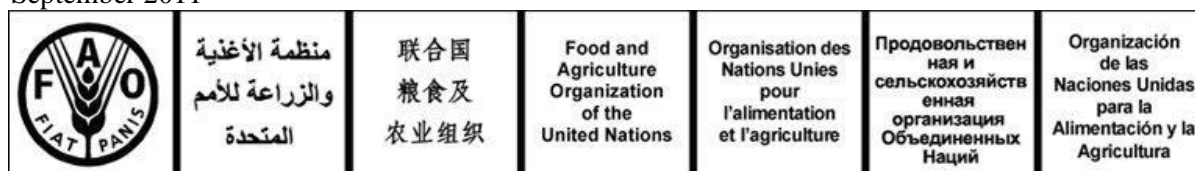


September 2011

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PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Hundred and Eighth Session

Rome, 10 - 14 October 2011

EVALUATION OF FAO'S ROLE AND WORK IN NUTRITION

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr Robert Moore
Director, Office of Evaluation
(Evaluation Report)
Tel. (06) 5705-3903

Mr Modibo Traoré
Assistant Director-General
Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department
(Management Response)
Tel. (06) 065705-4523

1. This cover page provides the background and key issues for the attention and guidance of the Committee on the attached report *Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition* and the Management Response.

Background

2. The Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition was requested by the FAO Programme Committee in April 2010, when it considered the rolling work plan of the FAO Office of Evaluation. The Evaluation was to assess the integration of nutrition concerns into food and agriculture and the development of capacities to address malnutrition issues in policies, strategies, programmes and information products. The Evaluation was to give special attention to FAO's role in relation to and collaboration with other organizations for which nutrition is part of their core mandate.

Key issues in the Evaluation report

3. The Evaluation concludes that more than ever FAO's nutrition remains central to FAO's mandate because of the global implications of malnutrition. However, FAO has tended to analyse nutrition in terms of "under-nourishment" and embed nutrition as a separate set of activities largely within one objective, focusing on vulnerable people rather than adopting a more integrated approach. FAO was found to lack vision on its role in nutrition.

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4. The multi-sectoral dimensions of nutrition, the need to address these through both direct and longer-term solutions and the multitude of actors have made it more important than ever to achieve a convergence of views through the international nutrition architecture. The Evaluation found that FAO has to demonstrate stronger leadership and articulate, in collaboration with others, how agriculture and food-based approaches can contribute to tackling hunger and malnutrition, taking into account the double burden of under-nutrition and over-nutrition.

5. The Evaluation found that Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN) has very limited capacity and leadership to deliver on a wide range of responsibilities, partially due to the steady decline in staff numbers over a period of years. Furthermore, there is poor understanding, communication and cooperation between the groups responsible for nutrition within the Division. Consequently, AGN does not represent a strong and coherent focal point for nutrition despite the efforts of some very committed staff members. There are many strategic initiatives within FAO where AGN should be raising nutrition concerns, especially in the area of statistics, information systems, strategic planning and policy assistance.

6. With respect to the focal areas for FAO's nutrition work, the Evaluation stated that FAO's work should be less focused on delivering operationally demanding nutrition-specific activities at community level and more orientated towards providing "stewardship" and a normative function to inform, guide and establish norms and standards for governments and development partners to deliver on and achieve improved nutrition outcomes.

7. To address the issues identified above, the Evaluation has formulated 14 major recommendations, related to FAO's corporate position on nutrition, focal areas for work, nutrition in the Strategic Framework, institutional arrangements, collaboration and partnership, and networking.

Management Response

8. FAO Management welcomes the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition and is pleased that the recommendations rightly emphasize the central role of nutrition in FAO's mandate. Management welcomes that many of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation reinforce the issues identified by the concerned units across the Organization, while some of the recommendations are being implemented as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the role of nutrition within the Organization.

9. Management endorses the Evaluation's call for the development of a corporate vision and strategy for nutrition work in FAO as very timely for re-establishing FAO's global leadership role for improving nutrition from a food and agriculture perspective.

10. Management foresees FAO's main contribution to nutrition improvement through a nutrition-sensitive food systems approach, which will draw upon a wide range of technical expertise that exists throughout the Organization. This approach presents a perspective that is broader than the food supply chain, taking into consideration factors that play a key role in determining access to a nutritionally adequate, safe and sustainable diet, while addressing issues of under- and over-nutrition.

11. In terms of achieving measurable nutrition outcomes, FAO plays a significant role in assisting Member Governments in policy development, investment programming and capacity development for food, agriculture and rural development, including response to, and better preparedness for emergencies. It is expected that mainstreaming a nutrition-sensitive food systems approach in FAO's policy, programme and capacity development work will contribute at the national, regional and global levels to sustainable improvements of access to nutritionally adequate diets for all.

12. Out of the 14 major recommendations, 10 are accepted by Management with some qualifications indicated in the appended matrix; one subcomponent under Recommendation 5 is partially accepted; and the four recommendations on institutional arrangements (9-12) are deferred pending further review. Implementation of the Evaluation's recommendations will entail the actions detailed in the Management Response. The timetable for implementation coupled with the resource requirements present the most serious challenges. It is proposed to have nutrition mainstreamed into all of FAO's work through the Strategic Framework and Country Programming Framework as of 2014

onwards and to immediately pioneer a nutrition-sensitive food systems approach in a number of countries.

Guidance sought

13. The Programme Committee may wish to provide its views and guidance on the key issues in the Evaluation report as identified above, and to the response to the recommendations and proposed follow-up actions by Management.