect losses in Ukraine agricultural due to the war reached USD 34 billion, including USD 18.5 billion due to the Russian blockage of food exports from the Ukrainian ports and losses due to lower production.

Environmental damage in Ukraine caused by Russia war is estimated more than USD 46 billion.

One hundred and four criminal proceedings were initiated regarding environmental damage caused by the Russian aggressor. Huge agricultural areas are currently unsuitable for use in Ukraine due to mines contamination with explosive hazards and armed hostilities.

This is the second spring sowing season for Ukraine under the Russian full-scale aggression, in total we expect to sow more 90 million hectares this year, 33 percent less than in 2021 and 11 percent less than in 2022. We have identified 470 000 hectares of land as priorities in nine regions of Ukraine where we have started demining.

Government of Ukraine is grateful for FAO response to mitigate the impact of Russia's aggression on global food security and in Ukraine, especially the FAO Ukraine response programme for 2023. And ready to cooperate with the view to its efficiency.

On the export side we hope that FAO will take more active role in the work of the Brewers' spent grain (BSG) as it has proven its importance for lowering international grain prices and delivering food to low- and middle-income countries.

We also hope that FAO would continue active work with international financial institutions in providing technical advice and support investment by Ukrainian farmers and agri-businesses, as well as future reconstruction work.

We welcome the continued concerted efforts of the international community to put global food security at the forefront of their activities and support multilateral efforts to find acceptable solution to mitigate the food crisis.

Despite all challenges we face, we are committed to ensure the provision of humanitarian aid with a total volume of up to 125 000 tonnes with humanitarian programme grain from Ukraine.

We are grateful to international partners for the financial support of this initiative, and we call on countries around the world to join it. And here we count as well on FAO efficient cooperation in the context of vet laboratories.

The food security is one of the key elements of the peace formula proposed by Ukraine. The implementation of effective mechanisms of guarantee on global food security is one of our most important tasks. And concluding I would like to say that we fully support the draft of the document proposed by the United States Delegations.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

If I was to speak about Bahamas I would have been even quicker. I have never been to Bahamas and unfortunately because of the blockage of Russian aircrafts to go and to land there, they will have lost a lot of money on their tourist activities, but unfortunately I have to speak about Ukraine and to reply to some of the remarks that have been made about my previous colleagues.

Excuse me for my quotation of the agreement between Mr Joe Biden and Ms Ursula von der Leyen in Russian. I have not heard the translation, I will double check it and come up with the right version of the translation.

Well the same actually applies to the remark that was made by the distinguished representative of France with regard to the statement of Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov. That quotation was also not very accurate so I will refer you all to the website and we will circulate his official statement shortly so you will have the right quotation from Minister Lavrov.

Some other issues were raised about the violation of international law and the impact of the war in Ukraine. I just want to ask the question since some of the issues that are directly related to the mandate of FAO was raised. The arms treaty that was introduced by the European countries which is constitant with Eropéan Union (EU) code of conduct, how this treaty corresponds to the obligation by this treaty as well as by the code of conduct not to supply weapons in the zones of conflict.

I am also interested to listen about the implementation of the autowar anti peronnel mine convention and the mine that are been widely used in the civil cities, in Donetsk and Luhansk areas and those weapons are being used starting from 2014.

I will be also interested to hear from Norway about the implication of the autowar convention on classed ammunitions, how it is being implemented and how come that the native countries are supplying Ukraine with classed ammunitions that are widely used against the civilian population in Ukraine.

Moreover, interested to hear about the use of depleted uranium ammunition in Ukraine, this depleted ammunition have been used in Serbia in 1999 against the local population and has devastating effect including on the agricultural sector.

Speaking about the use of food as a weapon. I just want to recall you that the Minsk agreement was approved by the UN Security Council in 2014 and after that according to the statements made by the then President François Hollande, the then Chancellor Merkel and the then President Poroshenko, this time was used in order to feed Ukraine with weapons.

On this background in 2018 the World Food Programme (WFS) stopped the supply of food to the so called occupied areas in Ukraine and for all those years, for nine years we have spent millions and millions of Rubles in feeding the people who are in need.

Now speaking about the sanctions, well I will just one minute and one example. So if sanctions are not effective I will invite you all to the cafeteria, to the nearby restaurant, and I will feed you with food. Unfortunately, I will not be able to pay with a credit card because it is blocked.

the same applies to all food supplies by the Russian companies and last but not least of course Russia will object to the draft decision presented by the United States of America and in any case it will be put to a vote and it will vote against.

CHAIRPERSON

TI now turn the floor to the Chief Economist for a very brief response, if needed.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

I do not have any additional response, I think the document and the comments were in-line with the document.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voulais juste corriger et clarifier un élément, peut-être que ça ressortait de la traduction, ou de l'interprétation, ou bien d'un problème de vérité alternative. Je voudrais rappeler la citation que j'ai mentionnée. C'est bien celle du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies devant Sergueï Lavrov hier, et pour plus de clarté, je la dis en anglais.

Continues in English

The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in violation of the United Charter and international law is causing massive suffering and devastation to the country and its' people and adding to the global economic dislocation triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Continue en français

Ce sont les mots du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Monsieur Guterres, hier, à New York, devant Sergueï Lavrov.

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished Members of the Council, there is a clear request for a vote again, but there is also a request for postponing that for 24 hours for instructions. Could we follow the same practice that we take up also this Agenda Item for the vote tomorrow afternoon, so that we have one sequence of probably voting in the afternoon. Would it be agreeable?

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

We do not object. I think we heard very clearly from a large majority of delegations where people stand on this. I did hear the request one delegation to wait for 24 hours, I think he also said that whichever, that he would go along with whatever it was, so I do not object to waiting 24 hours if that is what we need to do but I also think, it is pretty clear where things are headed. I will defer to my colleague from Argentina.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Saben que les agradezco a todos lo que quieran interpretarme. Yo quiero ser muy claro. Lo único que digo, me parece que si estamos hablando de ahorro de tiempo y tratar de ser eficientes, creo que si el escenario es el escenario de votación podemos tener la situación directamente toda concentrada mañana en la tarde y en una sola acción. Y, por lo tanto, nos da tiempo a los países a tener las instrucciones precisas y, por supuesto, si hay un milagro en Roma, bendito sea. Pero si no hay milagro, podemos ser eficientes y permitirle a la Secretaría General que con toda la eficiencia que la caracteriza pueda organizar ese escenario mañana.

CHAIRPERSON

I propose to postpone the vote until tomorrow afternoon.

Dear friends, look now to the bright side of life. We are going to have a snack and we can use the time for a snack to refresh and come back and turn around to page, to Item 8, *Report of the Joint Meeting of 135th session of the Programme Committee and the 195th session of the Finance Committee*.

I know for sure that we have stated that we are going to agree on consensus with the conclusions. We adjourn now until 17:15 hours. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 16:46 to 17:24 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 46 à 17 h 24

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.46 a las 17.24

Item 8. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee (March 2023)

Point 8. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (135^e session) et du Comité financier (195^e session) (mars 2023)

Tema 8. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 135.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 195.º período de sesiones (marzo de 2023)

(CL 172/7)

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends. We are now turning to Item 8, *Report of the Joint Meeting of 135th Session of the Programme Committee and the 195th Session of the Finance Committee*, which you can find in document CL 172/7.

I would like to remind Members not to address Item 3, Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25), because we have discussed that yesterday on a separate Agenda Item.

The introduction of the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting Ms Imelda Smolčić has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 8: Report to the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee (March 2023)

Ms Imelda Smolčić, Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee. This Report is submitted to the Council in document CL 172/7.

The Joint Meeting examined the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25, which will be directly addressed under item 3, and the Feasibility study on the integration of administrative services among the Rome-based Agencies.

Members welcomed the updates provided on the Feasibility study on the integration of administrative services among the Rome-based Agencies, highlighting opportunities for closer collaboration among the three agencies at headquarters level, and recognizing that further administrative integrative efforts shall be pursued under the overall UN efficiency agenda.

I would like to underline that, in other items, the Joint Meeting welcomed the update provided on the work of the UN Food System Coordination Hub and the preparations for the first UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment to be held in July. It commended the Organization's ongoing efforts to strengthen the Country Programming Framework (CPF) process and welcomed the creation of a user-friendly and transparent CPF Repository webpage.

I would like to invite the Council to review the full Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee. For your convenience, this report includes an executive summary and suggested action, prepared by the Secretariat.

I am pleased to provide any further explanations you may need regarding this Report.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, I would like to open the floor to the Members for their comments, remarks and proposals.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I wish to intervene specifically on the reviewed Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025. As we await changes to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), to be enacted this June in the 43rd Session of the Conference, the Caribbean Region continues to seek further action and funding support for transforming its agri food system.

The TCP revision is only one mechanism to aid the catalytic resolution, therefore other means should be considered simultaneously. Livelihoods dependent on the agriculture and fishery sector in our region are impacted daily by climate change and economic challenges. As we continue to face rising food prices, there is the grave need for FAO support for innovative solutions to be disseminated throughout the region for adaptation and adoption.

Noting the requests from the region at the 168th Council Session, then again at the 170th Session of the Council, the Caribbean Region once again calls for more inclusive discussion within the sub-region. We wish to reiterate that it should be recognized that the Latin America and Caribbean Region has the greatest number of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), 16 of the 33 globally. These (SIDS) are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and increasing socioeconomic risk, largely due to slow recovery from natural disasters.

Notwithstanding the good work of the FAO that it has done in the Caribbean Region, we continue to be at a significant disadvantage compared to other regions when it comes to tangible and meaningful support from FAO. This support can assist SIDS in the Caribbean Region in being able to recover from natural disasters which has unfortunately become commonplace in our region, due primarily to the more and more intense hurricanes which scientific evidence clearly shows has a direct relation to climate change.

There is an additional need for special attention also at sub-regional levels for fair distribution of resource allocation. There are countries that receive the minimum allocation of USD 100 000 per annum in a biennium, which is insufficient for a substantial catalyst of work in comparison to other countries that receive higher allocations, all this while donor funding are often left untapped.

Despite the potential benefit of increasing allocation based on the proposed criteria of the revised TCP, the availability of updated data to measure the indicators is challenging for countries in our region. There is a need for specific resources to be allocated to Caribbean SIDS for agriculture and fishery surveys to ensure that the data used to measure the indicators are most recent to provide a true reflection of the state of food and agriculture in these countries, particularly with regards to poverty levels and inequality.

We therefore call on FAO to work closely within the region to assist in the provision of resources to access data tools and technology to build capacities of countries with respect to data collection. Often FAO developed tools are utilized in the African and Asian region, largely supported through donor funding. To truly engage in uniformity we request that the Management advocate for donor funding for data collection for Caribbean SIDS.

Lastly, it is noted that the Interregional Initiative (IRI) and FAO delivering machine mechanism for the implementation of FAO-led development of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on food security and nutrition in SIDS held a solutions forum programme for Pacific SIDS. This solutions forum objective was to identify, incubate, promote and enable locally-grown ideas and those adapted from other contexts to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Pacific SIDS. Alongside this, FAO collected innovations and creative digital technologies that respond to local problems and challenges and share them on a platform for adoption and adaptation.

I wish to say to the Management of the FAO that we in the Bahamas and the Caribbean Region would benefit greatly from such a programme. We are aware that such requests should be placed at the regional Conference. However, while we are here as a Member of the Council, we are here and now once again calling for more action and support.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, The Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

We would like to start by thanking the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting Ms Ilmeda Smolčić for her excellent leadership in guiding the Joint Meeting and a good collaboration between the Members of the Committee. The only comment as you asked for some of the Items since the others have been or will be dealt with under other parts of the Agenda.

The European Union and its Member States take note of the feasibility study on the integration of administrative services among the Rome based agency. We encourage the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) to continue to seek ways for collaboration at national and regional levels while recognizing that cooperation and collaboration should be done within the United Nations efficiency Agenda and also in the wider United Nations context. We welcome that a country programming frameworks are now available on the FAO webpage and request by Members and ask that it will be updated regularly.

We also welcome the update on the work of the United Nations Food System Coordination Hub in support of sustainable food systems transformation. We support the approach of the Hub to compliment rather than duplicate existing structures and to work closely with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in supporting the implementation of countries national pathways.

With these comments the European Union and its Member states endorse the Report of the Joint Meeting on the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and the 195th Session of the Finance Committee.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I pass the floor to Mali to speak on behalf of Africa.

M. Aly COULIBALY (Mali) (Observateur)

Le Mali, en concertation avec le Niger et l'Ethiopie prend la parole au nom du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique sur ce point de l'ordre du jour. Nous voudrions avant tout propos adresser nos vives félicitations à la FAO, le Secrétariat et le Président indépendant du Conseil pour la bonne organisation de la 172^e session du Conseil.

Nous dressons nos remerciements et nos félicitations à la Présidente de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier et ainsi qu'à celle du Comité du Programme pour la conduite exemplaire des travaux. Le Mali souscrit à la déclaration faite par le Cameroun au titre du point sur le plan à moyen terme révisé 2022-2025 et le programme de travail et budget 2024-2025 au nom du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique. Conformément à vos recommandations, cet aspect ne sera pas évoqué dans la présente déclaration.

Nous félicitons cependant la FAO pour les informations actualisées de l'étude de faisabilité sur l'intégration des services administratifs des organismes ayant leur siège à Rome qui mettent en avant les possibilités de collaboration plus étroites entre ces organismes au niveau de leurs sièges respectifs. Cependant, nous estimons que ces organismes devraient fournir plus d'informations actualisées sur la mise en œuvre des objectifs d'efficacités des Nations Unies ainsi que l'examen d'autres domaines aux fins d'une intégration administratives plus poussée au niveau mondial, régional et national.

Nous accueillons favorablement les informations actualisées à propos des activités des pôles de coordinations et des préparatifs du premier bilan de la transformation des systèmes agroalimentaires prévu en juillet au siège de la FAO, et c'est pour nous l'occasion de remercier l'Italie pour son initiative d'assister la FAO pour l'organisation des dits événements.

Cependant, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique insiste sur la nécessité d'une participation inclusive et équilibré au plan régional guidé par le principe d'égalité et de genre. Enfin, nous estimons qu'il est important d'intégrer les activités des pôles de coordination dans le plan cadre de coopération des Nations Unies.

Nous félicitons la FAO pour les efforts déployés dans le cadre du renforcement des procédures relatives au cadre de programmation par pays, ainsi que la création d'une base de données en ligne. Aussi, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique souhaite que sa mise à jour soit suivie de façon régulière.

Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique porte à l'attention du Conseil pour l'approbation des conclusions du rapport de la Réunion conjointe de la 135^e session du Comité du Programme et de la 195^e session du Comité financier.

Mr GUO Su (China)

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

The Asia Regional Group endorses the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee. We thank both the Chairpersons and the Members of the Programme Committee (PC) and of the Finance Committee (FC) of their continued engagement and constructive participation.

The Asia Regional Group appreciates the effort and commitment of FAO in leading the efficiency of delivering the programme of work of the Organization under unprecedented challenges and notwithstanding a long standing zero nominal core budget.

With regard to the proposed budget level for the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025, we take note that the request for incremental resources is aimed at preserving the purchasing power parity of the regular programme funded by assessed contributions while the delivery of large scale department and emergency and resilience programmes funded by extra-budgetary resources as forecasted to increase.

We encourage further consultations towards reaching consensus on the proposed budget level for the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and stress the need that all funding resources be deployed to support the priorities established by the Strategic Framework 2022-31. We also recall the need to take into due consideration the fact that several Members will be confronted with consistent increases in their share of assessed contributions based on the new scale of contribution and adverse impact exchange rate by unprecedented price fluctuation.

With regard to the feasibility study and integration of administrative service among Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), we welcome the resource of the feasibility study and encourage RBAs to further increase collaborative efforts.

With regards to the update on work of United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub we take note of the progress achieved and look forward to receiving regular updates. We appreciate the commitment and efforts of the United Nations Secretary General and the United Nations Deputy Secretary General to convey the United Nations food systems moment and express our gratitude to the Government of Italy for its offer to host it in Rome.

The Asia Regional Group is committed to the successful outcome of Asian Pacific regional meeting of the 23rd Food System Stocktaking Moment held in Bangkok, Thailand on 30 March 2023 and we are confident that the key messages of the meeting are expected to serve the collective regional input of the 2023 Stocktaking Moment.

Lastly, with regard to the process of Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), we congratulate on the alignment of CPFs with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework and appreciate the activation of the CPF repository well recognizing the need to finance transparency and confidentiality issues. We request the dissemination of the CPF should be based on the premise of the host countries confirmation.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America welcomes the conclusions of the Joint Meeting and we endorse its Report.

We greatly appreciate FAO's publication of the Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs), which will finally allow donors to better understand FAO's country level efforts and impact. We urge that these be updated as new frameworks replace those that are expiring and that Members be kept informed

about the status of country level programme planning and have regular opportunities to hear from evaluation teams about measurable results that advance and achieve FAOs strategic framework.

FAO is a Member driven Organization. It is now funded by over USD 2 billion in voluntary contributions and the bar for oversight needs to evolve with the newest chapter of the Organization.

We encourage FAO to consider beginning a conversation with Members soon well in advance of the next budget planning and the financial structures fitness for purpose and what measures could improve accountability, flexibility, effectiveness and cost efficiency in FAO achieving its strategic framework and how the Organization could best manage the evolving balance of voluntary and assessed contributions.

Finally, with regards to the United Nation Food Systems Coordination Hub we are eager to see concrete results. With the upcoming July Stocktaking Moment we hope to see the most productive coalitions featured especially the school meals coalition. The food loss and waste coalition and the sustainable productivity growth coalition.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom thanks the Programme and Finance Committees and their Chairpersons for their work and the report from their Joint Meeting in March. Having already covered the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) and 2022-25 and and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (PWB) in a separate Council agenda item, we would like to make the following points. I have three points.

First, the United Kingdom would like to thank FAO for creating the Country Programming Framework (CPF) Repository webpage in response to Member State requests. This is very helpful and could be used to strengthen partnerships.

To this end, it would be useful to provide further information on the timing of the development of new CPFs, for example. Currently, over 40 countries are showing as having a “*New CPF under formulation*”. More information of the processes and the timetable for the development of these could lead to further engagement from our colleagues in country, potentially fostering greater synergies and support for FAO programs. We look forward to maximizing the use if the information provided and to it being regularly updated.

Second, we welcome the update on the *Feasibility study* on the integration of administrative services among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). We look forward to receiving further information on the agencies’ collaboration in taking forward implementation of the United Nations’ (UN) efficiency agenda.

Finally, the UK also welcomes the update on the work of the *UN Food Systems Coordination Hub* and the preparations for the first UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment on 24-26 July here at FAO. We look forward to receiving more information and to working with all stakeholders to ensure a successful event. We hope that the Summit can deliver practical outcomes that will attract funding and support from the widest range of international partners.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría comenzar agradeciendo a la Sra. Jiani Tian por la preparación del documento y, al mismo tiempo, destacar el trabajo sinérgico de los miembros del Comité de Programa y Finanzas para abordar temáticas relevantes para FAO, bajo el liderazgo en esta oportunidad de la Presidenta del Comité de Finanzas, mi distinguida colega Imelda Smolčić.

En este sentido, brevemente, me gustaría realizar dos menciones.

La primera, se refiere a las oportunidades para incrementar la colaboración en materia administrativa entre las Agencias de Naciones Unidas con Sede en Roma. Como lo marca el documento, y más allá de las particularidades que tiene cada Organismo, pensamos que este enfoque ofrece una oportunidad no sólo para mejorar la colaboración en materia administrativa, sino también para alentar una economía de recursos a través de la integración de servicios. Lógicamente, es necesario tener en cuenta los matices que supone las características que tiene FAO, Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo (FIDA) y Programa Alimentar Mundial (PAM), pero, en un contexto de debate presupuestario, esta

temática cobra relevancia y, quizás, genere oportunidades para alcanzar mayores ahorros por eficiencia como hemos planteado en el punto de agenda 3.

Por otro lado, sobre las acciones del Centro de Coordinación de la Cumbre de Sistemas Alimentarios, como mencionamos oportunamente, quizás el ejercicio de balance sirva para subsanar el “pecado original” con el que se originó el proceso; es decir, exclusión de los Miembros. En un contexto de resultados no negociados, pensamos que sería virtuoso que el Centro de Coordinación sirva para apoyar a los países que han decidido caminos nacionales para mejorar sus sistemas alimentarios.

Es decir, sin pretender estimular una exportación de ideas de “talla única”, el Centro tiene la posibilidad de convertirse en un aliado de los países para materializar sus programas nacionales, así como fomentar la transmisión de experiencias positivas. La cuestión del financiamiento del Centro de Coordinación, entendemos que será tratada en otro punto de agenda, pero, aun así, nos gustaría reiterar que, desde nuestra óptica, esta línea de trabajo deberá ser financiada a través de recursos extraordinarios.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France s’aligne sur la déclaration de l’Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres et souhaite apporter les éléments qui suivent à titre national. Nous remercions et saluons le travail mené par Madame Imelda Smolicic en tant que Présidente de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier, et bien sûr, le travail des collègues. J’aurais trois points. Premièrement, nous prenons note des propositions de l’étude de faisabilité sur l’intégration des services administratifs des organismes ayant leur siège à Rome.

Nous avons bien noté les conclusions, et comme mon collègue argentin l’a souligné à l’instant, il nous semble que cela peut avoir un intérêt, y compris pour nos débats budgétaires, et fournir l’opportunité de trouver peut-être des gains d’efficacités et d’efficacité économique. Plus généralement, nous soulignons à nouveau l’importance d’une collaboration entre les trois agences romaines et plus largement, au sein du système des Nations Unies.

Deuxième point, nous accueillons favorablement la création comme demandé par les Membres, d’une base de données, pour publier les cadres de programmation par pays (CPP) approuvés, sous réserve d’une publication de ces CPP dans leur intégralité et d’une mise à jour régulière de cette base de données. Et je crois que mon collègue de la République du Mali l’a dit au nom du Groupe régional pour l’Afrique, je pense que cette mise à jour régulière est extrêmement importante.

Comme l’ont souligné les Etats-Unis d’Amérique et le Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d’Irlande du Nord, nous serions aussi favorables à recevoir plus d’informations sur la programmation de ces différents cadres de programmation par pays sur les résultats de l’évaluation de ce cadre de programmation car ce sont ces résultats d’évaluations qui inspireront la préparation des futurs CPP. Et de même comme l’ont dit plusieurs collègues, nous encourageons la FAO à engager un dialogue avec les Membres pour renforcer la gouvernance, la transparence, et l’accountability.

Troisième sujet, le suivi du Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires. La France souhaite insister sur le rôle et la contribution essentielle du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA), et je souhaite à cet égard remercier et saluer l’Ambassadeur Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Président du CSA. Nous soulignons la nécessité d’éviter les doublons entre les structures mises en place pour le suivi du Sommet avec les structures du CSA, en particulier son Groupe d’experts de haut niveau.

Nous saluons la mobilisation de la République italienne et l’accueil par l’Italie, conjointement avec les Nations Unies de la réunion de bilan, et naturellement, comme l’ont dit plusieurs collègues, nous souhaiterions à cet égard notamment valoriser les résultats déjà extrêmement impressionnants de la Coalition pour l’alimentation scolaire, pour laquelle de très nombreux collègues ici présents jouent un rôle extrêmement positif et se mobilisent.

Je voudrais saluer à cet égard le rôle notamment de la République de Finlande, de la République du Kenya, de la République fédérative du Brésil, de la République argentine, des Etats-Unis d’Amérique, et de l’Union africaine, notamment et bien sûr, j’en oublie beaucoup. Nous souhaiterions aussi promouvoir la Coalition agroécologique qui avait été lancée lors du dernier Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires.

Avec ces remarques, la France approuve le rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Japan associates itself with the Asian group joint statement delivered by the distinguished delegates of China. /Allow me to relay three quick questions about the Food Systems Coordination Hub. This is Japan's national statement.

First, with regard to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), so far as we know it is composed by 33 Members but only 23 Members are posted on the website. Japan wishes to have information about the other 10 Members.

Second, with regard to the stakeholders engagement and networking advisory group, likewise we would like to have information of the composition of the group and profile of the Members of the group.

Third, with regard to the food system Stocktaking Moment, to the best of our knowledge, a regional meeting have already been held in almost all regions. In this regard, we would appreciate if we could have some information about general atmosphere, which are the preliminary findings that the secretariat for Food Systems Coordination Hub, to obtain through the regional meetings.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia would like to join with others in thanking the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting, Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers for her wonderful leadership throughout that process and of course, in the Finance Committee.

Australia would also like to reiterate our appreciation for the dedicated webpage on the Members Gateway that has been developed to serve as a repository of all endorsed Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs). Like others have done today, we highlight the need to maintain the repository and keep it up to date to preserve its utility for users. We would also like to encourage the continued engagement of FAO's country level processes with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), to ensure that agrifood system transformation is well integrated into CPF development.

With those comments, Australia endorses the report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada would like to appreciate the leadership of the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting Ms Imelda Smolčić and recognize her important contribution and constructive approach to the work of joint meetings over her term. We focus in this instance only on Joint Meeting issues not covered elsewhere in this Council's Agenda and there will be some overlap with previous interventions.

We value the feasibility study on the integration of administrative services among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), noting the search for efficiencies is particularly relevant in the context of the review of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

We note the important work of the Food Systems Coordination Hub to date and especially in the months ahead in the preparation and delivery of the Stocktaking Moment in July, and we look forward to hearing from the Hub at a future Session regarding lessons learned from the process and how it will help shape its work going forward.

We particularly appreciate the development of the Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs) repository webpage which we believe will bring great value to Members and staff alike helping coordination, investment planning and transparency and we look forward to the documents being kept up to date and further reflections on how we can gain additional value from these important documents. With these observations we are pleased to endorse the Report of the Joint Meeting in its entirety.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCÍA WINDER (México)

Permítame comenzar por felicitar a la Sra. Imelda Smolčić y a todo el equipo de la Secretaría por la preparación de este documento y la conducción de la reunión conjunta del Comité del PPrograma y el Comité de Finanzas. Para mí es un placer siempre poder trabajar bajo la dirección de Imelda. Nos mantiene siempre dinámicos y a tiempo. Gracias, Sra. Smolčić.

México agradece el documento y lo endosa en su totalidad. En este documento se reflejan importantes recomendaciones para el trabajo de la Organización, por lo que pedimos que este Consejo acepte y endose el informe en su totalidad y de forma inmediata, y podamos movernos al siguiente punto salvaguardando un poco el tiempo que necesitamos.

Le pedimos a la Organización que dé cumplimiento a las recomendaciones incluidas en el informe.

Mr GUO Su (China) (Original language Chinese)

China appreciates the efficient and constructive completion of the Report of the Joint Meeting under the leadership of the Chairperson. China welcomes the Joint Meetings discussions on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025, in particular the flat nominal budget that is vitally important in supporting the programme of work during the critical period under the Joint Meeting's recognition of the efforts to improve organization efficiency and implementation of the programme of work.

We welcome the update on the feasibility study on the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) service integration. We note that the stock taking moment will take place at FAO headquarters from 24-26 July. We appreciate the co-hosting of the event by the Italian Government.

We encourage FAO to strengthen coordination for the leading role in successful holding the stock taking moment. We appreciate the active actions of FAO to implement the decisions of the Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs). This is a process that should be country led. FAO should respect countries opinions, the publication of the CPFs should inform the Member countries based on the above. We support the endorsement of the joint Report.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation would like to echo the words of thanks to Ms Imelda Smolčić for her capable and professional work of the joint meeting.

We understand that this is a joint meeting that took place under the Chairperson of Ms Smolčić and we are very grateful to her for her active participation in the work with the two different meetings. The Russian Federation has comments on the Report. We will not be against the approval of the Report. We think that the substantive discussion that took place during its work should be a guide for the work of the Organization.

In issues of budgetary planning optimizing mechanisms of cooperation within the Organizational Hub and the Cooperation Programme. We would also like to note having said that the argumentation that was outlined by the distinguish representative and the Ambassador of Argentina about joining the administrative functions should be reflected in savings and improving their efficiency. We share that view. We would expect a more substantive and specific proposal from the Management of FAO and on the substantive fulfilment of the cooperation between the Rome Organizations.

Our second brief comment is on the Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs), country planning frameworks rather, we greatly esteem the efforts of the Management of the Organization to support a high level of transparency in the activities of the Organization and in its Management, and we as the Russian Federation would like to recall that within the discussions of the country planning frameworks the issue is raised of the legal aspects, the aspects of access to these frameworks from third parties. We think that placing these country frameworks on the open part of the website would resolve these legal aspects.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have other speakers on my list.

I now turn first to Ms Imelda Smolčić.

Sra. Imelda SMOLČIĆ NIJERS (Presidente de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas)

He seguido con atención el debate de los Miembros y he tomado nota de los comentarios, que me han parecido oportunos e interesantes. Agradezco las palabras que han sido muy generosas, dirigidas hacia mi persona. Solamente permítame agradecer a todos los Miembros de la reunión conjunta, su dedicación y compromiso durante la sesión que tuve el honor de presidir. Y sobre todo a usted, por habernos acompañado durante la misma.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn first the floor to Mr Stefanos Fotiou because there were several questions asked around the Food System Coordination Hub.

Mr Stefanos FOTIOU (Director, Office of Sustainable Development Goals)

I would like first to thank all the Members and the Regional Groups for their positive comments and the fact you approve the work of the hub and you see that is the way we need to continue, it is very encouraging for us. I am joining you from Chile where we have the last of the five technical Report meetings for the regional Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago).

On the specific questions on the advisory group. We did have indeed at the beginning 33 Members. In the process three Members had to actually decline because they had some personal issues. The other seven Members, that we have asked their CV and photo, have not sent them to us.

We are giving to these Members another deadline, and if they will not respond since they are very busy we will publish the seven additional names without a CV and photo. It is the same with the Stakeholder Engagement Network Advisory Group, where we have all the 15 names and now we are going to publish them in the website even if they do not send us their photo and their CV.

On the question about the regional meetings, we get a very positive feeling from these meetings because we see the ways of the country representatives and the stakeholders to talk about how they implement the food system transformations to share experiences, to share good practices but also many times to share some issues, that there are still problems and it is about what is next for them to continue their transformation.

I must say that we have also a very good level of participation. In Latin America and the Caribbean today we started this morning with about 120 people in the room. In Asia we had close to 100 people and in the other meetings in North Africa, in Europe we had very good participation.

When it comes to the specific discussion on these meetings, if you go to our website you will see that we have published there the key messages that we get from these meetings. They are already finalized for the four meetings we had already concluded and of course we will publish the one that we have from Latin America and the Caribbean.

I would like also to say that there was a question about lessons learned on this process and I must say that indeed to the representative of Canada it is a little bit early to have some lessons learned but something I see that we need to consider in the hub after the stock taking moment is a work programme, the services and the products we want to provide to the Members.

We have an ambitious work plan as you know. If you see our work plan it has a lot of deliverables but we need to balance this ambition with the availability of resources for the hub. I think this discussion could also be quite important during the food system stock taking moment.

Finally, I would like to say that one important thing is that we get from the regional meetings but also we get from this last one that the hub is working, and that our great focus as I did not mention is indeed to support the national teams to implement their pathways. So, we see that the greatest value of the hub is on supporting the implementation of the pathways.

But we want to do this with a group of products and services that are available to all countries. Therefore, we do not want to start hand picking countries, but we want to have product services that will really benefit all the countries.

Finally, on the Stocktaking Moment I want to tell you that we have proceed a lot, you have seen on the website that we have side events, we had a call for voluntary national Reports with a deadline next week. We had also a call for non state actors for participation and right now the draft programme of the meeting is with the Executive Office of the Secretary General for their review and they clearly asking we are calling the meeting.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Related to Bahamas' question I have been checking carefully the information that we have not only for Bahamas but for most of the seats and there are significant gaps as you correctly refer. I think this is an area where we have to intensively work to be able to develop the information system that will be required not only for early warning systems for Bahamas related to climate change, even for food security and nutrition indicators.

We will see how we can get the resources needed to do the necessary investments to help the countries to also build local capacities so that we can start a system of information that could be useful and responsive to needs, and we call for the Members to support this initiative so that we can contribute to this.

Related to the comment of United States of America in terms of measurable results, in some of the initiatives like in the case of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative we are trying to have a dashboard of monitoring and tracking the outcomes and the results of the project. However, it is also important to understand that when you want to measure impact it is significantly complex because you will need to have a correct contrafactual to be able to measure impact.

Therefore, for initiatives of this size we are trying to find alternative ways to do that and there are some tools that were developed in the past that can be used to try to create those contrafactual so that we can the resolution to the impacts of interventions. I think the more metrics we have and the more we can join efforts with the work of Office of Evaluation (OED), the more validated evidence that we can use to do that.

We are also part of an initiative with Notre Dame University in trying to work on assessing all the evaluations that have been done in topics specifically to agriculture that could help enormously to bring all the evidence existing right now from where FAO can also learn and try to replicate the initiative that has been tested

CHAIRPERSON

I think with that we have finalized our work on Agenda Item 8, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee (March 2023)* CL 172/7

Now we turn to our draft conclusion.

We have an established practice to make a distinction between the work of the committees and that what needs to be decided by the Council, and it is clear and you saw in document CL 172/7 on page two what the Joint Meeting requested the Council to decide on. So, I put on the screen now the draft conclusions on the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee*.

18. The Council reviewed the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee and 195th Session of the Finance Committee noting that *Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)*, would be reviewed as separate Item and endorsed its conclusions on:
 - a) the *Feasibility study on the integration of administrative service among the Rome-based Agencies*
 - b) the *update on the work of the United Nations Food Systems Coordination Hub*; and
 - c) the *process for country programming frameworks (CPFs)*.

This is what we ask Council to decide, and in your statement, clearly you heard that you could support this conclusions. Can we agree to this conclusion and you asked to have brief conclusions.

Can we agree to this draft conclusion?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We certainly can agree with this. The only point would be that yesterday we agreed on the points relating to the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Programme of Working Budget (PWB) in which we did not endorse the conclusions of the joint meeting on the same plan.

If I recall I did not memorize what those conclusions were. That is not to say that we do not also agree with what the joint meeting concluded on those Items. Therefore, we did not discuss it at this point because it was covered in general terms in the discussion yesterday but just for the record we also endorsed the considerations of the joint meeting on the Programme of Working Budget. That said we will not insist on it being introduced here.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We had this discussion yesterday on the subject that was not such a happy memory and I very clearly remember that the recommendations of the Joint Meeting on the budget were considered to be reviewed to a separate Report.

We are not doubting Russian Federation's agreement on the principle of consensus of developing a unified budgetary document. But, to our surprise we see that the outcome of the Joint Meeting where there was a discussion of the budget does not have a reference to the conclusions because there were not conclusions not just on finding consensus there were also conclusions on the recommendations of the Finance Committee (FC) to defer the issue of refilling the working capital fund and other issues. Therefore, we would like to receive some clarification from the Secretariat.

On the basis of what Report you are proposing to turn to the recommendations of the Finance Committee. Will it just be the recommendations of the Financial Committee as a separate document of the Report in which we do not mention them in the joint document of the Joint Meeting. However, in this situation we would like to hear your clarification.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General to Conference and Council.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, there is a long established practice at the Council to subsume certain topics that would normally fall under the Report of the Council Committees within dedicated items. For example, this time within Item 3, *Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) (2024-25)* where the document C 2023/3 presented by the Management, as well the findings of the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee and their Joint Meeting were considered jointly together, consolidated under Item 3.

In fact, you will recall for example that the recommendation of the Finance Committee on deferral of the top-up for After-service Medical Coverage and of certain funds was there yesterday under item 3, and that had come from the Report of the Finance Committee. This is why then those discussions about the PWB and MTP will not be entertained now by the Council. There is no need, because it will be a duplication, as we go through the items related to the Reports of the Joint Meeting, the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee.

And yet, when the Report of the Council is produced, we will have all of the Council's considerations on the back of these three Reports consolidated in one place under the MTP/PWB.

Incidentally, this is long established practice, it was discussed in a number of meetings of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the Regional Groups' Chairs and Vice-Chairs, it was in the pre-Session letter of the ICC that was circulated to all Members, and it is also in the Timetable of the Session of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

With this explanation can we adopt the conclusions? I do not see any objections. It is so decided with consensus.

Item 10. Reports of the 195th Sessions of the Finance Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)

Point 10. Rapports de la 195^e session du Comité financier (Rome, 13-17 mars 2023)

Tema 10. Informe del 195.º período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas (Roma, 13-17 marzo de 2023)

(CL 172/9)

Item 10.1 Status of Contributions and Arrears

Point 10.1 État des contributions et des arriérés

Tema 10.1 Estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos

(CL 172/LIM/2)

Item 10.2 Scale of Contributions 2024-25

Point 10.2 Barème des contributions 2024-2025

Tema 10.2 Escala de cuotas para 2024-25

(FC 195/5)

Item 4. Mid-term Review Synthesis Report - 2022

Point 4. Examen à mi-parcours – Rapport de synthèse 2022

Tema 4. Informe de síntesis del examen a mitad de período correspondiente a 2022

(PC 135/2; FC 195/8)

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, we still have at least one hour to go. There was a special request to deal with Agenda Item 9, *Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)* tomorrow morning because some Ministers would like to be present and make a statement.

With your allowance could we take up Agenda Item 10? This is the *Reports of the 195th Sessions of the Finance Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)*, to be found in documents CL 172/9, CL 172/LIM/2, FC 195/5, PC 135/2 and FC 195/8.

Members are reminded that Item 3, *Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25)* and Item 15, *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization*, will be dealt with under their respective Agenda Items. However, Item 4, *Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2022* is to be addressed here. Relevant document are PC 135/2 and FC 195/8.

The statement of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolčić, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 10: Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)

Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers, Chairperson of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee, submitted to the Council in document CL 172/9. I would like to highlight the following matters presented in the Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 and the Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, which will be addressed directly under Agenda items 3 and 15 respectively.

On the review of the Scale of Contributions 2024-25, the Council is invited to endorse the draft resolution for adoption by the Conference as presented in paragraph 17 of document CL 172/9.

On the review of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee Membership, the Council is requested to endorse the extension of the terms of office of Ms Aït Mohamed Parent and Ms Wild as members of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee for a further, final three years.

Furthermore, the Council is requested to endorse the conclusions of the Finance Committee on its consideration of: the Financial Position of the Organization and the Annual Report on Budgetary Performance and Programme and Budgetary Transfers for the 2022-23 Biennium.

Finally, the Council is requested to note the Finance Committee's considerations related to the updates it received on: the 2022 Actuarial Valuation of Staff Related Liabilities; the 2022 Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report; the Human Resources Annual Report; the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee 2022 Annual Report; the 2022 Annual Report of the Inspector General; the 2022 Annual Report of the Ethics Office; progress related to the recommendations presented in the JIU Reports, Review of Whistleblower Policies and Practices in United Nations System Organizations and Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function; and scheduling of the FAO Management and Administration Review by the JIU.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may need regarding our report.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I would like to open the floor for Members to make comments.

Mr Yoshihiro KURAYA (Japan)

Japan expresses sincere appreciation of Ms Imelda Smolčić, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and Mr David McSherry, the Secretary of the Finance Committee. Japan would like to kindly ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) to pass the floor for the distinguished delegate of Thailand to deliver the joint statement of Asia Group.

Ms Ratchanok SANGPENCHAN (Thailand) (Observer)

Thailand has an honor to deliver the statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. First of all, the Asia Group would like to commence that excellent work carried out by the Finance Committee (FC) under the outstanding leadership shown by the distinguished Chairperson Ms Imelda Smolčić. We also appreciate FAO Report to address various challenges on its financial position, human resources and oversight.

The Asia Group reaches to highlight some pertinent points from the Finance Committee's Report, which are not covered by other Agenda Items of this Session of the Council. With regard to the financial position of the FAO the Asia Group notes with appreciation that FAO liquidity is expected to be sufficient to cover operations' needs through the end of this year.

In this regard, we fully recognize that FAO's cash flow health is depending on the timely payment of assessed contributions and which draws Members' attention to recommendations by the Finance Committee, which urged Members to make payments of assessed contributions in time and in full.

With regard to the Human Resources Annual Report for 2022, the Asia Group welcomes key achievements and progress towards the human resources strategic action plan, as well as a positive resource of 2022 employee satisfaction survey.

In particular, we welcome the revitalizations of Young Professionals Programme (YPP) as well as initiatives to strengthen and inclusive and respectful working environment free of harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority.

However, with regard to the geographical representation, while appreciating the achievement of the Key Performance Indicator (KPI), the Asia Group would like to emphasize its concerns that underrepresented countries are still existing, the third of which is our countries in the Asia Group, Asia region. In this regard, the Asia Group requests FAO's Management to develop an outreach plan to attract applicants from non-represented and underrepresented countries to participate in the recruitment process as is described in paragraph 28, subparagraph (i) of the Finance Committee's Report.

In this connection, the Asia Group also wishes to draw Members' attention to paragraph 34 of *Human Resources annual Report*, which says that only one Junior Professional Officer (JPO) was adopted for a staff post in 2022. Although 37 JPOs were dispatched from 13 countries with requesting FAO Management to seriously bear in mind the existence of 277 vacant posts. The Asia Group urges the Management to retain high performing participants of the JPO and YPP in particular from the non-represented and underrepresented country, and also encourages the Human Resources Division as well as the relevant technical divisions and decentralized offices to give due consideration to applications from qualified JPOs for appropriate professional staff posts.

Finally, with regard to the oversight related issue, the Asia Group welcomes the series of annual reports respectfully provided by the Inspector General, the Ethics Office, and the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee, which include positive conclusions of FAO's oversight mechanisms.

We appreciate the operation conducted by the Office of Inspector General (OIG), the work carried out by the Ethic Office and the progress in implementing the recommendations made by Oversight Advisory Committee and look forward to receiving further updates on their relevant activities towards the further enhancements of FAO's governance.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I am honored to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The following FAO Members aligned themselves with this statement, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine.

We would like to start again by thanking the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolčić for her engaging and efficient leadership of the Committee, which contributed to an effective meeting with a constructive exchange between Members as well as with Management.

We will only provide a few remarks since some issues will be discussed under other agenda items. But overall, we welcome the report. We welcome the improvements reported under the responsibility of the Division of Human Resources and Office of Ethics, which contribute to fostering an ethical, safe, and inspiring work environment.

We congratulate FAO for the positive result reported in the 2022 Employee Satisfaction report. We encourage Management to continue its efforts to make recruitment procedures more efficient in order to substantially reduce vacancy rates and speed up recruitment time, and also efforts to reach gender parity targets, especially at the senior level.

We share the concern of the Committee regarding the high number of overdue internal and external audit recommendations and urge Management to prioritize the implementation, especially the long outstanding high risk recommendations and to continue to strengthen internal control in decentralized offices.

We note the increase in resources to the office of the Inspector-General while recognizing that the workload of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) continues to increase in volume as well as in complexity. We encourage Management to ensure that oversight and supporting administrative functions can be adequately resourced to effectively manage risks.

Finally, we look forward to future updates on how the ongoing Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) administrative review can contribute to further improvements in FAO.

With these remarks, we endorse the Report of the Finance Committee.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

I would like to also thank Ms Imelda Smolčić for chairing the Finance Committee and we look forward to continue working together on the Session on the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Russian Federation notes the work of the Management to continue the work of FAO in the context of crisis. We can see this from the high-level financial resources and reserves, which make it possible and promote the implementation of the agreed upon programme by the end of this year, given the existing resources and contributions model.

Based on the fact that mandatory financing is systemic in nature and is necessary for the work of the Organization, a basic responsibility of all Members is to make payments in time because only in this way can their contributions help ensure the work of the Organization.

We need to also reach consensus on the draft budget for this biennial period. It needs to reflect the agreement of Members to take on additional financial obligations. As for FAO Management and governance, we want to note that it is important to follow practices and recommendations. Specifically, we note the work of the Commission on International Civil Service on determining the pay scale subsidy levels and payments, also general administration of the Organization based on this logic in order to promote the unity of the United Nations (UN) system. We think it is important to note the fact that we need to have a single approach in working with financial obligations after retirement, in retirement systems.

We also want to thank the Staff Unit for its work, especially on implementing the strategic action plan on human resources management. We call for continuing conditional measures to return staff to work and moving away from remote work.

Now, as for the idea of re-establishing a roster of pre-approved candidates which could be given priority, reviewed during position-filling is a good idea. The Russian Federation does not oppose the updated budget scale based on the scale included in the regular budget for 2023-2024. Based on the comments received, we support the work of the Finance Committee.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America endorses the Report of the 193rd Session of the Finance Committee. As we highlighted during the Finance Committee Sessions, we appreciated that the overall financial posture of the Organization has improved compared to last year.

The United States requests continued reporting to the Finance Committee regarding steps taken by the secretariat to address unfunded liabilities. We strongly recommend Council approval and Conference acceptance of the amendments to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) statute.

The Human Resources Report provided an excellent update on the important work being done under the leadership of Ms Greet de Leeuw and Mr John Lackey. We urged FAO to develop and present to Members of recruitment and hiring plan for underrepresented groups and we agree with the Asia Group statement on this matter.

We also noted with concern FAO's struggles with gender parity at the Director-1 (D-1) level and above. We were also happy to hear the update from the Legal Counsel as always and the Inspector-General on the progress made in the establishment of appropriate formal procedures for the investigation of complaints of misconduct by an FAO Director-General should such complaints ever be made. In line with clear and long-standing recommendations to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

We look forward to reviewing the draft procedures reflecting FAO's governance structure and existing legal framework in the fall and we welcome opportunities for Member consultation or informal input in the development of these draft procedures.

We also appreciate FAO Management's cooperation with the Management administrative review being conducted by the JIU and we look forward to a timely implementation of any recommendations. We encourage FAO to similarly welcome the upcoming review and recommendations by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), which we understand will happen this year.

With these comments, the United States is proud to join consensus in endorsing the Report of the Finance Committee.

Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)

Ethiopia, Niger, and Guinea are giving the statement representing the Africa Regional Group (ARG). We would like to appreciate the qualities of the financial report presented to us by Management of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Africa Regional Groups know that based on the latest regular programme cash levels and the projected payment patterns of Member Nations, the Organization's liquidity was expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs through 31 December 2023.

We recognize that the Organization's ongoing cash flow health was dependent on the timely payment of assessed contributions and urge Members to make payment of assessed contributions on time and in full.

ARG noted that the overall level of the general fund deficit was primarily due to unfunded charges for staff-related liabilities and also noted the information provided on Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) approval and expenditure rates and emphasized the importance of maintaining TCP expenditures at the level that ensured full implementation of the TCP appropriation as approved by the Conference.

Africa Regional Group also noted that the results of the study of amortization proposals for funding the After Service Medical Coverage (ASMC) liability and that proposals based on the analysis of various options together with related implications would be presented by the Secretariat at the future session of the Committee and encouraged Management to continue to review options to address the underfunding of the ASMC liabilities in coordination with other organizations of the United Nations Common System. Africa Regional Group has reviewed and endorsed the proposed scale of contributions for the biennium 2024-2025 set out in document *FC 195/5* and supports its transmission to the Council following draft resolution for adoption of the FAO scale of contribution 2024-25 by the Conference.

We noted that the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) had within its context of its mandate reviewed the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears of the payment of their financial contribution to the Organization in its 118th Session and made a number of technical adjustments to the text of the draft Conference resolution as set out in Annex 1 to *FC 195/6*.

We agreed to submit to the Council the draft resolution as set out in annex 1 to this Report for forwarding to the Conference and supported the recommendations of the CCLM that the various language versions of the text of the draft resolution be reviewed and checked for consistency with English version. Africa Regional Groups have noted and authorized the forecasted budgetary chapter transfers in favor of chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, and 9 from chapter 7, 7, 8 and 10.

We appreciate the efforts made by Management to continue to meet its duty of care toward these FAO employees worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic, while supporting employees progressive return to work in the office and establishing the new normal by hybrid teams and encourage the Human Resource division as well as relevant technical divisions and the decentralized offices to give due consideration to applications from qualified Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) for appropriate professional staff posts.

ARG welcoming the Report, which included positive conclusions on the Organization's oversight appreciating the operation of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the work carried out under the ethics and ombuds functions urges Management to prioritize the implementation of outstanding recommendation from audit report issued by OIG in particular long outstanding high-risk recommendations.

While reviewing annual Reports of Inspector General, we noted with concern the high number of overdue agreed actions, some of which have been outstanding for several years, and urge Management to expedite their implementations with focus on those assessed as high risk and to develop more realistic timelines for addressing recommended actions when originally agreed to them.

ARG commends, the quality of the Ethics Office report and the analysis of issues presented, which covered the full range of responsibilities under the mandate of the Ethics Office, noting that the work carried out was of great importance to help foster an ethical work environment across the Organization's and reiterating all personnel's role in building and maintaining the ethical work environment.

Africa Regional Group supports the Director-General's proposal regarding Ms Malika Ajit Momammed Parent and Ms Hailey Wild to continue as Oversight Advisory Committee Membership and agreed to submit the recommendation to the Council.

ARG endorses the Reports of the Finance Committee.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom thanks the Finance Committee for its work and for the very clear report from its 135th Session in March. We support the recommendations, conclusions, and considerations highlighted.

On the critical area of Human Resources, we welcome progress in implementation of the *Strategic Action Plan*.

We would also like to hear more about how FAO will use past audit recommendations of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations on mechanisms to speed up recruitment procedures, ensuring transparency and a merit-based approach in reducing vacancies across the Organization.

We strongly support and thank the work that is being done by the Office of the Inspector General. As the Ethiopian colleagues has mentioned, we share their concern about the high number of overdue agreed actions, some of which have been outstanding for several years. We would like to ask the Management what steps they are taking to address this, with a focus – as suggested by the Committee – on prioritizing those assessed as high risk.

Over recent years, FAO has worked on strengthening its internal controls and this is critical to the Organization's risk management. We were concerned to note that the Finance Committee needed to reiterate the importance of Management's continued attention on "*strengthening internal controls, in particular in high-risk areas*". We would like to ask if FAO could provide an update on how they are addressing this finding.

Finally, we appreciate the update on the JIU's *Review of Management and Administration* that is now included in the 2023 workplan of the JIU. We stress the importance of this being carried out in a timely way in a continued spirit of openness and collaboration. We look forward to progress updates and, in due course, to the report and to Management's response on implementation of its recommendations.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia congratulates the Chair, Finance Committee Members and the secretariat for the successful convening of the 195th session of the Finance Committee. We are pleased to endorse, in full, the recommendations and conclusions presented to the Council.

Australia takes this opportunity to highlight the constructive and collaborative relationship between Members and Management during this session of the Finance Committee.

I would like to highlight three points from the last Session.

First, we welcome Management's confirmation that the FAO Management and Administrative Review (MAR) by the Joint Inspection Unit was included in the 2023 workplan of the JIU and that initial steps for the review are starting, and we look forward to regular updates on the progress of the review.

Second, as has been highlighted during discussions on the 24-25 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), and as detailed in the Human Resources Annual Report for 2022 which was considered by the Finance Committee, the Organisation has a high vacancy rate for Posts with efforts to reduce the vacancy rate undermined by the extensive length of time for the completion of recruitment processes. Australia emphasizes the importance of improvements in recruitment and selection processes, and to explore the option of roster mechanisms, as a means to speed up recruitment processes and substantially reduce the vacancy rate which we consider will support the efficient and effective operation of the Organisation.

Third, we thank the Office of the Inspector General and the Oversight Advisory Committee for their commitment to improve the functioning of the Organization through its independent review and audit, assurance and advice functions. We highlight the importance of addressing the outstanding audit recommendations of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in a timely manner, noting the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)'s view that late implementation of audit recommendations creates an area of risk.

In closing, I would like to again appreciate the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolčić, for her steadfast leadership and guidance in what we understand was her last Finance Committee and of course throughout her term in this important role.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par le Royaume de Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. Nous félicitons la Présidente du Comité financier, Madame Imelda Smolcic pour son travail et son leadership.

Nous soutenons les recommandations du Comité financier en ce qui concerne le programme de travail et budget 2024-2025. Nous soulignons également l'importance d'une bonne organisation des organisations des Nations Unies et l'importance de renforcer les efforts en matière de transparence, de contrôle, notamment de contrôle indépendant, d'efficacité et d'efficacités. Il est important à cet égard, comme souligné par d'autres délégations de s'aligner sur les pratiques et les standards les plus élevés du système des Nations Unies.

Deuxième point, nous soulignons l'importance de mener à bien en 2023 l'examen de la gestion et de l'administration de la FAO par le Corps commun d'inspection (CCI) des Nations Unies, et d'une collaboration active de la FAO à ce sujet, comme demandé par ce Conseil. Nous demandons que les Membres soient régulièrement informés du déroulement de cette évaluation. Par ailleurs, nous appuyons les recommandations du Comité financier concernant le renforcement de la fonction d'enquête et la nécessité de première proposition du management d'ici l'automne 2023.

Nous sommes préoccupés, comme d'autres collègues et notamment indiqué par le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique ou mon collègue britannique, par le nombre élevé de recommandations de l'Inspecteur général non mises en œuvre par la Direction et nous souhaitons avoir des indications et des précisions à ce sujet. Nous soulignons l'importance du paiement des arriérés pour que cette organisation puisse fonctionner effectivement.

Enfin, nous encourageons la FAO à accélérer ses efforts pour parvenir à son objectif d'une égalité de genre pour les postes de niveau D1 et supérieur. En conclusion, nous demandons que le Conseil approuve et endosse le rapport du Comité financier, y compris ses recommandations.

Mr GUO Su (China) (Original language Chinese)

China would like to highly comment on the professional and efficient work by the Finance Committee. China agrees that the Council endorses the proposed scale of assessments for 2024-25, and we note that China's contribution has will increase from 12.006 percent to 15.256 percent, which is the highest increase of all countries as the largest developing country.

Although China has a large size of overall economy, but the average level is very low and our economy and the society are unbalanced and undeveloped in some parts. So, China will actively take up our international obligations appropriate to our level of development based on our specific situations. We will continue to work with Members to support fast development and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda regarding the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25, about the incremental funding of the After Service Medical Coverage (ASMC) post-service liability to be deferred to future biennia.

For this proposal, China is of the view that the Management should further strengthen communications with Members to ensure that Members have a better understanding about FAO's financial situation, especially the issues of long-term liability and potential liquidity, so that this issue can be considered properly by the Governing Bodies as soon as possible. China agrees FC's, other views on PWB 2024-25.

China agrees with the recommendations on the *Human Resource Annual Reports* and we are pleased with the positive results of the staff survey. We express concerns on the vacant positions and the longtime required for recruitment. We hope the Management can take measures to address the problem. China urges FAO to address the under representativeness of some countries and regions and agree with the FC's recommendations to prioritize certain posts in some departments and offices.

China recognizes and thanks the excellent work of the Oversight and Advisory Office, Office of the Inspector-General (OIG) and Ethics Offices. We agree with the FC's views on strengthening internal controls, and we also welcome extending the terms of Ms Malika Aït-Mohamed Parent and Ms Hilary Wild in their Oversight and Advisory Committee positions. We agree with other recommendations of the FC.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by Thailand on behalf of the Asia Group. I just have a request for a clarification on one aspect and this concerns the comments of the Finance Committee (FC) regarding the long outstanding high risk recommendations.

This is not something new. If you go back years, you will find the same comment in the Finance Committee or in the Oversight Committee. A lot of recommendations are implemented, but a few are outstanding for a long time. Is it a question that these recommendations can only be implemented with additional resources and those resources are not available?

If that is so, then something needs to be done to provide the resources because as the Committee is saying, there are high-risk recommendations, they would impact internal control and they would then result in all sorts of wrongdoings, which could have been audit implications as well.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCÍA WINDER (México)

Una vez más México reconoce el trabajo de la Sra. Imelda Smolčić en dirigir los trabajos del Comité. Como Miembro del Comité, México ha expresado en el seno del mismo sus opiniones y comentarios sobre los diferentes temas. No los voy a repetir aquí. Y solamente quisiera invitar a este Consejo a aprobar y endosar el Informe, y pedir a la FAO dé seguimiento a las recomendaciones que se hacen en el mismo.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

First of all, Egypt extends its thanks to Ambassador Smolčić for her chairpersonship of the Finance Committee (FC) and for steering its work in a very good way. And we extend thanks to all Members on board of the Committee for reaching this consensual report.

We welcome the Report and we agree with what it says in regards of the liquidity levels.

I would also like to encourage Membersto pay their dues in timely manner to enable FAO to accomplish its programme of work. We have taken note of the scale of assessments for 2024-2025, and, we call the Council to submit it to the Conference in its 43rd Session.

We welcome what the Report says in regard of the nnuual report on human resources, and we would like to stress the adequate representation and the gender balance representation in the high levels of Management in FAO. We also support the Finance Committee and recommend its work in its last Session, the 195th Session.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We appreciate the hard work of the Finance Committee (FC), its Chairperson and its Secretariat. Note the constructive atmosphere in which we understand the Committee conducted its work in this particularly important phase of the financial cycle of the Organization, which helps guide the work of this Council.

We note the Report helpfully digests a truly vast amount of information into an accessible set of observations and recommendations, which we greatly appreciate. We would like to particularly highlight three points raised in the Report with regard to the status of contributions and arrears.

We reiterate the Committee's finding of the importance that Members pay their assessed contributions on time and in full to the extent possible. We note this is an important consideration for improving the financial health of the Organization and helps reduce pressure on tools like the Working Capital Fund (WCF).

We also underscore the committee's recommendation to prioritize the implementation of outstanding recommendations from auditor Reports and note the importance of maintaining good practice through timely implementation of findings from both internal and external assessments, including from the upcoming Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Management and Administrative Review and the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessments.

We further welcome the Organization's efforts to maintain and strengthen the functions of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as a key independent oversight function and the commitment of the Organization to continued support to the Ethics Office and to strengthen the Organization's ethical framework.

With these observations, Canada is pleased to endorse the 195th Finance Committee's conclusions and recommendations, and we take note of the Committee's considerations.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá) (Observador)

Panamá agradece y felicita a la Sra. Presidente, Imelda Smolčić, por su excelente dirección de este Comité. Deseo hacer referencia al tema 10.2 en relación con el aumento a la *Escala de cuotas 2024-2025* y resalto el aumento en un 200% en la escala para Panamá. Para mi país es importante que esta Organización priorice su presupuesto de operación en consolidar sus capacidades técnicas y de conocimientos innovadores para que pueda cumplir con las demandas y necesidades de los Miembros, principalmente los que nos encontramos en la transición hacia el desarrollo.

Como indiqué en mi intervención del día lunes, aspiramos a que la FAO tenga una visión más a futuro de cara a los temas de tendencia, por ejemplo, en el mercado de carbono. La FAO requiere de recurso humano-técnico en esta materia.

Reitero la importancia que tiene el Programa de cooperación técnica (PCT) para Panamá y aprovecho para recordar las resoluciones de la Conferencia, donde se estableció un mínimo del 14% del presupuesto para el PCT y, en lo posible, un aumento hasta el 17%. Panamá insta a que, en futuros ejercicios, la Administración presente la consignación presupuestaria con este aumento para el PCT.

Dicho esto, Panamá apoya el informe del Comité de Finanzas y la escala de contribuciones propuestas para el bienio 2024-2025.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn the floor first to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee to say something.

Sra. Imelda SMOLČIĆ NIJERS (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

He seguido los comentarios que han hecho los Miembros del Consejo acerca de los trabajos del Comité de Finanzas. Agradezco nuevamente las amables palabras que han dirigido sobre la conducción de los trabajos del Comité de Finanzas y sobre el trabajo de los Miembros del Comité. En términos generales, el 172.º período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas fue fructífero, y en particular, considero que fue posible tratar una serie de temas cruciales a los que se enfrenta la Organización, sobre todo en cuanto a la situación financiera, los asuntos presupuestales, los recursos humanos y la supervisión.

Deseo, en nombre de los Miembros del Comité, expresar nuestro aprecio a la Administración por la asistencia prestada en nuestras deliberaciones, que no fueron fáciles en este período de sesiones. No obstante ello, deseo subrayar que todas ellas se hicieron en profundidad y con calma, y aun así los trabajos se terminaron a tiempo y con un uso racional del tiempo asignado.

Mi gratitud a todos los Miembros del Comité, a la Administración y a nuestra Secretaría por brindarnos la oportunidad de contribuir a la labor de la Organización.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Ms Imelda Smolčić. I will come back to you later, but also I would like to thank already because behind the Chairs of the Programme Committee (PC), Finance Committee (FC) and Joint Meeting assistance there are their Secretariats. For the PC led by Ms Jiani Tian and for the FC led by Mr David McSherry. We would like to thank their teams for the hard work they are doing to prepare the Reports, to prepare advance conclusions, to be where we have to be.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I turn to Management.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur général adjoint)

Je remercie les membres du Conseil pour les commentaires et les encouragements sur les différents points de gestion de l'Organisation qui ont été soulevés lors des discussions lors de la dernière session du Comité financier. En particulier en ce qui concerne le rapport sur la gestion des ressources humaines, les questions de contrôles internes, les questions financières, y compris en ce qui concerne les préoccupations en ce qui concerne les calculs actuariels sur les problèmes liés aux coûts de l'assurance maladie pour le personnel retraité de la FAO.

Un point sur lequel je voudrais faire plus d'élaborations, c'est ce qui concerne le grand nombre de recommandations de l'audit qui n'ont pas été mises en œuvre ou fermées, et pour lequel un certain nombre de membres du Conseil ont exprimé des préoccupations. Je voudrais tout d'abord, à ce sujet rassurer les membres du Conseil que nous sommes en bonne voie d'être en ligne avec les indicateurs de performances qui ont été définis dans le cadre du Programme de travail et budget sur la mise en œuvre de recommandations qui ont été émises il y a un certain temps, et en particulier celles à hauts risques.

Nous progressons dans le sens où en 2020, il y avait 480 recommandations ouvertes. En 2021, il n'y en avait plus de 379. En 2022, 370. Et aujourd'hui, nous sommes à 306 recommandations ouvertes. Donc, je ne dis pas ça pour nous féliciter. Nous voulons être sûrs que nous mettons en œuvre toutes les recommandations et dans le temps imparti. Pour vous rassurer encore un peu plus, dans ces 306 recommandations qui sont ouvertes, il y en a actuellement que 230 qui ont dépassé la date, qui ont dépassé la date où nous étions engagés pour les mettre en œuvre.

Nous faisons actuellement en collaboration avec l'Inspecteur général un travail intense pour accélérer la mise en œuvre de ces recommandations, et régler ce problème, parce que nous pensons que cela peut être une indication, d'un niveau de risque pas acceptable pour la bonne gestion d'une organisation comme la FAO.

Donc, beaucoup de travail est en cours, pour vous donner une idée, depuis le début du mandat de cette administration, le Bureau de l'Inspecteur général a émis 736 recommandations d'audits. Durant la même période, nous en avons mis en œuvre, 747. Il y a toujours un volume important de recommandations qui sont émises par l'Inspecteur général et nous assurons que nous les mettons en œuvre au plus vite.

Comme il l'a été mentionné pour certaines recommandations, nous avons des contraintes d'ordre budgétaire, donc ça peut prendre plus de temps pour les mettre en œuvre. Pour certaines, elles sont parfois complexes, impliquent un certain nombre de divisions, d'entités administratives, et c'est pour cela que cela peut prendre plus de temps.

Mais, je peux vous rassurer, enfin je l'espère, que nous faisons le maximum pour nous assurer que ce problème ne soit plus souligné à l'avenir, car il est extrêmement important que les recommandations de l'Inspecteur général soient mises en œuvre selon les engagements pris pour leurs mises en œuvre.

À cet effet, je dois dire aussi que quelques fois, nous avons noté que nos collègues font preuve de trop d'enthousiasme sur leurs capacités à mettre en œuvre les recommandations dans le temps imparti et nous y sommes beaucoup plus attentifs pour s'assurer qu'il n'y ait pas ce type de rapport que vous avez noté aujourd'hui.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Mr Laurent Thomas. I think with that we have concluded the response of Management because I really would like to finalize the draft conclusions this evening.

I put forward to you the draft conclusions on the Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee.

21. The Council reviewed the Report of the 195th Session of the Finance Committee, except for the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25) and the Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, which were taken up under separate agenda items, and:
 - a) endorsed the recommendations of the Finance Committee to:
 - i. submit the Draft Resolution for adoption by the Conference of the *Scale of Contributions 2024-25* as set out in *Appendix D*;
 - ii. endorse the extension of the terms of office of Ms Aït Mohamed Parent and Ms Wild as members of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee for a further, final three years.
22. In addition, the Council endorsed the conclusions of the Finance Committee on:
 - a) the Financial Position of the Organization; and
 - b) the Annual Report on Budgetary Performance and Programme and Budgetary Transfers for the 2022-23 Biennium.
23. The Council also noted the Finance Committee's considerations on:
 - a) the 2022 Actuarial Valuation of Staff Related Liabilities;
 - b) the 2022 Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report;
 - c) the Human Resources Annual Report;
 - d) the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee 2022 Annual Report;
 - e) the 2022 Annual Report of the Inspector General;
 - f) the 2022 Annual Report of the Ethics Office;
 - g) progress related to the recommendations presented in the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Reports, *Review of Whistleblower Policies and Practices in United Nations System Organizations* and *Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function*; and
 - h) scheduling of the FAO Management and Administration Review by the JIU.
24. With the above observations, as stated in paragraph 1, [but it will be renumbered as we have the whole Report], the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Report.

Can we agree to the *chapeau*?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just a quick observation to express appreciation for following the magic formula that I think we came up with in the last Council for the structure of this because I think that, in terms of how it is now structured, reapplying that formula is going to be very helpful.

Therefore, just wanted to recognize that this follows the formula from the 171st Session, which I think helped us come to the conclusions more quickly, more efficiently, and understand what direction we were actually giving to the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

We go to subparagraph (a), (i) and (ii). Can we agree to this? I do not see any objections.

We go to paragraph 22.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I think it may have just been an oversight, but in the suggested action by the Council in the Finance Committee's Report in paragraph 1, subparagraph (c), there is an additional, "*the proposal to amend the statute of the International Civil Service Commission as well*". That should be endorsed under 22. So, it should be (a), (b) and then there should be (c) that says, "*endorse the recommendations of the committee on the proposal to amend the statute of the International Civil Service Commission*". I think it was probably just an oversight because there's a lot of stuff in here.

CHAIRPERSON

I listened carefully to the statements and you clearly stated it and I was looking to the conclusion, but I never saw it. But I think it was an oversight. Can we agree to this addition? I do not see any objections.

We go to paragraph 23. I do not see any objections.

We go to paragraph 24. I do not see any objections.

We agree with consensus to the Report of the Finance Committee.

Thank you so much.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Before I close, I come back to Ms Imelda Smolčić. It is a pity that you are not here because you would have gotten hurt from probably 100 people. Ms Smolčić, we have worked closely together for the last four years, two years when I was Chairperson of Programme Committee and now as the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC). We laughed a lot.

Sometimes we had to put away a tear, but we worked hard to benefit the Organization and especially to benefit the Members. For that, I really admire you because you always did it with a laugh. But be careful with Ms Smolčić because she is laughing a lot, but she is really the boss.

Ms Smolčić, thank you so much from all of us out of our hearts. It is the last time that you have your presence, at least as Chairperson, in the audience and in the Council. But of course you are not leaving Rome yet, luckily and for sure I will find another job for you to do. Thank you so much.

Ms Imelda SMOLČIĆ NIJERS (Chairperson of Finance Committee)

Thank you all for your hard work. I am not the boss. You are. Everybody. And listen, everybody, and obviously after all I do whatever they want, but do not say it. Thank you. You are the best.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

With this, distinguished delegates, dear friends, a hard day of work comes to an end. Indeed, we worked really hard. We got where we could get today again with positive inspiration, trying to find each other. I know for sure that this spirit of work will bring us where we have to be on Friday and also bring us through probably a difficult afternoon tomorrow, but with your spirit, with your admiration for the FAO, for your dedication to the FAO, we will get there.

In this respect, I really would like to thank again, the interpreters. Without you we would not be here or we would still work until 12:00 hours in the evening.

Thank you so much for your hard work today.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I would like to thank the technicians for their work, even with artificial intelligence.

Thanks to the messengers because they are always there for us with a smile. Thank you so much.

Applause***Applaudissements******Aplausos***

I leave you now for a very good rest. Tomorrow morning we start at 9:30 hours sharp. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 19:21 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 21

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.21

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
FIFTH PLENARY SESSION CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
26 April 2023

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:35 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 35
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 09.35
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 9. Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)**
Point 9. Rapport de la 135^e session du Comité du Programme (Rome, 13-17 mars 2023)
Tema 9. Informe del 135.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (Roma, 13-17 de marzo de 2023)

(CL 172/8)

Item 4. Mid-term Review Synthesis Report - 2022

Point 4. Examen à mi-parcours – Rapport de synthèse 2022

Tema 4. Informe de síntesis del examen a mitad de período correspondiente a 2022

(PC 135/2; FC 195/8)

CHAIRPERSON

I hope that you have had a refreshing evening and that you are fully energized for another exciting day of the 172nd Session of the Council. Of course, this morning we hope to make quite some progress.

We turn now to Item 9, *the Report of the 135th Session and 136th Session of the Programme Committee*, which you can find in documents CL 172/8, CL 172/16, PC135/2 and FC195/8.

I would like to remind Members that we do not have to address the Item 3, *Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024 25* and Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, because they are separate Items on the Agenda. Of course, Item 4, *Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2022* should be addressed, as it is an Agenda Item.

The introduction by the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, Ms Yael Rubinstein, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 9: Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 13-17 March 2023)

H.E. Yael Rubinstein, Chairperson of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee

I am pleased to present the Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee.

The 135th Session of the Programme Committee was held from 13 to 17 March, and its Report is submitted to the Council in document CL 172/8.

The Programme Committee had 17 items on its agenda, including nine for information. I would like to highlight the following matters for the attention of the Council.

The Committee reviewed the *Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25*, which will be directly addressed under item 3.

In relation to the *Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report – 2022*, Members appreciated the progress achieved in implementing the Programme of Work in 2022, welcomed the initiatives, mechanisms and approaches that enable the Organization to leverage its expertise, enhance the relevance, quality and timeliness of its contributions and maximize impact, particularly in the face of multiple global challenges, and also welcomed the Organization's increased visibility and the work on partnerships in maintaining food and agriculture on the global agenda.

The Committee welcomed the Interim Strategy of the Office of Evaluation (OED), commended the strategic approach that will be used to enhance OED's capacity and delivery of services over the coming years, and recommended the Council to endorse it. It also reiterated the importance of the independence of the evaluation function.

Regarding the *Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function – Term of Reference (draft)*, the Committee acknowledged the importance of having a formative evaluation that informs the development of the new FAO evaluation policy and agreed to convene a special session to finalize the terms of reference of the Evaluation and to submit its recommendations as soon as possible to the Council.

Members welcomed the follow-up reports on the evaluations of FAO's support to climate action (SDG 13) and the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017), and on the role and work on antimicrobial resistance, recognizing the progress in the implementation of the recommendations.

The Committee appreciated the update provided and acknowledged the progress made on FAO's engagement in and collaboration on integrated water resources management, and supported the priorities listed in the document, *Update on water resources management* (PC135/7). It also encouraged FAO to further address water efficiency and water stress, in line with its mandate.

I would like to invite you to review the Report of the 135th Programme Committee. For your convenience, this Report includes an executive summary and suggested action, prepared by the Secretariat.

I am pleased to provide any further explanations you may need regarding this Report.

CHAIRPERSON

I would now like to open the floor for the Members.

Mr ZHANG Xingwang (China) (Original language Chinese)

China appreciates the efficient completion of the meeting Report by the Members of the Committee and welcomes the Committee's discussions on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025 and supports the Council's approval of the interim Strategy of the Office of Evaluation (OED) and the Terms of reference for the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function.

We also appreciate Management's effort in carrying out consultations among Members in developing the Strategy on Climate Change and the Science and Innovation Strategy.. We also encourage the Secretariat to carry out more discussions to promote the efficient implementation. We are also happy and satisfied to see the progress made by FAO in the implementation of the 2022 Work Plan.

China appreciates that since his appointment, the Director-General has been actively carrying out his duties and has led FAO to comprehensively strengthen its capacity. He has been leading FAO to strengthen capacity building and in depth work in various areas and continuously strengthen partnership building and helping countries, especially developing countries, to improve food and agricultural governance and accelerating the implementation of 2030 Agenda and achieving the world without hunger.

In particular, during the difficult period of the pandemic, Director-General has led FAO to launch several important initiatives and implemented a series of practical projects, making positive contributions to improving the efficiency of low agricultural production and distribution and improving the nutrition and living conditions of rural people in developing countries, which has been highly recognized by all parties. The vision, pragmatism, competence and innovation demonstrated by Director-General, QU Dongyu, his work has been fully recognized by Members.

China has always supported the work of FAO and is willing to take up international responsibilities that are commensurate with its own development phase and capacity and its share of the regular FAO budget will be further increased in 2024 and 2025. This is the largest increase among all Members. China has donated three tranches of the China FAO Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation to FAO, providing effective support for developing countries to improve agriculture production and ensure food security.

China is willing to continue to deepen cooperation with FAO and Members to contribute to ensuring global food security and promoting the achievement of 2030 Agenda.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Can you kindly pass the floor to Zambia who will speak on this Agenda Item on behalf of Africa.

Ms Patricia Chisanga KONDOLO (Zambia)(Observer)

Zambia, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire make this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group (ARG) would like to express appreciation to the Chairperson, Ms Yael Rubinstein, for her leadership, and to the team for all their hard work. The Africa Group commends the work of the Programme Committee in assisting Council carry out its duties in relation to the development and implementation of FAO's programmes activities. The breadth of important matters presented for attention at this Council is therefore noted.

We welcome the findings of the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report – 2022, and appreciate the progress achieved in implementing the Programme of Work in 2022. We look forward for continued initiatives, mechanisms and approaches that enable the Organization to leverage its expertise, enhance the relevance, quality and timeliness of its contributions and impact, particularly in the face of multiple global challenges.

We wish to record the importance of effective and meaningful involvement by Members in the development of FAO strategies and policies, such as the Climate Change Strategy, and the Science & Innovation Strategy, as well as the FAO Data Policy. We stress the need to maintain a constructive and respectful dialogue both among Members and between Members and FAO Management in order to achieve FAO strategy of the Office of Evaluation (OED). We welcome the new vision and mission of OED, “OneOED”, aimed at producing high quality evaluations that meet the needs of FAO Stakeholders, and support the inclusion of capacity development and capacity building at both headquarters and decentralized levels.

The Africa Group welcomes the updates of the implementation of FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and the updates of the implementation of FAO Science and Innovation Strategy. We appreciate the open, inclusive and transparent consultative process in its development.

The Africa Group agrees with the 135th Programme Committee’s (PC) recommendations of underscoring the importance of Water Resource Management and encourage FAO to continue implementing programmatic initiatives with Members to advance Integrated Water Management in Agrifood systems.

We further echo the importance of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, in particular the need for additional technical and financial support, and commend the progress achieved and the positive impact being catalyzed by the Hand-in-Hand Initiative on the ground in beneficiary countries, in support of the national priorities.

The Africa Group welcomes the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as the recommendations on the matters within its mandate and looks forward to Council’s positive endorsement.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

The United States of America is prepared to endorse the Programme Committee Report and would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few Items. We strongly support the Programme Committee’s conclusions on the update on FAO statistics work for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and welcome Management’s commitment to hold additional consultations on the proposed proxy measure prior to further implementation.

United States is eager to work with FAO to ensure that any proxy measure accurately captures the wide diversity of sustainable agricultural practices. Proper measurement is key to understanding the sustainability trends in agriculture and to realize the SDGs. We are pleased with FAO’s commitment to adapting global agrifood systems to the impacts of climate change and look forward to the rapid completion and implementation of the FAO action plan on climate change.

We must ensure that our agriculture and food systems are ready for and adapted to the impacts of the climate crisis. Given the scale of the challenge, FAO must strategically support multi-stakeholder alliances, such as through the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM) and the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST).

On FAO’s Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) work, we concur with the Programme Committee that FAO should strengthen its efforts towards the achievement of the objectives of the action plan on AMR 2021 through 2025. We caution that the adoption of AMR targets not associated with the AMR action plan and not endorsed by FAO governing bodies could detract from FAO’s work on this issue.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

With regard to the Mid-term synthesis report, we note with appreciation the progress achieved in delivering the Programme of Work in 2022, and the positive outlook towards full implementation by the end of the biennium.

We highlight the importance of FAO's work on timely and neutral information to support decision-making by policy-makers and investors, based on scientific evidence, open access data, and multidisciplinary technical expertise.

On the proposal by Programme Committee on considering additional reporting lines on Indigenous Peoples, climate change, science and innovation, and implementation of UN development system repositioning, more information would be welcomed on how these areas are monitored by the existing Key Performance Indicators and what would be the changes to address those reporting dimensions.

As highlighted by the Programme and Finance Committee, we are looking forward to receiving information on the Organization's biennial achievements against the Key Performance Indicators, as well as operational and financial performance in the Programme Implementation Report 2022-23.

We take note of the FAO proposals on the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and concur with the recommendations of the programme committee.

With regard to the interim evaluation strategy, we support the endorsement of the strategy and take this occasion to reiterate the importance of an independent, transparent and efficient evaluation function.

On the evaluation of the evaluation function, we welcome the process initiated by the director of Office of Evaluation (OED) and believe that the findings of this work will be essential to develop a new evaluation strategy. In this regard, we believe that the "Norms and Standards for Evaluation" of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) adopted in 2017 constitute a reference to be followed in any evaluation process at FAO and in the UN system in general.

We stress the importance of FAO's work on integrated water resources management, in line with its mandate and in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies, in particular through the UN Water mechanism, and request further information on FAO's efforts to coordinate with other relevant international organizations.

On antimicrobial resistance (AMR), FAO's role in combating the global threat of AMR remains critically important. We attach the highest importance to the diligent and effective implementation of FAO's Action Plan on AMR for 2021-2025. The EU and its Member States remain fully committed to supporting FAO's efforts to that end.

On the Private Sector Partnership, we take note of the information provided by FAO. We underscore the importance of increasing transparency and of a broad approach on the partnerships agreements to be published on the CONNECT portal, in line with FAO's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement.

We welcome the update on the development of the action plan for the implementation of the Science and Innovation and Climate Change strategies and reiterate the importance of aligning them with other existing FAO strategies notably the FAO Strategy on Engaging the Private Sector and the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture.

With regards to the action plan for the FAO strategy on climate change, we will not enter into the details of the written comments. However, as a general comment, we believe that the expected outcomes, objectives and indicators of the strategy need to be elaborated in more detail, so that members get a better sense of what outcomes and impact are to be achieved.

With these remarks the EU and its 27 Member States endorse the Reports of the 135th and 126th Programme Committees.

Mr Arnaldo DE BAENA FERNANDES (Brazil)

Firstly, Brazil would like to express appreciation for Ambassador Rubinstein and the Secretariat of the Programme Committee for the smooth conduction and the quality of work of the 135th Session and the Special Session held last week.

With regard to the report, Brazil highlights the outcome of debates on the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget, especially concerning the importance of Management ensuring regionally balanced academic representation during expert consultation processes.

We were also glad to see clear reference to Management's initiative to organize informal consultations with Members on the role and effects of earmarked contributions in delivering the Strategic Framework. We appreciate the additional information provided by *Information Notes number 3* as we look forward to receiving more details on specific projects on the field being funded by voluntary contributions.

On discussions held on the *Follow-up Report on the Evaluation of FAO's Support to Climate Action*, Brazil praises the increased recognition, by the organization, of the importance of adaptation of agrifood systems to climate change.

In a moment when the Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COPs) starts looking more closely to the role of food and agriculture in climate change debates, it is fitting that FAO raises its profile on the promotion of adaptation as a condition for increased food security and nutrition.

In this context, we highlight the need for FAO to increase support to developing countries in accessing climate funding.

Brazil supports increased recognition of the contribution of local actors, particularly indigenous peoples, to climate action.

We look forward to seeing more regionally balanced academic representation in future work by FAO on climate-related issues linked to agrifood systems, natural resources, food security and nutrition.

Brazil appreciated the opportunity to discuss and receive information on FAO statistics work for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. Incidentally, it may be worth noting that the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals indicators (IAEG) is assembling a country-led working group in order to discuss FAO's proposal for a proxy for SDG 2.4.1.

Once again, we highlight the importance of FAO Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT) taking into consideration regional specificities in the parameters and methodologies applied in the production of statistics.

Regarding the updates on the implementation of the strategies on Climate Change and on Science and Innovation, Brazil would like to stress the importance of FAO providing support to developing countries to access financial resources and technical assistance to carry out climate action at scale.

We reaffirm the need to promote innovations and technologies aimed at fostering the development and strengthening of local and traditional agrifood systems, especially those produced by local producers and indigenous peoples.

Finally, the Brazilian Delegation endorses the draft of the terms of reference for the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function, as proposed by the Programme Committee. As registered in the reports of both sessions, we reiterate the importance of geographical and gender balance in the implementation of the terms of reference.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Pakistan is delivering this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Regional Group commends the excellent leadership of the Chairperson, Ambassador Ms Yael Rubenstein and the efficient work of the Programme Committee (PC) Members.

We welcome the discussions on the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2022, and echo the conclusion of appreciating the progress achieved in implementing the Programme of Work in 2022, as

well as welcome the Organization's increased visibility and the work on partnerships in maintaining food and agriculture on the global Agenda.

We would like to emphasize the Organization's unique position and role in transforming agrifood systems in accordance with national contexts, priorities, and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in the context of global challenges and recent trends and risks to global food security. We call for FAO's support to scale up actions in Asia and the Pacific region, with a particular focus on smallholders and family farming operations.

The independence of the evaluation function is important to optimize the work of the Organization. We welcome the FAO Evaluation Strategy and the Terms of reference for the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function, and fully support the endorsement by the Council of the Interim Strategy of the Office of Evaluation and the terms of reference, as recommended by the Programme Committee reports.

The Asia Regional Group also notes with appreciation the updates on water resources management, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and FAO's private sector engagement, and commends the progress achieved. We appreciate FAO's transparency and its continuous updating of progress to Members. We encourage FAO to focus on its mandate and continue to improve the Organization's visibility and leadership in the relevant areas, especially to scale up its support for developing countries in need.

Finally, we welcome the updates on the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031, as well as the implementation of FAO Science and Innovation Strategy. We would like to highlight the importance of the Action Plans to address the Strategies and appreciate Management's efforts to take into account Members' feedback on the draft Action Plans, and encourage Management to continue the process in particular with the FAO Regional Groups.

With these comments, Asia Regional Group endorses the Reports of the Programme Committee.

Mr Sultan J. Sh ALOTAIBI (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to give the floor to my colleague.

Ms Sadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan)(Observer)(Original language Arabic)

Sudan will make this statement on behalf of the Middle Eastern Group on the Report of the Programme Committee. We welcome the work done by the Committee. During its Session it discussed a number of Items and we would like to make the following comments.

The Group welcomes the work and the results of the *Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2022*. We welcome the work to be done to further the work in these initiatives and anything that will enable us to take up the global challenges of the day.

As concerns the new vision, we support the capacity building, both in Headquarters and in field offices. We are going to support Members in their regional approach to address climate change issues. It is worth noting that the resources of countries in the region is fairly limited. It is therefore necessary that the Organization be in a position to support the technical and scientific work done so as to mobilize resources and enable the implementation of such plans.

We welcome the efforts made in the field of antimicrobial resistance. In this respect, we must indeed exchange more on the topic. As concerns the Integrated Water Management, we have to work even more on this issue. Let us remind ourselves, that water scarcity in the Middle East is one of the most severe issues our countries have to face.

We have to have assistance to be able to tap into water and to develop the technological solutions that have been developed so as to use or promote a sensible use of water and agriculture and good governance in the management of water resources.

Managing livestock is also something that should be supported by the work of the Organization but we support the conclusions in the Report.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, nos gustaría agradecer a la Sra. Jiani Tian por la preparación de este documento y por su destacado compromiso en apoyo al trabajo del Comité de Programa y de todo su equipo también. Sobre el contenido del informe, me gustaría decir que, como Miembro del Comité de Programa y Vicepresidente del mismo, la Argentina se congratula por los fructíferos debates que tuvieron lugar durante el 135.º período de sesiones del Comité bajo la excelente conducción de mi amiga, la Embajadora Yael Rubinstein.

Todos los Miembros contribuyeron para abordar constructivamente el programa de trabajo y este elemento nos parece que debe ser destacado. Por otro lado, en cuanto a comentarios relacionados con puntos específicos del documento, nos gustaría indicar lo siguiente:

Primero, el trabajo de la Oficina de Evaluación bajo la dirección de la Sra. Cosentino es crucial para impulsar mejoras en los procesos internos y resultados de la FAO. Creemos que es necesaria y oportuna la propuesta de diseñar una estrategia de evaluación con foco en la construcción de capacidades, así como la visión de una sola Oficina de Evaluación y para ello se necesitan los fondos correspondientes.

Dos, al mismo tiempo, vemos un avance en la articulación de la Estrategia y el Plan de acción sobre cambio climático (2022-2031). Aquí tenemos una oportunidad para que la FAO muestre sus ventajas comparativas sin superponer sus tareas con otras agencias del Sistema de Naciones Unidas. Alentamos a que se siga integrando a los Miembros a través de consultas para terminar de establecer los parámetros del Plan de acción en tanto como documento vivo.

Tres, nos congratulamos por el involucramiento de FAO en la temática del agua, bajo la premisa de trabajar en las dimensiones de eficiencia en el uso del agua y estrés hídrico, de acuerdo al mandato de la Organización y sus responsabilidades de custodia de los indicadores 6.4.1 y 6.4.2. Dado el vigor que ha tomado este tópico, en especial tras la Conferencia de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Agua 2023, nos parece fundamental promover las ventajas comparativas de la FAO y evitar cualquier solapamiento innecesario con los mandatos de otras agencias.

Cuatro, siguiente en la temática de los indicadores, agradecemos el interés de la FAO por mejorar los abordajes para la recopilación de información estadística. Como es señalado en el informe, es clave alentar a que los países reporten de acuerdo a indicadores oficiales y consensuados por los Miembros. Y, en todo caso, fomentar la creación de capacidades para que todos los países puedan producir información bajo estos parámetros. Pensamos que la creación de un grupo de trabajo e información para revisar la propuesta de la FAO en el contexto del IAEG-SDG, es un buen avance para estimular la transparencia y la inclusión.

Cinco, con respecto a la implementación de la Estrategia de la FAO para la ciencia y la innovación, como lo mencionamos en otras oportunidades, pensamos que esta línea de trabajo representa el futuro de la FAO y contribuye a la evolución de los sistemas alimentarios. La biotecnología, la edición genética y las técnicas de mejoramiento son imprescindibles para afrontar los desafíos que nos plantea este contexto desafiante en materia de seguridad alimentaria. En un mundo interpelado por los alcances del ChatGPT, la FAO está para liderar. La ciencia y la tecnología representan la manera de estar a la cabeza de las soluciones necesarias.

Finalmente, deseamos destacar el trabajo, la transparencia y el profesionalismo de la Directora General Adjunta, Sra. Beth Bechdol, en la promoción de la sinergia entre la FAO y el sector privado. Pensamos que aquí también hay un área de trabajo que puede aportar múltiples beneficios a los objetivos de esta Organización.

Con estos comentarios, Presidente, damos la bienvenida al documento y apoyamos su endoso.

Mr Yoshimasa ARAMAKI (Japan)

Japan would like to read the following three points briefly with introducing Japan-led global and regional initiatives.

The first, regarding the mid and long term framework of FAO's programme, Japan appreciates FAO's flexible approach to add the future role of food security risks, such as the soaring food prices and food

access, high prices of the fertilizers and other agriculture inputs, economic downturns and rapid inflation caused by Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine.

In order to deal with these risks on a mid and long-term perspective, Japan emphasizes that the importance of the improvement of the ability to predict and analyse future technologies, especially in developing countries. To improve local productivities as well as supports to start-up companies which have such solutions. These are one of the main topics that we are discussing in the Group of Seven (G7) Global Security Working Group under the Japanese presidency.

The second, in order to make sure food security and nutrition in the mid and long term, it is important to strongly promote the improvement of agriculture production capacity in a suitable manner. Japan has been implementing a series of policies based on the Strategy of the sustainable food systems, named MeaDRI, Measures for achievement of Decarbonization and Resilience with innovation.

Since there exists no one size fits all solutions for achieving sustainable agriculture and food systems, it is important that each country finds its best way through information-sharing regarding initiatives and achievements in these countries.

In this regard, Japan recognizes that the United Nations (UN) Food System Stocktaking Moment (STM), in late July would be a beneficial opportunity for such an information-sharing. At the preparatory meeting of the STM, transforming food systems in Asia and the Pacific regional stocktaking held at the end of last month, Japan introduced the recent research achievements, such as technology catalogue contributing to production potential and sustainability in the Asian monsoon region. That contains improved wheat with utilizing much less fertilizer.

Lastly, as the Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu mentioned on the first day in his opening message, it is important to make sure of collaboration among UN Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) related to food issues, particularly Japan continues to encourage them to look for ways to strengthen their cooperation.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses États membres et souhaite ajouter les éléments qui suivent à titre national. Nous exprimons notre gratitude à Son Excellence l'Ambassadrice Rubinstein et au Secrétariat du Comité du Programme dont la France est membre, en particulier à Madame Jiani Tian. Premièrement, sur la fonction d'évaluation, nous remercions la Directrice du bureau de l'évaluation, Madame Cosentino et ses collaborateurs pour la qualité des débats avec le Comité du Programme.

La fonction d'évaluation est stratégique pour garantir une bonne efficacité de l'Organisation, permettre de contrôler l'atteinte des objectifs et vérifier l'adéquation entre les missions et les moyens; une exigence cruciale alors que les besoins sur le terrain excèdent largement les financements. Les évaluations doivent être réalisées de manière indépendante, les résultats publiés, les recommandations suivies et faire l'objet de réponse écrite de la Direction de la FAO. Les évaluations réalisées doivent également s'inscrire dans le cadre défini par les Nations Unies, en particulier les normes et règles d'évaluations du Groupe des Nations Unies pour l'évaluation (GNUE), adoptés en 2017.

Deuxièmement, sur l'approche «Une seule santé» et la résistance aux antimicrobiens. Il est important de privilégier un usage raisonné des antimicrobiens avec un objectif de réduction de leurs usages. Pour cela, l'approche «Une seule santé», notamment dans le cadre de la quadripartite, constitue l'approche adéquate afin de répondre aux interactions entre santé humaine, santé animale, et santé environnementale.

Troisième point, sur le secteur privé. Le secteur privé joue naturellement un rôle important pour renforcer la sécurité alimentaire et atteindre l'Objectif de développement durable 2. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Stratégie de la FAO relative à la mobilisation du secteur privé a prévu en 2020 un renforcement des partenariats avec la FAO. Mais ce partenariat, ne peut être légitime et facteur de réussite que s'il répond à des exigences pleines de transparence. Les publications actuelles sur le portail de la FAO, Portal Connect, consacré au secteur privé, doivent donc être complétées et couvrir l'ensemble des partenariats, comme cela a été demandé par la Stratégie de la FAO relative à la mobilisation du secteur privé et il nous semble que cette actualisation doit être absolument renforcée.

Quatrièmement, s'agissant du plan global pour la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie de la FAO en matière de science et d'innovation, la France a transmis plusieurs remarques sur la prise en compte des questions éthiques, la prise en considération de l'agroécologie et la cohérence nécessaire entre les différents plans d'actions, climat, biodiversité, science et innovation, conformément aux positions portées par l'Union européenne. Elle attend avec intérêt la nouvelle version du plan d'action. Nous soulignons l'importance d'une approche de la science et de l'innovation fondée sur les droits de l'homme, les libertés fondamentales, en particulier en ce qui concerne les nouvelles technologies et technologies de l'information et l'importance de l'exigence de déontologie, y compris la pleine transparence sur les affiliations des contributeurs au rapport de la FAO.

Cinquièmement, sur la nutrition, nous saluons la mise à jour sur ce sujet et nous rappelons que la France aura le plaisir d'accueillir en 2024, le Sommet nutrition pour la croissance après l'édition réussie au Japon. Nous souhaitons poursuivre les échanges en ce qui concerne l'alimentation scolaire.

Enfin, nous saluons l'arrivée des nouveaux directeurs du Bureau du changement climatique, de la biodiversité et de l'environnement (OCB) et du Bureau de l'innovation (OIN), et leur souhaitons tous nos vœux de réussite. Avec ces observations, nous invitons le Conseil à approuver le rapport du Comité du Programme.

Ms Ruth MALLET (Australia)

Australia congratulates the Programme Committee on its successful 135th session and expresses its gratitude for the additional efforts made to conclude the work on the terms of reference (TORs) for the evaluation of the FAO's evaluation function in the 136th Special Session.

Australia notes the desire to modernise and make a more fit-for-purpose Office of Evaluation (OED) which we strongly encourage. The interim evaluation strategy should lead to effective and targeted evaluations that can support the continued improvement and efficacy of FAO's programs and initiatives as well as internal processes. We look forward to following the process of the evaluation of FAO's evaluation, we endorse the TORs for the Steering Committee that would guide the process and hope for a concise set of recommendations that can be wholly embraced by the Organization.

We welcome the FAO's willingness to exchange on the topic of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and look forward to receiving further information at an informal briefing. In relation to SDG indicator 2.4.1, we reiterate that it is important to recognise that sustainable agriculture comes in many forms and differs from country to country, and that reporting methodologies should avoid a prescriptive or "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Australia also welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement of the mutual relevance of Integrated Water Resources Management to Indigenous Peoples. It is critical to ensure that the cultural authority, deep knowledge, and expertise of First Nations people is better incorporated into water decisions.

Finally, regarding the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2022, we commend FAO on the implementation of its work programme in 2022 and endorse the conclusions of the Programme Committee's 135th Session in this regard. In particular, we welcome the efforts of the organisation to increase visibility of FAO's work and keep global hunger goals in the spotlight. We also appreciated the verbal confirmation by Management at the Programme Committee that a number of priority issues such as Indigenous People's work which was not sufficiently reflected in the paper would be elaborated more fully in future reporting.

With these comments, Australia endorses the recommendations and conclusions of the 135th and 136th Sessions of the Programme Committee.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

We thank the Programme Committee and the Chairperson for their Report and for their work and we endorse the Report's recommendations and conclusions. We would like to make a few points on priority themes that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) would like to strengthen our engagement on with FAO and our fellow Members across the regional groups.

First, climate change and climate finance. We welcome the progress made in mainstreaming climate change action in FAO's work, its engagement with the global funds and FAO's efforts to improve

Reporting on climate financing. The integration of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) policy markers to results reporting is a welcome development. This will help us to better track progress on countries, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and national action plans, including our own.

Second, links between climate change and nutrition outcomes. We would like to highlight the Programme Committee's conclusions on FAO's climate change evaluation in this respect. We endorse conclusions that stress the need for FAO to increase support to developing countries to access climate funding and in particular to support the most vulnerable countries to adapt their food systems to climate change and to secure healthy diets. We hope the food systems stocktake can provide clear priorities for this work.

Third, One Health and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The UK welcomes joint working between the quadripartite organizations following the official incorporation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). We look forward to working with FAO and the quadripartite organizations and all Members to lead an ambitious United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on AMR in 2024 that links to wider priorities, including food security and improved sustainability of food systems.

The UK is particularly keen to follow progress being made on the international FAO antimicrobial resistance monitoring platform. The UK underlines the importance of recommendations which encourage FAO to consolidate its work on AMR through a strong programmatic approach. Part of this approach is ensuring a central coordination and management structure that is supported by dedicated core funding in the allocation of the next biennium.

Finally, we look forward to sustained efforts to implement the climate change and science and innovation strategies. When we read these strategies, it is obvious that we need to recognize the global nature of the challenges and yesterday's discussions, we talked about multilateralism quite a lot and that means, I think, to implement these strategies we are going to need to work across regional groups in FAO more effectively to identify and share knowledge and resources that can help tackle those challenges, and we want to support the comments made by Pakistan and Sudan earlier in this respect.

And it is a critical point because no regional group has a monopoly on resources, including knowledge and technical know-how across the areas that those strategies highlight. To take one example, how are we going to develop drought-resistant crops to feed growing populations in regions already being affected by climate change and which we know will be more affected by climate change in the future. There is a wide variety of technical know-how, say, on genetic resources that are spread across the globe. So, we will need to work more effectively as a multilateral group of countries to get effective solutions.

Therefore, we look forward to working with FAO and with the Membership to identify where we can cooperate more effectively across the areas outlined in the Programme Committee Report to identify priorities, resources and build stronger international action for sustained results.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada appreciates the leadership of the Programme Committee Chair in guiding the Committee through its work and notes the collegial spirit of Committee members and thanks the Secretariat for its ongoing work to support the Committee.

We can support many of the interventions already made and have a few specific points. We note particularly the importance of the interim evaluation Strategy which we believe will help provide more decision-relevant information to the Organization, help strengthen impact and harness learning and sharpen future programming. We fully endorse its application.

We also believe the evaluation of the Evaluation function is an essential step to better understand the functioning and opportunities presented by this key division and emphasize the importance of ensuring the division is resourced appropriately to deliver on the updated Strategy. We look forward to the launch of the evaluation process on the basis of the terms of reference that have been agreed by the Programme Committee in the near future.

We further note the importance of the evaluation of the Organization's work on climate change and consider this as an important input to the development and implementation of the new action plan of the Strategy on Climate Change and expect to see the findings reflected in the work going forward.

We underscore the importance of the work on private sector engagement and encourage those efforts to continue, including in relation to publishing information through the "Connect" portal. With regard to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators, we welcome upcoming briefings on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and would appreciate any information on their scheduling. We also look forward to further engagement on potential proxy indicators while ahead of their rollout.

We appreciate the Secretariat's good work in presenting the findings of the Programme Committee in a more accessible format to facilitate the decisionmaking by this Council and we are pleased to endorse the Committee's conclusions and recommendations and we take note of the Committee's considerations.

Ms Consolata Nkatha MAINA (Kenya)

Kenya aligns itself with the statement made by Zambia on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. We recognize FAO's unique position and role in transforming agrifood systems in accordance with national contexts, priorities and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

We appreciate FAO's work on strengthening the statistical capacity of countries in producing food and agricultural statistics. We stress the need for FAO to provide consistent and timely information, including statistics taking into consideration the needs of Members. We request for enhanced efforts to support developing countries in increasing their capacity to collect and assess data of official Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators by building capacity and for integrated technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.

We acknowledge the importance of the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and its action plan in supporting the implementation of recommendations 3 to 12 and appreciate the steps already taken by FAO Management to achieve them.

My country as well as the entire region have been adversely affected by the effects of climate change. We urge FAO to increase support to developing countries in assessing climate funding, particularly grants. We encourage FAO to increase recognition of the contribution of national and local actors, particularly indigenous people, women, youth and micro and smallholder farmers to climate action, including by supporting these groups to access climate finance.

We recognize the importance of implementing the strategies on climate change, on science and innovation and on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors in a coordinated manner and as an integral part of the programme of work for improved effectiveness and impact. Chair, we call for additional technical and financial support to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and appreciate the ongoing improved flow of information and progress through the updated website and briefing to Members.

In conclusion, Kenya welcomes the findings of the Programme Committee as well as the recommendations.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia)

Malaysia appreciates the efforts taken by FAO to present the findings and recommendations of the Programme Committee in more accessible manner to facilitate Member States in their decision-making process.

Malaysia appreciates the references to the importance of providing consistent and timely information and statistical data and expert consultation processes that enables regionally balanced academic representation. Malaysia calls on FAO to equally place emphasis on fisheries management and) fishing nexus.

Malaysia welcomes the Interim Strategy of the Office of Evaluation, OED's consideration to include the use of evidence and evidence-based knowledge in decision making since this concept providing Member States with evidence and lessons learned from previous crises. OED plays significant role in contributing evaluative evidence for an informed response by embracing research, seeking innovations

and leveraging technology in its evaluation. By continually share with Member States and stakeholders the relevant knowledge, expertise and learning, we could reach more participation and involvement from Member States, key target groups and stakeholders, particularly, in light of the current global food security situation.

Malaysia takes note of the Committee's request for FAO to strengthen its efforts towards the achievement of the objectives of the Action Plan on Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) 2021-2025 and welcomes the follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role on work on AMR.

On water resources management, Malaysia recognises the importance of water as a critical resource for sustainable development and reiterates that there is no one size fits all solution to Integrated water resources management (IWRM). Collaborations with Members, strategic partners and other relevant UN agencies are significant in navigating economic recovery post-pandemic, finding innovative ecosystem-based solutions to address water quality and improved access to water for increased agricultural productivity. For Malaysia, we aim to reach 98 percent coverage of clean water for rural areas and 90 percent for sewerage coverage by the end of 2025. In this regard, Malaysia applauds FAO's continuous efforts and actions relating to IWRM in its programmatic initiatives that will enable Member States to advance their water management approach and implementation in agriculture and food systems. Further, Malaysia also encourages FAO to intensify its efforts and strategic approaches to financing and investing in water infrastructure and management, including through private funding sources.

Malaysia takes note of FAO's commitment to providing regular updates to Members States on Hand-in-Hand Initiatives, on FAO's private sector engagement, on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and the UN Statistical Commission, on FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022 – 2031, on the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and on the United Nations Decade of Action of Nutrition 2016 – 2025. Malaysia underscores the importance of incorporating global and inter-regional perspectives in all FAO's action plans.

Mr Birger GJELSTEN VEUM (Norway) (Observer)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We align ourselves with the European Union (EU) statement. I would like to start out by thanking Ambassador Yael Rubinstein for her steady management of the meetings in the Programme Committee. We want to highlight a few issues from the Committee of particular importance for the Nordic countries.

Firstly, on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), the Nordic countries welcome FAO's role and work on AMR. In that regard, we will emphasize the following points which we consider particularly important to achieve the objectives of the FAO action plan on AMR. Strengthening the One Health approach, building on close cooperation between health, agriculture, aquaculture and environmental sectors. Recognizing the need to include AMR-sensitive interventions in climate mitigation efforts. Reducing the need for antimicrobials by reducing the factors driving the needs. Promotion of responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials in food production. Phasing out the use of all antimicrobials in animals for routine prevention of disease and growth promotion as well as antimicrobial agents used as pesticides for plants. And, lastly, ensuring that prescribing of antibiotics is not influenced by economic incentives.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries underline the need to translate the normative work into action. We welcome the establishment of the AMR Multistakeholder Partnership Platform. We expect and urge FAO to continue its quadripartite cooperation based on quality data, knowledge and scientific and technical expertise.

Secondly, on climate and biodiversity, global warming and climate change increasingly impact all aspects of food systems. The Nordic countries welcome the follow-up Report on the evaluation of FAO's support to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG13), Climate Action, and the implementation of the 2017 FAO Strategy on Climate Change. We expect FAO to continue mainstreaming climate action across its programmes in line with the current climate Strategy.

For the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) we encourage FAO to focus on linking climate and food systems, including the loss and damage Agenda in close collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the broader United Nations system and international financial institutions (IFIs). We welcome FAO's work on anticipatory action, acting early before disasters strike and protecting rural livelihoods from climate shocks is key.

We urge FAO to collaborate closely with other actors of disaster preparedness. Moreover, we welcome FAO's participation at the biodiversity COPs and encourage FAO to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Diversity Framework and of FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity.

We encourage FAO to work closely with farmers, fisherfolk and food producers to strengthen their role in the agri food chain. It is essential that they are provided tools to better meet challenges related to climate change and biodiversity loss.

Economic, social and environmental sustainability is closely inter-related. In that regard, we underline the importance of continuing to give prominence to gender equality, acknowledging the role of rural women and youth and small-scale producers as well as including indigenous people's rights and knowledge. We warmly welcome the FAO Report on women in agrifood systems. That should be put to good use.

To conclude, food systems contribute significantly to the alarming threats to climate and biodiversity and must also be part of the solution. We call on FAO to be in the forefront for the urgently needed transformation towards sustainable food systems, including at the Stocktaking Moment in July, prior to the SDG Summit in September.

With this, the five Nordic countries endorse the Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Nous remercions le Secrétariat pour la préparation de ce document et saluons aussi l'excellent travail fait par Son Excellence Madame l'Ambassadrice Rubinstein, Présidente de ce Comité. La République du Congo s'aligne à la déclaration faite par la République de Zambie au nom du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique et souhaite saluer la tenue du forum sur l'investissement du mois d'octobre 2022 dans le cadre de l'Initiative Main dans la main. Celle-ci a été une occasion d'aider les pays participants à cette initiative de mobiliser les financements autour de leurs priorités nationales dans la perspective de la transformation des systèmes alimentaires, et de l'accélération de la réalisation des Objectifs de développement durable (ODD). Nous suggérons que le Conseil se penche sur la formalisation de la tenue de ce forum, qui sera une bonne vitrine pour les pays en développement, d'attirer les financements, y compris les financements climatiques, en faveur des petits producteurs et des plus pauvres, sous l'égide de la FAO.

Enfin, la question de l'eau doit être alignée à toute les stratégies liées à l'adaptation au changement climatique en fonction des priorités nationales, car nous ne devons pas continuer à compter sur l'agriculture pluviale pour atteindre les objectifs de sécurité alimentaire.

Avec ces quelques commentaires, nous appuyons donc ce rapport et sur ce, je vous remercie Monsieur le Président.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I turn the floor to the Chair of the Programme Committee, Ms Yael Rubinstein, I have to turn to Ms Beth Bechdol because she is celebrating her 50th birthday, and she is fully matured now!

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Now I turn the floor to the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, Ms Yael Rubinstein.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Programme Committee for the excellent cooperation and for the friendly atmosphere we had during our discussions. I would like also to thank my friend Ambassador of Argentina, my Vice-Chairperson, for his good advice as always. Lastly, I would like to thank our devoted Secretary, Ms Jiani Tian and her team, for her great work and for spoiling us always and all the time.

CHAIRPERSON

I have three speakers on behalf of Management so I hope that they can be really brief.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

In response to France and the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in 2024, it will be great to coordinate and to exchange ideas on how we can support. Of course, FAO will be part of that.

In terms of the date and the date indicators, we are coordinating informal briefings and there is a group of ideas which is being formed. Finally, we will provide the dates of the potential briefs and on the Andean Agricultural and Livestock Health System (SASA) preparedness there will also be a new flagship allocation on the costing of disasters that will be delivered this year to FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to Ms Maria Helena Semedo.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

Very briefly some comments regarding the Climate Change Action Plan. I would like to thank all the Members for their comments. We received the comments, they have been all integrated. We are finalizing the version with the comments we receive from the Members, and it will be very soon shared with all for information.

Regarding the comments on climate finance, I must say that we have been following the guidance received from FAO Governing Bodies to give priority to developing countries. Just for an example, the three last projects approved by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) were for Bolivia, Cambodia and Philippines. We presented to the Global Environment Facility (GEF8) around 42 proposals, and they are mainly regarding developing countries – and we will continue to work with the countries in order to support them to present consistent proposals to the vertical funds for their approval.

Regarding Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), we are committed to implement the AMR action plan as endorsed by the Members. We are giving priority to AMR on how to reduce the use of anti-microbials and the prudent use of anti-microbials. We are working with the global leader groups on AMR under the leadership of the Prime Minister Ms Mia Amor Mottley and as it has been said, we are preparing the 2024 general assembly meeting on AMR.

Just to conclude, to say that we are committed also on the water, following the meeting in New York where I think FAO was very visible, to work with the countries on their water road map and to bring the water as the team, for the biennial team of FAO, starting at the FAO Conference where we expect to come up with some policy recommendation and some guidance on how to take forward this team to improve the integrated use and management of water – it could be water scarcity and also floods has been added to the document to be presented before you during the Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the Director of the Office of Evaluation, Ms Clemencia Cosentino.

Ms Clemencia COSENTINO (Director, Office of Evaluation)

First, I would like to thank Ambassador Ms Yeal Rubinstein and all Members of the Programme Committee (PC) for having been so supportive in these first few months of my tenure, as I considered what changes to bring to the Office of Evaluation (OED), and I am particularly grateful both to the Programme Committee and to the Council for their approval of the OED Strategy.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Chief Scientist.

Ms Ismahane ELOUAFI (Chief Scientist)

Just to make it very short, we hear the comment from the Council in regard to keep the multiplicity of solution, to really pay attention to the fact that the different countries have different capacities but also different contexts – and within that we are really very much in alignment that we need to really support more countries to harness science and technology and to make sure that they have access to knowledge, and there is a need for it definitely - and we are ready for it - that FAO plays a crucial role in providing technical assistance, but also access to knowledge and access to technology and innovation for all countries.

Within that, I want to just give an example on the role that FAO played in gene editing. We first put forward a very important paper that was very well balanced on gene editing and food system, that was followed by another paper on gene editing and food safety, looking particularly at application for food safety, and in both papers what it shows really is that FAO is prepared to play a very leading role, but also provide a natural forum for constructive dialogue and extent of knowledge and by promoting discussion on the application of technology like gene editing.

The other point I want to mention is for the Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is a breakthrough, and we have seen it and are looking at it as it is developed right there in a very quick manner. Definitely FAO is working on the ethics in artificial intelligence, to the role of ethics in AI.

My last point is really that all the areas that were mentioned, be it water, be it climate change action and adaptation – particularly adaptation – require scalability of technology and innovation. Therefore, it requires both the investment, to continue investment in the windows of research, in developing varieties with draught tolerance and heat tolerance, in making sure that all our animals and fish can withstand the 1.5 degree or the 2 degrees that is more probable.

All of this requires both investment in science and investment in scaling up the science. I am really glad that this Council and this Programme Committee (PC) have covered very crucial areas as we are talking about transformation of agrifood systems, and particularly adaptation to climate change.

CHAIRPERSON

With that we have concluded the remarks of the analysis of the Management and we turn now to the draft conclusions. We put them on the screen, of course, our usual business.

19. The Council reviewed the Reports of the 135th and 136th Sessions of the Programme Committee, noting that the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 (Reviewed) and Programme of Work and Budget (2024-25) and the Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative would be reviewed as separate items, and:

- a) noted the considerations of the Programme Committee on the Progress report on the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 and the updates on:
 - i. *FAO's private sector engagement;*
 - ii. *FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and the UN Statistical Commission;*
 - iii. *the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031;* and
 - iv. *the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy;*
- b) agreed with the conclusions of the Programme Committee on the *Mid-term Review Synthesis Report – 2022*, the *Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function – Terms of Reference (draft)*, the *Update on water resources management* and the follow-up reports on:
 - i. *Evaluation of FAO's support to climate action (SDG 13) and the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change (2017);* and
 - ii. *Evaluation of FAO's role and work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR);* and
- c) endorsed the recommendations of the Programme Committee on the *FAO Evaluation Strategy: An Interim Strategy for the Office of Evaluation to build an architecture for*

excellence in supporting Management and Members' culture of evidence in decision-making;

- d) endorsed its recommendations on the terms of reference for the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function and the oversight structure.

20. With the above observations, as stated in paragraph XX, the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Reports.

Of course, it reflects the numbering of the Report.

Can we agree to the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Since Zambia is talking on behalf of the Africa Group on this Agenda Item, please at any time, do not wait for us, if they ask for the floor please give them the floor because they are Observers.

CHAIRPERSON

I always like efficiency and effectiveness in the Council. I certainly will do it.

Mr Arnaldo DE BAENA FERNANDES (Brazil)

Very briefly, I believe the proposal is very good. Just a small amendment, the Programme Committee (PC) also analyzed the implementation of another document, which was the Plan of Action on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). So, I believe that the last subparagraph here should be the implementation of the Plan of Action on AMR, including to keep the parallel between this subparagraph (a) and the subparagraph (b) which follows and which includes also the AMR issue.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this insertion?

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

C'est en fait une question parce que sauf erreur, mais on ne voit pas à l'écran, il me semble que la question de la résistance aux antimicrobiens est mentionnée au point (b), est-ce que ça répondrait à la question du Brésil ? Au point (b), mais comme on ne voit pas à l'écran. Voilà, vous voyez, c'est le (b), point (ii). Est-ce que ça répond à la question du Brésil ? Ou c'est quelque chose de différent ?

Mr Arnaldo DE BAENA FERNANDES (Brazil)

I believe that both are correlated so as to reinforce the work, and in this case here in subparagraph (b) it is just the evaluation of the FAO role, but it does not mention any specific document. I believe the Action Plan, which you Sir have also helped us to build, should be mentioned here to reflect our discussions when we discussed that document and which guides us on the work on that issue.

CHAIRPERSON

I see after your explanation France nodding, so can we agree now to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b)?

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I was wondering why subparagraph (b) starts with "*agreed*" and not "*endorsed*"? Should it not be "*endorsed*"?

CHAIRPERSON

We place "*endorse*" and we delete "*with*". Is that agreeable? I see nodding in the room in a positive way then.

We go to subparagraph (c). Can we agree to subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

I go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

We go to paragraph 20. I do not see any objections.

Therefore, the Report of the Programme Committee is adopted with consensus.

Item 11. Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (Rome, 6-8 March 2023)

Point 11. Rapport de la 118^e session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (Rome, 6-8 mars 2023)

Tema 11. Informe del 118.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (Roma, 6-8 de marzo de 2023)

(CL 172/10)

CHAIRPERSON

At the start of the day let us keep working in this atmosphere. Now we turn to Agenda Item 11, *Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (Rome, 6-8 March 2023)* and the document before the Council is CL 172/10.

Members are reminded not to make statements pertaining to Item 15, *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization* and the Code of Conduct for Voting, as well as the participation of Private Sector Observers in the Session of FAO Governing Bodies, because these Agenda Items will be separately dealt with in the Council.

The introduction by the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, Ms Alison Storsve has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 11: Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (Rome, 6-8 March 2023)

Ms Alison Storsve, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

During the 118th Session, held from 6 to 8 March 2023 in hybrid modality, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), after having considered the relevant documents prepared by the CCLM Secretariat, makes specific recommendations for decision by the Council on:

- the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization;
- the proposal to amend the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC); and
- the Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization (GROs) as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports.

The CCLM considered the process of election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and brings to the attention of the Council for its endorsement, its conclusions regarding these items.

Finally, the CCLM considered the update on:

- the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system;
- the participation of private sector as observers at the FAO Governing Body sessions; and
- the status of recommendations presented in the JIU Report Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function (JIU/REP/2020/1).

The Committee informs the Council of the CCLM's considerations with respect to these items.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for Members to react.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We welcome the Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We further welcome the thorough review undertaken by the CCLM within its mandate and its due consideration of the processes involving the wider Membership in addressing the specific issues referred to it by the Council or the Director-General.

In view of the foregoing, the Asia Regional Group endorses the CCLM's recommendations for decision by the Council, notably on: a) the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization; b) the proposal to amend the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC); and c) the Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports.

We also endorse the conclusions of the CCLM on the process of election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO). We look forward to the Council's endorsement of the CCLM's recommendations and conclusions.

Further, we request the Council to note the CCLM's consideration of: a) the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations Common System; b) the participation of private sector as observers of the FAO Governing Body sessions; c) the status of recommendations presented in the JIU Report, *Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function*, which appears in document JIU/REP/2020/1.

Since I have the floor, in its national capacity the Philippines aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group statements and, as a Member of the CCLM, the Philippines wishes to express its appreciation for the excellent leadership of the Chairperson, Ms Alison Storsve of the United States of America, and the efficient working of the CCLM, and fully endorses the Report of the 118th Session of the CCLM.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

We acknowledge the strong leadership of Ms Alison Storsve to guide the work of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). Could you kindly give the floor to Algeria, who is speaking on behalf of the Africa Group on this Agenda Item?

Mme Lamia BEN REDOUANE (Algérie)(Observateur)

L'Algérie fait cette déclaration au nom du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique conjointement avec la Guinée Equatoriale et le Burkina Faso. Tout d'abord, nous souhaitons féliciter l'ensemble des membres du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (CQCJ) et sa Présidente pour le travail effectué lors de cette 118ème session qui a abouti au document qui nous est présenté devant cette assemblée.

Aussi, nous adressons notre plus haute appréciation à l'égard des membres du secrétariat pour leurs efforts qui ont facilité la tenue de la session et l'élaboration du document qui est entre nos mains. Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique apprécie le travail important et minutieux mené par les membres du CQCJ ainsi que la pertinence des questions abordées. Le Groupe les remercie pour la rédaction exhaustive du rapport et des conclusions de cette session.

Néanmoins, nous souhaitons mettre en relief un certain nombre de points traités qui nous semble cruciaux, même si les deux premiers points seront discutés un peu plus tard. Je dirai quand même un bref mot à leur sujet. Donc, le projet de résolution de la Conférence concernant les Procédures relatives au rétablissement par la Conférence du droit de vote des États membres en retard dans le paiement de leurs contributions revêt une grande importance pour les États du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique.

Nous nous félicitons à cet égard de l'adoption par le CQCJ du document relatif à ce sujet, et nous félicitons le CQCJ pour sa pertinence dans les corrections et les enrichissements apportés, qui ont améliorés le texte. Cette question a été longuement débattue par l'ensemble des États lors des sessions

informelles, tenues sous l'égide du Président indépendant du Conseil dont nous relevons avec grande satisfaction ses efforts et sa détermination pour l'aboutissement de ce processus.

Tout comme le point précédent, nous nous réjouissons que le CQCJ ait adopté le projet de Code de conduite volontaire sur les procédures de vote visées à l'article XII du Règlement général de la FAO et qui concerne les élections au poste de directeur général de l'Organisation.

Faisant suite à d'innombrables réunions informelles tenues également par le Président indépendant du Conseil, qui ont parfois connues d'âpres débats, nous nous félicitons de voir que le CQCJ a approuvé le projet ayant fait l'objet de consensus informel. Tout en veillant à rester conforme aux Textes fondamentaux de l'Organisation, et en application des huit principes généraux, ce projet s'inscrit dans l'optique d'améliorer les modes et procédures de vote pour le poste de directeur général, en vue d'un déroulement serein dans des conditions optimales de la procédure électorale.

Toujours dans la continuité des réformes et des améliorations des procédures de travail, il nous plaît de constater que le CQCJ, en conformité avec son mandat, s'est penché sur la proposition de modification du Statut de la Commission de la fonction publique internationale (CFPI) et qu'après examen, le CQCJ a confirmé que ses propositions n'impliquent aucun changement du cadre juridique interne de la FAO, mais permettront d'aligner l'Organisation avec les autres organisations appliquant le régime commun et par ce fait même, d'appliquer le régime commun des Nations Unies.

Dans le même sillage, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique accueille favorablement les recommandations du CQCJ concernant la procédure à suivre pour l'élection du président du Comité des forêts, en soulignant que l'un des points cardinaux de toute présidence d'un Comité du système onusien reste le principe de rotation géographique. Le Comité des forêts a en effet affirmé avoir dûment compte de ce principe afin d'assurer une rotation équitable de la fonction de président entre les régions, ce qui nous satisfait et de ce fait, nous permet d'appuyer les recommandations du CQCJ à ce sujet.

La question de la participation d'acteurs du secteur privé en tant qu'observateur aux sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO, est une question qui requiert toute l'attention des membres du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique. Et au même titre que le CQCJ, nous attendons avec grand intérêt la note conceptuelle qui est en cours d'élaboration par le Président indépendant du Conseil, laquelle entamera très certainement un cycle de réunions à ce sujet.

Enfin, nous affirmons avoir pris note que la Conseillère juridique et les membres de son équipe ont présenté des exposés oraux aux membres du CQCJ, sur l'examen des questions de compétence au regard du régime commun des Nations Unies, ainsi que sur les recommandations figurant dans le rapport sur l'examen des progrès accomplis par les entités des Nations Unies dans le renforcement de la fonction d'enquête.

Nous les remercions pour leurs efforts et nous les encourageons à poursuivre dans cette lancée. Nous exhortons par ailleurs le CQCJ à inclure de plus amples informations sur la teneur de ces exposés dans leur rapport à venir. Pour conclure, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique a bien pris note du travail méticuleux effectué par le CQCJ, ainsi que des recommandations de son rapport et approuve les indications et les directives proposées dans le document CL172/10.

Je profite de cette occasion pour présenter à titre personnel des sincères remerciements pour la présidente du CQCJ. En mon nom personnel, et je pense que tous les membres du CQCJ dont je fais partie m'accompagneront dans nos remerciements à Madame Alison Storsve qui a présidé le Comité pendant ces deux dernières années, qui a fait un travail exceptionnel, qui nous a vraiment guidés et j'avoue que nos travaux se sont toujours terminés par un consensus dans un esprit de fraternité, un esprit très collégial.

Ms Alison Storsve, je te souhaite vraiment beaucoup de succès dans tes fonctions à venir.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.

We would like to thank the Chair and the members of the Committee for Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for the leadership and commitment. As some of the topics discussed in the CCLM will be subject to separate agenda items, we are going to address the remaining points.

We welcome the CCLM consideration of the process of election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) as recommended by the Council at its 171st Session. In particular, we note that the rules governing the election of Chairperson of COFO are similar to the rules of the other technical committees, including the equitable rotation principle among the regions. We also note that the legal framework governing the process of the election of the Chairperson of the COFO is consistent with the General Rules of the Organization. We reiterate that the authority to amend its Rules of Procedure is vested to the technical committees, which shall review any matter in accordance with its functional needs.

We fully support the conclusion of the CCLM on the proposal to amend the International Civil Service Commission Statute and on the Review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system. In particular, we recommend to the Conference to accept the amendments proposed to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Statute.

Finally, we express our full agreement with the conclusions of the CCLM on the implementation of recommendation 7 of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Report on the Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function. We urge management to take immediate steps to implement the recommendation, and to submit a draft procedure for further consideration of the Governing bodies.

With these remarks the EU endorses the remarks of the CCLM.

Mr Sultan J. Sh ALOTAIBI (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

We would like to kindly ask you to give the floor to Algeria, on behalf of the Near East.

Mme Lamia BEN REDOUANE (Algérie) (Observateur)

Nous voudrions faire cette déclaration au nom du Proche-Orient et du Nord de l'Afrique. De prime abord, nous remercions les membres du Comité des Questions Constitutionnelles et Juridiques (CQCJ) pour le travail effectué lors de la dernière session qui s'est tenue en mars 2023. Nous remercions de même les membres du Comité qui ont déployé tous les efforts possibles afin d'élaborer le document qui vous est aujourd'hui présenté. Nous notons avec satisfaction le travail énorme qui a été effectué concernant un grand nombre de questions importantes, la coordination a été excellente parmi les membres du Comité et le Secrétariat. Ce travail a abouti à un grand nombre de recommandations importantes.

Premièrement, concernant le projet de résolution pour le rétablissement de la Conférence du droit de vote des États membres en retard de leurs paiements de leurs contributions. Notre région a suivi les développements et les discussions à cet égard, eut égard à leurs extrêmes importances. Nous saluons l'adoption du CQCJ du document y pertinent, et nous la remercions pour les additions présentées afin d'améliorer le texte. Deuxièmement, le projet de code de conduite volontaire sur les procédures de votes visé à l'article 12 du règlement général de l'Organisation.

Concernant l'élection du Directeur Général de l'Organisation, nous saluons l'adoption du CQCJ du projet de code de conduite qui a été l'objet d'un grand nombre de réunions. Nous notons qu'il est important de s'engager à respecter le texte selon les règles de l'organisation et que les procédures de votes doivent s'appliquer aussi au Directeur Général. Ce document peut être adopté après l'examen de la Conférence. Troisièmement, la participation des entités du secteur privé en tant qu'observateur lors des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO.

Eu égard à l'importance de ce sujet, nous voudrions recevoir plus d'informations au sein du CQCJ à ce propos et nous voudrions que le Président Indépendant du Conseil nous transmette le document d'information qu'il est en phase d'élaborer. Il nous faut approuver les amendements de la CFPI en assurant le respect du règlement général de l'organisation, cela nous permettra de travailler en harmonie avec les entités onusiennes et dans le cadre du régime commun des Nations Unies.

Eu égard au cadre juridique pour l'élection du Président du Comité des Forêts, il nous faut respecter le principe de rotation géographique. Notre région ne peut que remercier la Conseillère Juridique pour ses [inaudible] et pour les recommandations qui nous ont été présentées concernant le CCI. Nous voudrions saluer le travail effectué par le CQCJ et nous remercions le Comité pour les excellentes recommandations qui nous ont été fournies.

Ms Anna LARSON (Canada)

Canada would like to thank the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for her strong leadership throughout her term, and we appreciate the Members of the CCLM for their diligent and essential technical and advisory work.

We are pleased to endorse the Report in full and we look forward to discussing specific elements later in the Council Agenda.

Mr LI Bo (China) (Original language Chinese)

China appreciates the professional and efficient work carried out by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We thank the Chairperson of the CCLM for the excellent leadership and appreciate the important role played by the Secretariat.

First of all, China welcomes the CCLM's Draft Resolution on the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, the technical adjustments to the Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct of Voting procedures, and for checking various language versions for consistency.

Secondly, regarding the proposal to amend the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), China supports the CCLM's recommendations. Further, regarding the process of election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), China appreciates the detailed comparisons of the election rules of different Technical Committees by the CCLM.

China notices that the regional rotation rules of COFO differs from other Technical Committees, so we recommend that the Council endorse the CCLM's conclusion, namely the authority to amend its Rules of Procedure lies with each Technical Committee, in accordance with its distinct nature and functional requirements.

With this statement, China supports the Council to endorse the recommendations contained in the 118th Report of the CCLM.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation supports the recommendations of the Report and is grateful to the Members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for their contributions to strengthen the administrative and legal principles of operation of the Organization.

As concerns these various Items on the Agenda, can I look at the following points that were discussed during the CCLM Meeting?

As concerns the amendment to the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), we support them; they were put forward on the basis of the UN General Assembly recommendation.

As concerns the review of the legal set-up, this is in line with the measures concerning the information and instruction as concerns the places of service.

As concerns the investigation function, we are coming closer in line with the general system in the United Nations family and the intergovernmental nature of this is being relied upon.

As concerns the possibility to rely on this and to rely on the investigation functions of the United Nations, the Office of Internal Oversight (OIG), we support the conclusions of the Report.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Permítame, en primer lugar, extender un agradecimiento a la Sra. Alison Storsve, Presidente de este Comité, por el trabajo que ha desarrollado orientando eficientemente el trabajo del Comité y por haber alcanzado en todos sus informes y en todas sus reuniones resultados siempre por la vía del consenso.

Un agradecimiento especial a la Secretaría, a la Oficina Jurídica y, en especial, a la Sra. Asesora Jurídica por la preparación de todas las reuniones de este Comité, que se han desarrollado de forma eficiente.

Nos vamos a expresar sobre algunos puntos del informe cuando los tocaremos. Simplemente quería expresar este agradecimiento, y con estos comentarios queremos refrendar el informe.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia joins others in thanking the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), as well as its Members for their contributions during the 118th Session of the CCLM. We welcome the CCLM's Report and we are pleased to endorse its recommendations and conclusions in full.

Noting that particular elements of the CCLM's work will be discussed in other Agenda Items of this Council Session, we take the opportunity to highlight one of the findings of the CCLM Report, relating to the election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO).

In particular, we note that the rules governing the election of the Chairperson of the respective FAO Technical Committees are similar and consistent, that there is also adherence to the principle of regional rotation within COFO, and that the authority to rotate the Chairperson position among Regional Forestry Commissions regions lies within COFO.

Australia sees considerable value in this regional rotation and we strongly support retaining current practice, recalling, as others have done, that the authority to amend Rules of Procedure rest with the Technical Committee itself.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other speakers on my list so I turn now to Management, to Ms Donata Rugarabamu, to make some remarks.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Thank you very much, Members, for your very positive comments about the work of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We are, you are, very fortunate to have a Body comprising Members that guides the work and the implementation and fills the gaps in the legal framework. So few organizations have such an important body, indeed.

In this regard though, such a body could not work without the commitment of all its members, and indeed the very positive, efficient and constructive engagement of its Chairperson. I wanted to just join the Members in thanking the members of the Committee and, most particularly, Ms Alison Storsve, for the great contribution she has made to the work of the CCLM and, through that, the work of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

I look to Ms Alison Storsve, as to whether or not she wants to make some remarks.

Ms Alison STORSVE (Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

Thank you to colleagues for all the positive comments about the our Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)'s work. I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude and esteem for the work of the extraordinary team who support the CCLM – Ms Annick Van Houtte, Sara and the Legal Counsel, Ms Donata Rugarabamu – and the entire team who we do not always see in the meetings, but who include expert speakers on legal and technical topics, who always arrive thoroughly prepared and ready for a wide and unpredictable range of questions.

This is a great team that often works quietly and in the background and I think really preferring not to draw so much attention to itself, but it is their work that makes ours, the Members, so smooth and productive in the CCLM and on this Council.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to chair the CCLM this biennium. It has been very important to me to keep the focus on the Members because I think when we serve in these roles it is not about the

Chairperson, it is about the Membership, reflecting and synthesizing what we hear from the room, and then supporting their ability to provide advice to this Council.

Finally, I would like to make special mention of the interpretation team and the technical staff who support the CCLM. Perhaps more than in any other Committee their work requires precision, because they are interpreting interpretations of rules and procedures and they are helping Members to characterize those rules and procedures clearly and consistently across the six United Nations languages, so that we can most effectively contribute to the work of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

With that we now go to the adoption of the conclusions of the Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

25. The Council reviewed the Report of the 118th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), except for the *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization* and the *Code of Conduct for Voting*, which are taken up under separate agenda items.

26. The Council:

- a) endorsed the recommendations of the CCLM on the proposal to amend the Statute of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC);
- b) endorsed the conclusions of the CCLM on the process of election of the Chairperson of the Committee on Forestry (COFO); and
- c) noted the CCLM's considerations on:
 - i. the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system;
 - ii. participation of the private sector as observers at FAO Governing Body sessions; and
 - iii. the status of recommendations presented in the JIU Report, *Review of the State of the Investigation Function: Progress made in the United Nations System Organizations in Strengthening the Investigation Function* (JIU/REP/2020/1).

27. With the above observations, as stated in paragraph 25, the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Report.

We now turn to Paragraph 25. Can we agree to paragraph 25? I see no objections.

We turn to paragraph 26. Can we agree to paragraph 26? I do not see any objections.

We go to paragraph 27. I do not see any objections. With that we have concluded and adopted the Report of the CCLM by consensus.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Ms Alison Storsve, it is not with pleasure that we are seeing you good to go. I was thinking, why are you leaving the most beautiful, eternal city of the world for a city of mountains and water? But of course I understand, duty calls.

I really would like to thank you for your hard work, your dedication, but also your legal experience in moving forward the work of the CCLM, and indeed what was said by Ms Donata Rugarabamu, the Organization should be proud that we have a Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

We often see that we have some small fights amongst each other and that we have to rely on legal matters interpretation, etc. You steered the work of the CCLM always very productively and I would say when speaking about the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), they could find savings because you always did it in one day. But really, thank you so much for how you did your work, your leadership, and I wish a lot of success, a very successful next step in Geneva.

Applause

*Applaudissements**Aplausos***Item 12. Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (10-13 October and 19 December 2022)****Point 12. Rapport de la 50e session du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (10-13 octobre et 19 décembre 2022)****Tema 12. Informe del 50.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (10-13 de octubre y 19 de diciembre de 2022)***(C 2023/21)*

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we now turn because work goes on, to Item 12, *Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)*, and the document before you is *C 2023/2021*.

The introduction by the Chairperson of the CFS, Mr Mr Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 12: Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (10-13 October and 19 December 2022)

H.E. Gabriel Ferrero y de Loma-Osorio, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security

I have the pleasure to introduce to you the Report of the 50th Plenary Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

The 50th Session of the CFS was held in hybrid modality from 10 to 13 October, and on 19 December 2022; its final report is submitted to the Council for endorsement in document C2023/21.

Participation included 25 Ministers and 9 Vice-Ministers, representatives of 129 Members and 13 non-Members, and delegates from the UN system, financial institutions, civil society, research organizations, private sector associations, and philanthropic foundations.

At the Session, Members and Participants discussed and deliberated on six issues that are very relevant to global food security and nutrition, and that formed the backbone of the CFS 50 Plenary agenda.

First, the Committee expressed deep concern over the global food crisis and called for strengthening coordinated global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the crisis, in line with the CFS reform document.

Second, the Committee deliberated to conclude the work on the preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, with a renewed approach and a renewed sense of shared responsibility.

Third, the Committee decided that it will prepare the next MYPoW 2024-2027, which is most critical for recovering from the crisis, progressing on the transformation of food systems, and advancing on the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, the MYPoW process is the foundation of the CFS's work, and a cornerstone of global action to arrive at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of food security and nutrition.

Fourth, the Plenary concluded to take forward the CFS policy convergence process on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Tools for food security and nutrition.

Fifth, the Members endorsed new Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition and decided to move them into actions.

Last, the Plenary discussed how to contribute to boost the means of implementation of SDG 2, boosting responsible investment in sustainable agrifood systems, building on the experiences of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems 10 years after the issuance of the guidance.

In conclusion, I would like to thank again the Members for their valuable engagement throughout and towards the conclusion of the CFS 50, last 19 December.

The full report of CFS 50 was adopted by consensus and it is available on the CFS website.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Members to make comments on this Report.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Para comenzar, nos gustaría agradecerle a la Secretaría del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria por la elaboración y presentación del documento sobre los avances del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) en el marco de su Programa multianual de trabajo. No escapan a nadie las dificultades que enfrentamos durante la Sesión plenaria 50 del Comité para alcanzar consensos y poder concluir nuestras deliberaciones.

En ese sentido, pensamos que la lección aprendida nos debe servir para evitar escenarios similares en el futuro y al mismo tiempo para buscar adecuar el ángulo de abordaje a la presentación de los informes del estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI), sin por ello adentrarnos en deliberaciones que tienen lugar aquí en el Consejo de la FAO. En contraposición, pensamos que el punto sobresaliente de la Sesión 50 fue la adopción del documento sobre recomendaciones de política para la promoción del involucramiento y empleo de jóvenes en la agricultura y los sistemas alimentarios que, sabiamente, condujo el Embajador de Suiza, Pío Wennubst. A él nuestro reconocimiento y agradecimiento ya que, de hecho, este documento avanza sobre la cuestión fundamental de cómo estimular la participación de nuevas generaciones en la producción sostenible de alimentos.

Por otro lado, entendemos como positivo el mensaje que se obtuvo sobre la posibilidad de avanzar en una nueva etapa de negociación para concluir las directrices voluntarias sobre género. En ese sentido, queremos agradecer a los representantes de Panamá y de Finlandia por el excelente trabajo realizado. Como lo expresamos oportunamente, la Argentina le otorga un valor central a este documento que debe representar un valor agregado y, en simultáneo, entiende que la finalización de este ejercicio únicamente puede ser fruto del consenso. Sin este factor principal, pensamos que no solo la temática se debilitará, sino que los eventuales alcances de las directrices se podrían ver reducidas.

Como abordaje general, pensamos que el nuevo Programa multianual de trabajo deberá enfocarse en aquellas temáticas donde el CSA tenga la capacidad de utilizar sus ventajas comparativas, sin solaparse con líneas de trabajo en curso y sin plantear cronogramas de negociación de difícil cumplimiento para las delegaciones. Por eso, creemos que la negociación de un documento anual basado en lenguaje multilateral mejoraría no solo la participación de todos los Miembros sino también la facilidad para alcanzar consensos.

Adicionalmente, nos gustaría comentar sobre la mención a las conclusiones del segmento ministerial sobre el estado de la seguridad alimentaria en el mundo 2022. Y la dinámica de trabajo en el marco de la convocatoria que planea realizar el comité para la coordinación de respuestas a las crisis de seguridad alimentaria actual. Con relación al primer punto, entendemos que no es correcto hacer referencia a conclusiones que no fueron negociadas por los Miembros, mientras que sobre los eventos que se planean convocar del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria a la fecha existen dudas en varios de los países integrantes del buró del Comité. Como principio general pensamos que no es apropiado endosar conclusiones que no hayan sido debatidas formalmente, como así tampoco asignar un rol al comité que vaya más allá de su mandato.

Con estos comentarios, tomamos nota del documento.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

The United States welcomes the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)'s 50th Plenary Report. While negotiation of the 50th Report required an additional Session, it was essential that CFS unequivocally call out the war in Ukraine as one of the major drivers of the ongoing global food crisis. This was highlighted in the 2023 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report and in many delegations' statements.

We urge CFS to re-examine its approach to Plenaries, which we see as a vital opportunity for stakeholders from across food systems to share ideas and build momentum for policies that can reduce

global food insecurity, and for CFS 51 in October 2023, we recommend CFS should avoid negotiating Plenary text and return the focus to high-level engagement and dialogue. We look forward to a fruitful Plenary in October.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Quisiera iniciar agradeciendo al Embajador Gabriel Ferrero por su dedicación y encomiable labor como Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria y por el informe de la sesión 50.

Como ya lo hemos expresado en otros momentos, sigue siendo preocupante el estado de la inseguridad alimentaria a nivel mundial. Datos que hemos observado en la edición 2022 del estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI). Como todos sabemos, las causas de esta inseguridad vienen de los conflictos, el cambio climático, la inestabilidad económica, el alza de los precios de insumos y alimentos, entre muchos más. Quisiera llamar la atención que sobre esas causas vemos un efecto desproporcionado en las personas pobres, las personas con discapacidades, los productores de alimentos en pequeña escala y los agricultores familiares, las mujeres, los jóvenes, las personas mayores y los niños; lo que implica un aumento constante del riesgo de hambruna en todo el mundo, particularmente en las poblaciones más vulnerables.

Para los países en desarrollo como Costa Rica, la labor del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria es de gran importancia para encontrar soluciones a la crisis a corto, medio y largo plazo con miras al logro de sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios más resilientes, sostenibles e inclusivos en consonancia con la Agenda 2030 que permitan seguir luchando por la seguridad alimentaria. Sigue siendo necesaria más financiación para el desarrollo sostenible y acceso a recursos para alcanzar el ODS 2 a través de proyectos que, además, posean alto contenido de sostenibilidad ambiental. Nótese esto importante: alto contenido de sostenibilidad ambiental.

Sobre los trabajos del comité, nuestro país desea manifestar el apoyo para continuar trabajando en las políticas para la promoción de la participación en el empleo de los jóvenes en los sistemas agrícolas alimentarios, así como continuar el proceso inclusivo basado en el consenso para alcanzar el acuerdo respecto a las directrices voluntarias sobre la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y cuya aprobación estaría prevista en la 51.ª Sesión del comité en el próximo mes de octubre. Además, apoyamos la elaboración del estudio por parte de Ganesan sobre el fortalecimiento de los sistemas alimentarios urbanos y periurbanos para alcanzar la seguridad alimentaria y afianzar la nutrición en el contexto de la urbanización y la transformación rural para que sea presentado en el 2024.

Con estos comentarios, aprobamos el informe del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria en su 50.ª sesión. Muchas gracias.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)

Kenya presents this statement on behalf of the African Regional Group together with South Africa and Zambia. The African Regional Group congratulates the Committee of World Food Security (CFS) for the successful conclusion of the 50th Session and the Report thereon. We appreciate the multistakeholder representation of this Committee, which is key in delivering on the mandate of CFS, especially Sustainable Development Goals (SDG2) recognizing that we are in the last decade of action.

The African Regional Group (ARG) recognizes that gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is essential to achieving all the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, as well as ensuring food systems that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The African Regional Group however regrets that there was no agreement on the draft text of the voluntary guidelines on the gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition by the end of the third round of the open-ended working group meetings.

We acknowledge the efforts made by all stakeholders involved in the consultations and negotiations of this draft voluntary guidelines, and express our gratitude to the Co-Chairs and the Chair of CFS for their efforts. We reaffirm our support for an inclusive and consensus-based process to achieve agreement on these voluntary guidelines for presentation to the 51st CFS Plenary Session.

We recognize the need to strengthen coordinated global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the ongoing global crisis in line with CFS reform document. We acknowledge our appreciation for the work of the High Level Panel on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPFSN) to prepare the Report on data collection and analysis tools for food security and nutrition, and call for greater collection, analysis and dissemination of data on all the mentions of food security and nutrition, including on age, gender statistics, and statistical information on disabilities.

We take note that food systems, food security and nutrition require significant improvement in the production and availability of and access to high quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated official statistics in the fields of food security and nutrition, agricultural and rural development. We call upon multilateral financial institutions and the donor community to mobilise resources to fund global and national initiatives aimed at closing data-finding gaps in the fields of food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural statistics.

The African Regional Group endorses the CFS policy recommendations on promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition as a key intergovernmentally agreed voluntary and non-binding global policy framework in support of country-led efforts towards achieving food security and nutrition.

We encourage Members and all stakeholders to document lessons learned from using the policy recommendation and to share progress and experiences with each other, as well as with the Committee. This will assist in assessing the policy's continued relevance, effectiveness and impact based on the principles of participation, transparency and accountability, as well as ensuring youth participation in sharing of progress and in monitoring implementation.

The African Regional Group agrees that responsible investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems aligned with the SDGs is essential for enhancing food security and nutrition and in supporting the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and the appropriate responses, such as a significant increase in financing, sustainable and inclusive food systems are required to address the four pillars of food security and nutrition and the SDGs.

We reiterate that responsible investment in agriculture and food systems remains key to addressing food security and nutrition challenges and to successfully overcoming hunger and malnutrition.

To conclude, Chair, the African Regional Group takes note and supports the recommendations of the Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

Mr Antonius Yudi TRIANTORO (Indonesia)

Indonesia delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We appreciate the report, the information and the recommendation contained in document of the *Provisional Agenda C 2023/1* on the Agenda Item.

We take note the work of the Committee as one of the important Committees within FAO in cooperation with World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), given its inclusive nature.

It is therefore our common responsibility to continue working together to ensure the work of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is more impactful amidst the current global food insecurity.

In this regard, there are at least three points where we can assist:

First, to support the added value of CFS as a platform to discuss the food security and nutrition.

In this context, the convening power of CFS is very significant to discuss the developments, trends as well as emerging and critical issues on global food security and nutrition; to help facilitate Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) closer collaboration; to make sure all stakeholders' perspectives are being heard.

And most importantly, is seeking a common solution to global food security challenges.

Second, to support CFS to act in concert guided by its mandate.

The CFS has a very important mandate to promote the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in order to achieve a world free from hunger.

The CFS, with its mandate, has a very strategic position in developing robust voluntary guidelines and policy recommendations to offer countries different science-based tools and options.

These policy products are crucial in elaborating and assisting national action plans and programmes for the eradication of hunger considering countries' national contexts, necessities, capacities and priorities.

Lastly, to support CFS to promote the use and implementation of its products we support the CFS to be more focused on the uptake.

This is why, not only do we support more disseminations, follow-ups and reviews of CFS products, but also the sharing of experiences and good practices on the use and application of them.

In conclusion, Asia Group stands ready to continue working together in an efficient, effective and coherent manner to make the work of the CFS even more impactful.

With this statement, we support and endorse the report of the 50th Session of CFS.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia and Ukraine.

We appreciate the continued high quality of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) reports and would like to express our great concern regarding the negative global trends of increased food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms, as outlined in the latest SOFI-report. With only 7 years left, the report clearly shows that we are not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2).

Global food security and nutrition were already under pressure as a result of poverty, economic inequalities and slowdowns, conflicts, the climate- and biodiversity crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors. The food crises have been further exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine which has resulted in soaring food prices and disrupted global food value chains. It has also caused increasing problems with the availability and accessibility of global food commodities, fertilizers, and other agriculture inputs.

The EU and its Member States are committed to working together with the Committee on Food Security (CFS), highlighting its important role as the foremost inclusive, multi-stakeholder, intergovernmental platform for promoting world food security, nutrition, and sustainable food systems and for coordinating global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the food crisis and for realizing the right to adequate food.

We call on FAO to strengthen its support to the CFS together with the other Rome-based agencies, as a symbol of joint ownership and effective RBA cooperation.

The EU and its 27 Member States welcome the endorsement of the CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition. We would also like to welcome that the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism joined the consensus. We encourage FAO and the RBAs to provide full support in implementing these guidelines, and to promote further uptake, dissemination and use of CFS policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines, recalling it is first and foremost the responsibility of CFS member states to foster implementation of CFS products.

The EU and its 27 Member States reiterate their commitment to an inclusive and consensus-based process for finalising the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition and their subsequent endorsement at CFS 51. We appreciate the use of UN agreed language as a valuable basis to build consensus and underline the voluntary nature of these guidelines.

We welcome the development of the CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition. We are committed to work together with other CFS members and stakeholders to ensure the adoption of an ambitious document at CFS 51.

Finally, we acknowledge with appreciation the CFS HLPE-FSN Note on Critical, Emerging and Enduring Issues for Food Security and Nutrition in preparation for the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027, which is to be submitted for consideration and approval at CFS 51.

With these remarks, the EU and its 27 Member States welcome the Report of the 50th Session of the CFS and support its submission by CFS to Conference for endorsement.

Ms Mariana MARSHALL PARRA (Brazil)

Brazil would like to thank Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero for the presentation of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) 50th Report. As a permanent enthusiast and a vivid supporter of the work of the Committee since its creation, in 1974, Brazil was also one of the central actors in the debates that led to its reform, in 2009.

Since then, we continue to be a steadfast promoter of the vision of the committee, embedded in its reform document, and I quote, *“The CFS will work towards a world free from hunger, where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”*.

Brazil actively and constructively participated in all activities and negotiation processes of the Committee last year. We would like to express our satisfaction to having approved the Policy Recommendations on *“Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition”*. I would also like to take this opportunity to express, once again, Brazil’s appreciation for the excellent leadership of the Rapporteur, Swiss Permanent Representative, Ambassador Pio Wennubst.

Regarding the voluntary guidelines on *“Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in the context of Food Security and Nutrition”*, Brazil would like to thank and express its appreciation to the work of both rapporteurs, Ms Tania Gren and Mr Tomas Duncan, as well as to the Secretariat for the tremendous efforts in trying to reach an agreed document.

Although we have not reached consensus on this document during the three previous phases of negotiations, Brazil is confident that we will be able to achieve a consensual document before the plenary in October.

I would like to use this opportunity to share our recent national developments in the multi-level governance of food security and nutrition.

In Brazil, the promotion of food security and nutrition security is a shared responsibility between the federal, state and local governments.

The National Food and Nutrition Security System (SISAN) was created to coordinate these efforts, counting, in its structure, with participatory councils at federal, state, and municipal levels.

Within this system, Brazil has also recently reframed the Interministerial Food and Nutrition Security Chamber (CAISAN), comprised of representatives of 24 federal ministries that relate to Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) implementation.

Brazil values, supports and promotes the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the only committee dedicated exclusively to eradicating hunger and achieving food security. Therefore, Brazil highly discourages any attempt to dilute the agenda of the Committee, for the risk of losing its uniqueness and added value.

Finally, I would like to stress that we are confident that the Committee will approve a new and effective Multi-Year Program of Work for the next four years, with a focus on how to address the structural causes of hunger and food insecurity.

With that, Brazil welcomes and endorses the recommendations.

Ms Josylene C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines aligns with the Joint Statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by Indonesia in supporting and endorsing the Committee on Food Security (CFS) 50th Session report and recommendations contained in document *C 2023/21*.

The Philippines wishes to highlight the CFS' call to strengthen coordinated global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the global food crisis.

Within the respective mandates of existing international fora, the Philippines enjoins prioritizing coordinated global policy responses in five areas: 1) addressing the impacts and threats of climate change; 2) keeping trade transparent, predictable and fair; 3) boosting productivity and resiliency of agri-food systems; 4) fostering inclusivity and empowering all peoples, regardless of their gender, status or conditions; and 5) promoting data and evidence-based policy-making and program development for food security and nutrition.

The Philippines supports the CFS's efforts in promoting knowledge and technology exchange and effective adaptation practices that would help countries, especially the more vulnerable ones like the Philippines, enhance their resilience to climate change and other natural disasters. This would have to be done in congruence with processes under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and obligations based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Philippines looks forward to the successful uptake of the CFS policy recommendations promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, which the Committee has endorsed. Implementation of the recommendations can empower the youth in becoming successful agents of agri-food systems transformation for poverty reduction and food security.

The Philippines also looks forward to an inclusive and consensus-based process to achieve agreement on the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, so that these may be presented to the 51st CFS Plenary Session.

We also hope for the development of an agreed set of policy recommendations on strengthening food security and nutrition data collection and analysis tools, for presentation to the 51st CFS Plenary.

Finally, on the preparation of a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2024-2027, the Philippines proposes that priority be given to promoting uptake of CFS Products, as it is necessary to increase global visibility and use of CFS Policy Products (Voluntary Guidelines, Policy Recommendations) at the local, national and regional levels. This could guide progress towards the transformation to sustainable food systems and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

We underscore that international cooperation and capacity-building are crucial for the effective implementation of these CFS products.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of the CFS as the foremost inclusive platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. It welcomes the CFS' commitment to put the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the center of its work (until 2030) through integrated policy products that support country-led implementation of the SDGs.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

Japan aligns with the joint statement of Asia Regional Group delivered by Indonesia. In addition to conflicts, climate change and COVID-19, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has exacerbated global food security crisis even further. With this in mind, Japan has just hosted the G7 Agricultural Minister's meeting.

The Minister's meeting confirmed the importance of, one, increased both productivity and sustainability of agriculture; two, utilising national production resources in a sustainable manner; three, disseminating innovations to local agricultural communities.

In promotion of sustainable food systems, Japan underlines the importance of youth. It is our responsibility to succeed sustainable food systems to the future generations. In this regard, Japan welcomes the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy recommendations on promoting youth

engagement and employment. With this statement, Japan welcomes the Report and conclusions of the 50th Session of CFS for the Council's endorsement.

Ms Ekaterina VYBORNOVA (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation supports the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). We will continue to work actively with the Committee. Our delegation intends to seek full compliance with the mandate of the Committee, which is to help countries harmonise policies and implement in a coordinated manner the recommendations aimed at ensuring sustainable food security and nutrition, and monitor progress towards world food security.

We note with regret that at the 50th Session Member States tried to politicise the work of the Committee and focus on the qualification of conflicts. Once again, we state the position of Russia as stated during the Commission. The CFS is not the right forum to take political decisions. In this respect, Russia would like to disassociate itself from paragraph 10(d) as the CFS went beyond its mandate in working on this.

It is also disappointing that despite regular appeals over the last few years from a group of countries, including the Russian Federation, the leadership of the Committee and the high level panel of experts have failed consistently to address the impact of unilateral coercive measures adopted in violation of the UN Charter and of international law to food security and nutrition. Moreover, they ignore the relevant statements of recognized international experts, including the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, and the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on unilateral coercive measures.

History has shown that hiding information or sweeping inconvenient issues under the carpet only makes things worse, and on occasion leads to irreversible consequences. We therefore consider the inclusion of paragraph 11 in the Report to be justified. We expect the CFS, which presents itself as a highly inclusive platform on food security and nutrition, to provide Members with the information on the impact of sanctions on food security and nutrition and thereby facilitate informed decision-making.

Lastly, but not least, Russia considers that it is important to finalise the work on the voluntary guidelines and gender and we are indeed ready to continue to work towards a consensus. Once again, we call on the Members of the CFS to focus on issues, which are directly related to the Committee's mandate.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We appreciate the challenging work of the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the persistence of the Members and participants to conclude the work of the Committee in late 2022. We hope that a constructive spirit can rein at future Sessions of the Committee with a view to efficiency and effectiveness in its important work that can focus on substantive issues. The work of the Committee underscores the importance of having sustained multistakeholder dialogue on global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the global food crisis. We are all Members of humanity's crew and an open discussion is an essential ingredient to identify concrete options in fulfilment of the Committee's mandate.

We are pleased with the endorsement of the CFS policy recommendations on promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition, under the leadership of the Swiss Rapporteur, and we look forward to efforts by Members, participants and stakeholders, including the FAO, to foster their application and uptake.

We remain committed to an inclusive and consensus-based process to achieve agreement on the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, and we recognize the important work to date of the previous Co-Chairs from Panama and Finland. We will engage constructively on the basis of the principle of no steps backwards, recognizing the narrow landing zone for agreement on the sensitive but crucial dimension of food security as we highlighted in our intervention under Item 5 yesterday.

We note the process that has been launched on data collection and analysis tools for food security and nutrition, under the able leadership of Kenya, as a basis for the preparation of policy recommendations and we underscore the important link to the FAO's work on data and statistics. Canada encourages

open discussion to avoid overlap and maximise synergies and we emphasise the importance of considering uptake and impact throughout the process, as also noted by Indonesia on behalf of the Asia Regional Group, and the Philippines, amongst others.

Finally, we reiterate the call to the three Rome-based Agencies to honour their agreement to equally share the costs of the CFS Secretariat budget as a symbol of joint ownership and shared commitment to the Committee. With these observations, we are pleased to endorse the Council-related aspects of the Report.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia expresses its appreciation to the Chairperson of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and we also extend our thanks to the Committee Secretariat. We were pleased that the CFS was able to conclude its deliberations in December 2022, and we endorse the findings and recommendations of the report of this 50th Session of the CFS in full.

As we said at CFS in October, and subsequently in December, the global food security crisis remains of deep concern. Countries around the world continue to face the burden of rising hunger, driven by, inter alia, the challenges of climate change, rising cost of living, the COVID-19 pandemic and conflicts.

It is in this context that the CFS and its stakeholders must continue working together efficiently and purposefully, to support country-led processes to improve food security and nutrition, including through the development of voluntary policy guidance and recommendations.

Sustainable and resilient agri-food systems depend on research and innovation, a commitment to open markets and rules-based international trade, and overall continued collaboration. Australia looks forward to working with all stakeholders, including through the CFS and the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), to develop food systems solutions that are fit-for-purpose, informed by scientific evidence, and appropriate to the contexts, needs and priorities of each country and region.

We look forward to the successful conclusion of the 2020-23 Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW), including the finalisation of a valuable and ambitious set of voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, and the development of concrete and useful policy recommendations as part of the data workstream. Recalling the voluntary and non-binding nature of CFS products, we look forward to an inclusive and participatory process that facilitates Member consensus.

As we move towards the beginning of the 2024-2027 MYPoW – with the shadow of global hunger and food insecurity sadly looming ever larger – the importance of adhering to the CFS mandate and focusing our joint efforts on the development of products that are demand-driven and add value will be fundamental to further strengthening of the CFS at this critical time.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président. La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union Européenne et de ses 27 États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. La France remercie le Président du Comité de la Sécurité Alimentaire Mondiale (CSA), l'Ambassadeur Gabriel Ferrero, pour la conduite des travaux du Comité. Nous réitérons notre soutien au rôle fondamental du CSA, comme l'ont déjà exprimé plusieurs collègues et je voudrais citer notamment le Costa Rica ou encore le Brésil.

Nous saluons la participation de haut niveau de nombreux pays lors de la dernière plénière du CSA qui témoigne de l'importance accordée par les membres au rôle de ce Comité dans le contexte actuel d'aggravation de la sécurité alimentaire et de la malnutrition dans le monde. La France continuera d'appuyer les efforts du Président pour mobiliser le CSA dans la réponse à la crise alimentaire mondiale.

Nous saluons en particulier l'adoption des recommandations politiques sur l'engagement et l'emploi des jeunes dans les systèmes alimentaires. Un sujet prioritaire pour la France et pour de nombreux pays ici, nous le savons. Nous saluons bien sûr le rôle de l'Ambassadeur Suisse, Monsieur Piot

Vanburst dans ces négociations. Nous demandons à la FAO d'apporter tout son soutien pour la mise en œuvre de ces nouvelles recommandations.

Nous nous réjouissons également du soutien de tous les membres du CSA pour poursuivre les négociations qui doivent aboutir à l'adoption de directives volontaires sur l'égalité de genre et l'autonomisation des femmes et des filles dans le contexte de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition. Je voudrais remercier les deux co-facilitateurs du Panama et de la Finlande, Madame Tania Grène et Monsieur Thomas Duncan pour leur excellent travail. Les membres ont insisté sur l'importance d'un processus inclusif qui ne pourra être effectif que si l'interprétation dans toutes les langues officielles des Nations Unies est assurée.

Le soutien de la FAO au CSA est essentiel à cette fin. De même que l'appui des membres attachés au respect du multilinguisme et à l'inclusivité des travaux du CSA. Et la France y prend toute sa part. La France salue en outre le début des travaux visant à adopter des recommandations politiques sur la collecte et l'analyse des données pour la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition ainsi que ceux visant à l'adoption d'un nouveau programme de travail pluriannuel pour le CSA.

Certains collègues ont souligné le rôle des parlementaires. Il nous semble en effet que le rôle des parlementaires est essentiel pour mettre en œuvre concrètement dans chaque pays les recommandations et les travaux du CSA, et nous avons noté que le Chili organisera en juin prochain un Forum Global Parlementaire Contre la Faim et la Malnutrition et ça pourrait être l'opportunité utile d'évoquer ce sujet important du rôle des parlementaires dans la mise en œuvre des produits du CSA.

Enfin, la France réitère son regret de voir la FAO organiser le Forum Mondial pour l'Alimentation la semaine de la Journée Mondiale de l'Alimentation qui était réservée traditionnellement jusqu'ici à la plénière du CSA. Nous appelons la FAO à organiser à un autre moment le Forum Mondial de l'Alimentation et nous appelons à un retour dès que possible de l'organisation de la plénière du CSA aux dates habituelles et à des dates rapprochées avec la Journée Mondiale de l'Alimentation.

Avec ces remarques, Monsieur le Président, nous soutenons le rapport du Comité et de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et nous invitons également à inclure le président du CSA dans les prochaines réunions informelles des trois agences romaines.

Mr GUANG Defu (China) (Original language Chinese)

China aligns with the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by Indonesia. We also thank the Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for his work.

China has taken notice of the Session Report of CFS to the Council. China recognizes that the 50th Session of the CFS provided a platform for stakeholders, including governments, international organisations, civil societies, private organisations, and the charities to find ways to respond to global food crisis.

However, at the same time, China has noted that during the negotiations of the Report, some of the content was very political, deviating from CFS's vision, namely stakeholders coordinate and joint efforts support a country-led process that aims to eliminate hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all. This has led to unnecessary voting and breaks of the meeting, which severely impacted its efficiency. So China, again, calls on CFS to focus on its own mandate and avoid spending too much energy on political items.

Secondly, China notices that the voluntary guidelines on gender equality failed to be submitted to the 50th Session for review as planned, but soon its texts will be further amended and negotiated and then it is planned to be submitted to the 51st Session. Regarding this, China stresses the importance of CFS's nature as an intergovernmental Committee and the consensus of Members. China encourages all stakeholders to cooperate actively in consultations, fully taking into account the nation's contexts and the objectives of the voluntary guidelines that are to be implemented at the country level.

Thirdly, China appreciates the professionalism exhibited by the high level panels, as always, especially the insight for recommendations the panel provided on the priorities CFS needs to focus on in future, especially regarding the Multiyear Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2024 to 2027. China encourages all stakeholders, in particular the Bureau and the Advisory Group, to play a constructive

role, balance ambitions and feasibility, take into account nations and the regions contexts and needs, focus on the mandate, build on their own advantages, and avoid overlap of mandate with other UN agencies.

With this statement, China suggests the Council endorse the 50th Session Report of the CFS.

Ms Siti Normaznie ABDUL MUTTALIB (Malaysia)

Malaysia aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group's statement delivered by Indonesia. Malaysia thanks the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for the 50th Session CFS Report and welcomes the efforts taken by CFS Members and stakeholders to work together towards achieving food security and related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Malaysia thanks CFS and FAO for the the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 report. Malaysia expresses its deep concern over the rising rate of global hunger that has been observed since 2019 due to the COVID-19 detrimental effects for shortage economic uncertainties and worsening climate change.

At national level, Malaysia is intensifying its effort to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of affordable and nutritious food for the population by developing a new policy direction for the country through the National Agri-food Policy 2021-2030, and the National Food Security Policy Action Plan 2021/2025. In this regard, the Malaysia agri-food industry is poised to be one that is robust and agile, not only to keep pace with global economic growth and the effects of globalisation, but also to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Malaysia also welcomes the call for the preparation of a Multiyear Programme of Work for 2024-2027 and emphasises that the CFS Secretariat, the CFS Members, and the advisory group must work closely in developing the multi-programme of work and continuing efforts in policy convergence processes.

Malaysia expresses its appreciation to the CFS work on the voluntary guidelines promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems for food security and nutrition as an important contribution to the Rome-based agencies' work on food systems.

Malaysia encourages FAO to disseminate the voluntary guidelines to the widest possible audience and for Member States' uptake and implementation by taking into due consideration national capacities, contexts and priorities. Lessons learned from using the voluntary guidelines also could be shared amongst Member States and relevant stakeholders. For example, in Malaysia, national agriculture training centre has been established for providing a new stream of skilled workers amongst youth to the agricultural sector and to enhance youth skills and capacities.

Malaysia would like to thank the CFS Secretariat for the series of negotiation on the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women, and we must endorse empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

Malaysia recognizes that women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition is pertinent in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda, as well as ensuring a food system that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. However, Malaysia is of the view that the terms and definitions used for these voluntary guidelines under CFS should be consistent with multilaterally agreed terms and definitions and be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national law based on country contexts and preference. It is important to ensure that all Members could reach consensus and strike a balance between the different positions experienced by the Members.

Sr. José Ángel BUCARELLO GUZMÁN (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

Empezaría por agradecer el trabajo del Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA) y lo encomiaría a mejorar y fortalecer los métodos de trabajo del comité, especialmente en el tema de multilingüismo.

Señor Presidente, nuestra Delegación no puede dejar pasar esta oportunidad en expresar su opinión sobre el Reporte tal como ha sido propuesto, pues hasta nuestro entender no recoge la verdadera

dimensión de la gravedad de la afectación de la seguridad alimentaria que sufren varios países, como el nuestro, a causa de la imposición de medidas coercitivas unilaterales, las cuales han sido un instrumento perverso aplicado por parte de algunos países que han optado por el unilateralismo; desconociendo acuerdos internacionales, siendo estas medidas violatorias del derecho internacional, del Estado de Derecho y de la Carta de Naciones Unidas y de las normas y principios que rigen las relaciones pacíficas entre los Estados.

También haría un llamado a la presidencia del CSA de evitar la politización y la polarización de los trabajos del comité.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the Chair of the CFS and hopefully for brief comments.

Sr. Gabriel FERRERO Y DE LOMA-OSORIO (Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial)

Permítanme, en primer lugar, agradecer las amables palabras de todos los Delegados y Delegadas que han dirigido el trabajo del comité y a los equipos involucrados. Quiero personalmente agradecerles a todos y a todas, a los 137 Miembros del comité, a todas las instituciones participantes incluyendo FAO, FIDA, PMA, pero también las instituciones financieras internacionales, el resto de agencias del Sistema de Naciones Unidas, CGIAR, las fundaciones, los mecanismos de participación de la sociedad civil, del sector privado, al panel de alto nivel de expertos, a todos por su compromiso, dedicación y esfuerzos en un contexto extraordinariamente difícil. Y, por supuesto, al Secretariado y al Secretario del Comité y a todo el equipo por todo su trabajo.

Queridos colegas, como todos los comités, comisiones, órganos intergubernamentales, multilaterales encontramos dificultades extraordinarias en este contexto tan difícil para encontrar consensos en la totalidad de las cuestiones. Y, como bien sabemos, la sesión plenaria 50 encontró la imposibilidad de hacerlo en una cuestión particular relacionada con cuestiones políticas sin recurrir a la votación para dirimir esta cuestión, tal como vamos a ver muy probablemente hoy en el Consejo.

Sin embargo, como muchos han señalado, creo que esta realidad no debe oscurecer los acuerdos alcanzados en la práctica totalidad de cuestiones sustantivas en el período de sesiones 50 del Comité. Como muchos han resaltado, el acuerdo de recomendaciones de política sobre juventud, el avance decidido hace un acuerdo en las directrices voluntarias sobre igualdad de género y empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición, también el impulso a la importancia de inversiones responsables o a la llamada a reforzar las respuestas globales coordinadas a las múltiples dimensiones de la crisis alimentaria movilizándolo todo el poder de convocatoria del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria en línea con su documento de reforma.

Por eso querría, para finalizar, Señor Presidente, agradecer nuevamente a todos y a todas por sus contribuciones, por las lecciones que todos estamos aprendiendo en este difícil período en los diferentes órganos de la FAO y también del resto de las Naciones Unidas, tengan por seguro que tomo muy buena nota de todas sus sugerencias y de todas sus contribuciones y creo que, de cara al plenario 51 y al siguiente Programa multianual que nos llevará hasta 2027, creo que todas estas lecciones aprendidas y todas sus ricas sugerencias serán incorporadas para hacer un comité que sirva de plataforma más inclusiva, como es su intención, en el sistema de las Naciones Unidas y en la FAO para proveer las medidas necesarias para avanzar en el derecho a una alimentación adecuada y para servir también de espacio de convergencia en las políticas en apoyo a cada país y en alineamiento con las condiciones particulares de cada país.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I turn to the draft conclusions, which we of course are going to adopt after the lunch break, but I will read them out so at least you have seen them.

The Council considered the Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and in particular:

- a) expressed concern over the global food security situation and expressed support to the work of the Committee;

- b) welcomed the Committee's engagement with the UN Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, and welcomed the High-Level Special Event co-convened on 18 July 2022;
- c) commended the Committee for the endorsement of the *CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition*, and encouraged the Rome-based UN agencies and other relevant actors to support their utilization at country level;
- d) reaffirmed that advancing gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment was critical, and encouraged the Committee to continue its efforts to achieve agreement on the *CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition*, for presentation to the 51st CFS Plenary Session;
- e) highlighted the importance of greater collection, analysis and dissemination of data on all dimensions of food security and nutrition for evidence-based decision-making, and looked forward to the elaboration of a set of policy recommendations on "Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition", envisaged to be presented for endorsement at the 51st CFS Plenary Session;
- f) welcomed the *Third CFS HLPE-FSN Note on Critical, Emerging and Enduring Issues for Food Security and Nutrition*, as an input into the preparation of the Committee's draft *Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2024-2027*;
- g) took note of the Committee's request to the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) to undertake a study on "Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization and rural transformation"; and
- h) noted the stocktaking of experiences and good practices in the use and application of the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), highlighting the importance of boosting financing for sustainable development and access to resources for actions and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 2 by 2030.

As soon as we have adjourned this meeting, we will send them to you.

It was a very productive and positive morning. I think we dealt with a lot of work already and I would say the sun is not only shining outside, but it is starting to shine in here as well when I look that we can arrive, hopefully, after probably a more difficult afternoon Session, but we can arrive for the adoption of the Report on Friday.

Thank you so much that we could decide all the Items by consensus. I will leave you now for an excellent lunch, reenergize yourself and we see each other back at 14:00 hours sharp. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:28 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 28

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.28

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
SIXTH PLENARY SESSION SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
26 April 2023

The Sixth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:06 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La sixième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 06
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la sexta sesión plenaria a las 14.06
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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toute correction à: Verbatim-Team@fao.org
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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

- Item 12. Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (10-13 October and 19 December 2022) (*continued*)**
- Point 12. Rapport de la 50e session du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (10-13 octobre et 19 décembre 2022) (*suite*)**
- Tema 12. Informe del 50.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (10-13 de octubre y 19 de diciembre de 2022) (*continuación*)**
(C 2023/21)

CHAIRPERSON

Let us bring forward the positive spirit of this morning and let us continue with the adoption of the draft conclusions on the Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

We put them on the screen and we start with the *chapeau*. Can we agree with the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

I go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)?

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

Thank you for these draft conclusions, which we think are fine and good. I do have a few minor proposals that I think will be able to meet consensus and hope to engage constructively with other Members on those.

Subparagraph (a), I think we could probably express ourselves a bit more firmly regarding the global food security situation, in line with what was said this morning. I would suggest adding, "*expressed grave concern*" over the "*deteriorating global food security situation*". I hope that will be able to meet consensus from other Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to these adjustments? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (b).

Ms Mariana MARSHALL PARRA (Brazil)

I would like to suggest a slight change which is, "*welcomed the Chairpersons' engagement*", instead of "*the Committees*", because I think it is the correct term here because are the persons who engaged with the United Nations Secretary General Global Crisis Response Group, not the Committee itself.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this adjustment? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (c). Can we agree to subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (d). Can we agree to subparagraph (d)?

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

We would like to suggest small amendments in changing the wording "*agreement*" into "*consensus*". Because everyone was talking about achieving consensus, not agreement. Hope that will be acceptable to all.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

We are fine with the proposed addition by Indonesia. Then, I noticed a slight inconsistency between subparagraphs (d) and (e), where in (e) we "*envisage the policy guidelines on data to be presented for endorsement*" and indeed we just said "*for presentation to the 51st Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Plenary Session*".

I would propose to add for consistency, "*for presentation*", "*for endorsement*" or something to that effect. Presentation is fine. It can remain because we have "*to be presented for endorsement*" in (e), so just to add, "*presented for endorsement*" then in (d).

Ms Mariana MARSHALL PARRA (Brazil)

On subparagraph (d), the first line is just the verbal tense. I think "*it is*", not "*was critical*", but "*is critical*", right. It continues to be critical.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

We would like to support the intervention from the dear colleague from Indonesia regarding using "*consensus*" instead of "*agreement*".

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the adjustments as shown on the screen? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (e). Can we agree to subparagraph (e)?

Mr GUO Su (China)

I would like to suggest a slight change of the. "*We add something just follow, all dimensions of food security and nutrition, abide by national and international laws*". "*Abide by*". And "*International laws, for evidence-based decision making*". Also besides, I would like to make two clarifications about this morning's statements made by China on Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

One is where we agree on a joint statement made by Indonesia it is not Malaysia. In the petitions it made mistakes and also for the nature of the CFS what we said is, intergovernmental committee it is not international committee, so we just request for the due clarification in the Verbatim.

CHAIRPERSON

We will correct this in the Verbatim.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

We support the addition made by China and we would like to include before "*evidence*", "*science- and evidence-based*", so we keep coherence with the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the proposed changes as shown on the screen?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Perhaps just rather than "*abide by*", but "*in accordance with*", for clarity, for consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

Is everybody happy now? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (f). Can we agree to subparagraph (f)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (g). I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (h)?

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

We would like to propose a new subparagraph after (g). "*Stressed the importance that all documents produced by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) use as appropriate multilaterally agreed concepts and language*". I think with this proposal we are capturing many concerns raised by different delegations. In addition, I would like to recall colleagues that this language was approved in the 168th Council for clarification it was document *CL 168/REP*, paragraph 32 (e).

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

We fully support the new additions made by delegations of Argentina and we would like to add a new subparagraph (i).

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with subparagraph (h). Can we agree on subparagraph (h)?

Mr GUO Su (China)

We support the proposal by Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Indonesia for a new subparagraph (i).

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

We would just like to add one subparagraph based on our Asia Regional Group Joint statement which will be as follows. “*Supported the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to be more focused on the uptake, including in promoting the use and implementations of its products*”. I hope that will be acceptable because it is not only on the joint statement of Asia Regional Group, but also several delegations mentioned it as well.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I may be wrong, and I stand to be corrected on subparagraph (h). We are thinking there was a chapeau that was added after language especially those agreed in their full context or something like that. I do not know, but I need to stand to be corrected. I think we have discussed something like that early this week.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

First, we would like to support the constructive proposal from Indonesia. Then, our proposal is based on agreed language, so we would prefer not to modify it. Agreed text coming from previous Councils.

CHAIRPERSON

We have now two Councils with different paragraphs.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

What I added was also agreed language of the Council. I believe that probably the Legal Counsel can help us here on which exactly, but I think it is also agreed language of the Council that addition. And I think it was the most recent.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

If I could have a few minutes, would you mind and then I come back to that particular paragraph. I just wanted to double check the relevant Reports. I have not got them in front of me right now.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first listen to Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and its 27 Member States.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

While waiting for the Legal Counsel, just to lend my voice to support the proposal by Argentina in this regard and note that Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is not just FAO, it is a border stakeholder base with the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

Then, if I may, I would like to make an addition to the new subparagraph (i).

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voulais soutenir ce qui a été indiqué à l'instant par la Suède, le langage qui a pu être agréé pour des organes directeurs de la FAO, des Comités Techniques, ne peut pas être applicable tel quel au Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA) qui n'a pas le même statut, et pour cette raison, nous préférons la formulation de l'Argentine.

CHAIRPERSON

We put on the screen what was adopted by earlier this week on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), so at least we have the paragraphs. They show what I understand the clear preference for maintaining the text as was proposed by Argentina. Is there flexibility to go along with it?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

For consistency, because it is the same Council, we adopted two different languages. This was adopted already. But we do not have any strong view about it. But for the sake of consistency, that is all.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Indeed, here I note, referring to the Report of the last Conference in Report *C 2021/REP* at paragraph 64, subparagraph (q), the terminology used by the Conference was, “*stressed the need for FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts, approaches and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies*”.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

I think the Legal Counsel said quoting the previous decision the key word there was, “FAO”. Now we are talking about Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which is not just a body of FAO, so I do not think that this language is appropriate in this setting. The addition made by Cameroon, and we propose to delete the text now in square brackets.

CHAIRPERSON

We are not going to work on square brackets because we have to solve the square brackets.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Perhaps, as common ground, we potentially could replace “FAO” by “*Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) Governing Bodies*”. So everyone is happy. Just a proposal but I understand the point raised by Cameroon and we can be flexible.

CHAIRPERSON

We are not consistent anymore because we are changing earlier agreed paragraphs. So with both paragraphs previously agreed to, I think we have to make a choice between one or the other.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

We do not have a strong view about it. But people should know that this text exists. That’s all. We do not have a strong view about it.

CHAIRPERSON

I thank you for your flexibility. It is clear that we know that there are different paragraphs that are not consistent with each other, but let us keep the subparagraph as it was proposed by Argentina.

Can we agree to this paragraph?

Then I go to subparagraph (i) and there was a suggestion to be made by Australia.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Noting the voluntary nature our Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products, we suggest this subparagraph refer to the voluntary uptake. So insert the word “*voluntary*” which I think still goes to the point that the product should be promoted, but that there is no obligation to uptake.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

In subparagraph (i), I would suggest putting to Members for their consideration something that is already in the text. But in subparagraph (c), where we urge or encourage the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other relevant actors to support utilization of the policy recommendation on promoting youth and youth engagement. In this subparagraph, I was wondering whether it would be appropriate to maybe expand on that and replicate the encouragement made in subparagraph (c), but make it a bit more general to promote the uptake and use of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines rather than, as we have done before, just the youth recommendations.

Or rather at the end, so where it says “*and encouraged FAO and the Rome-based Agencies*” or just “*the Rome-based Agencies to promote the uptake and use of CFS policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines*”. Should that be able to meet consensus with delegations?

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this subparagraph?

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

In principle, yes, we share the spirit. We would like to replace “*promote*” by “*encourage*”. Then, in order to maintain consistent and be coherent with the proposal given from Australia, “*encourage the voluntary uptake*”.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

In principle, we are okay with the slight amendments made by Australia. As for the additions made by the delegation of Sweden, I think there is a duplication there. When we say, “*promoting the use and implementations of this product*”, it means that “*we encourage the uptake and the use of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines*”. I would suggest you merge those two, to make it more succinct and concise. Or we can just delete “*starting from*”, in “*promoting to its product and, so it reads, support CFS to be more focused on voluntary uptake including by encouraging Rome-based Agencies*”, so on and so forth.

Mr Alexander BÅNG BERGSTRÖM (Sweden)

My slight concern with that amendment is that the first part of the sentence was, “*is geared towards Committee on World Food Security (CFS) being the active part*”. In my addition it is rather about the Rome-based Agencies. So while I realize there is a slight duplication of language, the first part is as I said about an encouragement to CFS and the second part to the Rome-based Agencies. So, in that regard I would propose to stick with the duplication actually, if that would be agreeable by Indonesia with this explanation.

CHAIRPERSON

Is there flexibility in the room to work with text? I see Indonesia nodding, I think we have done an agreement on this text.

We go to subparagraph (h). Can we agree to subparagraph (h)? I do not see any objections.

With that we have concluded our work on this Report, and we have concluded our work by consensus. Thank you so much.

Item 6. The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (continued)

Point 6. Impact de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) (suite)

Tema 6. Repercusiones de la guerra en Ucrania sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO) (continuación)

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, 24 hours have passed since yesterday. I think everybody has been in contact with their Capitals. Hopefully you have clear instructions so that we have a smooth running of finalizing Agenda Item 5 *Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change* and Item 6 *The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*.

First, as we yesterday paused to take up the request of votes, I first would like to take up Item 6 and vote on Item 6 as proposed by the United States of America. I am doing this is because this is the less complicated to vote on this decision because for Item 5, we have two proposed decisions, and we have also amendments.

I would like to take up Item 6 and put forward to the vote on the decision proposed by the United States. I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat, to the Secretary-General, to explain how we are going to conduct our voting.

Sorry, there is a request from the Russian Federation.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

Before we proceed to voting procedure, so it was also discussed yesterday and it was stressed that Items 5, Item 5.1 and Item 6 are interconnected. Since we do not have a consensus on both of those items, my proposal, according to the Rules of Procedure Rule XXIV, we can discuss whether it can be paragraph 24.8 to suspend the meeting for further consultations or to adjourn the debate on the Item under discussion.

I will ask the advice from the Legal Counsel what will be advisable in this situation and to vote for this motion.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugurabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that the Russian Federation has asked for guidance on the procedure for adjourning the debate on the item in question. Here I would wish to ask through you, Chairperson, for further clarification from the Russian Federation as to exactly what is the nature of the motion that they are seeking.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I am very sorry for my English, since it is not my mother tongue. I was saying that Items 5 and 6 are interlinked and it was stressed at the debate yesterday and many delegations when they were addressing those issues made this very same statements under these Items.

Now we are going to vote on Item 6, which is interlinked with Item 5. My proposal will be to use paragraph 24 of the Rules of Procedure, we can either suspend the meeting and vote on this motion or we adjourn the debate on the item under discussion. I am asking your advice what will follow after this decision.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Thank you very much for the clarifications and my apologies for needing to seek those. The Rules of Procedure provide under Rule XII, paragraphs 22 and 23, either the option of adjourning the debate or the option of closing the debate on the item under discussion. It would be for the Members to determine which, if any, of those options they would wish to move forward with.

As noted by the Russian Federation, either of these options under paragraph 24 require to be addressed before over any other discussion or addressing of any other proposals or motions before the meeting. These need thus immediate action.

Should any Member or delegate request or propose the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion - that is under paragraph 22, *"In addition to the proposer of the motion, two delegates or two representatives may speak for, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The Chairperson may limit the time allowed to these speakers"*. Should you be seeking to close the debate on the Item under discussion, that matter should only be accorded only to the two speakers opposing the closure, after which the matter shall again be put immediately to the vote. I hope that is clear.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I turn the floor to the United States, I give the floor to the Russian Federation to make precisely clear what your request will be.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

As I understand there is only one proposal that is supported by my country and as we realized that there was no consensus during the debates and unfortunately there was no attempt to find a consensus. For that reason, we would propose to adjourn the debate on the items, if there is no consensus on the discussion, and to go for a vote if other countries will oppose my proposal.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I would ask for some clarification because our colleague from Russian Federation seems to be confused. You started this Session by saying that we were on Agenda Item 6. Agenda Items 5 and 6 were agreed by this Council by consensus at the beginning of this Council when we adopted the Agenda by consensus as two separate Agenda Items. So I am confused at what the question is, but it seems like our Russian colleague is confused as well. Could you please clarify for us, Chairperson?

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Russian Federation, because we have Items, I put forward first Agenda Item 6 and after that, we go to Agenda Item 5.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

Once again, English is not my mother tongue and maybe that is the reason for my confusion, but I want to be rest assured that I am not confused. I am not talking about the items and the Agenda Items, I am talking about the actions on those items and the proposed decisions. So, that is why we are putting a proposed decision on the motion and not on Agenda Items because we had already had a full-fledged discussion on them.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

To avoid any confusion, I will speak in Russian. We are ready to support the proposal of the Russian Federation.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

J'avoue que la confusion demeure. Si je regarde les règles, s'agissant du paragraphe 12, paragraphe 24.C ou D, on parle bien d'un point de l'ordre du jour. Donc je voudrais soutenir à nouveau ce qu'a dit le collègue des Etats-Unis, qu'est-ce qui est demandé précisément ? S'agit-il de l'ajournement d'un débat et si oui, sur quel point de l'ordre du jour ?

Encore une fois, nous sommes au point 6. S'agit-il, comme prévu par le sous point D, la clôture du débat sur le point de l'ordre du jour ? C'est-à-dire le point 6, peut-être que le collègue Russe n'est pas confus, mais pour notre part, nous le restons, et si mon collègue demande un ajournement du débat ou une clôture du débat, nous nous y opposons.

CHAIRPERSON

We have to go to the vote because there is a clear question for a vote, and we cannot have a long discussion whether we would like it or not. ,we are at Item 6, so we focus at this moment only on Item 6, I would like to ask the Russian Federation exactly what he wants to be brought for a vote.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

As it was discussed yesterday, there is a well-established practice within the United Nations system and this practice has been used here in the Council on previous occasions, to go for the “no action motion”. So my proposal would be to go for “no action motion” on the proposed decision by the United States of America for Agenda Item 6.

Whether it falls within Rule XII.22 or 24 (a), that is a question for Ms Donata Rugarabamu, but my proposal is that we will go for the “no action motion” on the proposed decision and I urge all the countries, since we are starting with a consensus, not to politicize the work to vote for this motion.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us be absolutely clear what we can and cannot do. First, within FAO, we do not have a “no action motion”. So if we want to have a vote adjourning this Agenda Item or closing this Agenda Item, we have exactly to formulate it in this way so that the Members know where they have to vote on. I ask the Russian Federation to exactly formulate what he wants the Members of the Council to vote on.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

There are two paragraphs under paragraph 24 of the Rules of Procedure. One is to suspend the meeting. So we can vote for suspending the meeting, which means that we are not going for the vote on the proposed decision. Whether my proposal is clear now?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, now it is clear. So, this is a clear request of the Russian Federation to vote on the decision to suspend the meeting.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Again, I would just ask for clarification on what is being asked for. Suspending the meeting would suspend this Council? The meeting is the Council meeting, so I am wondering what is being asked for, for a vote and what are we voting on? If you could explain it to us, that is great. If they can make a proposal that is based on the Rules, that is also great. The proposal that is out there is ours. We called for a vote on that, as you know.

CHAIRPERSON

As I understand, and then of course I will give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu for further clarification, we are not going to suspend the Council, because we have too many things to do. It means that the request would be to suspend Agenda Item 6.

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I will try and identify the appropriate Rules. I would note paragraph 24 addresses the order of precedence of these motions. The substantive procedures applicable are in the preceding paragraphs 21, 22, 23. It was my understanding that the last intervention by the Russian Federation was requesting a suspension of the meeting. That is paragraph 21.

If that is the case, that Rule provides that *“During the discussion of any matter, a delegate or representative may move the suspension or adjournment of the meeting. Such motion shall not be debated but shall be immediately put to the vote.”* Accordingly, if that is the request before you, this matter needs to be put immediately to the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I understand that the request of the Russian Federation is to suspend Agenda Item 6, not the whole meeting.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

If it is, then the suspension of the discussion of an item, i.e. Item 6, an adjournment of the debate on the Item, that falls under paragraph 22, this must also be put to a vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a list of at least four speakers, which according to the Rules of Procedure cannot be done because we are not going to debate it. I give the floor to the United States because it is a point of order.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

While I understand that you have decided to interpret what was said, what was said by the delegate from the Russian Federation was a request to suspend the meeting. So I would request that either a Member make a request that is different from that or that we move forward as requested.

CHAIRPERSON

I tried to clarify or at least ask Russian Federation to clarify to the Members what the idea was. In his answer, twice he said “*suspension of Item 6*” and not the whole meeting. But I give him the floor again so that we know exactly what the Russian Federation is asking us to do.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

For the third time I will try to be clear. The idea, and that is why there was a request for Ms Donata Rugarabamu and the various paragraphs in the Rules of Procedure.

Since we did not utilize our time to find a conclusion or a decision on the Agenda Item and as we heard yesterday from the delegation of the United States of America that for three weeks there were attempts by certain countries to reach a consensus and they could not reach a consensus, so my idea to stop this circus and to go for a vote.

Since we did not reach a consensual decision, my proposal will be exactly to suspend the meeting on Agenda Item 6. Of course, to take a decision on the proposed decision on Agenda Item 6, and of course not on the whole procedures and the meeting of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished delegates, you have heard. We can have a long discussion. First, I would like to finalize my statement and I think let us give everybody the room to address the Council. We put it now on the screen what exactly is being asked so that everybody sees it in writing so that we know what we have to vote on.

Then, I have three speakers on the list and then, as was clearly stated by our Legal Counsel, we have to go to a vote. And the speakers are Sweden, Canada and France.

We put it on the screen. Now I ask the Russian Federation if what is on the screen, is that his request?

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

My request to the Legal Counsel was whether adjournment of the debate on Item 6 provides for a vote on the draft decision proposed on this Item. That is my question. If this is the case, I fully agree with the proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

The adjournment of the debate on an item would mean that work is suspended on that item. Typically, in FAO this would mean that a matter may be resumed. The matter is not closed, it is that discussion that is suspended for an indefinite period or for a specified period.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Et en effet, point d'ordre, droit des états membres, en vertu du paragraphe 20 de ces règles. Encore une fois, nous demandons la disposition précise, précise, des textes qui sont invoqués par la Russie pour savoir précisément si c'est une suspension de la réunion, alors nous sortons tous la salle, pour tout l'après-midi.

Si c'est un ajournement du débat sur le point de discussion, on ajourne le débat bien sûr, pour une période indéfinie, mais il faudra y revenir. Encore une fois, nous encourageons la Russie à exprimer clairement ce qu'elle souhaite afin que les délégations ne soient pas dans la confusion. Et nous nous opposons par ailleurs à tout ajournement du débat sur le point en discussion, et à tout ajournement de cette réunion.

CHAIRPERSON

To avoid any confusion, if we all go to paragraph 24 of Rule XII of the Basic Texts, there we have four possibilities. The following motion shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting except a point of order. First option is to suspend the meeting.

Second option, (b), is to adjourn the meeting. The third option is to adjourn the debate on the Item under discussion, which is Item 6, or the closure of the debate on the Item and the discussion at 6. Therefore, we have those four options which have to be proposed or not.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Since there has been no proposal for any delegation, only in the interpretation by the Chairperson, it is up to delegations in this chamber to make a proposal for a vote. We have put a proposal forward for a vote. We request that a vote be held.

CHAIRPERSON

There was a clear request made by the Russian Federation. Please, United States, can we have respect to all of us and also to respect to the Chairperson, that also that the Chairperson can finalize at least what he wants to say before to be interrupted. I respect everybody also, that I do not interrupt you.

I did not interpret anything, I just try to get clearance on the request that was made on behalf of the Russian Federation. If there is no request, then we go to Item 6, on the vote of the proposal to United States for a decision. That is what is in front of us. I give now the floor to Sweden for a point of order.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

We are also still a bit confused, although you are trying very hard to explain to us. So we have a number of things on the table here. We have an adjournment of the debate, but until when? What does that mean for the adoption of the Report finally of this Council?

Also I am a little bit confused over the proposal, as the voting on Item 6 was in fact supported by the Russian Federation in the letter that they sent to FAO prior to this Council meeting. So they were themselves in support of voting on this Item. There are a number of confusing elements here.

I would hope that you could clarify, and I agree with the United States of America, there was a draft set of conclusions proposed by them for a vote and we would support to go for a vote on those conclusions.

CHAIRPERSON

Anyhow, that is how I started this Agenda Item 6, is putting the vote or the proposal for decision of the United States of America. But then there was a request made by a Member about something which could supersede that vote. That is how the order of issues are, as was also explained by the Legal Counsel.

Once again, can we go to Item 6 with the vote on the decision of the United States of America or is there another proposal?

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

As it was called many times both by you and by Ms Donata Rugarabamu, there is a special practice established by the Rules of Procedure. If a certain country, in this case the Russian Federation, is asked to take one of those options, which is provided by Rule XII, paragraph 24 and with interpretation provided by Ms Donata Rugarabamu. If we adjourned the debate on Item 6, it automatically means that we adjourn the debate here at this session and, of course, later we can come back to this debate and to the draft decisions that will be provided under this Agenda Item.

But for this meeting we adjourn the debate, we vote for the adjournment of this circus and we will move forward to the other Agenda Items for discussions for taking other decisions. So this is the proposal of my delegation. Hopefully it is clear.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Mr Rakesh Muthoo, by Sweden, what does it mean for the Report?

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Report will reflect the totality, the compendium of the discussions and decisions of the Council. So if there is now a vote on a motion to adjourn this debate under this particular item, there will be a

resumption of this item at some point, which does not necessarily need to be well defined immediately at this point in time. When that resumption occurs and the Council finishes its work on this particular item, that will determine the final form of the Report of the Council.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We were in favour of your initial starting point of voting on the process with the language proposed by the United States of America, as was discussed yesterday. In the discussion this morning on Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), there was a reflection on the need for precision in language.

That is very clear, that at this point, under paragraph 24 (c), we need to be very clear in which language and in many of the interventions there is a mixing of... it is a meeting on Item 6 or it is a suspension, which is an adjournment and in this point 24 is quite clear on which language we should use and it would behove us at this point for delegates to use the language that is in the Basic Texts.

If we are speaking of a meeting, that is the whole Council. If we are speaking of an item, then it is just this item. So that is either 24 (a) and (b) is the whole Council or 24 (c) and (d) is the item. As I understand it, we are speaking about the item. So then we should only use the verbs that are in 24 (c) and (d) which is either to adjourn or to close. If we adjourn, it means we will come back to it. If we close, we do not.

We are in favour of voting on the language proposed by the United States of America and coming to a conclusion on Item 6. We oppose voting for adjournment or closure, but if it comes to that point, we will happily do so.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

Canada said most of it. I wanted us to remind Council that this Item was actually requested by Council. That is what I wanted to say.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

From what Ms Donata Rugarabamu explained to the Council in terms of paragraph 22 it reads as follows, *“During the discussion of any matter, a delegate or representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two delegates or two representatives may speak for, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote. The Chairperson may limit the time allowed to these speakers”*. I am proposing that we stick to the Rules, Council Members, and follow the procedures..

CHAIRPERSON

Let us then exactly follow the Rules of Procedures.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom)

I do not want to complicate an already quite complicated situation. I am looking at the Basic Texts and paragraph 22 says that *“during the discussion of any matter, a delegate or representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the Item under discussion”*. But did we not discuss this matter yesterday?

And did we not agree yesterday that for the reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, we would vote on it today? So I am wondering, we are not really discussing this matter now, are we? We discussed it yesterday and we agreed to go for a vote. Perhaps the Legal Counsel could say if I am wrong or not.

CHAIRPERSON

What we did, because there is also an explicit request of Canada yesterday that we said, we paused the discussion for Members to get instructions for the vote on the proposal of the United States of America. We did not close the issue because we still had to go for a vote. I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

The United Kingdom raises a very interesting point. In these circumstances, there is arguably a position that a vote would constitute part of the debate. Its views remain to be expressed. Of course, as the United Kingdom had indicated yesterday, there had been, I understand, a discussion or an understanding that this matter would be put to a vote today and that that was the understanding that was being moved forward.

That understanding, of course, is not a matter reflected in the rules - that was an understanding within this forum amongst the Members. Nevertheless, until there is an outcome, it may be argued that the debate is still ongoing. In this, I am in your hands.

CHAIRPERSON

As suggested by South Africa, I would now like to take up paragraph 22 of Rule XII of the Rules of Procedure and give the possibility for two Members to make a plea in favour and two Members to make a plea against the proposed adjournment of the debate on Item 6. So who would go against adjournment? Now, we did exactly so that two Members of the Council can speak out against the proposal to adjourn the debate on Item 6.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

Could you just repeat from which delegation and what the actual proposal is, then I will be able to speak in opposition to it. Just to clarify one time for everyone exactly what it is that is being proposed. I think that will make it easier for all of us.

CHAIRPERSON

I ask Ms Donata Rugarabamu to do it.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

It is my understanding that the Russian Federation has requested an adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion, Item 6. This would be an adjournment of debate in accordance with Paragraphs 22 and 24 (c) of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization. That is my understanding.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

Before we proceed with the vote, of which is expected to take many rounds, my delegation would like to express its disappointment to the Council of FAO, the most related to the global world food crisis, is spending its time debating details and arguments at a time where most of the world's population suffer from food insecurity and rising hunger.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I heard the call for somebody to speak against the motion. So Sweden, on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States would raise its voice against a proposal by the Russian Federation to adjourn the debate on Item 6.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I have listened to this carefully and pondered over the text and while I am not still convinced we have had a valid motion made under paragraph 22, let us progress on that basis and I will then follow that I will speak against the motion put by Russian Federation to adjourn the debate on Agenda Item 6, and hope that we can move forward where you tried to start today, which is for a vote on the text proposed by the United States of America for Agenda Item 6.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Simplemente, usted está hablando de dos Miembros que tenían que apoyar una o la otra propuesta. En ese sentido, Nicaragua desea manifestar el apoyo a la propuesta de la Federación de Rusia de aplazar el debate sobre el Tema 6. Como son dos Miembros, este es uno de los Miembros que está apoyando la propuesta de Rusia.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not see any other requests for the floor. I go to the Secretary-General of the Council to explain how the voting will be done. Mr Rakesh Muthoo.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

We will now proceed to vote on the proposal for adjournment of debate under the current Item 6. With your permission, the Assistant Secretary-General, Ms Nadine Kayal, will take us through the motions.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before I proceed to the vote, I wish to inform you that there are 45 Members present and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached. I will now ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw a lot to determine the first Member to be called on the roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

The Russian Federation.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is the Russian Federation. We will now proceed to the vote, *Proposal to vote for adjournment of debate on Item 6*, as it appears on the screen. I will call out the names of Council Members and ask for their votes by replying as a 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'. Russian Federation.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I will now pass the floor to the Independent Chairperson of the Council who will read out the results of the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, I now present to you the results of the vote on the proposal on the adjournment of the debate on Item 6.

The number of votes cast, 23. Majority required, 12. Votes for, 3. Votes against, 20. Abstentions, 21.

With this result the Council has rejected the adjournment of debate on Item 6.

26 April 2023 – 15.18

Vote on: Adjournment of the debate on item 6 of CL 172
 Vote sur:
 Votación para:

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Nominal vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos : 23
 Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida: 12
 Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favor : 3
 Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra : 20
 Abstentions/ Abstenciones : 21

Votes for: Belarus, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.
 Votes pour:
 Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France,
 Votes contre: Germany, Guatemala, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea,
 Votos en contra: Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Abstentions: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India,
 Abstentions: Indonesia, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and
 Abstenciones: Tunisia.

No Reply: Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Mauritania.
 Aucune réponse:
 Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/ REJETÉE/ RECHAZADA

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones



CHAIRPERSON

With this, we continue now with Item 6 and bring forth to you the vote on the proposal for decision of United States.

I give the floor to Ms Nadine Kayal again to explain how we are going to do. Sorry, there is a request on the floor from the Russian Federation.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

This was on a point of order and the order provides that before we go for a vote, the countries may express their position before the vote. I just wanted to ask the Secretariat whether this right will be provided before the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we had a lengthy debate yesterday on this. I give two countries speaking in favour and two countries speaking against, but to be honest, we have the Rules of Procedure, but we can also be practical and let us bring it to a vote. Unless the Russian Federation would like to speak against, but that is clear.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I think this afternoon an hour was spent on procedural issues and people that wanted to follow the rules, I believe that we still need to follow the rules. I will not be long in my statement, I will just refer to paragraph 3 of my letter that I addressed both to you and to the Secretary-General or Director General of FAO.

Taking account of the draft proposal of the United States and taking into account that previous recommendations of the FAO Council as well as the United Nations General Sub-Resolutions mentioned in the text provided by the United States were adopted by a vote, the Russian Federation requested a vote on the draft and will vote against.

CHAIRPERSON

Is there any other delegation which would like to take the floor? I see none.

I give the floor to Ms Nadine Kayal to explain how we are going to conduct our vote.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before proceeding to the vote, I wish to inform you that there are 46 Members present and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached. I will now ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw a lot to determine the first Member to be called in the roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

As a point of order, Egypt.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I just want to make sure we are voting on the decision proposed by the United States, right?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes. Pakistan, Ms Nadine Kayal.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is Pakistan.

We will now proceed to the vote on the proposal for decision contained in document *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 6* as it appears on the screen. I will call out the names of Council Members and ask for their votes by replying as a 'yes', 'no', or 'abstention'. Pakistan.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL


We have called out all the names, I will now pass the floor to the Independent Chairperson of the Council to read out the results in a few seconds.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, the results for the vote for the proposal for a decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 6*.

Number of votes cast, 26. Majority required, 14. Votes for, 22. Votes against, 4. Abstentions, 16.

With this result the Council has approved the proposal for decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 6*.

منظمة الغذية 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 Alimentación y la Agricultura
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26 April 2023 – 15:33

Vote on: Proposal for decision contained in CL 172/INF/7, Annex 1, Item 6
 Vote sur:
 Votación para:

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Nominal vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos : 26
 Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida: 14
 Votes for/ Votos pour/ Votos en favor : 22
 Votes against/ Votos contre/ Votos en contra : 4
 Abstentions/ Abstenciones : 16

Votes for: Votes pour: Votos en favor:	Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America.
Votes against: Votes contre: Votos en contra:	Belarus, Egypt, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.
Abstentions: Abstentions: Abstenciones:	Angola, Brazil, China, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Tunisia.
No Reply: Aucune réponse: Ninguna respuesta:	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Eritrea and Mauritania.

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ ACEPTADA

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones



CHAIRPERSON

With that we have concluded, hopefully, our work on Item 6.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt) (Original language Egypt)

We would like to explain the vote of Egypt on the decision that we have just adopted. To begin with, the delegation of Egypt would like to underscore its endorsement and support of all the common efforts aimed at pushing the Organization towards greater effectiveness and its mandate, and because this is a no knowledge organization it is crucial, of course, to promote agriculture and food security.

It is necessary to bring forward to the awareness of Members anything new. The document in question under Item 5 provides for that we praise the efforts made by the Secretariat, as well as the role of the Organization for the advice provided and technical assistance, especially from those countries that are ravaged by conflict and affected by problems that have an impact on food security.

At the same time, we would like to underscore the following points to justify the vote that we cast with regard to this Item. To begin with, the Egyptian delegation would like to express the reasons for its vote on these two Items. That is due to the fact that the nature of the decision is consistent with the mandate of the Organization.

On the other hand, we also underscore the need not to politicise the work of the Organization because this would not be consistent with the mandate of the Organization. And it is indeed important not to divert attention, deflect attention, away from the mandate of the Organization.

Egypt, would also like to say that we did not have very much time to really study the decision and therefore, it was difficult, or we did not have sufficient time to consult the various Capitals. Egypt is among those countries that are most affected by the situation and we are disappointed in saying that the already short time that the Council has at its disposal has been further curtailed because of our discussion on these Items, which obviously is affecting our wish to attack all food insecurity. And my country, therefore, decided to vote against the decision in the way that it was tabled.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Egypt, for the explanation of position and it will be noted in the Verbatim.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Indonesia voted in favour of the draft decision because we believe in joint undertakings of the international community in overcoming the challenges of global food security. Notwithstanding the reasoning, we are deeply concerned that the decision failed to avoid the zero-sum approach.

The FAO consultation should reflect the collective voice of FAO Members. It is therefore fundamental to be inclusive, balanced, and accurate when formulating the decision. The credibility of our august consult will be in jeopardy if we fail to ignore the factual information. The decision adopted today was leaning very closely toward this direction.

Taking UN General Assembly Resolution 11/6 beyond its context will never help countries in conflict, countries affected, the international community in bringing the crisis to an end. Taking any UN resolution with the mindset of zero-sum game will never help us overcome our greatest challenges today. There should be no discrimination and double standard in viewing the context of food security and nutrition.

Food insecurity in Ukraine, Palestine, Sudan, or any other part of the world, should not be treated as any different. All should be treated as a violation to the rights to food. Those only with a comprehensive and constructive approach, we can pave the way to finding amicable solution for our common challenges at hand. Diplomacy and dialogue are the only viable way. Indonesia remains steadfastly committed to this endeavour.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Indonesia, for your explanation of vote. It will be taken up in the Verbatim.

- Item 5.** **Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change (*continued*)**
- Point 5.** **Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes: conflicts et guerres en Ukraine et dans d'autres pays, ralentissements et fléchissements, et changement climatique (*suite*)**
- Tema 5.** **Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en Ucrania y otros países, desaceleraciones y contracciones de la economía y cambio climático (*continuación*)**
- (CL 172/5)

- Item 5.1** ***Sustainable global food supply chains: comprehensive implementation of UN-brokered two Istanbul Agreements signed on July 2022 (known as Black Sea Grain Initiative) for maintaining global food security and nutrition for all (continued)***
- Point 5.1** ***Chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire mondiales durables: mise en œuvre complete des deux accords d'Istanbul signés en juillet 2022 sous l'édige de l'ONU (connus sous le nom d'Initiative céréalière de la mer Noire) pour préserver la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition pour tous au niveau mondial (suite)***
- Tema 5.1** ***Cadenas mundiales de suministro alimentario sostenibles: aplicación integral de los dos acuerdos de Estambul auspiciados por las Naciones firmados en julio de 2022 (conocidos como Iniciativa sobre la Exportación de Cereales por el Mar Negro) con miras a mantener la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición para todo el mundo (continuación)***

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we have concluded Item 6.

Now we go to Item 5 *Global food security challenges and its drivers: conflicts and wars in Ukraine and other countries, slowdowns and downturns, and climate change*. there we have, again, two draft decisions to be decided on by vote, because, as I understand this time, the miracle did not happen in Rome.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, first, to explain how we are going to do it because we first have to take up the proposal of the United States on Item 5, but are eight amendments proposed by a Member to this decision. We explain how we are going to address it in conformity with Rules of Procedures which you can find now, probably well known, in Rule XII, paragraph 22-24.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The order of voting, in line with the applicable Rules, would thus be the Council would first vote on the amendments that are contained in document CL 172/INF/8 to the proposal that is contained in the Annex relating to Item 5/5.1 of document CL 172/INF/7. That would be the first vote.

After that, the Council will move on to vote for the proposal as either amended by the first vote or otherwise, in its original format as submitted in the Annex relating to Item 5/5.1 in document CL 172/INF/7.

Finally, the Council would then vote on the proposal which is contained in the Annex of document CL 172/INF/8.

CHAIRPERSON

We will put now on the screen the first vote, what we are going to vote on, and that of course is the amendments proposed in document CL 172/INF/8 on the draft decision contained in CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1.

Again, I would give the floor to Ms Nadine Kayal.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before putting it to the vote I wish to inform that there are still 46 Members present, and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached. I will now ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw a lot to determine the first Member to be called on roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

Kuwait.

Point of order, Russian Federation.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

Question to you, Chairperson. No delegation asked for a vote on this document to my knowledge, so why are we going for a vote?

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor again to Mr Rakesh Muthoo.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

In fact, the proposal that is contained in document *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1* was explicitly submitted before the start of the Council for decision by the Council. That is explicit in the letter that precedes it and that was circulated therefore as a document. This was also repeated by the Member that submitted that document and supported by a number of other Members when debate was held on this item beforehand.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I did not hear any request from any delegation, at least in this room right now, to put on vote the proposal, or the amendment to the proposal, since we are going first to vote on the amendment to the proposal. The amendment to this proposal was introduced by the Russian Federation as duly reflected on the screen.

The reason for introducing this proposal, and it is contained in the letter that was circulated and addressed to you, Independent Chairperson of the Council, and to the Director-General, was to bring to the attention of the Distinguished Delegates that the proposal that was initially made by the United States of America is a proposal made by a state, which is not a party, neither to the initiative on the safe transportation on green and foodstuffs from Ukraine, nor it is it a Member of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the UN Secretariat on the assistance to promoting Russian food and fertilisers on global markets. This is point number one.

Point number two – yesterday there was a meeting between Minister Mr Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov and UN Secretary-General and in his letter addressed to the President of the Russian Federation...

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, I would like to interrupt, which I normally will not do, but you raise a point of order.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

This is not a point of order – this is an explanation before the vote, if we go for a vote.

CHAIRPERSON

No. The vote has already been started so we cannot have then an explanation of voting.

That is the Rules of Procedure.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

The Rules of Procedure says that before we move to taking a decision, you as a Chairperson, shall ask whether any delegation wishes to make a statement before the vote. Since there was no request for a vote you went exactly to a voting procedure, so that was my question of order, because no one requested the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, yesterday it was already the request for a vote. It was clearly stated in the letter which was circulated by the United States, which was also explained now by the Secretary-General. As we have discussed this Item quite lengthy yesterday, then we suspend the meeting to get clear instructions from Capitals where positions were clearly stated about the content of the decision.

When there were no further requestes from the floor, I assumed that we could go to the vote. But if Members would like to go back first to express positions for or in favour, we can do it, but I think the positions are quite clear. I do think at a certain moment we should try to turn around the atmosphere in the room and be practical. I see that the United States has made a point of order.

Mr Rodney HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to say, the Russian Federation sits in front of me – I did see him raise his hand before the vote began, so I support his right to make a statement.

CHAIRPERSON

Let me also be clear how we conduct our work, because if you are sitting here, and there are many people in the chairs here in front of me, I cannot see whether people raise their hands or not. For that, we have the button in front of you. If you would like to ask for the floor, please push any button, so that on the screen I see that somebody has asked for the floor. However, sometimes I cannot even see you because of people sitting in front of you. So Russian Federation, the United States said he saw you wave for the floor first, so we stop the procedure for the votes in order to give you the possibility to make a statement.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

First of all, my thanks go to the United States of America for bringing us to order, and just for you to mention, I first pressed the button, since you did not see it, I had to raise my flag before you go to this procedure.

So I already made part of my statement that we are going to vote on the amendment that was produced by the Russian Federation and was presented just for your information. If we want to be a knowledge organization or no knowledge organization, this is your choice. But yesterday, the UN Secretary-General, he sent the letter to my President. I do not know whether the content of this letter is known to the distinguished representative of the United States of America, but he also sent more or less the same letters to the President of Türkiye and to the President of Ukraine.

I do not know what is contained in this letter, whether to extend this deal for a limited period of time. What are the conditions for the extension of this deal? What are other other modalities? Because I believe only two Member States, which is Russian Federation, Ukraine and Türkiye are members of this agreement, and the United Nations is just a coordinator of the implementation of this initiative.

Is it adequate for us to take a decision on the three party or four party agreement? So if this were the case, maybe we can then go for a vote on other decisions, bilateral agreements on trade relationship, on food security issues, but we are establishing a new practice. So we are in your hand.

Of course, we are flexible, so if countries are interested in having a decision, but it must be factual. For this reason, we presented our amendments to the draft that was introduced by the United States. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not see any requests for the floor, so with that I would like now to turn and start the voting procedure. Unless two countries want to speak in favour or against? I see none, then I again start the voting procedure and I give the floor to Ms Nadine Kayal for the next steps.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before proceding, I wish to inform that there are 46 Members present and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached and I will ask now the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw a lot to determine the first Member to be called in the roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

Canada.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is Canada. We will now proceed to vote on the amendments proposed in document *CL 172/INF/8* on the draft decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1*. I will call out the names of Council Members and ask for their vote by replying either 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'. Canada.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

We now pass the floor to the Independent Chairperson of the Council to read out the results of the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends. The results of the vote on the amendment proposed in document *CL 172/INF/8* on the draft decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 annex 1 Item 5/5.1*.

Number of votes cast, 22. Majority required, 12. Votes for, 3. Votes against, 19. Abstentions, 22.

With this result, the Council has rejected the amendments proposed in document *CL 172/INF/8* on the draft decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1*.

I look whether any Members want to make a statement of explanation of vote. I see none.



26 April 2023 – 16.00

Vote on: Amendments proposed in document CL 172/INF/8 on the draft decision contained in CL172/INF/7, Annex 1, Item 5/5.1
 Vote sur:
 Votación para:

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Nominal vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos : 22

Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida: 12

Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favor : 3

Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra : 19

Abstentions/ Abstenciones : 22

Votes for: Belarus, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.

Votes pour:

Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany,

Votes contre: Guatemala, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden,

Votos en contra: United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Abstentions: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India,

Abstentions: Indonesia, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Tunisia.

Abstenciones:

No Reply: Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Mauritania.

Aucune réponse:

Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/ REJETÉE/ RECHAZADA

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

We go to the vote on now the decision proposed on *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1*.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before proceeding to the vote I wish to inform you that there are 46 Members present and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached. I will now ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw lots to determine the first Member to be called in the roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

United Kingdom.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is the United Kingdom. We will now proceed to the vote on the proposal for decision contained in *CL172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1* as it appears on the screen.

I will call out the names of Council Members and ask for their votes by replying either 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I will now pass the floor to the Independent Chairperson of the Council to read out the results.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, I now present to you the results of the vote on the proposal for decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1*.

Number of votes cast, 26. Majority required, 14. Votes for, 23. Votes Against, 3. Abstentions, 17.

With this result the Council has approved the proposal for decision contained in *CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1 Item 5/5.1*.



Vote on: Proposal for decision contained in CL 172/INF/7 Annex 1, Item 5/5.1
 Vote sur:
 Votación para:

26 April 2023 – 16.09

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Nominal vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos : 26
 Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida: 14
 Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favor : 23
 Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra : 3
 Abstentions/ Abstenciones : 17

Votes for: Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America.
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Belarus, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Tunisia.
Abstentions:
Abstenciones:

No Reply: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kuwait and Mauritania.
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ ADOPTÉE/ ACEPTADA

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Let me explain my vote as provided for under the General Rules. The Russian delegation voted against this decision. Yesterday and today's discussions have unfortunately shown one thing – the unreadiness of our Organization of FAO to reach a compromise, to reach compromise on these issues that are vital for the establishment of global food security.

FAO does not have any mandate to get involved in the implementation of the agreements that were the object of today's vote. Russian Federation will therefore take a decision to decide whether it will or will not go on taking part in these agreements and contributing to them.

Indeed, the conditions relating to the Black Sea Initiative must be properly abided by.

CHAIRPERSON

Your explanation of position will be noted in the Verbatim.

Mr Cláudio GARON (Brazil)

First of all, my Delegation would like to express our sincere gratitude for all the commendable efforts you and many other members have made in trying to reach a possible consensus. As we have previously expressed, struggling for consensus is never a waste of time, not unless shows less efficiency. Brazil hopes time spent in dialogue is never valued as a waste of energy and time, especially at an UN Agency.

The 2022 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report stated that the number of people affected by hunger globally rose to as many as 828 million in 2021, an increase of about 46 million since 2020 and 150 million since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of them, 33 million people are also struggling in my country, Brazil.

We have recently been talking about crisis, conflicts, COVID-19 and climate change as the main drivers of food crisis. And even with all the efforts we recognize have been put in place, which I might recognize as laudable, we are still falling those 828 million. What we have been doing is still not enough.

Looking forward, projections are that nearly 670 million people (8 percent of the world population) will still be facing hunger in 2030 – even if a global economic recovery is taken into consideration. This is a similar number to 2015, when the goal of ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by the end of this decade was launched under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In Brazil, we are now working on fighting the underlying causes, with the implementation of various cash transfer programmes.

Internationally, Brazil has also been a partner in providing humanitarian assistance and, especially, in cooperating with resilience, in various bilateral and triangular cooperation programmes, such as the Central American Dry Corridor Project, which is now also part of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and benefits various countries in that region.

Let us be very clear: last February, Brazil voted in favor of the General Assembly Resolution that reiterated the commitment to a general, just and lasting peace in Ukraine and the territorial integrity of that country. The resolution calls for a cessation of all hostilities and appeal to all parties to seek ways to broker peace.

But that was in New York. We are here in the Mediterranean, where we now face a dire situation. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people desperately arrive in the Mediterranean harbors looking for better life conditions. Unfortunately, we are failing them.

We know what to do. We know the importance of concessional financial resources, technical cooperation, emergency assistance as essential tools to support countries build public policies that can tackle poverty and inequalities. I do not see those terms being emphasized in the document. That is the reason why, even though we have been open to dialogue, even though we have been struggling, we will be forced to abstain.

The good news is we still have time to reach consensus before the Conference in July. We all have the duty to work towards reaching this much waited consensus, so we don't fail those 828 million people.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement of explanation will be included in the Verbatim.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to provide an explanation of vote as the following: Indonesia voted in favour of the draft decision because we believe that cooperation, diplomacy and dialogue are necessary in overcoming the current global food security crisis, wherefore the decision is missing the spirit it needed to force consensus, it does not call on the international community to create conditions conducive to dialogue and diplomatic means to improve food security and nutrition in Ukraine and the countries affected.

Most notably, as the two have been significant contributors to World Food Security, the decision today does not call the parties in conflict to pursue dialogue and enter into direct negotiation to improve the condition of global food security today.

Ultimately, having two different Agenda Items discussing the war in Ukraine has shown once again the failure of the FAO Council to go anywhere near consensus through dialogue and cooperation. FAO Council has once again failed to move closer to the solution.

We are also concerned that the decision failed to avoid a zero-sum approach to resolving the underlying problem. Such an approach will only deepen the divide between the conflicting parties and bring us further from achieving global food security and zero hunger. We must continue to work towards a solution through dialogue, and we call on the international community to contribute to this process.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement of explanation will be included in the Verbatim of this meeting.

Distinguished delegates, excellencies, dear friends. We go to hopefully our last vote during this Council and that is the proposal for the decision contained in decision *CL172/INF/8 Annex 1, Item 5*. For the Rules and Procedures, are there any Members who would like to speak in favour or against this decision?

I see none.

Then I turn the floor to Ms Nadine Kayal, to start the voting procedure.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

Before proceeding to the vote, I wish to inform that there are 46 Members present and therefore the quorum of 24 is reached, and I will now ask the Independent Chairperson of the Council to draw a lot to determine the first Member to be called in the roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

Congo.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is Congo. We will not proceed to the vote on the proposal for the decision contained in *CL172/INF/8 Annex 1, Item 5* as it appears on the screen, and I will call out the names of Council Members and ask for their votes by replying either 'yes', 'no' or 'abstention'.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I will now pass the floor to the Independent Chairperson of the Council to read out the results.

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished delegates, dear friends, I now present you the results of the vote of the proposal for decision contained in *CL 172/INF/8, Annex 1, Item 5*.

Number of votes cast, 21. Majority required, 11. Votes For, 4. Votes Against, 17. Abstentions, 22.

With this result the Council has rejected the proposal for the decision contained in *CL172/INF/8, Annex 1, Item 5*.



Vote on: Proposal for decision contained in CL 172/INF/8, Annex1, Item 5
Vote sur:
Votación para:

26 April 2023 – 16.27

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Nominal vote/Vote par appel nominal/Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos : 21
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida: 11
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favor : 4
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra : 17
Abstentions/ Abstenciones : 22

Votes for: Belarus, Egypt, Nicaragua and Russian Federation.
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Guatemala, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America.
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Angola, Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Tunisia.
Abstenciones:

No Reply: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Kuwait and Mauritania.
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/ REJETÉE/ RECHAZADA

Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électoral/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for any delegation who wants to make a statement of explanation for its decision.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

My delegation is very sorry that this decision was not approved although it does in fact draw, or it would have drawn attention to the significant issue of unilateral decisions on the issue.

A number of delegations seem to have abstained, as if that was not of any importance to them. I see here the delegate of Kenya just in front of me, but turning to them I would say that in September last year the President of the Russian Federation decided to grant 286 000 tons of fertilizers for free.

Six months later the 300 000 or so tons of fertilizers meant for Kenya have not been delivered because of sanctions. If you who have abstained do not feel particularly concerned, then let me just say that we will not be solving the issue of food safety, it is just going to worsen.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement of explanation will be taken up in the Verbatim of this meeting.

Mr Cláudio GARON (Brazil)

Just to spare the Members an explanation, the vote I made before hand is the same for this vote.

CHAIRPERSON

That will be reflected in the Verbatim of this meeting.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I wish to take this opportunity to say that on behalf of the Bahamas and countries similar to us, firstly I find very offensive the language that was just used by my colleague from Russian Federation. I think we all in this place represent a sense of independence and have a right, notwithstanding what gifts would be given to any of our countries, to vote on issues as our capital and as our country deems necessary.

I wish to remind colleagues that – and I have heard a lot of talk about apparently what time we are wasting here – and to point out that we all know what the issues are and I believe that countries must stand up and speak out on issues that are affecting them negatively and we seem to talk around the issues.

The real issue has been pointed out repeatedly, which is there is a war that is affecting our countries, causing this food crisis, and we strongly disagree with those who see this as not being an issue to be raised in FAO. This war has everything to do with the crisis of food.

So I just want the record to reflect that.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement will be reflected in the Verbatim of this meeting.

Mr Victor L. VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

I must respond to what the honourable representative of the Bahamas has said. I am sure he is familiar with Cuba. Sanctions have been applied to Cuba for more than 50 years. They were introduced, exclusively introduced against this country, because there was occupation of the country and I am sure that the representative of the Bahamas is familiar with the situation there.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us not prolong this discussion, but Bahamas, right for reply.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I would not let that comment go as is, stand as is: Our record is very clear in the United Nations, where we stand on the issue of Cuba and so I do not need to repeat that. We are independent as a country, we take decisions that are in our best interests and we disagree with any country, no matter

what the size, no matter what contributions they make to us, on any issue. And so on record I invite the Member to take a look at the record of the Bahamas, where the issue of Cuba stands, and frankly inform himself of that – and I do not see the relevance frankly.

CHAIRPERSON

With this we have closed Item 5.

Let us have the snack and then we continue hopefully with consensus on the following Agenda Items, hopefully to be addressed today, and I will not overstretch you because it was already a long day and an intense day. The idea would be to have the afternoon Session to deal with Agenda Item 15, *Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization*; Item 16, *Code of Conduct for Voting*; and briefly, Item 17, *Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies*.

We now break for a snack and we come back at 17:10 hours. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 16:35 to 17:14 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 35 à 17 h 14

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.35 a las 17.14

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends. I know for sure that we are going to finalize our work today and are not so many times that you can be sure of something but this I am sure of because we are going to finalize our work in a very positive setting.

We are going to end in a positive note because we are going to celebrate at the balcony after the closure of this meeting, the 50 years of wisdom of Ms Beth Bechdol.

On a more serious note we have of course this afternoon, and sometimes we have in the Council heated discussions. This leads to emotions, but we are all professional diplomats and we are working in a multilateral system.

The multilateral system clearly states let us work as professionals together, respect each other. With this opening I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Kenya for the right to reply.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)

I want to restate from the onset that we respect this Council and we believe this is a decent platform for discussing multilateral issues. We absolutely do not expect this forum to be a platform for bilateral matters.

We implore the Chairperson, therefore, to encourage Members to moderate their language in their deliberations for us to have amicable outcomes in this Council and other related forums. May I also take this opportunity to thank the Bahamas Ambassador for his words of support. We agree that this forum should be used to focus on food security within the confines of FAO's mandate.

I rest my case and Kenya is a distinguished nation, respectable of many of those who are in this room who we deal with, and I want to stress that and thank you so much for giving me the right to respond.

Ms Marieta Stepanyan (Armenia)(Observer)

As we were discussing food security challenges within the context of conflicts, I would like to mention that it does not just concern Ukraine. It is already the fourth month that the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh and its 120 000 people including 30 000 children remain under factual siege. Deprived of proper access to food, essential goods and services including life saving medication and health care. Many businesses especially related to the food production and services have shut down.

The reason is the following. The Lachin corridor which is linking Nagorno Karabakh with Armenia and the outside world has been illegally blocked by our neighbour Azerbaijan, regarding the cause of the international community as well as the legally binding decision of the International Court of Justice. For having a proper perception of the dire humanitarian situation in Nagorno Karabakh, about

12 times less vital goods including grain, flour, rice, vegetables, fruits, medicines and baby formula etc. were imports, that should have been, due to the blockade.

More than 4 000 tons instead of about 51 000 tons in 128 days have been delivered and only exclusively by the Red Cross and Russian peace keepers. During the blockade, Azerbaijan completely or partially interrupted the gas supply into Nagorno Karabakh for a total of 62 days and electricity supply has been completely disrupted for 99 days which in turn caused serious deforestation.

This is in addition to the limited access and possibility to cultivate the agricultural lands and such works have been continuously shelled from the border line villages that is effecting the food security of the most vulnerable rural households.

Azerbaijan's destructive approach to politizing the humanitarian issue is accompanied by blocking the entry of international organizations including the United Nations into the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone, thus depriving those people humanitarian assistance. Hunger is being used as a weapon of war and in the result ethnic cleansing.

Armenia is of the strong opinion that the human lives matter, regardless of the status of the region and Armenia is responsible FAO Member and partner is hopeful that the humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh will be addressed in accordance with the Goals to of the 2030 Agenda as well as its steadfast principle of leaving no one behind.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

Angola s'associe à la déclaration du Kenya et nous devrions ici défendre qui ? Tous. Nous engager pour renforcer l'engagement de promouvoir l'agriculture, la pêche, l'alimentation et aussi la solidarité entre nous. Nous avons beaucoup de solidarité africaine, parce que sans la solidarité, nous ne pourrions pas tenir la paix et nous ne pourrions pas tenir la stabilité et le progrès que le peuple africain mérite.

Mr Nemat ALIYEV (Azerbaijan)(Observer)

We wish to exercise our right of reply to the statement made by the delegation of Armenia who regrettably, has made false and groundless remarks about my country.

We strongly reject the remarks of the Armenian delegation on the alleged blockade of Lachin road and on the measures taken by Azerbaijan to establish a border checkpoint at the starting point of the Lachin-Khankandi road on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border.

The establishment of this checkpoint is a legitimate and national security decision adopted in the situation when following the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020 and contrary to the provisions of the Trilateral Statement, the Armenian side still continues military provocations against Azerbaijan, the road is used for illegal activities, transportation of weapons, ammunition, and landmines, as well as the rotation of Armenia's servicemen. There is no basis for the claim that this step is contrary to the Trilateral statement, any other international document, or court decision.

The legitimate decision and step by Azerbaijan to establish a border checkpoint in its sovereign territory is in line with all principles and norms of international law.

Accusations against Azerbaijan in ethnic cleansing and assertion of Armenia to be a peaceful side, who during almost 30-years of occupation period plundered 9 cities and hundreds of villages, carried out ethnic cleansing against 1 million Azerbaijanis, deprived them of the right to return to their homes, and ignored the calls of international organizations and partners to end the occupation of Azerbaijani lands, is an example of hypocrisy and fraud.

Armenia has been pursuing a policy of aggression not only against the people of Azerbaijan, but also its nature, which led to disastrous impact on agriculture, wildlife and natural resources.

Armenian aggression caused serious threats to unique and well-known Karabakh purebred horses, perished millions of ruminants, burned down fodder reserves of the farmers, restricted harvesting of tens of thousands of hectares of cultivated lands, completely destroyed agricultural infrastructure, and demolished irrigation systems. Affecting lives of more than hundreds of thousands of farmers, this occupation led to substantial losses to the agricultural sector of Azerbaijan.

Armenian aggression has affected more than 30% of Azerbaijan's arable land, depriving Azerbaijan of a significant part of its fertile agricultural land, leaving about 1 million people as refugees and internally displaced persons, interrupting food production and off-farm economies which create jobs and ensuring rural development. Approximately 150,000 ha of arable land and 350,000 ha of pasture land were occupied. As a result of the occupation, 320,000 cattle farms and 1.1 million small cattle farms were destroyed, and the animals were appropriated.

During the 30-35 years of occupation, Azerbaijan suffered a loss of approximately 20% of its agricultural potential every year. As a result of the landmines planted in the territory of Azerbaijan exposure to loss still continues.

During the years of occupation, Armenia used the favorable deployment of its occupying armed forces as a weapon against the environment and agriculture of Azerbaijan.

In 2016 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution 2085 which stated that Azerbaijani inhabitants living alongside the line of contact were deliberately deprived of water. The Assembly considered that the intentional creation of an artificial environmental crisis must be valued as environmental aggression.

Nevertheless, Armenia continued to pollute and redirect River flows causing serious environmental damage and depriving the population of adjacent regions of water. The liberation of the Azerbaijani lands previously occupied by Armenia has given access for Azerbaijani ecologists to local rivers flowing through the territories of the liberated districts and other transboundary rivers flowing through the territory of Armenia. The monitoring results, analyzed in certified national and foreign laboratories, revealed that high amounts of heavy metals, in the river water and these drastic changes in the quality of water in the river can have extremely negative effects on its use for domestic and agricultural purposes.

Another source of threat is one of the largest water resources Sarsang. The lack of regular maintenance of Sarsang for almost 30 years posed a danger to the whole region and could result in great humanitarian disaster.

All of the mentioned war crime acts by Armenia are clear evidence of a violation of international norms and obligations under global strategies, such as human rights, as well as UN SDGs, FAO, and EU strategies on agriculture and food security which are rests on norms of international law.

Even after the liberation of their territories, Azerbaijani farmers cannot return to their homeland and engage in agricultural activities in these territories, given the intensive mining of these territories by Armenia. Contrary to the Tripartite Agreement, Armenia continues to plant anti-personnel mines on the territory of Azerbaijan and thereby intends to prevent the return of life and agricultural activity to these territories.

Transportation of landmines through the Lachin road, followed by their subsequent planting on the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, has particularly grave consequences. Since August 2022, more than 2700 anti-personnel landmine produced in Armenia in 2021 have already been detected in the Lachin and Kalbajar districts of Azerbaijan. Evidently, those landmines have been transported to the territory of Azerbaijan through the Lachin road in a blatant violation of the Trilateral Statement.

Therefore the establishment of this checkpoint is a legitimate and national security decision.

Such illegal actions restrict farmers to return to their homelands after 30 years and ability to feed their families, live a decent and safe life, and is a source of an imminent threat to regional food security, taking into consideration the worldwide challenges on the establishment of resilient food security system as a main task during the Post-COVID-19 situation.

Azerbaijan calls upon International Organizations to consolidate efforts in urging Armenia to take necessary measures to bring an end to the aggression of Armenia against the biodiversity of Azerbaijan and cease the irrevocable degradation of the region's unique ecosystem.

We recommend the Armenian side to abandon such provocations, to take a responsible approach to the efforts establishing relations with Azerbaijan on the basis of the principles such as territorial integrity and sovereignty of both countries, and to take a constructive position.

At the same time, we call on Armenia to put an end to its attempts to make the international community an instrument for its smear campaign, as well as to distort the well-known decision of the International Court of Justice for this purpose.

M. Abakar RAMADANE (Tchad) (Observateur)

Je crois que nous sommes, si je suis venu ici aussi, c'est quand même pour dire un mot au moins. Je vais parler surtout de l'impact du changement climatique surtout sur les ressources naturelles de chez moi, et plus particulièrement sur l'agriculture. Donc, le Tchad est un pays d'Afrique centrale qui est frappé depuis trois ans. Nous sommes frappés durement par l'impact du changement climatique depuis deux ans surtout. Durant la campagne 2021- 2022, notre pays a subi une sécheresse sans précédents où nous avons perdu plus de 10 pourcent de notre production agricole, et l'année dernière et surtout en 2022-2023, c'est le contraire.

Donc, ça veut dire, nous avons été frappés par des inondations sans précédents. Donc, ans une année sans eau et, une année avec beaucoup d'eau. Ceci effectivement, a joué sur la production. Malgré qu'il y ait assez d'eau, nous avons perdu encore cette année, plus de cinq 5 à six 6% pourcent de notre production. Donc, pour vous dire effectivement que la situation alimentaire est préoccupante chez nous, cette année. Cependant, déjà avec toutes les crises que nous avons connues chez nous en Centre Afrique, au Darfour, on a fragilisé la sécurité alimentaire de notre pays.

Présentement, encore une autre crise à l'est, effectivement, se profile. Avec la crise du Soudan, cela commence effectivement à encore peser effectivement sur les populations de l'est de notre pays. Comme vous le savez, le Soudan est le plus grand pays effectivement, africain producteur de céréales pour vous dire que pour nous, dans la région, le Soudan est notre Ukraine.

Donc, cela ça veut dire que, c'est le plus grand pays africain producteur de céréales qui nourrit à peu près une bonne partie de l'Afrique et également du Moyen-Orient. Donc, c'est un pays, les impacts de ce pays vont lourdement peser sur nous. Donc, je demande à ce que ces problèmes doivent être bien vus au niveau de la FAO, surtout cette conférence doit quand même faire une déclaration sur la cessation du conflit au Soudan. Ça, c'est une des demandes que je demande ici. Parce qu'un problème au Soudan, c'est un problème au Tchad, c'est un problème en Centrafrique, en Libye, en Egypte et au Moyen-Orient.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor.

Item 15. Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization

Point 15. Rétablissement, par la Conférence, du droit de vote des États membres redevables d'arriérés de contributions financières à l'Organisation

Tema 15. Restablecimiento por la Conferencia de los derechos de voto de los Estados Miembros en mora del pago de sus contribuciones financieras a la Organización

(CL 172/14)

CHAIRPERSON

I turn to Agenda Item 15, *The Restoration by the Conference of the Voting Rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization* and it can be found in document CL 172/14.

Introduction to Item 15: Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization

Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the Council

The 42nd Session of the Conference “requested the conduct of a comprehensive review on the process for reinstating voting rights for Member Nations in arrears for consideration by the relevant Governing Bodies, including the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), supported by a process of informal consultations led by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the

Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups”.¹ The 167th Session of the Council reiterated this request,² and the matter has since gone through a process of both formal consideration by relevant Governing Bodies as well as informal consultations led by the ICC.

The matter has been considered at the 113th, 115th, 116th and 117th Sessions of the CCLM, the 188th and 191st Sessions of the Finance Committee and the 168th and 170th Sessions of the Council.

The 113th Session of the CCLM noted the practice developed by FAO was consistent with the approach taken by most other UN system organizations and was of the view that a blanket waiver of the rules regarding voting rights established by the Basic Texts should be avoided.

The 168th Session of the Council considered the Report of the 113th Session of the CCLM and encouraged the ICC to hold consultations with Members taking into account existing rules, the CCLM’s findings, and relevant United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions.

Subsequently, transparent and inclusive consultations open to the full Membership took place on 4 March and 20 April 2022, through which a draft Conference Resolution was developed containing procedures and criteria related to the restoration of voting rights for Member Nations in arrears. This Resolution was submitted to the 116th Session of the CCLM on 8 June 2022, ahead of the 170th Session of the Council (13-17 June 2022).

The 116th Session of the CCLM recommended amendments to the draft Resolution in order to align it with the Report of the 191st Session of the Finance Committee, and with these adjustments considered the draft Resolution consistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization.

The Council at its 170th Session considered the draft Resolution and requested that the ICC continue the informal consultations to achieve consensus before submitting a revised version for review by the Council, through the CCLM and the Finance Committee, with a view for submission to the Conference at its 43rd Session.³

Accordingly, further informal consultations with the Membership took place during which consensus on the draft Resolution was reached. That text was presented to the Council at its 171st Session in December 2022, through document CL 171/19, Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization. The Council considered the document and looked forward to reviewing the draft Conference Resolution at its next Session, in April 2023, following review by the CCLM and the Finance Committee, with a view to submitting it to the 43rd Session of the Conference for approval.⁴

The draft Conference Resolution was subsequently presented to the 118th Session of the CCLM, which made a number of technical adjustments to the text and confirmed that the revised text was consistent with the Basic Texts and ready for the consideration of the Finance Committee and that of the Council, before eventual submission to the Conference for decision.⁵

The revised version of the draft Resolution was further reviewed by the Finance Committee, at its 195th Session, which agreed to submit the draft, as amended by the CCLM, to the Council for consideration, adoption and eventual forwarding to Conference.

The draft Resolution is presented in document CL 172/14 for the consideration of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

As you are well aware this Item was discussed heavily and was already mentioned this morning in the committee on constitutional legal matters. It was also discussed in the Finance Committee (FC) and with that I would like to open the floor to the Members for their statements that they wish to make.

¹ C 2021/REP, para 25

² CL 167/REP, para 11(a)

³ CL 170/REP, para 41 (b)

⁴ CL 171/REP, para 45 (b)

⁵ CL 172/10, paras 9 and 10

M. Sébastien FOUMANE (Cameroun)

Le Cameroun parle sur ce point de l'ordre du jour au nom du Groupe Régional régional Africain. Jje tiens à m'associer de prime abord aux déclarations du Kenya et de l'Angola de tout à l'heure. Nnous sommes rendus aujourd'hui au troisième jour du Conseil, vous ayant vu à l'œuvre depuis lundi, qu'il me soit permis de vous féliciter pour la bonne conduite des travaux que vous menez avec patience, méthode et pondération.

Et cela, dans un contexte où vos recommandations de départ pour la recherche du consensus dans nos débats n'ont malheureusement pas toujours été suivies. Nos félicitations vont également à toute l'équipe qui vous accompagne, le Secrétariat pour l'excellente qualité des documents produits, le Service d'Interprétariat d'interprétariat et de Traductiontraduction, ainsi que tous les autres qui œuvrent en background pour le succès de nos assises.

Notre Groupe Régional régional se félicite du processus consultatif, inclusif et des négociations qui ont abouti à la préparation du projet des résolutions joint au document *CL172/14*. Souvenons-nous que c'est un processus qui a été lancé par la 42ème Session de la Conférence en 2021 et qui, deux ans durant, a engagé l'ensemble des membres Membres dans une série de consultations informelles, facilitées par vous-même, Monsieur le Président Indépendant indépendant du Conseil.

Le texte du projet des résolutions de la Conférence a par la suite été examiné par les organes de gouvernance pertinents, notamment le Comité des Questions Constitutionnelles et Juridiques, (CQCJ), à sa 118ème Session et le Comité Financier, CF, à 195ème Session. Les deux Comités ont validé le projet de résolution issue des consultations informelles et ont estimé que le texte était suffisamment mûr pour être examiné par le Conseil.

C'est cela l'objet de notre présente déclaration. Le Groupe Régional régional Africain, dont les membres ont activement participé aux consultations informelles et lors des revues par les organes directeurs suscités, et après avoir examiné ledit projet de résolution, fait siennes les propositions du CQCJ et du CF et soutient qu'il soit transmis à la Conférence pour adoption.

Mr Hammad HAMMAD B. (United States of America)

The United States of America welcomes your work in assisting Members in reaching consensus on this important issue in inclusive and formal consultations. FAO must have a clear process in place for the constitutionally permitted means for Members in arrears to apply for their voting rights to be restored provided the circumstances preventing them from payment were beyond their control.

The draft resolution before us does just that. We fully support the draft criteria and the text of the draft resolution which provides practical guidelines that Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) is consistent with the Basic Texts which the Finance Committee (FC) confirmed it is consistent with the Organization's financial regulations. The United States of America reiterates its support for Council finalizing and approving the draft conference resolution on this matter including all amendments by CCLM and the Finance Committee for adoption by the 43rd Session of the Conference.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia align themselves with this statement.

First, we would like to thank the Independent Chair of the Council for holding informal consultations with Members on this important matter. We would also thank all Members for their constructive approach in these consultations, which resulted in reaching an informal consensus on the draft of a Conference Resolution.

The European Union (EU) and its Member States attach great importance to the financial health of the FAO and to the full payment of assessed contributions. While mindful that there can be conditions hindering Members' ability to meet their financial obligations, we urge all Members to pay their assessed contributions on time, in full and without condition.

The restoration of voting rights for member in arrears is thus a crucial issue that requires robust

procedures. In this regard, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) provides an important benchmark.

The EU and its Member states are convinced that this *Conference Resolution* will provide valuable and practical guidance for Member Nations in arrears to validly request the restoration of their voting rights at FAO Conferences. We strongly encourage all the Member Nations concerned to make full use of this *Conference Resolution*.

We underline the importance to maintain an enhanced publicly accessible, exhaustive and up-to-date information section on the FAO website, following best practice of the UN system.

We appreciate the thorough consideration of the draft Resolution by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and we note that the text is consistent with the Basic Texts. We support the technical adjustments made by the CCLM. We would, nonetheless, have liked to see the established UNGA criteria regarding the deadline for making requests for restoration of voting rights better reflected in the draft Resolution.

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of consistency of all language versions of the draft Resolution with the English version.

With these comments, we support the recommendation of the CCLM and the Finance Committee to submit the draft Resolution for consideration and decision of the Conference.

Sra. Ivania LEÓN (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua agradece al Presidente Independiente del Consejo, a los órganos rectores pertinentes y a todos los Miembros por haber desarrollado un proceso de consultas formales e informales de moto inclusivo, participativo y transparente que ha permitido avanzar en la búsqueda continua del consenso como forma privilegiada para fortalecer a nuestra Organización.

Nuestra Delegación considera que el presente proyecto de resolución presentado ha interpretado, por una parte, la necesidad de flexibilidad para que los Miembros puedan cumplir con sus obligaciones y, por otro lado, ha buscado asegurar a la FAO los recursos tan necesarios para garantizar la ejecución eficaz de las actividades en sus programas de trabajo ordinario en beneficio principalmente de los países en desarrollo. Recordamos que una parte importante de los recursos de FAO se fundamentan en la contribución de los Estados Miembros, sin embargo, no podemos obviar la complejidad del entorno internacional agravado en estos últimos años y sumado a otras circunstancias ajenas a las voluntades de los países Miembros haciendo especial hincapié en los países en desarrollo con atraso en sus contribuciones para que puedan mantener su derecho al voto preservando un principio fundamental del sistema multilateral.

Con estos comentarios, nuestra Delegación recomienda que este proyecto de resolución sea remitido para su aprobación durante la Conferencia en su 43 Período de Sesiones.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia)

Malaysia delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia regional group. The draft Conference resolution contained documents *CL172/14* on procedures for the restoration by the Conference of voting rights of Members nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organizations presented at this Session, is the culmination of serious of long transparent rich and inclusive discussion and deliberation process spearheaded by the Independent Chairperson of the Council under and the informal consultation setting.

The draft has been further reviewed and readjusted by the 118th CCLM people to ensure its consistency with the Basic tTexts. For this the Asia regional group highly commends the invaluable contributions and tireless advocacy ofn the Independent Chairperson of the Council and other Ggoverning Bbodies. We also appreciate Members' flexibility in reaching consensus on this matter as requested by the General Committee of the 42ndnd Session of the Conference and the 170thth Session of the Council with a view for submission to the Cconference at its 43rdrd Session.

In the absence of explicit provisions in the Basic tTexts concerning the implementation of Aarticle three, paragraph four of the FAO Cconstitution the draft Cconference resolution presented here

provides clear guidance to Members in arrears to request restoration of their voting rights by the Cconference without their harming derogating their legal financial obligation to the Organization.

Of particular importance the draft Cconference resolution will help enable the General Committee to implement its function more effectively, professionally and in a timely fashion. The Asia regional group take note of the critical situation of the Rregular Rprogramme in 2018 as a results of delays in the payment of the major contributors. We recognize that the Organization's ongoing cash flow health is dependent on the timely payment of contributions and Member nationss to make payment of contributions on time and in full. In this regard, the Asia regional group recommends the submission of this draft to the Cconference for adoption.

Chairperson, with your permission since I have the floor, we would like to deliver our National Statement.

Malaysia commends the leadership of the Independent Chairperson of the Council for holding serious informal consultations with Members on this issue. The constructive approach by Members in this consultation enabled us to reach a consensus on the draft Cconference resolution. Malaysia emphasises that the draft Cconference resolution presented to us in this 172nd Session of the Council must provide practical criteria and clear guidance to Members in areas to request restoration of their voting rights by the Cconference, provided circumstances preventing them from payment were beyond their control.

Malaysia takes note on the technical adjustment made to the draft Cconference resolution and supports the recommendation by CCLM to have language versions checked for consistency. In this regard Malaysia reiterates its support for submitting the draft Cconference resolution for adoption by the 43rd Session of the FAO Cconference.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We also appreciate the active participation of the Membership in the deliberations on the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization.

This has been a long process with many cycles of the Governing Bodies with informal consultations and negotiations in between, but we are very happy to have an outcome that we can support as presented in the draft resolution in front us as administered by Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and supported by the Finance Committee (FC).

It adds an important tool to our collective tool box that supports the effective functioning of the Conference providing clarity to all Members on the process to follow. We encourage all Members to pay their assessed contributions on time and in full whenever possible.

We concur with recommendations from both CCLM and the Finance Committee that the various language versions be reviewed and checked for consistency with the English version, and although the resolution will be presented at the next Conference for formal adoption which we support we encourage Members and the Secretariat to strive to implement the resolution at the outset of the 43rd Session of the Conference.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Antes de comenzar con este punto, déjenme decir que cada vez que no logramos resolver nuestras diferencias por consenso es una pequeña derrota al trabajo de la diplomacia y al trabajo del multilateralismo. Y, además, empieza a crear un espíritu negativo donde se corre riesgos de afectar la relación entre nosotros, entre los Miembros. Cada uno de nosotros, Presidente, debe volver al equilibrio, al respeto y al espíritu de que lo normal en esta Organización es resolver nuestras diferencias por consenso. Dicho esto, creo que usted lo ha intentado, nosotros también y, lamentablemente, en algunos temas no lo hemos logrado.

Con relación al presente ítem, queremos apoyar la declaración de África y celebramos que, gracias al trabajo del CCLM y sus buenos oficios, Presidente, hemos logrado un consenso que se presentará y será aprobado seguramente en la próxima Conferencia.

Pero déjeme decir un dato que me parece importante, sobre todo para los países en desarrollo., Presidente. En el año 2019, había 10 Miembros sin derecho a voto por atraso de pagos. En el año 2021, pasamos a 25 países que estaban en esa situación. Al día de hoy, Presidente, hay ya 44 países que no tienen ese derecho, por lo tanto, seguramente vamos a trabajar en el marco de los países en desarrollo en el G77&China para tratar de promover que en base a una situación global absolutamente crítica que claramente explica por qué los países empiezan a tener este nivel de problemas, tener la posibilidad de presentar las explicaciones y las notas correspondientes de acuerdo a los procedimientos para que nadie pueda quedar fuera de su derecho de voto en la próxima Conferencia.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia welcomes the draft Conference resolution for the restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Members in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions following review by the 188th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the 195th Session of the Finance Committee. We appreciate your efforts Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) working with FAO Management including the Legal Counsel to address this matter and we thank all of those who have contributed to the development of this document in its current form.

Given the importance of establishing clear procedures for restoring voting rights of Members in arrears as was requested by the 42nd Conference we wish to acknowledge Members willingness to collaborate and find compromise. This is the work we should be doing and how we should be doing it.

Australia supports the draft resolution and recommends its submission to the 43rd Session of the Conference for adoption.

Ms LI Xi (China)(Original language Chinese)

China supports the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. China does not have any disagreement with the draft Conference resolution.

China thanks the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for organizing several rounds of informal consultations and appreciates the professional inputs from the Committee and Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and Finance Committee (FC) and the FAO Legal Office on the draft.

To ensure the financial health of FAO we encourage Members to pay their contributions on time. We also stress that in considering the applications for the restoration of voting rights full consideration should be given to the difficulties faced by developing countries to ensure fairness, inclusiveness, and feasibility. China supports the submission of the draft resolution to the general Conference for its consideration.

Continues in English

We also have a question for the Secretariat and also the Legal Counsel, considering the previous statements made by the Members. We do not want to pre-judge the review of the Conference. So we are also wondering if for this Conference can we apply for the suggestions containing this draft resolution.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

Je voudrais tout d'abord exprimer mon soutien à l'Ambassadrice du Kenya, mon amie l'Ambassadrice Jackline Yonga et soutenir son intervention et ses mots de sagesse.

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. La France soutient l'adoption d'une procédure de rétablissement des droits de votes par la Conférence, comme l'avait du reste demandé le Bureau lors de la dernière Conférence.

Nous regrettons que ce texte ne soit pas pleinement aligné sur la procédure connue et acceptée de tous, mis en œuvre et réaffirmé chaque année par l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies depuis 1999. Nous pensons néanmoins que cette résolution permettra de renforcer et de préciser la procédure de rétablissement des droits de votes à la FAO. Comme l'ont dit plusieurs collègues et comme l'a souligné le Comité des Finances, le paiement des contributions obligatoires est engagement pris par chacun d'entre nous et tous les Membres de la FAO en vertu de l'article 18 de la constitution. Il

permet à l'Organisation de remplir son mandat, un élément crucial pour répondre à la crise alimentaire, notamment au bénéfice des pays et les populations les plus vulnérables.

Plus de 90 pourcent des arriérés de paiements sont dus par des pays qui ne sont pas parmi les pays les moins avancés. Les pays les moins avancés sont les victimes et non les responsables des arriérés de paiements. Cependant, nous sommes conscients que certains pays font face à des circonstances économiques notamment indépendantes de leurs volontés. Pour cette raison, le rétablissement des droits de vote par la Conférence est une question qui doit être traitée avec le plus grand sérieux.

Le Bureau de la Conférence, et là encore, il l'avait souligné lors de la précédente Conférence, doit disposer d'un temps suffisant et des informations les plus complètes possibles pour étudier en détail chaque demande de rétablissement par écrit. Ainsi, nous appelons les Membres à mettre pleinement en œuvre les dispositions de cette résolution.

En conclusion, nous recommandons au Conseil de soutenir l'envoi de ce texte à la Conférence pour adoption.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

Before getting into the joint statement under this Agenda Item, Japan supports the statement made by Kenya in the previous Agenda Item.

On this particular Agenda Item 15, Japan fully aligns itself with the joint statement of the Asia regional group made by Malaysia. Japan highly appreciates efforts made by the Chairperson and the Secretariat informing consensus among Members. Japan also supports Members active participation and contributions to the process.

As mentioned in your regional statement the text of the resolution provides useful guidance to Members in arrears to request restoration of their voting rights. With the expectation that the resolution contributes to better process and better finance of FAO, Japan supports the draft resolution to be submitted to the Conference in this right for adoption.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Thank you very much for the consultations that you organized as concerned the issue of restoring voting rights. We do not stand against the recommendations made in the document to submit this to the Conference in agreement with the recommendations made by the Finance Committee and Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). This practice goes along the lines of what is done in other parts of the United Nations system and was found on the basis of consensus.

There are however a number of Items that have been added or may be added that were not the result of consensus and may lead to a breach of consensus.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by Malaysia on behalf of the Asia group.

We just have two points to highlight. We support the draft resolution as it will facilitate the work of the General Committee particularly the points which place an obligation on the requesting country to submit certain information, namely providing explanation of conditions beyond the country's control which led in its failure to pay and the submission of the payment plan containing specific information.

Although the conditions beyond a country's control they are in the regulations, but very often what was submitted was not what was required and the resolution makes specific obligations on the part of the country to submit that information which should facilitate the work of the General Committee.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

First of all I would like to support the statement that was made by my good friend, the Ambassador of Kenya regarding the draft resolution, I think it is a good reflection of your efforts in the last few months and Israel supports its adoption.

Sr. José Ángel BUCARELLO GUZMÁN (Venezuela República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

La República Bolivariana de Venezuela saluda la presentación del proyecto de resolución para el Restablecimiento del derecho a voto en la Conferencia de los Miembros en mora del pago de sus contribuciones financieras. Asimismo, desearía felicitar el liderazgo del Presidente Independiente del Consejo quien convocó a un gran número de consultas informales con los Miembros de la FAO en un proceso transparente e inclusivo.

Saludamos el consenso alcanzado con respecto a este proyecto de resolución el cual apoyamos sea remitido para ser sometido a la consideración de la Conferencia. Y, en línea con esto, deseamos agradecer la oportunidad que se nos ha brindado para expresar nuestras legítimas preocupaciones generadas en el marco de estas consultas. Estas preocupaciones de Venezuela tienen su origen en la imposibilidad material que confronta nuestro país al ver limitado su acceso al sistema financiero internacional y no contar con cuentas con bancos intermediarios esenciales para realizar transferencias y transacciones bancarias que permitan honrar los compromisos financieros con la FAO y otras organizaciones de las que Venezuela es miembro como consecuencia de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales o llamadas sanciones unilaterales.

Sin duda, esta es una situación —como hemos expresado— que escapa al control de nuestro país. También desearíamos agradecer la ardua labor y la buena disposición del Director, Mr Aiman Hija, de la División de Finanzas y Tesorero de la FAO y a su equipo con quienes nuestra misión ha sostenido múltiples consultas y reuniones para tratar de establecer un canal o mecanismo que provea a nuestro país una vía segura para transferir dichos pagos adeudados a la FAO sin que estos sean congelados o confiscados como consecuencia de estas arbitrarias medidas.

Aun así, quisiera también aprovechar la oportunidad para reiterar el compromiso indeclinable de Venezuela para honrar sus compromisos financieros con la FAO al igual que con otras organizaciones. No cesaremos en nuestro esfuerzo para establecer dicho canal con la ayuda de la Organización y de todas las partes que necesitamos convocar para hacerlo posible. Consideramos que proveer a la Organización de un presupuesto adecuado es parte también de las obligaciones que como Miembros tenemos y estamos prestos y dispuestos a continuar trabajando para lograrlo.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu to answer the question for China.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that China requested clarification as to the effect of this draft resolution and its applicability or otherwise during the upcoming Conference Session. Here, firstly, I would recall that the authority on matters of restoration of voting rights lies solely with the Conference. This is what is provided in the Constitution and, indeed, this very great amount of work that you Members and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) have undertaken derives from a request from the Conference, and what you are doing is responding to that request as you move forward.

The Council here is requested simply to recommend. It would be the Conference that would adopt and, thus, until the Conference adopts there is no legal binding effect of this resolution. Taking that into account, I think it may also be pertinent just to consider that the scope of this draft resolution, which also includes actions that would be expected from Members in advance of the Conference.

Thus, while there would firstly not be a legal requirement to apply this until adoption, Members may also wish to consider that even a possible political decision to respect it could be, to some extent, rather complex and rather difficult for Members. However, from a formal legal perspective, until adopted this draft resolution has no formal effect.

CHAIRPERSON

I see that Observer Iraq has asked for the floor.

Mr Zaid Tarik AL-ANI (Iraq) (Observer)

We are bound by the rules of the Organization our representation is in contact with the financial department and I would like to use this opportunity to mention Mr Aiman Hija and what he does in this respect to try and make sure that we have the information required to be able to pay our dues.

We have asked for a concept paper to try and make sure that Iraq is not deprived of its status of Member and can indeed vote. Iraq was unable to adopt a budget because there was no government in fact in the country over the last few years, and the budget must be passed or submitted by government. The adoption or the installation and appointment of a Government in 2022 helped to solve the issue. As of 2023, Iraq has started paying down its dues. Can I add the following?

Iraq is one of the founding Members of the Organization. It was and remains committed to the mandate of our Organization and this has led us to paying our dues and even to giving financial contributions on occasion. There is indeed an Iraq room within this building which is the illustration thereof.

We also hosted the 36th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa conference in Baghdad in 2022. We highlighted the relevance of attending in person despite the difficulties due to COVID-19. Iraq has taken an active part in the work of the Organization and its meetings and recently the Near East and North Africa group has elected us to lead it over 2023-2024. We were also involved in the initiatives launch by the Director -General because indeed we do believe in the mandate of the Organization.

This is the decision that has been taken of the Iraq affair namely excluding us and depriving us of our voting rights at the next Conference.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other speakers on my list, I turn to the Council to draft council conclusions.

The Council reviewed the Draft Resolution contained in document *CL 172/14*, Restoration by the Conference of the voting rights of Member Nations in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, and:

- a) took note of the recommendations made by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Finance Committee;
- b) noted with appreciation the confirmation of the CCLM that the Draft Resolution, as revised by the CCLM, is consistent with the Basic Texts of the Organization; and
- c) recommended submission of the Draft Resolution, as reproduced in *Appendix E* to this Report, to the Conference for adoption.

Can we agree to these draft conclusions?

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I have no objections to what is on the screen. I wanted to propose an additional sentence. It could be after “*Organization*” before “*and*”, and it could read “*stressed that the full and timely payment of the assessed contributions is crucial for FAO’s financial and health and urged all Members to pay their assessed contributions on time*” and then follow, but it could be a separate sentence as well.

Ms LI Xi (China)

China agrees with Sweden on behalf of a European Union's proposal. While we also hope that at the same subparagraph after this sentence, as many countries mentioned in their statement, we would add one more proposal, “*while taking into consideration of the developing country's actual situation*”.

Besides this, we hope that the Secretary could help us to develop some one extra subparagraph that it is as everyone mentioned their statement. We also express our high gratitude and appreciation for the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) leadership on this several runs of consultation. We hope that it could also be reflected in the Report.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo había pedido la palabra luego de la intervención de mi estimada colega de Suecia porque la propuesta sugerida, no la primer parte donde habla de: “*stress that the full and timely payment of the assessed contribution is crucial for FAO’s financial carehealth*”, con lo cual estoy de acuerdo; pero

la segunda parte:, “an urge all Member nations to pay their assessed contributions on time”, pareciera un mensaje demasiado fuerte como si lo que yo mencioné en mi intervención no hubiera sido comprendido. Significa que, en la misma medida que está creciendo la inseguridad alimentaria mundial, también está creciendo la cantidad de países con dificultad para poder pagar sus contribuciones. También hay países que no pagan sus contribuciones y que no tienen ese tipo de dificultades, pero este no es un juicio donde estamos analizando país por país.

De todas maneras, la propuesta de China de alguna manera equilibra el párrafo, por lo cual si esa propuesta podemos aceptarla, podríamos estar de acuerdo con el párrafo tal cual está en pantalla. Segundo, creo que sería justo reconocer el rol también aparte del CCLM, el trabajo suyo, Presidente, en la cual llevó a delante consultas que fueron absolutamente funcionales y positivas, constructivas, para poder construir ese consenso. En un momento donde pareciera que el consenso está en discusión es importante reconocerlo.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

On subparagraph 4 (a), we may want to add something to make it a little bit complete, which has to do with language consistency. And I took note of the recommendation made by the Committee on Constitutional Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Finance Committee (FC). There we should put FC because you put CCLM, then we put FC. And “*stressed the need to ensure language consistency in the various versions of the draft resolution*”. That is what I wanted to add. Now, you know, you always learn every day. So, for the Cconference, will the numbering of the document be changed to Conference document or is it the Council? So, what is it going to happen? I need to be educated on that.

Mr Hammad HAMMAD B. (United States of America)

For the second part, the addition by our colleagues from China. I understand what we are trying to get at. I am just wondering, I am still trying to get the exact language to propose if we can use kind of language from the Basic Texts because it is covered in there. Kind of the idea of taking to account because we are not just taking to account. I guess this is a little unclear what actual situations means, what developing countries are in this context. So, to avoid that confusion I will propose language, but I just need a few minutes.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I was just wondering since this document and this Conference resolution is specifically addressing the question of the restoration of voting rights. Would not this wording in subparagraph (c) which says, “*urged all Member nations to pay the assessed contributions on time*”. Will it not be contradictory? Because the basic reason for this document is to restore the voting rights of countries who can show that there were conditions beyond their control and that's in the financial regulations, I think. And that is why they did not pay.

So, if there are conditions beyond their control, which they are now obliged to specify, should we urge them to pay on time at the same time? Is it not a bit contradictory? That word “*urge*”? I also agree with all the Members who are saying, and I I also said it. We should have a subparagraph on the efforts you made in arriving at that consensus.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Precisamente me anticipó nuestro querido representante de Pakistán.

En nuestra declaración especificamos, y lo dijimos, que dadas las situaciones, tendría que estudiarse también caso por caso las situaciones de cada uno de los países que se encuentran en dificultades ya que muchas veces es por motivos ajenos a sus voluntades, por un lado.

Por otro lado, compartimos el que se pueda hacer una mejor redacción sobre el texto en el caso quedase así en el subpárrafo (c). Compartimos la posición de China. Si se puede mejorar está bien, pero precisamente está incluido en la declaración que nosotros hicimos porque se tienen tomar los casos particulares, individuales, según la situación de cada uno de estos países.

También dijimos que efectivamente el presupuesto de la FAO sabemos todos de donde viene y en una situación como en la que nos encontramos actualmente, tendrían que ser consideradas todas las situaciones.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We understand what Argentina has said. What Nicaragua has said and we share in that concern. And specifically the mention added to the text after the intervention of the People's Republic of China. What we have to bear in mind here is that there are two things here, the obligation or the duty of Member States to pay their dues.

And also as Mr Khalid Mehboob said, we need to take into account the outside circumstances that may prevent these countries from doing so. I think we probably shouldn't express these things in the proposed resolution.

But if we really must, we would like to add to subparagraph (c) the following amendment, while taking into consideration the developing countries actual situation and the subsequent result or their subsequent inability for them to pay given circumstances beyond their control. I think this really would be more relevant as a presentation of our meaning as confirmed, then transmitted to the conference. Again, we would rather not have this paragraph, but if we have to have it, then let us have it with the amendment we have just brought to it.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

S'agissant du petit C, par souci de coller au texte de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies et du projet de résolution, je souhaiterais juste ajouter, après "on time". Non, de mettre, "*assess contribution in full on time and without conditions*".

Qui est exactement le langage que nous avons dans le projet de résolution à son paragraphe 1. Par ailleurs, comme l'ont indiqué les États-Unis et également le collègue russe, la constitution elle-même donne un langage utile et donc notre proposition peut-être, ce serait d'être plus court et de dire,

"While noting that there might be conditions beyond the control of the Member nations, in particular for the list of developed countries".

Pour prendre en compte ce qui a été dit dans la salle et ce qui est la réalité des arriérés de paiements.

CHAIRPERSON

I was still thinking that we have an agreement on the on the draft resolution. The more we bring in, the more complex it becomes. And this is only to conclude that we should send it to the Conference for adoption.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

On subparagraph (a) just would recommend in the various language versions of the draft resolution, we hope there's only one version of the draft resolution.

On subparagraph (c) we can live with what's there, but in the spirit of finding something perhaps simpler, "*and urged Members to meet their commitments to the Organization in a timely fashion*". Because we recognize that if Members are in arrears, part of their commitment would be to identify their payment plan or identify the information that's putting them in a limitation.

So, perhaps that is one way to find a middle ground. So, "*and all Members to meet their commitments to the Organization in a timely fashion*". On subparagraph (d) just a question with regard to the draft resolution as noted in subparagraph (e) that currently still shows track changes and we just want to confirm that what goes to the Conference will be a clean version that has all the track changes that have been accepted.

And then finally on (e) we support this subparagraph. We would recommend perhaps we start with this bullet rather than keeping it at the end. And then just for clarity we would suggest deleting "*successfully*", which resulted in consensus among Members. We believe consensus is what shows the success.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (South Africa)

Firstly, I would like to join the other distinguished Members of the Council that spoke before me in appreciating the role of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) in getting us to where we are in respect of the Informal Consultations and therefore would agree with Canada that we reorder and start with that.

Secondly, I think just again in acknowledgement of the inputs made both by Cameroon, Argentina and Pakistan because the key and the efforts that colleagues made in finding the draft or arriving at the draft resolution were more informed by the fact that there is difficulty in Members meeting obligations and therefore the purpose being then to restore those rights.

And I would therefore also opt for a simplified (c), which ends exactly at that square bracket where Canada summarized it quite well. It would simplify and probably will leave the rest of the text is too wide, too broad, because I think the key is that some of the elements are covered in the in the Finance Committee Report so that we avoid tautology and repetition.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

The last part of South Africa's intervention is highly supported by us. I believe that subparagraph (d) is not necessary here. We have it in the Finance Committee Report and in every Session of the Finance Committee. I speak as the former Chairperson of the Finance Committee, that sentence comes in all the time. So, we may not need it here because it is also in the draft resolution. So, I will suggest that we do away with (d), simply.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

Japan does not feel the necessity to include the subparagraph (d) but if we really need this sentence we are a bit being confused because in this subparagraph, the two separate matters are included.

One is the obligation to pay, which is the second half of this subparagraph. And the latter half is about the restoration of voting rights. It seems to us that these two matters are being mixed up in a complex way.

Therefore, if we need this sentence, we would like to suggest using the agreed language from the draft resolution, the first preamble paragraph, which starts from reaffirming Article 3, subparagraph 4, and article. How many? Article 18 of the Constitution and others, which in our view incorporates all the elements raised by the distinguished colleagues in this room.

CHAIRPERSON

I have seven speakers on my list. Could we not make our life easier because we are now going to introduce language of the related resolution. If you see subparagraph (d) is getting more and more complicated because we all know what we are speaking about. We all know what is in the Basic Text.

We all know what is in the resolution. That is why we drafted a very short text for draft resolutions. Just given the complexity of the text now in (d) which does not even have everything, could we now just delete subparagraph (d)? It is a flexibility in the room not to insist on subparagraph (d) because I do not think we can negotiate it this evening and I do not think we should have a long discussion. Certainly we do not want to go back to Informal Consultations. Can we agree to delete subparagraph (d)? Is there an objection to delete subparagraph (d)? I see none.

Then we go to subparagraph by subparagraph. I am trying to see whether or not we can finalize this. Because I do want to at least do the Code of Conduct.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

I go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b)?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Iba a pedir que sacaran el subpárrafo (d), así que le agradezco su sugerencia y con respecto al subpárrafo (b), después de: “*ensure language consistency in the sixth official FAO languages*” esa es mi sugerencia con respecto al texto.

CHAIRPERSON

I see that Venezuela has asked you for the floor, but in accordance with the Rules of Procedures, we cannot give you the floor because we are doing now the text negotiations and then it is up to the Council Members. I apologize for that.

I heard several voices saying something about languages, what would be the best, Mr Rakesh Muthoo? Because he is the Officer in Charge of multilingualism.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The guidance from the Council is pretty clear and we will work hard to ensure that there is exactly what is written in that guidance, that there is consistency in the language versions of the draft resolution, which will be in the six languages of FAO.

While I have the floor, Chairperson, perhaps I could also address the process by which this draft resolution will be transmitted too.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first finalize the text.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I think the first language is redundant. It is a matter of “*ensuring consistency in the six languages of FAO*”. Then, we could delete “*in the various language versions*” after that.

CHAIRPERSON

Is this agreeable to everybody? I see smiling faces.

With that, we have concluded our work on this Agenda Item. Before I close this Agenda Item and we give the floor to Mr Rakesh Muthoo, but let us first adopt the Draft Conclusions by consensus.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Now that the Council has adopted this draft resolution for transmission to the Conference and once it adopts its Report later this week, this will take the form of a clean draft resolution in a dedicated document for the Conference. It will then be submitted for approval by the Conference under Agenda Item 24 of the Provisional Agenda of the Conference, which was previously approved for transmission by the Council to the Conference, and which the Conference will adopt at the beginning of its session.

CHAIRPERSON

I hope that is clear for everybody. With that we have concluded Item 15.

Item 16. Code of Conduct for Voting**Point 16. Code de conduite relatif au vote****Tema 16. Código de conducta para las votaciones**

(CL 172/15)

CHAIRPERSON

We continue with Item 16, *Code of Conduct for Voting*, which you can find in CL 172/15. As we are all aware and certainly also my predecessor, Mr Khalid Mehboob that it has a long history of informal consultations. It went also several times to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). But finally we could arrive at the informal consensus of the Code of Conduct, which is now in front of you. Hopefully we can send it to the Conference for its adoption.

Introduction to Item 16: Code of Conduct for Voting

Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chairperson of the Council

Following the 41st Session of the Conference in 2019, the 162nd Session of the Council considered matters arising from the Conference including, inter alia, voting procedures and requested these be

reviewed by the appropriate Governing Bodies and through a process of informal consultations led by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC).⁵

As a result, the ICC held numerous informal consultations from February 2020 to February 2023, as mandated by the Conference and the Council,⁶ with a view to developing a draft code of conduct which should address candidates, Members, and the Secretariat, be consistent with Rule XII at large and the General Rules of the Organization and be developed through a member-led and participatory process.

The Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports presents the consensus text which was agreed at the last ICC informal Consultation on the Code of Conduct for Voting, held on 9 February 2023.

At its 118th Session, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) reviewed the draft text, made two small technical adjustments within the context of its mandate, and invited the Council to endorse and transmit it to the Conference.⁷

The draft Code of Conduct, as amended by the CCLM, is presented for the consideration of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I opened the floor for Members who would like to take the floor.

Ms Nina P. CAINGLET (Philippines)

The Philippines delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We welcome the draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting Procedures.

The Asia Group commends the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) Mr Hans Hoogeveen and his predecessor Mr Khalid Mehboob on their efforts leading a long, open, extensive, inclusive, and transparent consultation process towards the development of a voluntary draft Code of Conduct for Voting in the past three years. We also appreciate Members' flexibility reaching consensus on this matter.

We took note of the Status and the Scope of the Code that this Code is of a voluntary nature and is not legally binding and the Code does not amend the Basic Texts, We also took note that Member Nations and candidates are nevertheless expected to honor its contents.

In this regard, the Asia Regional Group recommends the submission of this draft to the Conference for adoption.

Ms Naomi MATTOS (United States of America)

The United States of America appreciates the efforts of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) independent chair of the Council and facilitating consensus to allow us to reach the finish line in the development of a Code of Conduct for FAO elections.

We also appreciate the thorough review within its legal mandate of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at its 118th Session. This voluntary Code of Conduct is important. It looks to the future, improves and strengthens procedures in transparency in FAO elections and codifies some of the strong practices we saw FAO employ during ICC and Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and person secret ballot elections.

The United States of America is proud to join consensus in recommending this draft code of conduct to be sent to the final version as amended by CCLM 118 for adoption at the 43rd Conference.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE TECLEGHIORGHIS (Eritrea)

⁵ CL 162/REP, para 7

⁶ C 2019/REP, para 28; CL 162/REP, para 7; CL 164/REP, para 20 (a); C 2021/REP, para 7; CL 170/INF/7; CL 170/REP, para 49; CL 171/REP, para 47.

⁷ CL 172/10 paragraphs 28, 29 and 31.

This statement on the draft of voluntary code of conduct for voting procedures is prepared on behalf of the Africa Regional Group by Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, and Mauritania, hence Eritrea is honored to present the statement.

Primarily the Africa Regional Group commences FAO, the sSecretariat and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for organizing the 172nd Session of the Council. Therefore Chairperson, the draft voluntary code of conduct for voting procedures of FAO is a result of extensive informal consultation among Members and under the guidance of the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

This voluntary code of conduct for voting procedures aims at promoting open, fair, equitable and transparent voting procedures during the election for the office of Director General of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO). It is of a voluntary nature and is not legally binding.

Hence Member and candidates have to honor its contents. It recommends the durable behavior by Member nationalists and the candidates nominated by the Member nationalist regarding the election of the Director General of the Organization in order to increase the fairness, credibility, openness, and transparency of the process.

All personnels involved in the voting proceeds are subject to the obligation of impartiality, neutrality and confidentiality. Any failure to adhere to this obligation result in the initiation of administrative arm Strategy process, which may include disciplinary process.

Therefore, the African Regional Group appreciates the draft voluntary code of conduct for voting procedures and recommends Member nationalist to respect and accept the procedures.

The Africa Regional Group requests the Council to review the drafted documentary if necessary, and make comments and observations as it is considered appropriate and recommend its submission to the Conference for adoption.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

This is an important milestone and we would like to thank all those who contributed over the long process for facilitating the outcome in front of us today. At times it felt like it was being assembled by big robotic arms, each contributing divergent pieces that did not quite fit together. But thankfully with patience and persistence and many, many hours of discussion under your leadership and the creative and constructive contributions of the Members, a consensus outcome was reached.

Canada supports the draft of Voluntary Code of Conduct for voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as amended with proposed technical adjustments by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). Although the Code of Conduct will be presented at the next Conference for formal adoption, we encourage Members and the Secretariat to strive to follow this code of conduct during the election processes at the 43rd Session of the Conference.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the joint statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by Philippines. Japan highly appreciates the fact that the Code of Conduct for voting has reached a consensus. Thanks to the long initiative of the Chairperson who gave in and his predecessor an active debate and contributions of Members.

Japan knows that the objective of this code is to increase the fairness, credibility, openness, and transparency of the process. The Secretary General election will be held at 40th Conference in this July. Japan believes that the Members and the Secretariat need to properly implement the action based upon the agreed code of conduct and the existing FAO rules and procedures in a highly fair and transparent manner.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you for all the work you did in facilitating the informal consultations on this subject.

Our delegation thinks this is an important outcome on an important subject. Conference ask the Council to take up this issue and suggest improvements in this area. So, it is good that our negotiations have resulted in a consensus.

We think the Code of Conduct is a sound basis to continue to strengthen FAO process in line with the best practices in the United Nation system. For our part, our interest in these discussions stems from a desire to see FAO in the vanguard of good governance practice, setting high standards of transparency that can serve as a benchmark for other United Nation agencies.

We say this with a view not only to our internal rules and procedures in FAO, we say that to our partners, both public and private sector, recognize the efforts we are engaged on together to set high standards for FAO governance.

In a wider sense, this can build confidence in the way we develop policies and programs in FAO and in turn it can help us to broaden support for FAO and its work. In that context we see the code as a constructive collaborative effort across the Membership.

We look forward to working with all Members to fully respect the code. In due course we look forward also to working with Members to reviewing it to see how we are using the code so that we can build on and improve it.

While I have got the floor I just wanted to make one point. In our Council, it is broadening the point on governance. I am struck by the Council that we are always looking backwards and we look backwards at important issues. What is happened in the Council, the Financeial Committee, the Programme Committee and so on?

I just wanted to bring attention to the Council that today, while council's been going on, FAO has produced a very interesting analysis on El Nino and its effects. Now, that the La -Nina phase has passed. And I am saying that because FAO was telling us there is going to be a lot of agricultural areas impacted by El -Nino. In fact, there is an annex at the end of the Report and many of our countries on this council are on that annex, either going to be affected by too much rain or too little rain.

We talked about the Code of Conduct and I am talking about our wish to see good governance in FAO.

I am wondering if there is some way for us in this council to consider forward-looking issues, policy issues that affect us all, not just looking back, but making time in our Council's Agenda to discuss these kinds of issues that are going to affect all of us in some way.

CHAIRPERSON

I always like thinking out of the box. Letus see how we can deal with it. I think it is an Item which we certainly could think about further considering United Kingdom.

Mr Thomas John KELLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I was trying to be consistent in my point on good governance is not just about voting. That is a very important aspect of governance. But I was trying to kind of throw a broader governance discussion on the issues that we are talking about that concern this Organization, climate change, health issues and so on.

CHAIRPERSON

I was certainly not trying to press everybody now to sit here till 23:00 hours because Ms Beth Bechdol has made drinks for us and cooks some nice snacks. No, but I think it is an issue which we should address when we speak about working methods of the Council to see how we can also be future looking and certainly pick it up and come back to this. Also to the Chairpersons' and Vice-Chairpersons' in informal setting and to the Members.

Sra. Ivania LEÓN R. (Nicaragua)

El Código de Conducta Voluntario que con mucho esfuerzo y flexibilidad hemos logrado consensuar es un acuerdo alcanzado por los Estados Miembros de la FAO. En este sentido, reiteramos el estatus

del Código como un entendimiento político y no como un instrumento vinculante, el cual no implicará modificación de los textos fundamentales o del reglamento general de la Organización.

Considieramos quie este instrumento proporcionará una mayor confianza entre los países Miembros y la Organizaciión y que, en su carácter voluntario, aumentará el compromiso de todos para lograr procesos electorales para la elección del Director General de FAO; los cuales, recordamos, deben ser guiados por los textos fundamentales, las decisiones de las Conferencias y los principios cardinales, como son imparciabilidad, equidad, apertura y transparencia, soberanía, buena fe, dignidad, respeto mutuo y moderación, no discriminación, mérito.

Con estas observaciones recomendamos la presentación del Proyecto de resolución acordado para su aprobación en el próximo 43.o Período de Sesiones de la Conferencia.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia appreciates your leadership, Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) in conducting the informal consultations to progress the development of this Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting. Australia has supported the development of a meaningful and progressive code that would encourage best practice behavior at the FAO.

It is our expectation that this Voluntary Code will offer a useful foundation to further embed the core principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability in organizational practice, while also providing assurance to Members and other stakeholders, both within and beyond the United Nations system of the integrity of FAO's voting processes.

We have appreciated the contributions for Members and the spirit of compromise from all Members. That is allowed for the finalization of this important document. And we recommend the submission of the voluntary Code of Conduct to the cConference for adoption.

And just in closing briefly, I will thank the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) for their thought provoking proposal and we'll look forward to further discussions on this idea in due course.

Ms LI Xi (China) (Original language Chinese)

First of all, China supports the statement expressed by the Philippines. On behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We would like to extend our gratitude to the two Independent Chairpersons of the Council, Mr Khalid Mehboob and Mr Hans Hoogeveen for their constructive role in the negotiation process over the last two and a half years.

China recognizes the Code of Conduct, its voluntary nature and does not involve any changes to the Basic Texts. We are of the view that under the established practice, which guarantees the openness, fairness, and transparency of the voting process, further clarifying the operational process through this Code of Conduct has positive significance.

China stresses that in the operational phase and the subsequent revision process. It is important to take into account FAO's established practice and the good practices that exist across the United Nations system rather than focusing on some individual international organizations. Furthermore, where established practices have been tested in practice over a long period of time, where it is capable of ensuring the confidentiality of voting and the fair participation of Members.

In order to guarantee sound and practical food governance Members must spend more time and energy on discussing substantive Items and avoid spending too many resources on this kind of procedural Items. Lastly, we agree to submit the Code of Conduct to the Conference for review.

Ms Pernilla IVARSSON (Sweden)

I am honored to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Türkiye Turkey and Ukraine.

We would like to commend you, Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and your predecessor for your continued efforts in facilitating the informal consultations with all Members. And we appreciate that consensus was reached and that the code of conduct for voting process was concluded.

The European Union and its Member states remain fully committed to an open, fair, ethical, equitable, and transparent election process, adding value to the Basic Texts and to already existing FAO practice for secret elections.

In that respect, we regret that the Code of Conduct of voting does not extend to all elections at FAO. We nevertheless considered the voluntary Code of Conduct for voting a good basis for further strengthen the alignment of FAO with the best practices and standards in the United Nations system for the benefit of all FAO Members, ensuring the integrity and complete secrecy of voting by its secret ballot. With these comments, we recommend that the code be submitted to the conference for adoption.

Finally, we would support Canada in encouraging Members to follow the code also in this conference. And we would like to thank the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) for very constructive and interesting comments.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France)

La France souscrit bien sûr à la déclaration prononcée par la Suède au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres, et souhaite ce qui suit à titre national. Ce code de conduite relatif au vote est le fruit d'un long processus de consultation, comme vous l'avez beaucoup rappelé dans la salle, et bien que ce texte ne soit pas à la hauteur des meilleurs standards des Nations Unies, nous sommes prêts à l'accepter.

Nous pensons en effet qu'il définit un certain nombre de pratiques et de principes qui permettront d'améliorer la transparence et l'intégrité des processus électoraux à la FAO. Le respect du secret absolu du vote et la transparence du dépouillement sont essentiels au bon déroulement de toute élection démocratique, de même que la prévention des conflits d'intérêts, l'éthique et l'impartialité. Concernant les modalités pratiques du scrutin, nous appelons la FAO à s'inspirer de la pratique des organisations les plus rigoureuses en la matière.

De notre point de vue, ce texte n'est pas l'aboutissement mais bien le début modeste, mais méritoire d'un processus de réflexion pour améliorer collectivement la transparence des élections et plus généralement, comme l'a souligné mon collègue britannique mais aussi canadien pour améliorer la bonne gouvernance, la transparence et la redevabilité de cette organisation. Une révision régulière du code de conduite électorale est donc nécessaire pour s'assurer que les pratiques électorales de la FAO s'alignent sur les meilleurs standards des Nations Unies.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia)

Firstly, we would like to associate ourselves with the Asia Regional Group's statement under this agenda item delivered by Philippines.

My delegation commends the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and his team for their tireless efforts in engaging Members through numerous Informal Consultations aimed at bringing conclusion to the long-debated Code of Conduct for Voting.

Similarly, Malaysia applauds the 118th Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CLLM) for making much needed technical adjustments and amendments to the Code of Conduct.

While recognizing the long-standing practice of voting pursuant to Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organizations has been working well in protecting the sanctity and secrecy of the vote, we opine that the draft Code of Conduct before us can aid in a more effective implementation of Rule XII, paragraph 10 without a need to amend the Basic Texts.

My delegation supports the draft Code of Conduct for voting to be submitted to the Conference for adoption.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation is grateful to you (Independent Chairperson of the Council) and your predecessor, Mr Khalid Mehboob for their active participation in preparing the text of the Code of Conduct. We advocate supporting this document and we are not against it being handed over for approval to the 43rd Session of the Conference.

We would like to make the following comments, the voluntary and substantive character of the document do not contradict the way in which it was joined up. We hope that it will be reviewed. There is a change of the status and broadening of the sphere of the implementation of the code that should be based on real examples of deviation from the acting principles of voting. And in no case should they change the provisions of the basic rules of the FAO.

These Basic Texts of the FAO reflect the unique nature of the Organization in terms of its electoral procedures. But at this, they do not contradict the best practices in the United Nations. Considering these comments, Russian Federation is ready to support this draft code of conduct.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel)

I would like to start by thanking you Independent Chairperson of the Council and your predecessor for endless efforts to bring in front of us, the code, which is we believe a good, good, good basis. I would like also to thank you for saving us another two years of discussing this issue and giving us the opportunity to negotiate and to debate on more, , significant, subject like, for instance, what my distinguished colleague from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) was pointing out.

With those remarks, we support the Code to be adopted by Conference.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Three quick ones. One, just to lend our support, full support to the statement delivered by Eritrea on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

Two, to congratulate you Independent Chairperson of the Council) and your producer, Mr Khalid Mehboob for facilitating this work and leading us to the results we have today.

Three, is asking myself, what the applicability of this Code of Conduct is during the 43rd Session of the Conference because I heard many people asking for it to be applied there on. So I wish to listen from the Legal Counsel what is the applicability of such a request knowing perfectly that it is a voluntary Code of Conduct even not yet submitted to the conference for adoption. So, I am a little bit shaken on that. If I can have clarity on that, that would be fine.

Mr Niklas SCHULZE-ICKING (Germany)

Germany, of course aligns itself with a statement given by Sweden on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We also appreciate all the efforts that went into this endeavor and we are happy that the informal consultations came to a successful end.

In the general context of governance and the colleague from Canada mentioned it, it would be nice to clap on our shoulders and see if FAO on the forefront of good governance and good principles in general and in elections in particular. It is important to follow good practices in the wider United Nations system or even create such practices.

So, we consider secrecy of the ballot and indispensable principle of free and meaningful elections and the respect of the secrecy of a ballot is also a precondition for the legitimacy of any voting result.

And for this reason, Germany has, throughout the process, been committed to meaningful and generally applicable Code of Conduct that helps protecting the integrity of all elections.

Nonetheless, we are glad that this text could be agreed and we expect it will by its very existence. And that is somehow giving maybe not a legally waterproof answer, but a bit of a spiritual or spirit answer that this text will send a message to this Organization and its Members about the spirit and the guiding principles for elections in general.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Hay un compromiso en poco tiempo que yo siento que también es importante. Me parece que no sería lógico porque de alguna manera este proyecto es un proyecto que requirió mucho tiempo, mucho debate, mucha discusión. Entonces, solo para hacer una brevísima historia, Presidente, que le juro van a ser no más de dos minutos, este proyecto fue requerido por iniciativa de algunos Miembros.

Al mismo tiempo, recuerdo que había Miembros que no consideraban que era necesario este proyecto porque consideraban que estaban los textos básicos, que de alguna manera brindaban las condiciones, las normas y las reglas para las diferentes elecciones en el marco de la FAO.

La realidad es que, por lo menos en los últimos tres años y medio que me tocó trabajar aquí, debo decir que al menos hubo tres elecciones —no elecciones a nivel de Director General, pero sí elecciones importantes—, como la suya Presidente, el caso del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria y, quizás de menor relevancia, el Subcomité de Ganadería que me incumbe personalmente, en las cuales hemos votados de manera absolutamente transparente en la FAO.

No hubo ningún inconveniente y fue absolutamente transparente, por lo tanto, no me gusta mucho la idea de poner en discusión o que nadie ponga en discusión la transparencia porque creo que en esas elecciones el proceso fue claramente transparente. Por supuesto, está bien seguir pensando en cómo seguir mejorando cualquier procedimiento, pero la realidad es que mientras tuvimos que ir a elecciones, en las tres elecciones, creo que nadie podría cuestionar la transparencia de las mismas.

Por otro lado, el proyecto algunos colegas consideran que no es lo suficientemente ambicioso y aspiraban a más. Creo que gracias a su intervención Presidente, Presidente, ha permitido que ambas posiciones terminen de alguna manera insatisfechas, logró que pudiera haber un proyecto que finalmente seguramente va a ser remitido a la Conferencia, que es voluntario, que no altera los textos básicos y que, en definitiva, podrá decir que la FAO ha trabajado y construido con consenso un proyecto que se refiere a guías o a una suerte de Código Voluntario de Conducta para las votaciones.

Pero creo que, en definitiva, sería importante también ver qué pasa en las otras organizaciones que están con sede en Roma, porque a título de ejemplo, Presidente, en la última elección en el FIDA, recuerdo que en el caso mío personal, fui a votar y tenía mi celular en el bolsillo. Ni siquiera me di cuenta, pero no hubo ninguna exigencia específica sobre ese tema y nadie podría cuestionar que fue absolutamente transparente la votación.

Por lo tanto, creo que el tema de la idea y los valores de la transparencia es algo que es absolutamente innato a cada uno de nuestros representantes. Yo creo y confío en cada uno de mis colegas y, por supuesto, trataremos de que este proyecto que requirió el consenso pueda ser votado por unanimidad y que todo vaya para adelante.

Repito, creo que es importante recordar esta historia para poner las cosas en el justo término de lo que hemos logrado juntos.

CHAIRPERSON

With that we have concluded our list of speakers and we can hopefully go to the draft conclusion, but before we go there Ms Donata Rugarabamu is going to answer the question of Cameroon.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

If I recall correctly, Cameroon while noting that if endorsed by the Conference this would be a voluntary code, nevertheless was requesting such clarity as I could give on the status of this instrument prior to its adoption by the Conference. In a similar manner to the draft resolution on the restoration of voting rights, this document does not have standing until it is endorsed by the Conference. Thus, at this moment in time, it remains a consensual text, which the Council presumably has endorsed, but legally it does not have any greater effect than that. I trust that provides such clarity as there can be on this matter.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

It is like the COVID-19 vaccine that is you test it before you can know the validity.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not think we have to take that into the conclusions. So now we turn to the draft conclusions.

The Council reviewed document CL 172/15, Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports, and:

- a) commended the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for leading open, transparent and inclusive consultations on the draft text;
- b) took note of the technical adjustments made by the CCLM; and
- c) recommended the submission of the *Draft Voluntary Code of Conduct for Voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization as referred to in the Conference and Council Reports*, as amended by the CCLM, and reproduced in *Appendix F* to the Report, to the 43rd Session of the Conference for adoption.

Can we agree to the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

We can go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Let us go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections and with that we have concluded our work on Item 16 with consensus.

Item 17. Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies

Point 17. Participation d'observateurs du secteur privé aux sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO

Tema 17. Participación de observadores del sector privado en períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO

We are almost there for this evening but this will be very brief. It is Item 17, *Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies*.

It is an oral presentation because we do not have to discuss it yet. I just give a state of play.

It has been on the Agenda for several years. It became actual again when we adopted and implementing the Strategy for Private Sector Engagements within FAO. We had a first round of informal consultations in September.

Many questions were asked around the Private Sector Engagement, questions and concerns positive and negative. After that, Ms Beth Bechdol and her team and I we took a deeper dive into the issue.

First, to take the most actual situation in other United Nations into account, we need not to copy and paste but to learn where they are standing with the private sector attendance in Governing Bodies' meetings and how it is being done.

Secondly, we also went through the actual situation within FAO about Private Sector Engagement participation in Technical Committees as well as Governing Body meetings. I do not bother you know with all the facts and figures but there are already participating as Observers in meetings. But at the same time it also became clear that we need to work on coherence, especially Management.

What we are now doing and Ms Bechdol and I are reporting this before the Council, but what we are now finalizing is the draft Information Note on where we are standing, because it became clear during the informal consultations as well as further consultations that it is a step-by-step approach. It is a very complex issue for the Organization and not only for the Governing Bodies like the Council and the Conference but also for the Technical Committees.

That is why we are now working hard on the draft note. We hope to circulate the draft note in May, of course not to be discussed during the Conference but we take it up again in a formal consultations after the Conference and probably after the summer break. That is where we are with the Private Sector Observers in Sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies.

Just an update to let you know that we are working hard but it is a complex issue, step by step approach and you will hear from us in written form in May. I see Ms Bechdol nodding.

If there are no questions or remarks I would like to read out the conclusions;

38. The Council appreciated the oral update provided by the ICC regarding his consultations with the Membership on the participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies.
39. The Council looked forward to receiving an information note addressing questions, remarks and observations raised by Members, and requested the ICC to consult thereon.

Can we agree to this short easy conclusion?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I think you (Independent Chairperson of the Council) outlined a calendar, something should appear here in the calendar that you presented. The Council look forward receiving information containing, information note addressing questions, remarks, or whatever, something in that line. That is the only comment because you mentioned it.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes. So we put the calendar in as well. With that can we agree to these conclusions? So decided.

There is now even better information is that we are well ahead of our Council Agenda, which is also positive. So that means that tomorrow morning we are going to address Item 13, Address by candidates for the post of Director-General. Then we take up all the Items in Written Correspondence Procedure and Items 7, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21 and Item 22, *Any Other Matters*. We have one Item for Any Other Matters. The idea would be that we finalize our work tomorrow by closure of business.

Then the Drafting Committee will start its work on Friday morning at 9:00 hours. That Report will be available no later than 14:00 hours. Then, we give you one hour to go through it, if necessary, in your regions and the plan is that we start adopting the Report at 15:00 hours on Friday afternoon. That is the whole idea. I think it will somehow work.

Tomorrow we have also the preparations for the Conference, and we need to have the persons available for making the Conference happening. So, we need still two Vice-Chairpersons, one from the G77 and China group and one from the non-G77 and China.

We need a Chairperson of Commission II from the G77 and China group and we need still two Members for the General Committee from Africa and Asia and two Members for the Evaluation Committee also from Africa and Asia.

I really would like to thank you for your hard work today. It was intense. There were emotions, there were frustrations but we managed to come back to the consensus making in the Council. That is the strength of the United Nations.

I really would like to thank again the interpreters. Thank you for your hard work today, the extra time you gave us this morning, thank you so much.

I would also like to thank now the translators because they working hard to make sure that you have the Report available in all six FAO languages on time.

We would like to thank the technicians and last but not least as always the messengers. Give them all a big applause.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 19:23 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 23

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.23

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
27 April 2023

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:35 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 35
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la septima sesión plenaria a las 09.35
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 13. Address by candidates for the post of Director-General**Point 13. Communications des candidats au poste de directeur général****Tema 13. Declaraciones de los candidatos al puesto de Director General**

(CL 172/12/Rev.1; C 2023/7; C 2023/7 Addendum 1; C 2023/7 Addendum 2)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning, Excellencies, good morning, distinguished delegates, good morning, dear friends. It is a beautiful day outside. Let us make sure that we have a very beautiful, positive day here in the 172nd Session of the Council. I know for sure that you are today going to make it a very positive day. We hope to get through our Agenda today so that we can do both the Drafting Committee and the adoption tomorrow but, of course, we have still quite some things to tackle.

It is great to start this morning with Item 13, *Address by candidates for the post of Director-General* (CL 172/12/Rev.1; C 2023/7; C 2023/7 Addendum 1; C 2023/7 Addendum 2).

I wish to inform the Council that in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of Article XXXVII of the General Rules of the Organization, three nominations for the post of Director-General were received by the established deadline. But we also know that two candidates subsequently withdrew their candidacy, as set out in C 2023/7/Add. 1 and C 2023/7/Add. 2.

We therefore have now one candidate for the post of Director-General and the curriculum vitae of the remaining candidate, Dr QU Dongyu, is contained in document C 2023/7. The procedure which we are going to follow this morning concerning the address by the candidate to the Council was approved at the 171st Session of the Council last December and can be consulted in document CL 172/12/Rev. 1, as applicable to the sole candidate.

As agreed by the Council, we will do the following. The candidate will be allocated 90 minutes as follows: 15 minutes for opening remarks, then 10 minutes for a question and answer Session with each of the seven regional groups. So, it means that in those 10 minutes it is not only the question but also the answers have to be given, and at the end we have five minutes closing remarks by the candidate.

In order to ensure strict adherence to the established time limits, a stopwatch will be visible on the screens on each side of the plenary hall. The stopwatch will also be visible to the candidate, both at the lectern as well as when he is seated at the podium. As agreed, the questions to the candidate will be asked by a representative of each of the seven Regional Groups. Members representing the Regional Groups will speak in alphabetical order of English names of the Regional Groups. The representatives of the Regional Groups should request the floor by pressing the button in front of them.

It is my honour and pleasure now to call the candidate to address the Council. Dr QU Dongyu, you have the floor to make your opening remarks.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Dear colleagues and Members,

It is my great honour to have a second chance to face you, to present to you and report to you and answer your questions and move ahead of the FAO Agenda together, over the next four years.

I will use this time: 15 minutes, and now I will start with the first slide.

Based on the Basic Texts, all the candidates can distribute the Manifesto in advance, but since I was very busy, I asked the Chinese Mission, on my behalf, to distribute my manifesto in six languages which I am presenting to you now, so you can follow.

To build a dynamic FAO for a better world, this was my firm commitment in 2019. Thank you for your support and collaboration around this voyage, during which we faced many unexpected challenges marked by a wave of unprecedented complex overlapping crises, each one affecting all of us. For all the achievements we worked together, we made together extraordinary achievements with our colleagues and with the support of you and all the partners.

First is a new vision, a new structure, a new initiative to build a new FAO. I am not going through all the details, because you can follow the screen and also with the disk we distributed to you.

A new Strategy designed for a new narrative, especially I am proud that the Strategic Framework for the next ten years was endorsed by the Ministerial Conference two years ago. That has really changed the narrative, the *four betters* are guiding us forward.

The structural reform leading to a systematic transformation. You can see now, the new FAO is presented to you, not only from the entrance to the cafeteria, but also from the Headquarters to the country offices. Also from the physical to a changed mentality. That is what I am really happy to report to you.

I established so many different new units/offices, especially the Oversight Advisory Committee. It was established for the first time officially in FAO and also, together with Core Leaders, we have a zero tolerance policy for sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse of authority.

We have established many new offices, as I mentioned, an Ombudsman Office (OMB), Ethics Office (ETH) and also the Core Leadership Team and Reporting line A and B. Then we have a new Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is sole one in the UN system. That is why we are aiming for the coming SDG Summit in September. Also, the Office of SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs (OSL). That is why last month the UN had an LDC5 Conference. The Secretary-General was very happy to mention FAO that innovatively established a structure to fit the purpose.

We strengthened FAO Investment Centre. We have Joint Centres with the sister UN Agencies and then, of course, we strengthened the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB) and others.

The resource mobilization is at a historic high. A Chinese saying says that “food and fodder should go ahead of troops and horses”. That is also a historic high. In 2022, FAO mobilized over USD 2.1 billion in volunteer contributions, 51 percent increase over 2021, which was also a historic breakthrough year with a 61 percent increase of a five-year average. That is something that is historical.

We established a new people-centred culture and now the staff here is very happy. It is a happy place to work. Of course, we need to improve more. And then others. The recruitment process is open, around 630 staff have been recruited in the past 4 years, the majority is women and external. It is balanced.

Infrastructure improved. Gender parity, it was 94 percent of indicators exist in the UN action plan on gender equality. That is evaluated by the UN, not by ourselves.

Then come all these issues. Extraordinary achievements. You can read. I do not want to say too much because if you want to look at the details, we have all these Reports during the past years, during the Council I addressed.

FAO flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative and also addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. So, with the help of the Crisis Management Team, we came over with quite a safe place to work. Even during that, we had a lot of historical deliverables. The Pre-Summit was the first physical and hybrid meeting during the pandemic in the UN system. More than 600 participants, including Ministers, Vice-Ministers, and high-level delegations came to Headquarters in 2021. I really appreciate all my colleagues who managed that with zero COVID-19 case. That is really remarkable.

Of course, I have to appreciate the Host Country, Italy in FAO headquarters and other host countries to support FAO activities on the ground.

All the historical new platforms, like the World Food Forum, were established, very impactful and there is more and more coming. Then the digital initiatives. As I said many times, we have a digital world and we have a non-digital world. Luckily, FAO built the digital FAO during the past four years.

The One Country One Commodity and Green City initiatives. So, now we have to look at both sides, urban and the rural areas, how to integrate our work.

Science and innovation is one of the breakthroughs. And data for informed decision-making, FAO technical work was strengthened and the two Strategies, on Climate Change and Science and Innovation were endorsed. So, we are now going to prepare for the action plan.

At the coming Conference, we will focus on Water Resource Management for the *four betters*. The Global Soil Partnership, Soil mapping, forestry and One Health also. FAO now plays a decisive role on the One Health and Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) issues after so many years. My colleague, Ms Maria Helena Semedo, she was very proud of that and she contributed a lot.

On emergency assistance, since we established a new Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER) and now all the hot spots – Afghanistan, Eastern Horn of Africa, Ukraine and others. Yesterday, I had a very good meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. He appreciated me very much. Before I came, I was the co-chairperson to support Ukraine agriculture development. And also after I came to FAO, FAO is always working very closely with Ukraine farmers and people.

Now, the common understanding for a better FAO, we are facing new challenges but also it is a new opportunity for us, as I said always. FAO adapted and evolved to answer the international call for support and solidarity.

The past four years have written a new chapter in FAO history, informed by the past. My reflections going forward.

First, above all the successful FAO relies on the ownership, trust and support of FAO Members. Second, governance of FAO must allow a rules-based approach, in accordance with the Organization's Basic Texts. There are all the ten points I mention here. They are my thoughts, my observations after four years, how to interact with our Members, our staff, our partners. That is our joint common ground, to start with the next four years. Those are the ten points. I hope you can take ownership on these points and there we can have a common language in the future.

Now, more importantly is how FAO can better contribute for a better world. I quote here the FAO Constitution and still we have a lot of work to do together. I focus of *four betters*. For each *better* we have three actions and more focussing on value-added impact areas. I had a long and enormous discussions with my Core Leaders during the past two years under the guidance of four betters and 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). For better production, there will be the value chain, the One Country One Commodity, and the Blue Wave spearheading blue transformation and the modernization of farmer field school.

For *better nutrition*, we also mention three, four areas. Then, *better environment* and *better life*, leaving no one behind. Hand-in-Hand Initiative, resilient, inclusive, rural transformation and so on.

Then, it comes to the five key dimensions for the next four years. First, further increase the resources mobilization and scaling up both traditional and new partnerships, because traditionally we depend on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Still we want to continue, but we also explore the new ones, from international finance institutions (IFIs), regional banks and other emerging economic powers. They are willing to support FAO.

Second, fully leverage FAO potential, advance innovation, drive transformation. FAO should create a centre of excellence in a digital agriculture and also what does public good from FAO mean. We need to offer the data- and science-based analysis and flagship publications.

We also want to use the traditional knowledge. We want to establish a global food and agriculture museum and a network, including the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and the digital FAO, of course.

Third, the World Food Forum, where it says to promote a tailored investment plan and also provide a solid support for Least Developed Countries.

Fourth, strengthening FAO's capacity and capability to serve the Members. If FAO itself is not so well equipped, modernized, then how can we support our Members, especially vulnerable Members? We need also to improve the human resources development and attract talents from all corners of the world.

During the next four years, one of the important events will be FAO approaching its 80th anniversary. We strive to make it more dynamic and a more modern and more beautiful Organization.

The five critical entry points, FAO increases support for SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs, to build adaptive capacity and respond to the specific needs of vulnerable groups in those countries, through the resource mobilization. FAO will set up a global sustainable value chain cooperation network for research and development and investment and production on tropical agriculture. Because tropical and subtropical countries account for more than 113 Members. We have several big countries, like the United States of America, China, India, Brazil which are located also in some big parts of the tropical and sub-tropical. So, they can offer some experiences to share with the rest of the tropic countries.

FAO will develop global strategies for health and low carbon animal protein production reducing stress on the resources, on the investment. Because it is one of the bigger issues for the climate change from the agricultural sector, especially animal protein production. Because we need animal protein, for sure, for the development, but how to minimize the impacts on the environment.

FAO is responsive to climate crises, prioritize agro forestry systems that are adaptive and resilient.

FAO will also fully respect the recommendations of the Oversight Advisory Committee and the relevant professional external review, also Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). So, they are coming. They are welcome.

Last but not least, what FAO expressly delivered in the next four years will require us to work together and let our joint efforts forge ahead together. I reaffirm that in the next four years I will work closely with you, partners, my leadership team and staff to translate FAO's Strategy into action, initiatives into outcomes. Our global network will be better positioned to make an even greater contribution. I thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Dr QU Dongyu for your opening address. Now I pass the floor, as we have agreed to, to the representative of the Africa Group to pose their question to the candidate.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean NGCABA (Chairperson of the Africa Regional Group)

I welcome our special Director-General candidate. South Africa is delivering this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group together with Niger, Morocco, Senegal, Tanzania and Lesotho.

At the outset, the Group wishes to thank the Director-General for outlining his vision for his second term as Director-General of FAO and, as he has stated, his commitment to advanced food security in Africa. In this regard, the Group wishes to pose the following two questions to the Director-General.

One, in your second term, is the utilization of the African expertise in the work of the FAO a priority? If so, how and where will this expertise be utilized? And if not, why not?

Our second question goes as follows: does the Director-General believe that the global food crisis has underlined the need for increased self-sufficiency in the key commodities? And if so, how will FAO encourage and support the production, the use and trade of African orphan crops and African fertilizers? If not, why not?

I will return after the Director-General's responses.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, Ambassador, for your thoughtful questions, relevant to African development, and most importantly, to their needs.

First, the answer to your first question. Africa, you have big potential, not only vast land and biodiversity, but also expertise. Only Africa is African's Africa. Only we learn working together with African local experts, and then we have a more tailored service to support African development. That is, number one, politically very clear.

Second, how to learn together? Through FAO Headquarters and the network. I am ready to support. During the past four years I already started that cross-continent collaboration. Four years ago I heard that question from Africa, how to use the African expertise in other regions. You can see now a lot of Africa were sent out of Africa, to Asia, to Latin America and vice versa, to be FAORs. Because your people find experience in other regions and then will transfer it to your continent. That is the beauty and value of FAO networks. For so many years FAO did not use them. So, I encourage cross-continent collaboration.

Third, the use the African expertise should be fair, open, merit-based opportunity for Africa applicants.

Last but not least, we wanted to also support Africa to have strengthened the extension service for technology transfer.

For your second question, I want to make it a little bit shorter because Africa, you can produce more with less. Second, you have a huge potential with adequate policy, investment and science innovation. You can not only manage it to achieve your own food security and also you can become the potential world food basket, in 30 years, before 2063, I mentioned this so many times, before I reach my 100th birthday. By the way, yesterday we were happy to have our 50th anniversary of Ms Beth Bechdol. So, let us have another 50 years.

Work for Africa, first and have a lot of staple food. I think, if possible, you can have urbanization, industrialization, you can improve the income. And then you can import more staple food from other regions who is ideally environment-friendly producers of staple food. But for perishable products, for the short distance transportation, environment-friendly commodities should be locally produced, they are better. But, of course, you need the cold chain and value chain management and you need also infrastructure improvement. And, more importantly, the food's safety capacity, to check all the food locally produced and food imported to Africa, and there you can be in a good position to speed up the free trade zone.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean NGCABA (Chairperson of the Africa Regional Group)

Thank you very much, Director-General, for your comprehensive replies. The African Regional Group looks forward to continuing its exchange with the Director-General leading to the elections on 2 July 2023. Be assured of our support for your re-election.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn the floor to the Asia Regional Group.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Vice-Chairperson of the Asia Regional Group)

I will be asking three questions on behalf of the Asia Group. At the outset, we would like to thank the Director-General for outlining his vision for FAO. Now I will ask the three questions.

The first question is: during your tenure you have emphasized science and innovation in the agricultural sector, including digital agriculture. How did FAO contribute to the sustainable agrifood system transformation in the past four years? How can FAO disseminate and strengthen technological capacity of developing countries? How can science and innovation provide solutions to water-related challenges, including water scarcity, especially in Asia?

Question two: under the deteriorated global food security situation, what kind of activities should be prioritized and how the series of flagship initiatives, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative or the One Country One Product Initiative should be promoted?

And the third question is the shared concerns of the Asia region include the under-representation, improvement of farmers' uptake through sustainable farming systems, climate change adaptation and mitigation. What is your vision to address these problems?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

You made three questions, but they actually are seven. How can I answer you? Which are the most important three? What I understood there, that is typical Asian thinking. It looks small but it is big.

First, what I have achieved through a series of initiatives. Of course, I cannot judge by myself, but due to the pandemic but thanks to the digital FAO we launched the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. Mr Hans Hoogeveen was a former Ambassador. He asked me questions, how to use the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. Now I can tell you. Hand-in-Hand is a business model change. It is not a question of money. It is a question of how to speed up efficiency and effectively help the Members. Because we are now in the digital world. Especially Asia. So, that is the Hand-in-Hand.

In addition, the cooperative coherence among the UN system and also with the private sector. So, that is why Hand-in-Hand is the five key partners – government, like you, and the private and academia, NGOs, and farmer organizations and other international organizations, not only UN organizations. The Hand-in-Hand is a platform. What is the digital shared economy? It is a platform. A lot of Organizations, big or small, rich or poor, they did not know how to build a platform.

Based on my 20 years' experience in China, we built a lot of big or small platforms. Let the key players play and help our customers. Because we have limited sources - that is the reality. And that is why the digital solution for Pacific Islands and now there are more investment. Bangladesh and other Asian countries, even Nepal, they attract more investment in agrifood systems. That is the achievement.

Also other initiatives, like One Country One Commodity. Because a lot of developing Members, not only Asia, Africa and Latin America, if you ask what is the gap between the developed and the developing country, you suddenly see, one commodity from the developed are very well known. We always say the coffee. Which is best? Maybe you have a different opinion. Or wine. You have a different opinion. But if you ask the consumers, most will probably they will point out the products from the developed nations.

So, the One Country One Commodity, you will see we will have the commodity show in FAO Headquarter, during the World Food Forum. That is the next step. We will make it really attractive not only for governments, for consumers and for businesspersons that come to FAO. I think that is one.

Second, on the deteriorating situation. In Asia, in general, the big bottleneck is land. The only solution is innovation and enabling policies. But the advantage of Asia, you have a lot of people, which means a lot of potential purchasing power of consumers. So, how to convert the potential natural resources advantages to the potential economic advantages. That is what Asia should work together with the international organizations and community. And you did. You have done. That is why during the past four years the Asian economy is so promising.

I should tell you now that in FAO, assessed contributions, an 85 percent increase will come from Asia in the coming two years. That is indicated by UN standards. The Asian economy developed very well, based on the development of agrifood systems, environment and the sustainable development and urbanization and industrialization together. Not so many people realize that. I read the Report from the Chancellor of Germany when he returned from China and Vietnam. He told us as a European leader how to observe the Asian progress during the past four years.

Third, you asked what the experience we can share from Asia. I had a talk with leaders in Asia and Singapore should be playing a leading role on the Small Islands. Because Singapore is only one the richest small islands. They are not SIDS but they are Small Island countries. And also smallholder farmers experience from Japan, Korea, China, Vietnam, India, Indonesia or even Bangladesh can share with the world.

In short, Asia wisdom, Asia humility, Asia innovation, especially related to smallholder farmers, will benefit smallholder farmers in the world, it accounts for 85 percent of farmers in the world. That is our solution or alternative option.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Vice-Chairperson of the Asia Regional Group)

Thank you, Director-General, for your detailed and comprehensive replies to the Asia Group questions. It is very satisfying to hear your views and your vision for Asia.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Also because due to the sharp increase of the assessed contributions. And the under-represented members, the majority are from Asia: China, Japan, Korea, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam and if you consider Türkiye, of course here it is not Asia, and also Saudi Arabia, the Near East.

Let us work together, on both sides. And also America. I know America also will ask me questions about the under-represented. All this group, we have to work together. Because if you ask me transparent and merit-based recruitment, at the same time, you also request me to speed up the solving of the under-represented issues.

From FAO's side, we have advocated FAO posts and FAO mandates to attract the younger generation to apply. But at the same time the Members have to invest a little bit in FAO, with the Junior Professional Officer Programme (JPO) or internships. Let them be familiar with FAO and related areas. As an experience, you can learn from France 20 years ago. Now there is a French younger generation that can speak very good English, of course, and also understand agrifood systems very well.

Recently, I recruited several from France and Britain because they are from external, D-2 level. So, Asia, please, learn from some developed nations that already had the experience 20 years ago.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the European Regional Group.

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Chairperson of European Regional Group)

Thank you, Director-General and thank you for sharing your manifesto with us, From Vision to Action. FAO is an Organization at the service of all its Members for achieving the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). My question is specifically what do you want to achieve for our region during your second term mandate?

The other question is: how will you strengthen FAO governance and the "One UN" approach in FAO's work? Of course this goes beyond Rome. With regard to World Food Programme (WFP) and FAO, we would like to know which are your priorities for working with them to build resilience against shocks and to improve food security.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you for your question. Only two?

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Chairperson of European Regional Group)

Yes.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I expected more from Europe. It surprises me. I did not expect so many questions from Asia. Sometimes it changes so fast, I even cannot catch up with it. Anyway, I am happy too.

First, I appreciate the long commitment and support from the European Region, especially Western Europe, used to be called Western Europe, when I was young. Western Europe means advanced in technology, it means advanced in investment and also advanced in management. That is what we can learn. Now it is time to learn from each other.

From resources, from technology, from expertise you are more donors. That is why in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative we have a donor side and we have a recipient side. But sometimes Europe also needs to become the recipient side. I had a serious talk with the relevant Ministers and Commissioners.

First, I made already a proposal to some ministers and commissioners. Look at Europe from north to south. It is very big for you but not big for me, to be frank, because I am used to working on that scale. From Heilongjiang, similar to Nordic, from Hainan even hotter than Cyprus.

What I really sincerely hope is you use my experience and background, because I am the right person to understand Europe. Since 38 years ago, 1985. My first agricultural exhibition from Netherlands in Beijing, I was assistant to them. More specifically, I really used the FAO expert, neutral, professional position to have regional agriculture zoning design.

For instance, Iceland, you are not the ideal place to produce fruit or even some staple food. But what is the specific value of Iceland in the whole European system and in the whole world? Or Norway, Cyprus, Malta, or big states like France, Germany, Italy, Spain, you can have your own. But you cannot cover all the commodities competitively even within Europe. You have to jump out of the box of Europe. Because you will face competition not far, across the Mediterranean Sea. That is your historic position. You cannot change.

If you are willing to, based on what you will ask. I sincerely hope. Because 35 years ago we did it in China. They competed among different provinces and then we had the guidelines, how the comprehensive regional development for agrifood systems. That is one.

Second, how to make the European science and academic institutions work together, to support FAO and also build up competitiveness in the world. Because you are one of the leading continents. You are developed. It is not only a matter of Europe, it is a matter of the world. These are the two things I really specifically wanted to address. Because it is most related to my experience and to the FAO mandate.

For the RBAs collaboration, it is a historic time also. Now we have a new Executive Director of WFP, Ambassador Ms Cindy McCain. She has a big heart and a long experience. And also a quite new IFAD president from Europe, from Spain. We had an informal meeting already. We will have a Headquarters coordination and then we will start a holistic design at the country level. Maybe we can have a consensus starting with 10 or 20 countries who are willing to and from the emergency aid to the agrifood systems development and to financial services.

For instance, South Africa, not only vulnerable countries, you need how to speed up transformation of agrifood systems in South Africa. We are three Organizations coming and do design. You are not supposed to be the recipient of the humanitarian aid, but you will become the base, product base or provider, how to produce food in South Africa to support the other countries. That WFP can offer. And then FAO, of course, we can look at the whole system of agrifood systems. And then what financial services you need.

You have money. I know the local government in South Africa, they have a lot of money. They are always left at the end of the year, based on my knowledge. And then how to create new financial products to support your farmers, no matter whether big or small. And then to get the experience in the southern part of Africa. Ideally, you are not a poor country but also some poor countries, maybe WFP can play a more decisive role. You start with the purchasing power, how to transform agrifood systems.

I had four years 'thinking because three years ago I had a discussion with the former Ambassador of America, Mr Kip Tom. He is a very successful entrepreneur in agribusiness. And also Mr David Beasley. But unfortunately the pandemic came and we could not move forward. But now it has renewed my original ideas. I already had an informal discussion with them and after July we will try to have a joint trip and also at headquarter level, how to build a real working group at the country level who ask our offices and representatives there to work together.

Also IFAD and WFP, it is not necessary to build so many country offices. They can use the FAO network.

I hope you can support from the donor side. So, that is real Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration.

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Chairperson of European Regional Group)

Thank you, Director-General, for your replies and for your knowledge about Europe who is not only a donor region but also a recipient region.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the Latin America and Caribbean Group.

Ms Monica ROBELO RAFFONE (Chairperson of the Latin America and the Caribbean Group)

Tenemos interés en conocer su visión puntual sobre el futuro financiero de la FAO. ¿Considera que es viable asegurar la estabilidad financiera de la institución a partir del presupuesto ordinario y el pago puntual de las cuotas por parte de los miembros o es inevitable que la organización dependa de las contribuciones voluntarias? En todo caso, ¿cómo garantizaría que el rumbo de la FAO, el énfasis de su trabajo y sus acciones en la práctica no se definan en función de las contribuciones voluntarias de un número limitado de países?

La FAO es de todos sus miembros, incluidos los países de ingreso medio. ¿Cómo piensa atender las necesidades y preocupaciones de estos países, particularmente aquellos que se encuentran en la región de América Latina y el Caribe, que siguen enfrentando retos en materia de seguridad alimentaria, malnutrición en todas sus formas y pobreza rural?

En muchos países se habla de la necesidad de un nuevo extensionismo que responda a las nuevas dinámicas del sector rural. ¿Qué medidas propone para asegurar que el conocimiento de la FAO llegue a los productores de los países en desarrollo, en particular los de pequeña escala, de manera que desde el terreno contribuyan y se beneficien de las cuatro mejoras que ha propuesto? ¿Cómo mediría el éxito de ese esfuerzo?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

You end up also with more than three.

First, I know that for years and years your region was a little bit worried about the balance between assessed contributions and voluntary contributions. Who will speak more loudly getting the orientation of FAO? Myself also the same, before I came to Rome. But you have to define what the role is and function of assessed contribution and what is really meaningful for the voluntary contributions. It not only depends on where the money come from, it also depends on the purpose of the money. Therefore, purpose-oriented. That is why I ask the increase a little bit of assessed contributions. Because it shows your political willingness to owner this Organization.

This Organization by nature is an intergovernmental specialized agency under UN family. We are legally independent, operate based on our Constitution and Basic Texts. That is why, for years, I always repeated it and asked Members, staff and Management, we have to respect the Basic Texts. That is the starting point.

We look at that and the assessed contributions are increased to maintain the basic capacity. If we do not have any basic expertise in the divisions of fisheries and aquaculture, how can you address the issues related? We have been losing during the past years, our capacity on the technical expertise. So, that is why I put so much effort. Maybe there are a lot of things you did not know in the past four years.

I strengthened the capacity of the excellence of knowledge and technology from structural reform, from the established positions of Chief Scientist and Chief Economist and established all these relevant Offices and Joint Centres. Its instrument and mechanism established to protect FAO as an intergovernmental UN specialized agency.

Of course, if we do not increase the assessed contributions properly, you are worried about it, more and more voluntary contributions should be driven by the donors. Do not worry. Do you know why? Because I introduced serious arrangement of Strategic Framework. Some senior people here, like Mr Khalid Mehboob, can tell you. Before me, look at FAO's Strategic Framework. It was not so serious, to be frank.

Because only the Strategic Framework can border our domain. So, any voluntary contribution should be in line with the Strategic Framework and the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), the four betters and other relevant experts. So, the more money, the better, from the voluntary contributions, because you are under the Strategic Framework. So, please, my amigo from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), do not worry because you have a lot of sheep and goats but you need a fence.

The Strategic Framework is our fence, to protect the core values of FAO. So, we are aiming for USD 5 billion more. I asked Ms Beth Bechdol and the other colleagues, “try your best to raise the voluntary contributions, as much as you can”.

In the second question, you ask about the *four betters*, how to benefit from smallholder farmers and middle income countries. We are moving from the vulnerable countries first, I said that at the beginning, four years ago, it is not easy to limit only the poor countries, LDCs. We are moving up to the middle income. Before also the European region’s question.

We are willing to offer the service to the Europeans because FAO is a UN agency. It is a global operation. We are at service for 194 Members. But, yes, first, Members, you have to have a willingness. Second, FAO is capable to offer the service. That is the two aspects. If we have the capacity but you are not willing to, that is not my fault. But Members from Europe, from middle income and upper income, you asked it but FAO is not capable to do so. That is my problem. Of course, we need your support to strengthen our capability.

I think for smallholder farmers, family farmers and bigger farmers, I think they can also benefit from the *four betters*. Because better production is not only for big farmers, it is for smallholder farmers to offer the two-thirds of food production availability in the world. Even 85 percent of farmers are small but they offer, at least, two-thirds of food.

What is the value of the bigger farmer or commercial farmer? They stabilize the international supply chain. The food accessibility and food availability, especially for the staple foods. The dry commodities, which should be for the cross-continent transportation. And also environment-friendly.

For smallholders, *better nutrition*, of course they may focus on the more nutritious commodities, not suitable for the long distance transportation. Even in Europe also should be encouraging these family farmer producers of perishable products. Or the United States of America also. You do not need to transport them from one place to another place, more than 1 000 kilometres. Economically maybe it is good but for the environmentally it is not good.

That was my experience in China. Some perishable commodities being transported from the Hainan to Beijing should be stopped because it is 3 000 kilometres distance. Environmentally it is not good.

Last but not least, I think for the *better environment* should be built villages or township public parks. Green city. Green city is not like Roma, Beijing, Shanghai, New York or Paris. We should look at the local community green park. That is what I discussed with my colleagues, we are going to establish the FAO forest park in Rome.

To show and really have the platform for our guests – Ministers, Vice Ministers, Presidents, Heads of State or some rich Chief Executive Officer (CEOs), public figures – that can come to plant a tree in Rome and to show our solidarity and support the sustainable development in Rome and in Italy. In FAO we must walk the talk.

And last...

CHAIRPERSON

The ten minutes have passed.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

I am sorry but that is the unpleasant task I have this morning.

I now pass the floor to the representative of the Near East Group.

Mr Saywan BARZANI (Chairperson of the Near East Regional Group)(Original language Arabic)

I would like to express our full support for you to have a second mandate at the helm of FAO. We also fully support the reform which you have adopted to make FAO more flexible, more agile and more

responsive to the multiple global challenges which have had their impact on the agrifood systems. We appreciate the adjustments you made, making FAO more efficient.

As far as the programme and project management and the global and regional initiatives are concerned, we have hosted you in our meeting on 4 April and we have taken note of your comments and guidance.

You have raised the issue of the prospects for collaboration with the Near East region and you have mentioned that the collective work in such exceptional circumstances is required to face the rising levels of food insecurity and hunger, not to mention the current challenges which have affected the agri food systems, namely climate change, desertification, economic crises and conflicts. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep concern regarding the unfolding event in Sudan which will have negative impact on the region as a whole.

Director-General, new challenges have emerged, precisely the climate change, water scarcity, desertification, economic crises and unprecedented migration from the rural towards the urban areas, which will all have an impact on food security in many of our countries.

Our first question is what is your vision for cooperation with our region? Our region, despite the many challenges, have huge human capabilities and opportunities for the agricultural sector and for environmentally-friendly systems. If we received the adequate support and assistance from FAO, what are the positive indications or indicators you may see to strengthen the cooperation with our country?

Secondly, we highly appreciate the three initiatives, the Hand-in-Hand, the 1 000 Digital Villages and the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP). Do you have other initiatives in store? We also wonder if it is possible to adopt a Strategy to aim at the equity in the water distribution among the riparian countries sharing transboundary rivers and we wonder if it is possible to formulate policies for the riparian countries to share the damage to respect equity in their water undertakings and to create opportunities for collaboration, aiming at enjoying the interests of all parties.

Thirdly, what are your plans to address the issue of budget deficit and, fourthly, what is your future vision regarding the partnerships between FAO.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

You used six minutes so now have four or five minutes. First, your region. First a lot of overlapping crisis, for sure. So yes. But now it is at a very positive stage, new development in your region, more solidarity, more peaceful movement. That offers a big chance for FAO. So we want to encourage the increase of political willingness to engage in regional dialogue and collaboration first. That is why I am happy your government hosted the Regional Conference after Oman, and that is your internal or regional issues. So more and more, working together, FAO will have more chance to engage.

Second, I also think acknowledging your efforts in your region, we have more adequate, highly qualified staff to work with your Members in your region, and the brotherhood and the sisterhood.

Third, I think also for your region now, it is a big issue related to water management, and water availability and efficiency, that is why this year we designed the thematic subject on water resource management for the next year. So related to your second question, I will, if your region agree, FAO is willing to take a leading role on the design, holistic and comprehensive, of water resources utilization for the rivers basin. Because that is my experience, you know I work in this regard with dams, so the Yangtze River, and I also stayed in Ningxia, if you look, in Ningxia there is the yellow river.

So I have about 20 or 30 years' experience on river Management and from the top to the bottom it is about 6 000 kilometres long. So in your region you have several big rivers, but how do you have a holistic design and technical guidelines. FAO is not allowed to enter into territory issues, but you know if you ask a holistic way to design the river basin development, it will be of benefit to all the Members. So depends on your region politician's needs and political willingness.

Third, about how to strengthen cooperation with the other Organizations. Your region and also other regions in FAO have joint the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the platform World Food Forum, and we are not only strengthening cooperation, not only with UN systems but also with the financial and technical aspects, as well as others. That is definite.

But for your region you have a special movement also initiated by your Members, big Members, for the reforestation and anti-desertification programme, Green Near East. So in all this FAO has room to play and the role to make more contribution to your region – and for dust also, dust control. It is a cross-border issue. We always consider the cross-border issues about the animal and plant disease, but we never look at the cross-border dust. That is also a big issue.

In FAO, we have the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment (OCB), we have a Forestry Division and others. We should work on land and water. I had a good meeting with the honourable President of Iraq, he was a former FAO staff, for 6 or 7 years, so we try and use this momentum and the political willingness and support from your region, to change a little bit of the narrative and development for peace.

Mr Saywan BARZANI (Chairperson of the Near East Regional Group)(Original language Arabic)

Thank you very much Mr Director-General.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I pass the floor to the representative of the North America Regional Group, Ambassador, you have the floor.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Co-Chairperson of the North America Regional Group)

The North America Regional Group appreciates the opportunity to join this formal question and answer session with the incumbent candidate. For FAO Director-General, whom, if appointed, we would expect to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to accountable governance that respects the role of its Member States, who encourages inclusive human resources management, advocates for science-based approaches that reinforce innovation and FAO role in global standard setting, and who fosters positive cross-regional knowledge and collaboration, and cooperation of course amongst the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

Let me begin by asking the candidate, how would you ensure that FAO's activities including procurement and data protection, are impartial, independent and transparent, and do not advance the foreign policy priorities of any individual Member State? And how would you work in support of UN Secretary-General Mr António Guterres in addressing and mitigating the exacerbated impacts on global food security of Russian Federation's war in Ukraine?

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I fully agree with your statement. FAO runs a data-based and rule based governance. We have several functions. If you look at the Basic Texts on the second paragraph, there are several. I always remind our Members and our Staff that we should work based on our Basic Texts and FAO mandate.

Second, you are asking about transparency and accountability, but what is the bottleneck, not only for FAO, but for any other organization or company or country? What is the real bottle neck? It is that we should use the new technology to change. I said at one time, 30 years ago you were dependent on paper and then it was fax, and then it was email – and now it is digital.

The digital world is 360-degree transparent. So now all the investigations and traceability and accountability, even something we could not remember or maybe forget. Once I had an experience with Mr Laurent Thomas. "Oh maybe I forgot, or you forgot!" And then we traced through our communication easily. "Ah! That is what we said" So digital FAO is a real solution. Please compare FAO with other sister agencies, what level of transparency relates to digitalization. If all the staff including the Director-General through all the business models, through the digital, and if something is wrong, you have to take your responsibility. So digitalization.

Second, we also need internal transparency, which is why I introduced the Oversight Advisory Committee. All the Members that experienced the former Senior Staff in the UN sister Agencies. That helps me give adequate recommendation and consultation and also to timely and regularly come to FAO to check the operational and the risk Management. That is an instrument and mechanism to be installed.

Third, I think also all the procurement and the data protection and data collection, now we have established a new unit, the Data Protection Unit, directly under the Office of Director General (ODG), because on the one hand we had to keep our confidentiality and privacy related to data, and on the other hand it should be adequate and functional to protect the FAO intellectual property related to data. Data is property.

Last but not least, the FAO is a neutral, professional Organization. Some Members may not always be happy but FAO is still now working on consensus. So we have to keep neutral as much as possible and also as professional as possible, otherwise why we need other organizations or other agencies, other P, other F— so we have to self-restrain our domain; we cannot deal with everything that we want because FAO Basic Texts defines out major function and mandate. That is what I can tell you.

For any specific country or Members, if they ask, we have to be in line with the FAO mandate, because especially the bigger Members, if we have an initiative and some investment, it is good for other Members. Why do we stop it? FAO is not a building in the air, FAO is supported by the bigger pillars who have technology, money and human resources. Otherwise, do not be naïve – I can tell you, for many years since the beginning, in 1951 when FAO came to Rome, we became more and more dependent on Europe. For sure! Any Members who had a good initiative, they started through the FAO, and that is why we started the Triangular Cooperation.

You cannot say that is our initiative from one of the biggest states of Europe and without their support how can we cover ideas from us and then ask everyone's support. Of course, it is a one way. And the other way, in most cases, we encourage among the Members to learn about each other, support each other. As I said, FAO is a network, FAO is a platform. SSC cooperation also? Big states from the South, they support others, and the Triangular Cooperation also, any big or small state, you can through FAO find the recipient countries to work together.

That is the real internationalism, real multilateralism. Otherwise even for the North America Group, you are two Members – I appreciate you gave a lot of support. In the past three years most of the increase in investment on science and innovation is from America. And recently they initiated one project for Africa, value added crop – Mr Máximo Torero Cullen is here – they came to FAO and they worked with our relevant division. So it is good, because they offer money, resources and expertise to FAO and they support Africa.

So be careful. I want to use this opportunity with this question, it is a very good question, but we have to be clear and not be naïve. And also last year, Germany proposed global response to food security, and they searched to work with FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank. We support! We cannot say, “No, that is a German initiative!” So we appreciate it. But how to keep the role of FAO as professional and neutral. That is why we want to build transparency. Thank you.

Ms Elissa GOLBERG (Co-Chairperson of the North America Regional Group)

With limited time left, we will be interested in our follow-up discussions with you, with the additional Regional Group's specific engagement. We have got additional questions for you about how you will pursue implementation strategies with respect to climate change, science and innovation and the private sector – and of course we look forward to working with you as you refine your vision and consider implementation strategies and partnership with Members. But certainly we will be keen to hear your perspectives on how you see engagement with the private sector and how you do see rolling out strategies related to the policies adopted on climate change, science and innovation.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I will be clear, if you read my last part, all the answers are there because due to time limits I did not go into details to explain. I am a very pragmatic person, I was a scientist for many years. I do not want to talk too much. But all is Strategy and then an action plan.

That is not only for the next four years, but maybe beyond, after I retire from FAO. But I will not retire from my career, to work for the people and for the vulnerable people especially, first. And of course I want to support those who used to help me, from Europe, from America, from richer

countries. I know the richer countries, for over 40 years you have had a lot of programmes, small or big, left over.

If we are willing of course, at that time I will be a freelance, and so if you support me I will offer a 50 percent discount of service at that time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much Dr QU Dongyu. I know for sure that our deliberations and cooperation regarding the implementation of the Strategies and the private sector engagement will continue, and certainly we will address those issues again here in the Council.

I now turn and pass the floor to the last Regional Group, and that is Southwest Pacific Group.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Chairperson of the Southwest Pacific Regional Group)

Director-General, the Southwest Pacific Region has two questions for you to answer: I will ask them both together and request that you provide targeted answers to both questions with broadly an equal allocation of time to both questions.

Our first question is on the regional dimensions of the implementation of the Strategy on Climate Change and Science and Innovation. These Strategies are particularly important in the Southwest Pacific context, a region vulnerable to climate change, and where science and innovation is critical to boosting resilience and adaptation. Our question is, how does FAO intend to implement these Strategies sensitive to the unique context of Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – including FAO's efforts to improve coordination with other actors such as the Pacific Community, to prevent duplication and work efficiently with Pacific partners?

My second question relates and reflects on the Joint Statement of 8 February 2023 by you and the Heads of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Food Programme (WFP) and World Trade Organization (WTO), on the global food and nutrition security crisis. That Statement identified the need to reform and to repurpose harmful subsidies as one of three urgent actions to prevent a worsening of the food and nutrition security crisis. Our question is how will FAO act on this statement to promote and support reforming and repurposing harmful agricultural subsidies, including those that are environmentally harmful, for positive agrifood system transformation?

We look forward to your answers to both of these questions.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, your two questions are very rightly pointing out that at FAO we have endorsed three Strategies during the past four years. One is Climate Change, one is Science and Innovation and one is Private Sector Engagement. That is three. And also a mainstream Action Plan related to Biodiversity.

Not only in your small island that are in your sub-region. Also in other small islands in the Caribbean and African region. That is why I established the Office of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs), but it still will take time to take off, and we are going to strengthen that on the network, we are going to propose after the Ministerial Conference on 29th June, we are expecting more of the Ministries to take ownership and partnership of course.

And second also, I think the climate change and the biodiversity loss specifically in the small islands, means they need capacity building. Capacity building needs support from donors – Australia or others – and those who are willing to offer their support. Otherwise it is very difficult to say, there is even no basic data.

The third, I think we need to get them on board, or partnership, because any small islands state is far away from the continent, but thanks to digital approach, it is much easier. But you said “*duplicate*” and I think we need to do more work, but I do not think there is much duplication. Even if you look in the continental countries or even among the domestic governments, there is too much duplication. But small island states I think need more support first.

And then last but not last, I think please also open the market accessibility for the small islands, because if one country is willing to support one commodity to access your market. I have always said that taro – I have been there several times, in the Asia Pacific – Taro is a small commodity in the world but it is a major staple food for that part of the world. But if they produce more they can export it to the continent, especially the developed nations, and it is good for them to improve their incomes and livelihood.

So maybe we need some matchmaking arrangement, a volunteer basis of course.

And you say the repositioning of investment: Of course World Trade Organization (WTO) will take a leading role and FAO will offer the technical support first. Second, we will also support WTO and other partners to work together on how to improve the efficiency of investment, Research and Development (R&D). That is why it should be related to the agrifood systems, not only related to the production, and the biodiversity, environmental issues. So we need to offer policy consultation, have the SIDS countries to establish enabling policy – that FAO can do.

And, last but not least, we can also encourage strongly all the Members who are willing to support them, we can offer training chances for those countries, the younger generation, they understand the issues. Otherwise, there is always this voice from the small island states that they did not have a chance to express.

That is why thanks to the hybrid model they can easily access FAO, but I had a talk with them several years ago, they said *“it is difficult travelling 40 hours to just talk for about three or five minutes”*. For you, Australia, you are a rich country, but for some island states. But sometimes they need to come physically, in person, but in most cases now they can get it online. So information sharing is also very important.

Finally: how can we help them develop the one commodity value chain, to improve their competitiveness? Thank you.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Chairperson of the Southwest Pacific Regional Group)

As we do have a little bit of time I will move to a third question and that question relates to your view on the Organization's standard setting work, and what you think should be done to better improve and ensure timely and efficient development of plant, health and food standards to facilitate agricultural trade to address food security.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, it is a good question. I want to share my thoughts of the past 20 years. I also had a debate with my colleague from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, at that time. You know, the agricultural beauty is complementary and sharing: in all the history of civilization, you start to share your food with your neighbours, with your relatives, with your friends.

Now, in the modern times, how to build the complementary sharing economy of agrifood systems across the borders, across the countries.

First, we need to improve productivity in the staple foods, because that is basic food security. Second, we need to improve the nutrition of food, which may be locally produced – and there we need to support the small holder farmers to produce perishable food locally.

Those are the three categories, and then what is the role of the developed nations? Like Australia, I had a talk with your Minister of Trade, you have to support the developing countries to improve their capacity, to check the quality of food safety, CODEX and other national or international standards, or even entrepreneurial standards. If they are not confident to allow your import, because they are not sure of your food, you say, it is certified by European standard, by Chinese standard, by Japanese standard. No, you have to help them to improve their capacity to check the food safety.

On the ground, in the import countries, like I am happy to now see Lab installing in some African countries, when I last visited. So that is also a win-win beneficiary approach, because if someone has

confidence to guarantee the quality of their food from your export countries, then its capacity building is not only a question of the CODEX, it is a question of how to change international aid.

Third, and I think also from the point of view of donor countries or rich countries, you have to offer to assist them to produce the perishable value-added cash crops. Because you increase their purchasing power and then they can import more food from Australia from your staple food, or from the United States, corn or soya bean or whatever.

That is really sharing the future among the agriculture systems. That is what we need. We export more cash crops vegetables to Japan and then we import more staple food from Canada, the United States of America, Brazil, and Australia, of course. So if the local farmers have no income it becomes a political issue - you know that.

Let us build the real shared agrifood systems globally and make each country have their comparative advantage for their resource utilization, for their marketing competitiveness. That is why I said I want to help the Europeans a little bit.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we have now concluded our question-and-answer session. We finalize this part of the Council with the closing remarks of Dr QU Dongyu. Five minutes.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to stand in front of you and you know I am a very honest person, because I am a son of the small holder farmer. I came here not for money. I have enough money, even I used to live with about 12 RMB per month when I was a university student.

With my whole life experiences and knowledge, I want to help the poor people, which are like me 40 or even 30 years ago. In the next four years, I will be designing for the next 40 years because I will turn 60 in October. That is how I keep myself, competing with Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Mr Godfrey Magwenzi, Ms Beth Bechdol and other younger people. I behave like a 40 years old, so I will have another 40 years, it will be 80 years for me— psychologically.

I want to support not only Africa and the Near East because I was fortunate to work seven and a half years in a Muslim province and also I started my career in Latin America and in North America and I got my education in Europe. I was responsible in the field of agricultural research and policies for so many years, about 26 years, bilaterally, between China and the rest of the world.

So make full use of me, do not waste me, give me another four years, and then I will return with a surprised beauty FAO to you. Thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

With this we have concluded Item 13. After a very short break we will reconvene our meeting and continue with the Written Correspondence Procedure.

I really would like to thank the candidates for their position of Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, for being present here this morning, answering all the specific and sometimes very difficult questions. I think you have clearly stated your achievements, you have clearly stated our challenges, but you have also clearly stated your vision based on lessons learnt, on what to do for the next four years.

Thank you so much, and we go to the elections on 1 July.

Ladies and gentlemen, we reconvene at 11:15 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 11:09 to 11:17 hours

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 09 à 11 h 17

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.09 a las 11.17

Item 7. Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative**Point 7. Informations actualisées sur l'Initiative Main dans la main****Tema 7. Información actualizada sobre la Iniciativa Mano de la mano***(CL 172/INF/6)***CHAIRPERSON**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, we now turn to the Written Correspondence Procedure, and as agreed by the Council on Monday morning under the Adoption of the Agenda, deliberations on Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*. Item 14, *Arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference*; Item 18, *Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 171st Session of the Council*; Item 19, *Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO*; Item 20, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2023-2024*; and Item 21, *Tentative Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council* have taken place through the written correspondence procedure.

The written exchange among Members and the Secretariat is available on the dedicated website of the 172nd Session of the Council and we start with Agenda Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*.

Introduction to Item 7: Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

This update report on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative responds to requests made by the Council, at its 168th Session, to provide regular updates on progress and results achieved.

Launched in 2019, the HIH Initiative offers FAO Members and development partners programmatic support and innovative ways of strengthening, expanding and sustaining ambitious national programmes for agrifood systems transformation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 10.

With the HIH country-owned and county-led approach, Section II of the report outlines the major progress of HIH member countries to date, including follow-up to country-level investment cases and engagements initiated as a result of the first HIH Investment Forum (IF) held in October 2022.

Members' interest in the Initiative continues to grow strongly, and 60 countries now participate (from a total target of 64). With this increased interest from countries, there is a need for additional technical support to Members and to progress the expanding linkages with other FAO priorities such as agrifood systems transformation follow-up and data and digitalization.

Preparations are now underway for the 2023 HIH IF, where Members will have the opportunity to receive updates from country and regional initiatives, as well as information regarding new HIH countries who will be presenting their priority investment notes based on the improved HIH targeting tools for eradicating poverty and achieving food security and nutrition. A new feature which is being developed for the 2023 IF is an app for investors to engage with the HIH Members' governments.

Sections III and IV refer to the ongoing efforts on monitoring and evaluation as well as communications, and more details on national-level progress can be accessed on the HIH Initiative website and dashboard.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 29 de marzo 2023 a las 12.39

La Argentina agradece y toma nota de la información brindada por la FAO bajo este punto de agenda, en el que se informa sobre la evolución de la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano (HiH) desde su puesta en marcha. La Iniciativa Mano de la Mano fue respaldada por los miembros del LARC36 como un mecanismo para promover la cooperación eficaz entre los países desarrollados y en desarrollo, con el

fin de alcanzar los ODS 1, 2 y 10, en particular en aquellos países con alta incidencia de pobreza e inseguridad alimentaria y alto potencial agrícola. Ratificamos las conclusiones alcanzadas en el 135º periodo de sesiones del Comité del Programa del mes de marzo 2023.

Nos complace saber que el número de países participantes ha seguido aumentando y que se acerca al objetivo previsto de 64 países. Este incremento es una muestra del fuerte interés mundial en la HiH y la necesidad de una programación más amplia y ambiciosa por parte de los Miembros.

Asimismo, valoramos que todos los miembros de la FAO puedan participar de la misma no solamente como beneficiarios indirectos sino también como socios para el desarrollo a través de múltiples canales, como por ejemplo la Cooperación Sur Sur y Triangular. En ese marco, la Argentina una vez más manifiesta su disposición a ofrecer sus experiencias y conocimientos en torno a los sistemas agroalimentarios sostenibles para aquellos países que así lo deseen en el Marco de la presente iniciativa. Ello, siempre recordando la premisa de que no hay nadie tan pobre que no tenga nada que dar, ni hay nadie tan rico que no tenga algo que recibir. Lema, que entendemos condice con el espíritu de HiH y la intención de promocionar y multiplicar las asociaciones entre todas las partes involucradas.

Nos alegra saber que siete países prevén organizar su propio foro de la inversión de la HiH a nivel nacional, y que está previsto un foro subregional en América Central y del Sur. Esto demuestra que los países están comprometidos con la Iniciativa y que están trabajando activamente en su implementación.

También nos complace saber que las notas de inversión presentadas en el Foro de la inversión de la HiH de 2022 proporcionaron una base sólida para el apoyo en materia de inversiones brindado por la FAO en la segunda Cumbre de Dakar, organizada por la Unión Africana y el Banco Africano de Desarrollo. Creemos que es importante que la FAO siga apoyando iniciativas como estas para lograr la seguridad alimentaria y la resiliencia en África.

La Argentina se complace que la HiH utilice herramientas innovadoras y adopte un enfoque basado en la ciencia y territorial, entendiendo este último como el reconocimiento de la existencia de los múltiples modelos, métodos y prácticas posibles para el logro de sistemas agroalimentarios sostenibles, en función de los contextos, prioridades y capacidades nacionales. En definitiva, la HiH contribuye a la diferenciación de territorios y estrategias como requisito fundamental para encontrar soluciones genuinas para el logro de la sostenibilidad en la agro-bio-industria.

Asimismo, la incorporación de Innovación y nuevas tecnologías como ejes centrales en HiH, demuestra una vez más de forma consistente que el sistema científico-tecnológico público y privado ofrece soluciones eficientes (adaptadas localmente) a los desafíos que presenta la sostenibilidad y los escenarios de vulnerabilidad productiva frente al flagelo del cambio climático y otros shocks que amenazan a productores y actores de los sistemas agro-bio-industriales. Por último, expresamos nuestro beneplácito por la organización del Foro de la inversión de la Iniciativa Mano de la mano en paralelo al Foro de la ciencia y la innovación de la FAO. Consideramos que este tipo de eventos son fundamentales para fomentar la cooperación internacional y compartir experiencias y buenas prácticas en materia de inversión en agricultura y seguridad alimentaria.

En este sentido, la Argentina manifiesta su interés en que se sigan organizando este tipo de foros y que se promueva la participación activa de los Miembros de la FAO, con el fin de fortalecer la Iniciativa Mano de la mano y lograr los objetivos trazados en materia de desarrollo agrícola y alimentario sostenible.

En resumen, como miembros comprometidos con la seguridad alimentaria y el desarrollo sostenible, la Argentina apoya los esfuerzos de la HiH y anima a los países a seguir trabajando juntos para lograr los objetivos de la Iniciativa y garantizar el acceso a alimentos suficientes y nutritivos para todos

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 09:31

The Russian Federation thanks the Secretariat for the information on the progress made on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. At the same time, we note that there is no updated

information for Tajikistan. Does it signify that there is no substantial development of the activities since the last update? We would appreciate your comments in this regard.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 18:06

Australia appreciates this update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative.

We note the continued growth in the number of countries participating in the HIH and encourage FAO to continue to identify and maximise potential partnerships and investment opportunities, particularly in the Southwest Pacific region. We take note of the new Regional Technical Co-operation Programme project being developed by the FAO-RAP to cover six countries in the region, with a focus on enabling inclusive and effective blended investment in the context of HIH. The document CL172/INF/6 suggests that the project is expected to commence in the coming months. We would appreciate the provision of additional details on this project as it pertains to our region, including for example on resourcing, duration, participation and arrangements for monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

We further note the development of the Monitoring and Evaluation HIH dashboard and the progress shown, but suggest that further efforts are made to provide more easily understood information. For example, six stages of HIH are represented in the dashboard, from Stage 1 – Focus on Poverty and Hunger, through to Stage 6 – Programme Governance. It is unclear what these stages represent, as well as the values attributed to them (for example, 15 000 for stage 1, 10 000 for stage 6).

As part of this communication of information through the dashboard, we also request a break-down of confirmed commitments per country of operation, and further information on the confirmed partners per project/value chain. Further, while we note the dashboard is titled the “Monitoring and Evaluation” dashboard, the evaluation aspects are not immediately accessible (both at a project/investment level and at the Initiative level). Accordingly, as information becomes available, we request clear and easily accessible information on evaluation processes and outcomes to be included in the dashboard to allow users to understand and assess the impact of the initiative.

Finally, we take note of the summary of the communication strategy that has been published on the website, and we emphasise the value in regular engagement and coordination with existing development and resource partners, to help maximise synergies and prevent duplication and/or misalignment of objectives across programmes and investments.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Friday 31 March 2023, 16:53

United States thanks FAO for the update on the Hand in Hand Initiative (HiHI). We appreciate FAO’s responsiveness to Member State comments on this initiative including increased transparency through regular updates and the HiHI dashboard. The United States supports evidence-based data-driven decision making and supports FAO efforts to bring data to the forefront of FAO and policymakers’ decisions.

We support FAO efforts to expand the donor base for the HiHI. We request FAO to clarify whether international financial institutional investment in the Hand in Hand initiative represents new investments in agri-food systems or a re-allocation of existing investment. We are interested in hearing more from donors and beneficiaries about their views of the HiHI and what value they find from it.

Concerning the HiHI dashboard, we appreciate the brevity of the tabulated information about country-level investments; however, we note some projects have very high costs per beneficiary. We encourage FAO to strive to keep costs per beneficiary in line with international norms.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39

I am honored to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States regarding the abovementioned agenda item for the 172nd Session of the FAO Council.

The EU and its Member States take note of the latest progress report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. We would recall the continued importance of ensuring alignment of the Initiative with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the joint programming of the UN development system and the 2030 Agenda, and would like to see this elaborated in the information provided. To that end, we encourage FAO, in accordance with its mandate, to continue the close coordination of its work on the Initiative with other relevant agencies and developing partners.

We note the information on the achievements in the various countries. Mobilizing additional funding and attracting investments for taking the Initiative forward in participating countries should be duly aligned with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and other relevant CFS policy recommendations and guidelines. In addition, continued attention is needed in order to provide full transparency on the financing and to ensure that the Initiative will have no further impact on the regular agreed budget. In this regard, we see a need for clarifications regarding the proposal in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 to allocate resources to the FAO Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum.

To conclude, we thank FAO for the information provided on the Initiative as an additional means of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within FAO's mandate and ask that FAO continue to provide regular updates on the progress made in implementing the Initiative and the results achieved.

JAPAN

Submitted Wednesday 12 April 2023, 04:39

Japan recognizes the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) as one of the most important FAO's initiatives to promote the transition to sustainable and resilient food systems in developing countries. We acknowledge the efforts of the FAO Secretariat in the enhancement of related information, such as launching a geospatial platform, and continuous improvement of its accessibility, availability and transparency utilizing FAO website.

It is important to promote innovation and facilitate the transfer of agricultural and food-related technologies in the transition to sustainable and resilient food systems. In that process, benefits to recipient countries and its people should be prioritized.

Japan expects FAO to continue its efforts to improve the Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard by bringing all the necessary information of HIHI together. Japan also expects FAO to work together with Members to verify the effectiveness of the HIHI and lead the discussion on future utilization.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

FAO welcomes the positive feedback received from Argentina regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIH) and acknowledges the ongoing support and engagement of Argentina to the 2022 Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum. FAO warmly welcomes the interest and expression of willingness to support the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and specifically the offer of experience and knowledge on sustainable agrifood systems to other countries requiring help under this initiative. The HIH team will follow up with a request for a bilateral meeting with the Permanent Representation of Argentina to discuss options for taking this valuable support forward.

Regarding the query received from the Russian Federation, Tajikistan is a member of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative since December 2020. Work has progressed based on the National Investment Plans (2021- 2030) developed with the support from the FAO Investment Centre, which led to the production of multiple technical reviews and briefs aiming to support investments and catalyzing agrifood system transformation.

The programme utilized HIH Geographic Information System (GIS) analytical outputs (i.e. typologies of territories with high poverty rates and agrifood system potential) and complemented efforts that led to the development of a national investment plan atlas which allows different data and information to be combined to assist decision-making and investment planning. On this ground mapping key supply

areas for commodity value chains that are national priorities (e.g. dairy products, wheat etc.) alongside with information on key infrastructure layers (transportation network, power grids, internet access etc.) supports targeting locations where investments will make the sector and subsector more productive and competitive.

These efforts are maturing to two projects the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank aim to implement, while discussions are ongoing on streamlining the development of an additional five investment proposals with the Islamic Development Bank. Finally possibilities aiming to enhance collaboration with the Asian Development Bank are also being explored.

With reference to the request made by Australia, FAO is pleased to provide detailed information on the FAO Regional Asia and the Pacific Technical Co-operation project “Enabling inclusive and effective blended investment in agrifood systems in the context of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIH)”, the project was operationalized on 1 March 2023 and will be active until 28 February 2025. The project has a total budget of USD 483 000 and covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and the Solomon Islands. The project has a results-based planning approach including Indicators Baselines, Means of Verification and Assumptions. The HIH Secretariat can arrange a more detailed briefing for the Permanent Representation of Australia and other interested Members, with the Lead Technical Officer of the project, to discuss the details and explore further engagement.

FAO also welcomes the comment on the need to enhance Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E). The HIH team plans to launch a new version of the HIH Dashboard which will address a few issues, and to add a new feature on resource commitments from the Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum 2022. The HIH Secretariat is working to improve the M and E of the Initiative and, within the limited resources currently available, progressively building the Dashboard as well as its interoperability with other corporate reporting and M and E systems in FAO for long-term sustainability. This will also facilitate improved communications with Members.

FAO welcomes comments, advice and positive feedback received from the United States of America on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH). Most of the investments under HIH represent new investments for Members in line with the HIH efforts towards agrifood systems transformation. We also have one larger investment where a member Government is actively considering reallocating resources, largely from less performing interventions, into HIH identified opportunities as the per the Investment Forum 2022.

FAO also welcomes the valuable comments on the need for feedback from Members. The Hand-in-Hand website was recently upgraded and expanded. As an initial step the website now contains multiple videos from Ministers who participated in the Investment Forum last year providing their feedback.

FAO appreciates the comments on the cost that the process might cause for beneficiaries. Costs do vary from one country to another given that it depends on the specific investment and in some cases, the benefits although small, in number of direct beneficiaries, are significant when including indirect beneficiaries. It is also important to mention that in all of the investment plans important rates of return are identified, as mentioned in the 2022 Investment Forum. We will continue to support the Members to explore and engage with investors, including through a new online App which will be released shortly to facilitate ongoing engagements with Investors, beyond the duration of the Investment Forum.

Finally, regarding the comments received by the European Union, FAO is an active participant in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), providing technical expertise and support to countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in the areas of food security, nutrition, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and natural resources management. FAO is a key UN agency actively engaged in the development of Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) and other relevant Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy recommendations and guidelines, with full alignment of its initiatives. FAO's work through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, contributes to aligning globally agreed products like the CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, with

priorities and programmes emerging from national needs and realities as they result from the Common Country Analysis (CCA), which is the operational basis of UNSDCF. The HIH Initiative in each of its countries supports the identification and analysis of investment opportunities. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative aims to attract financing and partnerships that support agrifood transformation and sustainable rural development.

The investment and interventions cases are indicated as national priorities by the governments of the countries that are members of the HIH Initiative. The investment cases address priority areas and gaps identified by the CCA in each country, such as food security, nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation, natural resource management, rural employment, gender equality, and governance. They enhance the resilience and sustainability of the agrifood systems and the livelihoods of the rural people, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. This is aligned with the CCA's focus on leaving no one behind and addressing inequalities and discrimination. The interventions are analyzed based on evidence and data using geospatial, biophysical, and socio-economic data to identify territories where agrifood transformation and sustainable management of natural resources have the greatest potential for alleviating poverty and hunger. This is consistent with the CCA's approach of using data and analysis to inform strategic planning and programming. FAO through the HIH Initiative collaborates with other United Nations (UN) agencies and many partners to deliver coherent, integrated and effective support for sustainable development and climate action that promotes innovative approaches and solutions to address the challenges and opportunities of food system transformation. The HIH Initiative fosters partnerships and collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, UN agencies, civil society, private sector and donors. This is in line with the CCA's principle of engaging with a wide range of partners to leverage strengths and comparative advantages. Ultimately the HIH Initiative contributes to the common objective and priorities of Members and national processes and frameworks, to support countries on making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 1 (eradicate poverty), 2 (zero hunger) and 10 (reduce inequalities), but also all other SDGs. Finally, the proposal in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 is to allocate resources to the World Food Forum which includes the Youth Forum, the Science and Innovation Forum and the Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum.

CHAIRPERSON

As we have agreed to it, I now present the draft Council conclusions.

8. The Council welcomed document CL 172/INF/6, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, and in particular:

- a) noted the increase in the number of countries joining the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative to 60 Members by March 2023 from the total target of 64, including an improved regional balance;
- b) commended the progress achieved and the positive impact being catalysed by the HIH Initiative at country level in support of the national priorities;
- c) acknowledged that, due to the increased demand from Members to participate in the HIH Initiative, there is an increased need for additional technical and financial support;
- d) appreciated the ongoing, improved flow of information and progress through the dashboard, the updated website and communication with Members; and
- e) welcomed the organization of the Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum in October 2023, as follow-up to the 2022 Investment Forum, and efforts to organize national HIH investment fora to strengthen engagement at national level.

With that we start now with the *chapeau*. Can we agree to the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (a). I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (c).

Mr VITO SU (United States of America)

Towards the end of subparagraph (c) we would like to add “*additional voluntary technical and financial support*”. Therefore, the addition of “*voluntary*” after “*additional*”.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

United States of America actually took the words out of my mouth, so that was perfect. I was going to add something – sorry to go back on subparagraph (b) – but to add after “*national priorities*”, “*fully aligned with the UN sustainable development cooperation framework, the joint programming of the UN development system and the 2030 Agenda*” – as we had it in the Report of the December Council.

Moreover, full support for the United States of America proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

In previous days we used the wording “Agenda 2030”, but as this is also an agreed text of the December Council, we can go either way – at least everybody knows what we are aiming at.

Can we agree to subparagraph (b)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (c) with the addition of “*voluntary*”. Can we agree now to subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (d).

Ms LI Xi (China)

It is on subparagraph (c). I understand the “*voluntary technical and the financial support*” – actually we do not want to prejudge what will be in the future biennium, but I still think that it might be good for us to leave some room for the future discussion. Moreover, like this “*additional technical and financial support*”, we do not want to prejudge it, whether we channel it is coming from. It is at of Members’ hands where the support will be coming from, but I am wondering if we can leave the “*voluntary*” out. Because this is a need, for the additional technical and financial support, but we still want to keep the possibility.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

My comment is on subparagraph (d). I would like to suggest that after “*and*” add at the end “*look forward to further updates, including impacts at national level.*” This is my position.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I think Japan and I are perhaps thinking along similar lines here. My suggestion was going to be “*and looked forward to further enhancements to the dashboard.*” This was a specific comment made in response to Australia’s comment through the written correspondence procedure, and I am happy to try and find some way to work with Japan’s text, to incorporate both elements.

CHAIRPERSON

I come back to subparagraph (c) but is subparagraph (d) agreeable now to Members of the Council?

I do not see any objections.

Mr VITO SU (United States of America)

My comment is on subparagraph (c).

CHAIRPERSON

I will come back to subparagraph (c), let us first agree to subparagraph (d). Can we agree to subparagraph (d)? I do not see any objections.

We go back to subparagraph (c).

Mr VITO SU (United States of America)

The best way not to prejudge subparagraph (c), my proposal is to delete it, because we have the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) outstanding at this point, and the best way to not prejudge it is to delete the entire subparagraph.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We can go along with what was just proposed by the United States, but otherwise we do believe that if it is retained, “voluntary” is an important piece because the regular Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) as supported through the assessed contributions, there is not really any flexibility there, that is being part of the discussion on the budget. Therefore, where there is a margin to change is in the “voluntary” space, and so that is where if we were to have additional funds flow towards that, that would be through the voluntary contributions and so keeping “voluntary” in that line would be relevant.

Ms LI Xi (China)

We disagree with the deletion of this subparagraph as we can tell, especially like for our regional questions just to the Director-General and also on the briefing of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, a lot of countries actually did increase the demand to participate in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, so actually it is a statement about whether we need this or not. Actually this is an expression of the need, instead of the decision making here.

Therefore, I fully respect the other countries’ concerns, but since we are not making the decision here, we are just expressing, there is an increased need for additional support, and so we think that this expression is very important to this Initiative, so we would like to maintain it. However, we still have the flexibility, we can leave the “voluntary technical and financial support”, leave the “voluntary” there.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

Did I understand China correctly, that they would be willing to keep the “voluntary” in? In that case we are fine. Otherwise we would have been fine with the United States proposal, but we will keep it like this.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we now have an understanding that we maintain “voluntary” so that we maintain the para. Is that okay for everybody?

I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

We have now decided by consensus, the update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

Item 18. Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 171st Session of the Council

Point 18. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa 171e session

Tema 18. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 171.º período de sesiones

(CL 172/LIM/3)

CHAIRPERSON

Now I would have liked to go to the arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference, and we have to decide on this at this Council. We cannot conclude on this Council if we do not have all the candidates because then we cannot have a Conference, and they have to be approved by this Council.

We are still working on the time schedule I presented to you yesterday, which is a very positive timetable, but we still need a couple of candidates. First, we still need one Vice-Chairperson from the G77 & China Group. We need a Chairperson of Commission 2 from the G77 & China Group. We need one Member for General Committee from the Asia Regional Group, and we need one Member for the Credential Committee because it has to have nine Members – one from the Asia Regional Group so that all the Groups are represented, and any other volunteer from any region wherever in the world.

Please use the lunch break to get an agreement in your groups for a Vice-Chairperson for the Conference from the G77 & China Group, a Chairperson of Commission 2 from the G77 & China Group, and a Member of the General Committee from the Asia Regional Group, and a Member of the Asia Group for the Credential Committee and any other Member.

Please use your lunchtime to give the Secretariat the names so that after lunch break we can finalize this Agenda Item so that we can go in the direction tomorrow of the Adoption of the Report.

Now I would like to turn to the *Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 171st Session of the Council*, and the document in front of the Council is CL 172/LIM/3.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 29 de marzo 2023 a las 12.39

En el documento CL 172/LIM/3 se enumeran las decisiones adoptadas en su 171° período de sesiones, junto con una referencia a los párrafos pertinentes y el estado de aplicación de cada decisión. Es vital que se tome en cuenta esta información y se actúe en consecuencia para asegurar que las medidas propuestas se implementen de manera adecuada y efectiva. Sin embargo, es importante señalar que la falta de rigor en el seguimiento de las decisiones anteriores al 171° por parte de la Administración de FAO es un tema que debe ser tomado en cuenta. Como organización de los miembros, es esencial que se lleve a cabo un seguimiento riguroso de las decisiones tomadas en el pasado, y no solo en el último Consejo, para asegurar su implementación adecuada en el futuro y mayor eficiencia en los debates. A modo de ejemplo, la Argentina destaca la omisión de parte de la FAO del documento C2021/LIM/4 en el que se saldaron entre los miembros los conceptos no acordados multilateralmente y su uso en los documentos programáticos de la FAO, más allá del Marco Estratégico, conforme los lineamientos del propio Consejo. La Argentina reitera su más enérgica solicitud a que la Administración de la FAO actúe conforme el documento C2021/LIM/4, conforme lo acordado por la Conferencia. En resumen, es crucial que la Administración de FAO tome en cuenta la importancia de seguir rigurosamente las decisiones anteriores y su implementación, ya que esto es fundamental para el éxito de la organización y para el beneficio de todos sus miembros.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 09:31

The Russian Federation takes note of the presented comments of the Secretariat to the decisions taken at the 171st session of the Council. However, we reserve the right to make any additional comments and proposals during the session if needed.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Friday 31 March 2023, 16:53

The United States supports FAO's continued work and analysis documenting the global food security impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine, including its use of polling and the Food Insecurity Experience Scale to assess food insecurity at the regional, national, and sub-national levels.

The United States also appreciates FAO's recent publications and analysis requested by Council about the damage to Ukraine's agricultural sector and needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction, and its recently web-posted update of the Ukraine Response Plan and priorities for 2023.

We commend the Organization's collaboration with the International Monetary Fund on the launch and implementation of the Food Shock Window, and appreciate the update provided about initial disbursements to import-dependent countries.

The United States encourages FAO to continue updating its publications and analysis, following from the conclusions and decisions of Councils 169, 170 and 171.

The United States appreciates FAO's support to the sustainment and extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and welcomes further updates to Members about its technical support to this essential initiative.

We appreciate FAO's update and management's publication of all current Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) on the Members Gateway, with status updates about those under negotiation. The need for Members to understand FAO's country-level efforts and impact has never been more critical as the world continues to grapple with a global food crisis. Publication of CPFs was an important step forward by FAO in building a culture of transparency. We encourage continued proactive discussions with Members about the development, approval and review processes for CPFs, including how they are funded, as well as opportunities for donors to create synergy and complement FAO's work at country level.

With regard to the Action Plan development for FAO's Science and Innovation, and Climate Change Strategies, the United States reiterates its request that FAO solicit North America Regional Group input at every stage of the development of these Action Plans as a matter of standard practice, consulting with the informal regional group to the same extent as with other regional groups. North America has significant expertise, innovation experience, and private sector investment to potentially leverage with FAO in the implementation of these strategies, and the region welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Action Plans' development.

Finally, with regard to the development of temporary proxy indicators for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 2.4.1, the United States underlines Management's commitment to convene an informal briefing with Members in 2023 and additional consultations in this regard prior to further implementation of the proxy measures, as agreed at the 135th Programme Committee, and looks forward to these discussions

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39

I have the honour to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We thank FAO for updating Members on the status of implementation of the decisions taken at the 171st Session of the Council.

The European Union and its Member States note with appreciation FAO's efforts to evaluate the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security, especially in vulnerable countries.

We would emphasise the urgent need to implement the Ukraine Rapid Response Plan in an effective way as soon as possible, once the assessment of the needs is completed. It is especially important to provide support and help to rural household in all front-line oblasts, coastal territories and other heavily impacted rural areas. Furthermore, we encourage FAO to maintain efforts to update the estimates of the needs of the Ukrainian agricultural sector, for both reconstruction and recovery, in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies.

We reiterate the need to maintain the political and technical support for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, noting its importance to ensuring availability of and access to food for countries in all regions, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

We note FAO's efforts in providing up-to-date and objective data and information, market assessments and outlooks in the context of the work under the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), as an essential pillar for informed policy decisions and the coordination of policy responses.

We commend the launching of the Food Shock Window by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and we appreciate FAO's efforts in highlighting the food import costs and their effects on the affordability for lower and lower-middle income countries, as well as for vulnerable households.

We commend FAO for having established the Country Programming Framework Repository, accessible from the FAO Members Gateway.

We commend FAO's efforts to finalise the Action Plans for the Science and Innovation Strategy, and for the Climate Change Strategy in good time with a view to their prompt implementation.

Finally, we request FAO keep up its efforts on the issues still ongoing from the mandate of the 171st FAO Council, so that they can be evaluated in the next cycle of Governing Bodies meetings in the autumn of 2023.

JAPAN

Submitted Wednesday 12 April 2023, 04:39

Decision 1.

Regarding the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), we appreciate UN's leadership and efforts to realize and maintain it. Japan considers it crucially important to effectively and continuously implement this initiative. We understand FAO support is in political and technical aspects. Therefore, we expect FAO to provide the update information to Members regularly, in particular, we would like to ask FAO about the view for Russia's claim that the extension renewed on March 18 is only for 60 days.

Decision 4.

For the continuation and strengthening of efforts to support the information based decision-making and the promotion of policy coordination. Japan has been giving priority to further utilization and enhancement of neutral and objective statistical information that are provided by FAO and other international organizations in order to ensure global food security and build more resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems. In this regard, Japan expects FAO to play a major role in further strengthening the transparency of agricultural markets through platforms such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and in collecting timely and appropriate data from each country.

Decision 5.

We would request FAO to open with Members the updated working schedule of assessments on distributions, benefits, trade-offs and risks of plastics for agricultural use and the alternatives as well as development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture, based on the current progress statuses of the relevant activities.

Decision 9.

Regarding proxy Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators utilized by FAO, we will ask FAO when an informal consultation with Members will be organized as recommended at the 171st plenary session. We will request FAO to provide background documents such as information note in advance as early as possible because it is important for the Members to have time enough, at least two months, to prepare for consultation on the proxy indicators. We also encourage FAO leaderships to be proactively engaged in the 2025 Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicator framework and provide the Members with necessary information ahead of relevant deliberation and decision makings.

Decision 10.

Regarding continuity of consultation to form consensus on the Code of Conduct for voting, Japan expects the FAO Secretariat to administrate elections based on their mandates including the upcoming election of the Director-General at the 43rd FAO Conference in July, in an appropriate manner in accordance with the Code of Conduct that is agreed by Members and FAO regulations.

Decision 13.

Regarding the next project budget plan and mid-term plan, we hope to further contribute to ensuring global food security by collaboration and cooperation with FAO and Members. Japan in collaboration with FAO has been already providing assistance to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries as well as Africa and the Middle East since recognizing food security as a crucial topic under the Japan's G7 presidency this year.

*Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat*

Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat thanks Members for their inputs.

With regard to the comments of Argentina, FAO Management has made enormous efforts in respecting the agreements and in coordinating with Members when, because of the flexibility to be able to adjust to the existing realities, certain terms need to be used.

The Secretariat takes note of the comments made by the Russian Federation and confirms that, as per established practice, it is the sovereign right of Members to discuss Agenda Items addressed under the Written Correspondence Procedure in Plenary meetings.

Regarding the comments made by the United States of America, FAO has continued to provide regular updates on the impacts of the war in Ukraine on global food commodity markets and world food security, including through regular reports, documents for Governing Bodies, webinars and participation in various meetings. FAO will continue doing so. The Organization is also committed to supporting the sustainment of the Black Sea Grain Initiative as well as any other initiative that contributes to improving global food availability and to stabilizing world markets.

FAO appreciates the support of the United States of America in the development of the Action Plans for the implementation of the Strategy on Climate Change, and the Science and Innovation Strategy. FAO is committed to ensuring that all regional groups have equal opportunities to express their views to guarantee the plurality and representativeness of perspectives. FAO has engaged with all Members throughout the development of the Action Plans, including through the Governing Bodies and through sharing the Action Plans for written feedback. It is worth highlighting that the Action Plans are living documents that will be updated to reflect changing needs and lessons learned.

Furthermore, the Secretariat appreciates the importance of consulting with Members in the development of a sound proxy indicator for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 2.4.1, and, to this end, has reached out to the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) Co-chair (Canada) in order to convene a “task team” of countries for refining and finalizing the proxy indicator proposal. The IAEG-SDG Co-chair has already taken steps to organize this group of countries and plans to convene a first meeting in May. Management reiterates its commitment to keep Members informed of relevant decisions, including through informal briefings.

As regards the comments made by the European Union, FAO recognizes the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative for improving global food supplies, stabilizing markets and prices and supporting the livelihoods of Ukrainian farmers, and is committed to supporting its extension and sustainment. FAO monitors the flow of Ukrainian exports of grains and other foodstuffs made through this Initiative and provides analyzed data on the composition of the shipments and their destinations. FAO uses every possible occasion to highlight the significance of the Initiative.

FAO appreciates the European Union’s support in the development of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy on Climate Change and of the Science and Innovation Strategy, as well as its valuable written contributions. FAO is finalizing the Action Plans to be ready by the end of Spring 2023, and looks forward to their implementation.

Finally, the Secretariat wishes to provide the following responses to the comments made by Japan:

On Decision 1: Regarding the Black Sea Initiative, the support of FAO is technical, and we constantly report on the progress at Briefing Notes (fao.org) and support the Global Crises Response Group (GCRG) led by the Secretary-General.

On Decision 4: The Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) has played an important role in calming world food markets during the outbreak of both COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine, by providing up-to-date, objective and comprehensive data and information and market assessments, and serving as a platform for policy dialogue and coordination of responses among major players in global food markets. The success and sustainability of AMIS in the future will depend on the support of Members through the provision of timely and comprehensive market data and policy information as well as financial resources. It is essential that AMIS be provided with the required support to deliver on its core mandate and also be strengthened to meet new challenges.

On Decision 5: The Bureau of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) is regularly informed about the implementation of 28th Session of COAG recommendations on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture and on progress made towards the development of a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture. In this connection, an informal briefing for all Members is planned to be organized before the end of the first semester 2023.

On Decision 10: The Secretariat wishes to confirm that all votes at the 43rd Session of the Conference will be conducted in conformity with the applicable rules and regulations of the FAO Basic Texts.

CHAIRPERSON

I think I am going to present to you the shortest conclusion of this Council, and I put it in front of you:

The Council took note of the status of the implementation of decisions taken at the 171st Session.

Can we agree to this draft conclusion? I see no objections. So decided with consensus.

Item 19. Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO

Point 19. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO

Tema 19. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO

(CL 172/INF/4; CL 172/INF/4 Web Annexes 1-3)

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to Agenda Item 19, Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO, contained in documents CL 172/INF/4; CL 172/INF/4 Web Annexes 1-3.

Comments from Members Commentaires des Membres Observaciones de los Miembros

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 29 de marzo 2023 a las 12.39

La Argentina agradece la información detallada por FAO sobre “la digitalización en el punto de mira (Spotlight)”; “la Novena Sesión del Órgano Rector del Tratado Internacional sobre Fitogenética Recursos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura”; y el Segundo Foro Internacional de la Escasez de Agua en la Agricultura (WASAG) y la adopción del “Llamado a la acción de Praia” brindada para el 172° período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO. Con la misma, apreciamos su dedicación y compromiso con el fortalecimiento del trabajo de la FAO y su compromiso con el desarrollo sostenible.

Al mismo tiempo, nos gustaría plantear una inquietud sobre el criterio utilizado para seleccionar las novedades que se informan bajo este punto de agenda. En el entendido que la FAO trabaja en una amplia variedad de temas y que es importante mantener informados a todos los miembros sobre los avances en diferentes áreas, nos preocupa que algunos temas puedan repetirse con otros puntos de agenda previstos para su discusión en el presente Consejo, o con que haya una concentración temática por sobre otros temas igual de relevantes.

En particular, nos gustaría señalar que la información sobre WASAG, aun considerándose valiosa, podría ser redundante, dado que el trabajo de la FAO en temas de agua será abordado entre otros al considerarse el informe del reciente 135° Comité del Programa (punto 9 del Programa provisional), sin mencionar que a temática de agua será central en la próxima Conferencia de FAO y del próximo bienio de trabajo de la FAO. Por otro lado, nos gustaría saber con qué criterio se seleccionan algunas de las Convenciones y Acuerdos concertados en virtud del Artículo XIV de la Constitución de la FAO.

Por lo tanto, la Argentina se permite sugerir que, en el futuro, se establezcan criterios claros y transparentes para la selección de las novedades que se informan bajo este punto de agenda. Una posible forma de hacerlo sería informar sobre todas las convenciones concertadas bajo el Artículo XIV o que la FAO es anfitrión con impacto en toda la membresía, como CIPF, Convenio de Rotterdam y CODEX, entre otros. Otro criterio posible de ser utilizado podría ser la intención de visibilizar

temáticas que, aun no siendo parte central del periodo de sesiones en particular, son de relevancia para la FAO en particular en materia de género (CSW67 y ruralidad, por ejemplo), pueblos originarios (preparaciones del vigésimo segundo período de sesiones del Foro Permanente de las Naciones Unidas para las Cuestiones Indígenas), sanidad vegetal (la primera Conferencia Internacional de Sanidad Vegetal), biotecnología (colaboración con Centro Internacional de Ingeniería Genética y Biotecnología (ICGEB) y la Academia Mundial de Ciencias (TWAS)) o comercio internacional (seguimiento del OMC-MC12).

Consideramos que incorporar estos criterios, entre otros, podría ser un primer paso permitiría mostrar efectivamente el amplio abanico de trabajo de la FAO y, al mismo tiempo, brindar un mayor equilibrio temático a los documentos presentados a cada una de las sesiones del Consejo.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 18:06

Australia expresses its appreciation to FAO and the Government of India for their perseverance and generous support in making the Ninth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture a reality. Australia appreciates the productive and collaborative spirit shown at the Ninth Session of the Governing Body, and we look forward to ongoing work with FAO, the Treaty Secretariat and Contracting Parties. Australia notes that the Governing Body appointed Mr Michael Ryan from Australia, as one of the Co-Chairs of the reestablished Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Enhance the Functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing. Australia remains fully committed to this process, ensuring an effective, efficient and transparent system for exchanging plant genetic resources, to promote agricultural research and development, and global food security.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States regarding the aforementioned Agenda Item for the 172nd Session of the FAO Council.

The EU and its Member States thank FAO for the information provided. With regard to the information about digitalisation, we recognise that digital initiatives in areas within the remit of FAO's mandate are an important enabler in terms of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We therefore encourage FAO to increase its efforts to harness the potential of innovation and digitalisation to sustainably increase production and transform food systems with due respect to the relevant legal frameworks and consideration for potential adverse effects. We further stress our support for the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the efforts made by FAO to increase the membership of the Treaty.

We also thank FAO for informing the Membership about the outcome of the Second International Forum on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and welcome the adoption of the Praia Call for Action. We would like to highlight the importance of aligning the activities of WASAG with the water, food security and nutrition goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as of working in accordance with allocated resources and the strategic and operational objectives of FAO's Programme of Work. In addition, we would like to take the opportunity to repeat our call on FAO to increase its efforts to contribute to coherent, sustainable solutions to the multiple and transboundary water challenges that duly recognise the water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus, taking forward agreed UN agendas.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat

Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat thanks Members for the inputs received. With regard to the comments made by Argentina, the Secretariat wishes to clarify that the topic of "Digitalization in the Spotlight" refers only to Item 19, Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO and therefore, it does not overlap with other agenda items scheduled for discussion at this session of the Council. As a "global commitment for digital cooperation" is a key recommendation by the Secretary-General's High-level

Panel on Digital Cooperation, paving the way towards the Global Digital Compact and the further implementation of the Agenda 2030, the importance of this topic in the actual context of great change for digital innovation should be considered as a criteria for selection for a holistic achievement of FAO's mandate.

The Secretariat takes note of the comments made regarding Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG). The focus on water will indeed be central to FAO's Conference and FAO's work for the next biennium. Since the establishment of the Global Framework on WASAG, the Committee on Agriculture has consistently requested report on its progress in supporting countries in addressing water scarcity in agriculture. Additionally, the Praia Call for Action acknowledges the looming crisis and proposes bold but achievable actions, expanding the scope of WASAG's work. It invites all FAO Members to join WASAG. The Praia Call for Action is an important milestone for WASAG to be more inclusive of all FAO Members, and to be more impactful in the future. With more FAO Members actively joining and contributing to WASAG, the enabling environment and political support to WASAG will be further strengthened. Argentina, through the Instituto Nacional del Agua, is already a Partner of WASAG. We look forward to its continued support and greater involvement.

FAO appreciates Australia's continuous commitment to the International Treaty, especially the process of enhancing the functioning of the Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing and looks forward to continuing working together to ensure an effective, efficient and transparent system for the management of plant genetic resources, to contribute to global food security and sustainable agriculture.

Regarding the comments made by the European Union, the Secretariat appreciates the encouragement to harness the potential of innovation and digitalization to sustainably increase production and transform food systems, which is an essential component of FAO's commitment to a sustainable digitalization for targeted interventions worldwide. The point of working with "due respect to the relevant legal frameworks and consideration for potential adverse effects" is also well noted as FAO is conscious that the opportunities that digital technologies – including Artificial Intelligence (AI) – offer can also give rise to economic, social and ethical challenges and risks.

FAO is therefore strengthening its efforts to make sure that digital tools are designed, developed and used to be consistent with universal human rights, animal welfare principles, environmental considerations for the safe, sustainable and efficient management of natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity, and food safety, to leave no one behind.

FAO Secretariat appreciates the continuous support expressed by the European Union for the International Treaty and takes note of the comments on the Global Forum on WASAG and the water-energy-food-ecosystem nexus.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusions on that Item are as follows:

The Council received briefing notes on the following topics for information only:

- (a) Digitalization in the Spotlight;
- (b) Ninth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- (c) The Second International Forum of the Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and the adoption of the "Praia Call for Action".

Can we agree to the *chapeau*? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (b)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

With these draft conclusions adopted, we finalize Agenda Item 19 with consensus.

Item 20. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2023-2024**Point 20. Calendrier 2023-2024 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 2023-24***(CL 172/LIM/1)***CHAIRPERSON**

Now we continue our work on Item 20, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions*. The relevant document is *CL 172/LIM/1*, and to avoid meetings overlapping FAO drafts up this calendar in close coordination with International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP), and through the web-based common calendar, which may be consulted by Members at any time through the FAO Members' Gateway on the FAO home page and on the relevant platforms of the other two agencies, to make sure that we try to avoid overlap between meetings.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

EUROPEAN UNION*Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39*

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 172nd Session of the FAO Council.

We take note of the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions for 2023 and 2024, particularly the information regarding the dates of the regular Committee on World Food Security (CFS) sessions, confirming that CFS is no longer linked to World Food Day.

We regret this decision and insist on the fact that it should not create a precedent when it comes to determining the dates of the next CFS plenaries. We call on FAO to return as soon as possible to the practice of hosting the CFS in immediate connection with World Food Day as has been the case since 2008.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat takes due note of the comment by the European Union and its Member States on the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2023-2024.

CHAIRPERSON

We do understand it is inevitable that there is an overlap. So the schedule of meetings is in front of you and I would like to bring forward the following conclusion:

The Council approved the Calendar of the FAO Governing Bodies for 2023-2024 as produced in Appendix G to this Report.

Can we agree to this draft conclusion? I see no objection. So decided by consensus.

Item 21. Tentative Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council**Point 21. Ordre du jour provisoire de la 173e session du Conseil****Tema 21. Programa provisional del 173.º período de sesiones del Consejo***(CL 172/INF/2)***CHAIRPERSON**

We turn to Agenda Item 21, *Tentative Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council*, contained in CL 172/INF/2.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 18:06

Australia recognises that the 173rd Session of the Council will address the matters so required following the 43rd Session of the Conference. We note that the Tentative Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council does not include a tentative agenda for the following (174th) session of the Council. Australia would like to confirm that Members will have an opportunity to input into the tentative agenda for the 174th Session of the Council (either as part of the 173rd Session of the Council, or separately).

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its Member States regarding the above-mentioned Agenda Item for the 172nd Session of the FAO Council.

We take note of the draft Agenda for the 173rd Session of the Council and take this opportunity to request that “the review of Decentralized Offices Network and presentation by FAO of the strategy concerning the Decentralized Offices Network: for discussion and decision” be included on the Agenda for the 174th Session of the Council”.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat takes due note of the comment from the European Union and its Member States regarding the Provisional Agenda of the 174th Session of the Council, and confirms prerogative of Member inputs for the same, in line with the comment from Australia.

CHAIRPERSON

I read out the conclusions for this Agenda Item:

The Council endorsed the tentative Agenda of its 173rd Session as contained in document CL 172/INF/2, taking into account the decisions of this Council.

Can we agree to this draft conclusion? I do not see any objections. So decided by consensus.

We will do the following, because as I said on Monday, there would be the possibility for statement by the representative of the FAO Staff Bodies. We did not receive a request yet to do so, it is still possible, but my idea would be to give you a little bit more time for the lunch break so that you can finalize your list of representatives for the coming Conference.

We will adjourn now for lunch, early lunch, until 14:00 hours. Then, we see whether or not we have the statement of the representative of the FAO Staff Bodies. We will address the preparations for the Conference and, of course, we still have the Item on the mountains to be discussed after the lunch break. I see the Director of Cabinet of the Director-General, but first I give the floor to the United States of America.

Mr VITO SU (United States of America)

I would like to ask if the Secretary may share the plan for the Drafting Committee?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, after lunch we will come back to the schedule for the Drafting Committee, but as I stated yesterday, given the excellent progress of today, the Drafting Committee will start its work tomorrow morning at 9.00 hours sharp and we will let you know where the Drafting Committee will be meeting.

I do think there is an appetite to start already this afternoon, but we still have to make sure that we have all the language versions available for the Drafting Committee, and of course that all the professional editor can go through the text, and of course the changes made by the professional editor will be shown in track and changes. I give the floor now to Mr Godfrey Magwenzi.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Director of Cabinet)

Dear Council Members, with respect to the Item addressed by the staff representative bodies, I checked with Ms Greet de Leeuw two days ago if the Staff Representative Bodies were going to speak, she told me that she had not received a request from them. Therefore, we are not anticipating that they will be coming to speak. This is only for your information, and for planning purposes.

CHAIRPERSON

Probably within less than one hour we will get a request, otherwise we have even a shorter afternoon Session, which I think will be a pleasure for all of us, after our hard work this week.

We are now going to adjourn for lunch. I wish you a very good, refreshing lunch after an exciting morning. First, back to the afternoon Session, you can already see it may not be a later afternoon Session because we will certainly finish before 16:30 hours.

See you back in this room at 14:00 hours sharp.

Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11:42 hours

La séance est levée à 11 h 42

Se levanta la sesión a las 11.42

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA
27 April 2023

The Eighth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:14 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La huitième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 14
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la octava sesión plenaria a las 14.14
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 14. Arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference**Point 14. Organisation de la 43e session de la Conférence****Tema 14. Disposiciones para el 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia***(CL 172/13/Rev.1)***CHAIRPERSON**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, I hope you had a refreshing lunch and I do think that we will not have to stay very long this afternoon in this room anymore because the lunch helped to get the necessary nominations for the 43rd Session of the Conference, which we have to conclude during this Council.

We are 99 percent there. I will explain how we will do it now.

We start now with Item 14, *Arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference*.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

ARGENTINA

Presentado el miércoles 29 de marzo 2023 a las 12.39

La Argentina toma nota que, de acuerdo con la decisión adoptada por el Consejo en su 165.º período de sesiones, se han previsto diversas mesas redondas durante el 43.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO. Estas mesas redondas tendrían como objetivo fomentar la interacción y el diálogo entre los funcionarios de nivel superior que asistan a la Conferencia y abordar temas relacionados con el mandato de la Organización, en particular en relación con la gestión de los recursos hídricos para lograr mejoras en la producción, nutrición, medio ambiente y calidad de vida, con miras al cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 y sus Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible. En ese sentido, la Argentina una vez más recuerda que el mandato de FAO dentro de la gestión de recursos hídricos se debe enfocar principalmente al indicador 6.4.1 Eficiencia del uso del agua, y 6.4.2 Estrés hídrico, y en plena colaboración con UN Agua cuyo rol es garantizar que las Naciones Unidas "actúen como uno solo" en respuesta a los desafíos relacionados con el agua. Teniendo en cuenta ello, la Argentina tiene la expectativa que las mesas redondas se establezcan teniendo en cuenta esos dos elementos primordiales.

Por otro lado, si bien es alentador que se haya previsto este espacio de diálogo e intercambio, es importante tener en cuenta la posibilidad de que las delegaciones más pequeñas puedan tener dificultades para cubrir todos los espacios de participación previstos en la Conferencia de FAO. La FAO es una organización en la que las decisiones se toman por consenso de todos sus miembros, y no solo de aquellos que puedan participar en todas las reuniones.

Por lo tanto, sería recomendable considerar la implementación de medidas (como mesas redondas bajo modalidad híbrida) que garanticen la participación equitativa de todas las delegaciones, incluyendo el balance geográfico de moderadores de las mesas redondas. De esta manera, se podría asegurar una representación adecuada y justa en la toma de decisiones y se evitaría que algunas delegaciones se sientan excluidas o marginadas en el proceso.

En resumen, aunque es positivo que se estén organizando estas mesas redondas, es importante ser cautelosos en el abordaje del tema a fin de respetar las ventajas comparativas de la FAO y asegurarnos de que todas las delegaciones tengan la oportunidad de participar de manera equitativa y justa para que puedan contribuir de manera efectiva en los debates y la toma de decisiones dentro de la FAO.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 09:31

The Russian Federation welcomes document CL 172/13 with an overview on the arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference and takes note of its tentative agenda. However, we reserve the right to make any additional comments and proposals during the session if needed.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 30 March 2023, 18:06

Australia appreciates the information note outlining the arrangements for the 43rd session of the Conference, which will assist Members with their preparations.

We welcome the inclusion of the Roundtable discussions that are envisaged to take place at the Conference. We request Management to provide, at the earliest opportunity, further details on the specific topics and their timetabling, together with advice on how Members can nominate senior level officials to participate in the Roundtable to share their expertise and experience. We further request Management to strive towards regional and gender equity in developing panel composition.

CANADA

Submitted Friday 31 March 2023, 09:58

On behalf of the North American region, we submit the Honourable Madame Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Government of Canada, as candidate for Chairperson of the Conference.

In order for the meeting to run smoothly, and in keeping with past practice in Council and other Governing Bodies, Canada would recommend the establishment of time limits for speaker statements (e.g. Members speaking for a region would be allocated six minutes each; Members speaking for their country four minutes each). In order to enable the widest possible Member participation, pre-recorded speaker statements should be welcomed and considered equivalent to statements made in-person.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Friday 31 March 2023, 16:53

The United States joins consensus in endorsing the Tentative Timetable for the 43rd Session of the Conference, set out in *Appendix A* of CL 172/13.

The United States will provide to the Secretariat its name(s) for Conference Bureau position(s) as requested, coordinated within the North America Regional Group.

The United States takes note of the three proposed “Round Table” discussions in Plenary session “on the General Debate topic and on matters related to the mandate of the Organization.” Can FAO further clarify the topics or titles for each of the three Round Table events, as well as clarify whether the Round Table discussions in Plenary will have associated conclusions in the Conference Report?

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 5 April 2023, 18:39

I have the honour to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

We take note of the arrangements for the 43rd Conference, to which we agree in general terms.

We welcome the return to the normal setting – after the changes adopted on an exceptional basis to conduct the 2021 Conference – in full accordance with the rules of procedure. This will allow for conducting a smooth and fruitful Conference in this very sensitive time for global food security and nutrition.

As regards the procedures for voting by secret ballot at the Conference, we are confident that the good practice introduced in recent elections will be applied and that the robust safeguards to ensure the integrity and complete secrecy of voting set out in the draft Code of Conduct will be respected, thereby adhering to best practices in the UN system.

JAPAN

Submitted Wednesday 12 April 2023, 04:39

Regarding the background document of “Water Resources Management for the four betters: better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life, to achieve Agenda 2030 and the

Sustainable Development Goals”, we would like to know when it will be shared to Members. We hope that the document will be shared two months before the opening of the 43rd Session of FAO Conference so that Members can afford to take necessary procedures such as drafting a statement for the Heads of Delegations.

We would like to know the themes and agendas of the three High-level Round Tables and the current status of FAO’s preparation. We look forward to receiving additional information in writing, or through oral presentations at the Plenary.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The Secretariat thanks Members for their comments and support for the arrangements for the 43rd Session of the Conference, as contained in document CL 172/13/Rev.1.

In relation to the comments from several Members regarding Round Table discussions at the Conference, the Secretariat will provide further details on related topics, themes and agenda soonest available, and in any case well before the Session. As per document CL 172/13/Rev.1, three Round Table discussions are planned, one each in the morning Plenary Session from Monday 3 July 2023 to Wednesday 5 July 2023 in hybrid physical-virtual modality in order to ensure participation of all Members on equal footing. The Round Table discussions being an integral part of the Conference, their content will be recorded in the verbatim records of the 43rd Session.

The Secretariat welcomes Canada’s exhortation for the use of time-saving measures in order to ensure efficient conduct and maximise Member participation at the Conference, including well established instruments such as speaking time-limits, and the use of pre-recorded speaker statements which are equivalent in all respects to in-person statements.

In response to the European Union, all votes at the 43rd Session of the Conference will be conducted in conformity with the applicable rules and regulations of the FAO Basic Texts.

In response to the query from Japan, the Secretariat assures that Conference document C 2023/2 The State of Food and Agriculture, which Members are invited to refer to in preparing their statements for the General Debate, shall be published as soon as available.

CHAIRPERSON

The Provisional Timetable has been approved and will be published on the Conference webpage or is already there.

With regards to the nominations for Officers of the Conference, the following proposals have been received for endorsement by the Council.

Chairperson of the Conference will be Ms Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and AgriFood of Canada. For the Vice-Chairpersons of the Conference, we have Mr Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Subaei from Qatar, Mr Morten Aasland from Norway, and Mr Khalid Mehboob from Pakistan.

For Chairperson of Commission I, it is Mr Marcel Beukeboom from the Netherlands. We have seven Members. I will come to it later on, the Chairperson for Commission II, but we have seven Members of the General Committee: Algeria, Australia, China, Egypt, France, United States of America and Venezuela. We have nine Members of the Credential Committee: Canada, Germany, Lebanon, New Zealand, Panama, Russian Federation, Zambia, Bangladesh, and United States of America.

We will receive, either before closure of today but certainly before closure of tomorrow, the Chairperson of Committee II because, as I said it is in the making, but we can agree to that. For the others, can we agree to the nominations for the Officers of the Conference?

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

The European Union and its Member States disassociate themselves from the consensus on the election of the Russian Federation as a Member of the Credentials Committee and requests that this decision should be reflected in the Report of this Council.

Mr Vito SU (United States of America)

The United States disassociates from consensus on the nomination of the Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee. We would like our disassociation noted in the final Report of the Committee.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom also disassociates itself from the nomination of the Russian Federation from the Committee for Credentials.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Thank you. Canada also disassociates itself from the selection of the Russian Federation for the Credentials Committee.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

Japan also disassociates from the nomination of the Russian Federation to the Credentials Committee of the Conference.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia also disassociates itself from the consensus decision for Russian Federation to form part of the Credentials Committee for Conference and would like that reflected in the Record of the meeting.

Mr Vito SU (United States of America)

The United States of America disassociates itself from the consensus on Venezuela's nomination to the General Committee as the United States of America does not recognize the legitimacy of the regime. We request that our disassociation be included in the final Report.

Ms Ekaterina VYBORNOVA (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We would like to note with regret the attempt to politicize the work of the Conference even before it has begun. Therefore, the Russian Federation also disassociates itself from the candidacies of the United States of America, Canada, and Germany and the European Union to the Credentials Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

For the moment I will not say anything. I will refrain from any remarks. All the disassociations will be reflected in the Verbatim of the Council but we have now the officers for starting the work of the Conference.

Sr. Luis Geronimo REYES VERDE (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

Queremos agradecer a nuestro grupo regional por acompañar nuestra nominación al Comité General del 43 Período de Sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO. Estimados Miembros, Nuestra postulación al cargo se hace en base a un estricto cumplimiento de los textos fundamentales de esta Organización y bajo los criterios y enfoque de nuestro grupo regional. Rechazamos la politización de este punto por parte de los Estados Unidos y les recordamos que ante problemas comunes debemos trabajar en conjunto sin dejar a nadie atrás.

Queremos que conste en acta que nos disociamos de la nominación de los Estados Unidos también al Comité General.

CHAIRPERSON

This statement will be also included in the Verbatim of this Council.

Item 22. Any other matters

Point 22. Questions diverses

Tema 22. Asuntos varios

- Item 22.1** *Five years of action for the development of mountain regions*
Point 22.1 *Cinq années d'action pour le développement dans les régions montagneuses*
Tema 22.1 *Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones de Montaña*

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to Item 22, *Any other matters*.

On Monday we agreed to highlight our mountains.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Antes de iniciar, quisiera felicitarlo a usted y a los Miembros de la mesa principal, a la Consejera Legal, Secretariado, todos con han sabido manejar este Consejo tan sabiamente porque ha sido verdaderamente difícil. Ya vemos la cantidad de trastornos que se han presentado, pero han sabido manejarlo bien. Mis congratulaciones.

Costa Rica, como Miembro de la Alianza para las Montañas desea llamar la atención sobre la resolución sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Montañas A/RES/77/172 aprobada en noviembre de 2022 por la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. Esta resolución copatrocinada por 110 gobiernos proclama el período de 2023-2027 como cinco años de acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones Montañosas.

Esta iniciativa reconoce la importancia vital de las montañas como áreas de biodiversidad, proveedores de agua, alimentos y energía y su papel fundamental en el desarrollo sostenible. La resolución expresada en el párrafo 30, que *“con el fin de generar conciencia en la comunidad internacional sobre los problemas de las regiones de montañas y dar un nuevo impulso a los esfuerzos de la comunidad internacional para hacer frente a los desafíos y los problemas de las regiones montañosas”* y continúa diciendo que, cito el párrafo 36, *“invita a los Estados Miembros y los organismos pertinentes de las Naciones Unidas a que, en el marco de los mandatos, siga intensificando su apoyo al desarrollo sostenible de las regiones montañosas, entre otras cosas mediante la participación en el quinquenio de acción para el desarrollo de las regiones de montaña”*.

Como agencia principal de las Naciones Unidas para las montañas, la FAO tiene un claro mandato para abordar la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en las zonas montañosas y debe jugar un papel clave en la implementación de esta importante iniciativa.

En este sentido, nos gustaría aprovechar la oportunidad para alentar a la FAO a tomar medidas concretas y significativas en colaboración con los Estados Miembros, con otras partes interesadas y con la Alianza para las Montañas y su secretariado, que se encuentra en la Dirección Forestal de la FAO, para promover el diseño de políticas y prácticas sostenibles en las regiones montañosas siempre dentro del mandato de esta Organización.

La innovación y la investigación en áreas clave también son cruciales para el éxito de esta iniciativa, además del fortalecimiento de las capacidades de las comunidades de montaña incluyendo los pueblos indígenas para participar en la gestión y conservación de sus recursos naturales es fundamental para lograr un desarrollo sostenible a largo plazo en las zonas montañosas.

Espero que estas sean gratas noticias en medio de todo lo que está sucediendo aquí, un poco ingrato.

CHAIRPERSON

I must say I really am a fan of the mountains. They give you fresh air, time to relax but they are very much needed for both food security, food system, biodiversity and ecosystems. I think it is very important that we address this issue in the Council in a very positive way.

Ms Jackline YONGA (Kenya)

I want to echo the sentiments of Costa Rica and give the following remarks.

We welcome the recent resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), which includes the proclamation of five-year plan of action for the development of mountainous regions. This opens up wide opportunities for the development of a green economy and technologies, the

creation of financial mechanisms to strength cooperation between mountainous countries among others.

Mountains are the world's water towers providing 60 to 80 percent of all freshwater resources for our planet. At least half of the world's population depends on mountain ecosystems services to survive. Not only water but also food and clean energy. Kenya is famous for its beautiful landscapes, diverse wildlife and massive gain results of which a significant portion is found in the mountainous region. Our country contains 3 856 named mountains, the highest and most prominent being Mount Kenya.

In Kenya, we recognize mountains as very crucial for the green economy due to goods and services they provide to upstream and downstream populations. We have a significant share of Kenya's resources coming from mountains for mining, forestry, water for drinking and irrigation which directly contributes to the economic development.

The diverse mountain landscapes in Kenya support a large variety of ecosystem services such as energy, water, food, protection from natural hazards and multicultural ecosystem services. We do recognize that this has provision of environmental and social benefits by mountain ecosystems are vital to mitigate the impacts of threats that affects mountains especially the diverse effects of climate change.

As I conclude, Kenya supports the proposal by Costa Rica that FAO in collaboration with stakeholders and mountain partnerships, of which Kenya is a Member, promotes the design of a policy and practices in mountainous regions within its mandate.

Sra. María Carolina CARRANZA NUÑEZ (Perú)

La delegación del Perú desea agradecer a la Delegación de Costa Rica por brindar esta valiosa información a todos los Miembros del Consejo, así como apoyar lo expresado por esa Delegación y la Delegación de Kenya. Al reafirmar nuestro compromiso como país de montaña y, más precisamente, como país andino con el proceso posterior al Año Internacional del Desarrollo Sostenible de las Montañas 2022, deseamos subrayar la importancia de continuar trabajando en el marco del quinquenio de acción para el desarrollo de las regiones de montaña 2023-2027 incluido en la Resolución trianual sobre desarrollo sostenible en las zonas de montaña de la Asamblea General que ha sido citada.

Nuestro país enfrenta grandes desafíos que son comunes a los países de montaña en desarrollo, como los efectos del cambio climático, la pérdida de biodiversidad y la pobreza en las zonas rurales, todo ello con un impacto directo en nuestra seguridad alimentaria y la agricultura. Por ello, debemos seguir trabajando en forma conjunta en el marco de la Alianza para las Montañas, en la FAO y en los foros pertinentes de las Naciones Unidas. Al respecto, deseamos expresar un gran aprecio por el permanente apoyo de la FAO y el de la Secretaría de la Alianza para las Montañas, apoyo que continuará conforme a lo expresado por el Director General en la Ceremonia de Clausura Mundial del Año Internacional celebrado ayer en la FAO.

Finalmente, el Perú desea alentar a los Miembros de este Consejo y de la FAO, en particular a los países de montaña, a seguir trabajando por el nuevo impulso colectivo que se debe otorgar a los esfuerzos de la comunidad internacional y hacer frente a los desafíos que afrontan los países de montaña y en apoyo principalmente de la consecución de la Agenda 2030.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Within the United Nation system FAO has played a leading role in sustainable mountain development. The Mountain Partnerships Secretariat serves Members through advocacy to development, communication and joint initiatives. Also the mMuntain Partnership promotes the prioritization of mountains on national, regional and global Agendas by building synergies with the European Union (EU) and international entities.

For example, as part of the process towards the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS), the mountain partnership highlighted the relevance of sustainable food system in mountains as development drivers. To date around 10 000 farmers, 600 of them women, have benefited from technical and marketing support.

Finally, we support the proposal made by Costa Rica and the statement made by Kenya and Peru.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)(Observer)

I would like to align myself with what my colleagues of Costa Rica, Kenya, Peru and Pakistan have just said.

We do have in front of us these big challenges and we see those challenges in these days even more. We see how deep is the connection between mountains preservation and water management inter alia as the last Water Conference in New York has shown. This is no surprise as the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development recognizes the economic and social development depends on the sustainable management of our planet's natural resources and confirms the determination of the international community to conserve and sustain the use of oceans and seas and fresh waters.

Recent data has shown that about 340 million people in rural mountain areas in developing countries, 55 percent of the total rural mountain populations are considered vulnerable to food security. We therefore need to prioritize the specific challenges that they face and the opportunity that they provide. Italy is proud of the mountains that we preserve in our country and they are the specific place for specific ecosystem. But they also need to be the place for gender equality, resource management and for food security. Now I do switch very briefly into Spanish.

Sigue en español

Porque le quiero dar las gracias a la FAO por el constante apoyo brindado hasta ahora al tema de la preservación de las montañas. También, a través de la Alianza de las Montañas que Italia tiene el honor de presidir. Nos alegramos mucho del apoyo que el Director General, Dr. Qu Dongyu, nos brinda y quien ha dicho ayer que continuará brindando a través de la FAO. Eso es muy importante y queremos asociarnos a todos los otros países colegas y Miembros que crean realmente que tenemos que desarrollar políticas precisas también para preservar nuestras montañas.

Ermek ISAKOV (Kyrgyzstan) (Observer)

I want to thank our partners from Costa Rica, Kenya, Pakistan and Italy for raising the issue of the mountains here at the Council. The resolution Sustainable Mountain Development initiated by the Governments of Italy and Kyrgyzstan was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in November 2022 and was co-sponsored by more than 110 United Nation Member States. This resolution proclaimed 2023-2027 as the five years of action for the development of mountain regions.

We sincerely believe that our initiatives and joint activities will contribute to raising not only the ecological but also the economic and social levels of development of mountainous countries. I want to underline that on yesterday's closing ceremony of the international year of sustainable mountain development, which was held here in FAO Headquarters in Rome, the highest leadership of United Nations and FAO, the Secretary-General, António Guterres and the Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu had confirmed that United Nation system will support the mountain agenda including the five year plan of action.

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage international organizations of the United Nation systems especially the FAO to take concrete action to promote the design of sustainable policies and practices of mountainous regions.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor.

I now turn to Management to see whether or not the Director of the Forestry Division would like to say something.

Mr Zhimin WU (Director, Forestry Division)

Firstly, I would like to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the distinguished delegates from Costa Rica, Kenya, Peru, Pakistan, Italy and Kyrgyzstan for their recognition, encouragement and expectations on the work of mountains and as we know that mountainous areas cover 27 percent of the global service, and also home to 2.1 billion people, many of them are suffering from food scarcity and malnutrition, and also the ecosystems in the mountainous areas are facing great challenges with regard to climate change, deforestation etc.

In order to enhance the awareness of the international community of the problems of mountainous countries and to give awareness to the international communities to address the challenges and problems of mountain countries.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution on Mountains, which proclaimed from 2023 to 2027 as five years of action for mountains. Following the United Nations adoption of this resolution of mountains, the Mountain Partnership which was established in Switzerland, Italy, FAO and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Rio +10 Summit, they are setting up a task force to develop a global plan of action for mountains. This task force consists of 22 Member Organizations and Member Countries, and the task force have already met and they agreed that the global action plan will be developed followed by action plans at the regional levels.

Therefore, FAO as a lead agency within the UN system, we are fully committed to the work requested by our Member countries and we are obliged to provide what we can to support the work of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat which is hosted by FAO. We are at your disposal.

CHAIRPERSON

With your words we have concluded this Item on Any Other Matters. We have also finalized our work for today, and I see already smiley faces. It is a beautiful weather outside but probably we still have to do some work.

How to proceed? Tomorrow at 9:00 hours sharp we will have the Drafting Committee in the Green Room. Some are already asking if we cannot have the Drafting Committee earlier but we need the time now to translate the whole Report in all the six FAO languages and also I have the professional editor to go through the Draft Report so that we can speed up the work of the Drafting Committee.

As I said, it is the practice now, if there are changes made by the editor, the Members of the Drafting Committee will see them in tracked changes, and of course the editor is not looking to the language but to the right abbreviations, dots, commas, and etcetera.

Hopefully we can finalize the work of the Drafting Committee early in the morning tomorrow. Then, as was planned, the text of the draft Report, in all six United Nation (UN) languages, will be available no later than 14:00 hours in the afternoon. You will find it on the protected area of the Members' Gateway.

Then we start at 15:00 hours our closing Session and hopefully the positive adoption of the Report of this meeting. For those who are not in the Drafting Committee, have a relaxing or still hard work this afternoon. Tomorrow morning, we see each other then at 15:00 hours sharp in this room.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I wish to take this opportunity as I was hoping to do so in the any other business to really express my gratitude and our country's gratitude for the work of the FAO, particularly in the person of its Assistant Director-General, Mr Mario Lubetkin, who is in charge of the region of Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC).

I noted his interest in ensuring that not just LARC but the Caribbean region play a much greater role in the functioning in the Organization, which we welcome, and so I wish to express our gratitude for his work thus far, having taken office just last year.

I also want to say that he also participated, along with the sub-regional coordinator, Dr Renata Clark, in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) Conference, which are Heads of Government for the region of CARICOM, participated in that Conference and played a very significant role. So, again, I want to just say to the team, you and your team, thanks for all that you continue to do and we look forward to a bright and productive future in FAO.

Ms Marija MILIVOJEVIC (Sweden)

I wish I was before the Bahamas so we can end on this nice note. I just have a practical question on the Verbatim Records. I have not seen them yet. So, if you could just give us some information on when they will be published. I do recall earlier that we would get the Verbatims every day. So, if you could

just direct me to where they are, that would be really helpful. And thank you for this very efficient Council meeting.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you, Chairperson, the EU always have a better memory than mine. Anyway, we hope to have the Verbatim records ready for the Drafting Committee members tomorrow, as and when they are available. Then, of course, the practice that is established at FAO is that the compiled draft Verbatim records are circulated to Members after the completion of this Session, allowing them time to give us feedback, before the final Verbatim record is published.

CHAIRPERSON

I look around the room for anybody who wants to delay the closure of the Session of today. I see none. Thank you so much for your hard work today, effective and efficient.

Let us give the translators time to translate. I already thanked them for their hard work. Again, we cannot do without our messengers. We cannot do without our technicians. And certainly we cannot do without our interpreters. Thank you so much all for your hard work, for the excellent service you are providing, making it possible that you have an efficient and effective Council

Thank you so much. Meeting adjourned until tomorrow 15:00 hours.

The meeting rose at 14:47 hours

La séance est levée à 14 h 47

Se levanta la sesión a las 14.47

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-second Session Cent soixante-douzième session 172.º período de sesiones
Rome, 24-28 April 2023 Rome, 24-28 avril 2023 Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023
NINTH PLENARY SESSION NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE NOVENA SESIÓN PLENARIA
28 April 2023

The Ninth Plenary Meeting was opened at 15:06 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La neuvième séance plénière est ouverte à 15 h 06
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la novena sesión plenaria a las 15.06
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Portions marked as [XX] were inaudible due to technical reasons. Please submit all corrections
to: Verbatim-Team@fao.org
Les parties signalées par [XX], pour des raisons techniques, étaient inaudibles. Veuillez communiquer
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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

**ADOPTION OF REPORT
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME**

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, dear distinguished Delegates, dear Excellencies, welcome to the last session of the 172nd Session of the FAO Council. Before we commence with the Adoption of the Report, we have to have a tear again. Because, as we have seen this week, everything, not only in this room but also behind the scenes, everything went perfect.

We have a person in this room who is responsible for that and has been doing that already for 30 years and that is amazing. And why is it so amazing? Because he is so modest. He is checking until the last moment before I gavel, if everything is okay, and he is not only doing it for the Council, he is doing it for Technical Committees, he is doing it for informal meetings, he is doing it for everything here in this beautiful Plenary Hall, but also in the Green Room, in the Red Room and other rooms.

Mr Sergio Ferraro, could you please come to the podium?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Why did I say a tear? Because in May, I was very much against it, but the Director-General is very strict, he is going on his retirement after 30 years. But he promised us that he still would serve the Conference. Mr Ferraro, you did it so well, in such a modest way, with all the details. Of course, you had a very strong and excellent team. You always stood for your team and I saw all the members of the team putting you on their shoulders because they appreciate your work, your leadership but also the way you are doing it. Sometimes that is rare, but we should acknowledge it. Thank you so, so, so much. Thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Sergio FERRARO (Deputy Director, Governing Bodies Servicing Division)

Thank you very much. I was not expecting that, so I am not prepared at all. I would like to thank all of you, first of all, because it has been a pleasure for me working with you, with all of you, for more than 30 years in this Organization. As you said, I have an excellent team. I have worked with them, I have learnt a lot.

As you can see also from my language, I am not a linguist, but I have worked with interpreters and translators and meeting staff. I am an engineer by training, so I had to learn a completely new work and I am proud that I have been working for this Organization, serving you in all these meetings. I am sure the Organization will continue to work and with your support the team will grow.

I have also new things to present to you at the Conference, a new Plenary Hall with innovative equipment. So, stay tuned, there will be a lot of new things coming for you.

Many thanks to the Director-General, to Mr Hans Hoogeveen for his confidence, to Mr Rakesh Muthoo, of course, to the others Director-General, to all the staff of the Governing Bodies Servicing Division (CSG). Thank you very much to all of you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

I very much welcome the interpreters, the translators, all the technicians and the messengers. Let us now do some serious business. We now proceed with the Adoption of the Report. The relevant document is CL 172/Report for Adoption, which was made available through the password protected

area of the FAO Members' Gateway at 14:02 hours this afternoon, so exactly one hour before the Adoption of the Report in all languages.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Guo Su, to provide his remarks, what happened in the Drafting Committee.

Mr GUO Su (Chairperson of the Drafting Committee)

Let me start by thanking you for placing your confidence in me to chair the Drafting Committee of the 172nd Session of the Council. It is my great honour.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Members of the Drafting Committee, namely Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Eritrea, France, Japan, Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Sweden, the United States of America and also the European Union as a participant, for their work and dedication. We had a single meeting this morning and the Drafting Committee carried out its work in a constructive spirit. I applaud the collaboration by all those that participated and it has led us to the finalization of the Report for adoption before this Council meeting this afternoon.

It is down to the collective efforts and professionalism of the Members that our work was completed in a timely and efficient fashion. The Report for adoption before you reflects that we have avoided any substantial change to the conclusions of the Council. We stuck to the consensus of the Plenary on concepts and substance.

Finally, I would like to also thank the Secretariat, including the interpreters and supporting staff for their outstanding work in the Drafting Committee meeting. With this I would like to recommend that the report be adopted *en bloc*.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Guo Su, for your hard work and via you, I would like to thank all the members of the Drafting Committee for working so effectively and efficiently this morning. I understood that it is the first time that you are chairing such a meeting here within FAO, but that you are eager to chair more.

Now, hopefully, we are assured that the Report could be adopted and approved *en bloc*. Of course, if there are still any linguistic observations, please send them to the Secretariat.

I put forward to you, can we adopt the report *en bloc*?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Thank you so much. The Report of the 172nd Session of the Council is adopted *en bloc* with consensus.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

It is my pleasure now to invite the Director-General to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Excellences, all the Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, I wish to thank the Council for their constructive and professional manner in which it conducted its business this week. I feel the strong solidarity during this Council, after so many times - that is 11 times I witnessed and participated.

We always found a way to agree and compromise, even with some level of disagreement on some issues. But we are united by our collective understanding and the shared goals on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The international community is facing huge challenges that call for coordinated and joint responses. The 2030 Agenda is a fundamental tool for that collective response and we need to work together to achieve its target. We must act globally, no one can be left behind.

As a UN specialized Agency for food and agriculture, let us continue to search for consensus, openness and inclusiveness as a basis for our decision-making process. This has always been a priority for me since taking office as FAO Director-General in 2019.

Let us preserve the trust that we have built together over the last four years and keep the focus on the professional aspect, our common agenda to fight poverty, hunger and all forms of malnutrition. And to support the transformation of global agrifood systems, to be more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable to achieve the *four betters*.

Dear colleagues, during your discussion this week there was a recognition of FAO's role as a global centre of technical excellence and such a role requires to be adequately resourced. There was the recognition that FAO has had over 12 years of Zero Nominal Growth Budget, leading to a loss of purchasing power substantially. And a steady growth of volunteer contributions, which put more demand on delivery capacity.

I appreciate the Council's careful review of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) proposed for the next biennium, 2024-2025, and the constructive discussion confirming the need for a budget at a higher nominal level.

The Council discussions also evidenced that Members acknowledge the Oversight Advisory Committee's assessment that budget constraints over an extended period can negatively affect efficiency and effectiveness.

I also heard your call on the need for increased support, capacity building and the mobilization of additional financial resources for developing nations.

We want to continue to meet your needs and request for support in the next biennium and I am sure that with a positive spirit I saw around the budget discussions this week, we will be able to do so together.

As I said at the beginning of this week, a consensual approval of the proposed budget level will be a powerful sign that we are indeed ONE FAO.

Dear colleagues, we need to continue to prioritize the implementation of outstanding recommendations from the audit report and in completing and identifying agreed actions as soon as possible.

During this week you have highlighted the importance of the Strategy on Climate Change and its Action Plan and provided recommendations for its implementation, as well as the importance of a synergy with the Science and Innovation Strategy and on Private Sector Engagement.

I am pleased to see a consensus on such important areas of FAO's technical work.

I also noted that the recommendation to address both regional and country-specific needs and to facilitate inter-regional exchanges, this fully aligns with the structure of the FAO regional and sub-regional offices that are initiated and my vision going forward for increased coordinated delivery at the country level, including for the increased Rome-based Agencies (RBA) coherence and efficiency for collective delivery on the ground and for a holistic joint design for better production and rural development at the country level.

I am pleased to see we are on the same page and we have the same starting point to go forward.

Dear colleagues, we also welcome the emphasis placed on the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and we will continue working with partners to support the development and implementation of the National Work Roadmaps.

We will continue to strengthen work on One Health through the joint plan of action and the FAO chairpersonship last year, as well as on the Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) issues, which I strongly advocate to establish the global leadership on. Fortunately, we got the Prime Minister of Barbados, she is always fully engaged to support the global leadership group on AMR.

I was also pleased to note Council's appreciation for FAO's ongoing effort and the leading role in providing timely data and information on global food markets, including by updating Members

through the G7 and G20 for a, as well as the key UN Bodies in New York. By the way, the majority of the Members of G20, including the G7 of course, they doubled their support to the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).

I look forward to your ongoing support for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, including the preparation for the next Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum during the World Food Forum in October. So far, we have got a very active reaction and confirmation by the head of state for all the world, they are willing to make a special contribution to support the World Food Forum.

It is an honour and also a great impact platform we are going to establish together with all the Members and I hope for your continuous involvement, engagement and further contribution.

I also appreciated the Council's support for the FAO Digital Transformation with a focus on the Digital for Impact and the Digital Workplace.

I wish to thank the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for guiding the discussion this week with his professional neutral manner and harmonization. For the first time I feel there is a big change since four years ago. The previous ICC is here still. You are a two tall ICCs. I do not know the average, but it must be the highest in history. You always look down at me. I always respected both of you. I always try to leave a social distance from both of you and show my respect to you, and you deserve it.

And as well as to the Chairpersons of the Council Committees, for their invaluable support. I also say that FAO is large and it is poor, but I remember the first time, in April four years ago, I said what is the richness of this Organization, its greatest asset is its employees, highly internationally recognized employees.

Today, as the ICC already announced, we are going to have the Deputy Director for the Governing Body at FAO, Mr Sergio Ferraro, who is going to retire after so long service. Today is his official last working day of this Council. It is also the last Council for Mr Ferraro. In his career Mr Ferraro has supported over 70 Sessions of the Council, as well as 15 Sessions of the Conference, as well as thousands of other meetings.

Like many other FAO employees, I applaud Mr Ferraro's professionalism, passion and dedication to duty. We know some employees are always under the spotlight or limelight, like some Office of Communications (OCC) people. But also many employees are unknown, working quietly as hiding heroes. I always say that, we need both. So, especially those people who have a long commitment, like Mr Ferraro, I really invite you to give a big applause to him again.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Dear friends, FAO is your FAO. It is your Organization. I said this so many times. We are fortunate to have a chance to work for FAO.

As a Director-General or as other employees at different levels, we need your strong support. We try our best to deliver, to fit the purpose. That is our mission. That is our mandate.

Let us all continue working together.

This morning the Vice Premier of Italy, who is responsible for the infrastructure, I challenged him a little bit but he was very happy. I got him smiling. It was not a professional smiling, it was a very sincere smiling. Because I mentioned the elevator, as the Chinese Vice Minister was blocked for several minutes in the elevator. A lot of Ambassadors had a similar experience. I said that building is your building. Fortunately, also we use it for the purpose. So, you can see we have started change. I am very proud and appreciate the Host Country to support us to change, but we need to do more.

I said yesterday we will keep changing, not only physically, but also professionally and, more importantly, service, we are going to offer more and better.

Let us continue to achieve even more and better together and help the people and protect the planet together. Thank you.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, for your strong and warm words about the Council this week but also your call for what we have to do next.

I now give the floor, because of a request for the floor, to Argentina.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Gracias, Director General, por sus palabras. Quería agradecerle a todas mis colegas y a todos mis colegas por el trabajo que hemos hecho todos juntos. A la Secretaría General por el excelente trabajo como siempre nos tiene acostumbrados y a todo su equipo, intérpretes, técnicos, etcétera.

Pero el motivo por el cual pedí la palabra es porque después de más de cinco años, mi querido colega, compañero, mi deputy, Sr. Guillermo Valentin Rodolico que hoy es vicepresidente de este Consejo es el último Consejo al cual él participará para poder volver a la Argentina a ocupar funciones importantes en nuestra cancillería.

Todos ustedes lo conocen porque él ha trabajado en estos cinco años de una manera muy intensa en todos los comités técnicos y en todos los Órganos de Gobierno. Si no fuera porque todos lo conocen, tendría que estar explicando durante bastante tiempo quién es, su capacidad, su hombría de bien, su compañerismo, su solidaridad y, sobre todo, lo excelente profesional y persona.

Por todo ello, le agradezco mucho que me haya permitido hacer este saludo en público porque se lo merece y porque creo que todos los colegas también quisieran darle el aplauso que él se merece y corresponde.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Mr Guillermo Valentin Rodolico. I would say “until we meet again”.

We come now to the end of a long week. This was a very fruitful, positive and intense week of the 172nd Session of the Council. It was successful but we had also our difficult moments.

Let me first now start praising and saying so many thanks because we did it already to the interpreters, to the translators, to the messengers, to the technicians but we did not do it to the team who is sitting left of me – Mr Rakesh Muthoo, Ms Nadine Kayal and the whole team – always standing ready for you, working hard, not only in front of you, but certainly behind the scenes until many late hours in the night to make sure that we are breaking records again on timing.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

I also would like to thank Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

What I like the most is you really can see that it is a teamwork effort of the people behind the scenes. I think that is an example to make the Council a teamwork effort.

In the current times of severe global food insecurity and food crisis, never has been the logo of the statue at Headquarters of United Nations in New York so applicable. Swords into ploughshares. Ploughshares for sustainable agriculture to transform our agrifood systems, especially for the countries which need it the most. Actions by implementing the decisions of this and previous Councils.

We have to address our severe problems and challenges with determination and courage as well as with innovative approaches to seek science and evidence-based solutions. We know we can do it but we have to roll up our sleeves and to do even more.

This week we made excellent progress when it comes to the Programme of Work and Budget and with your guidance given, I know for sure that we can arrive at a consensus on the budget. But we have to take some more time and some more informal consultations which I certainly will organize.

We had to take decisions this time by vote on the global food insecurity and its drivers as well as the terrible war in the Ukraine. We have applauded, I think, the work of the Programme Committee (PC), Finance Committee (FC), Joint Meeting and Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) with adopting their recommendations, starting to implement them. And unfortunately we had to memorize the excellent work done by the outgoing Chairpersons of the FC and CCLM.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

We have improved further our governance of the Organization with decisions on restorations of voting rights as well as the Code of Conduct. And let us not forget the address of the candidate for the office of Director-General for a second term. We saw again a manifesto about results achieved, lessons learned and priorities to the future. With that we go to 1 July.

Let me really conclude. We maintained a positive and constructive atmosphere through the week. But we also need to draw some lessons learned from this Council to make sure that everybody is feeling part of our endeavours with professionalism, openness, listening to all with dignity and solidarity. With you I am one of the most strongly favouring multilateralism.

It is the only way to get out of the global food crisis. And multilateralism is all about solidarity. It is all about inclusiveness. It is all about equality and all about transparency. Let us practise real multilateralism and build one FAO through inclusive and balanced consultations to reach a consensus in line with FAO's mandate and functions as a UN specialized organization and making every effort to obtain the understanding and support for all and of all members.

We are now underway to the 43rd Session of our Conference and I would like to close with a slightly modified quote of Mr Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which is about water, oceans and nature. It takes generosity to discover the whole through others. If you realize that you are only a violin, you can open yourself up to the world by playing your role in a human concert. Our concert is for humanity, for solidarity, for peace, for food security for all countries, leaving nobody behind.

Thank you, the meeting is closed.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

The meeting rose at 15:41 hours

La séance est levée à 15 h 41

Se levanta la sesión a las 15.41