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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-third Session

Rome, 28 November - 2 December 2011

Report of the Joint Meeting of the Hundred and Eighth Session of the Programme Committee and Hundred-Fortieth Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, 12 October 2011)

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REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rome, 12 October 2011

INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint Meeting submitted its Report to the Council.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden), and Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon), Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	Ms S. Nilsson (Germany)
Mr M. Mellah (Algeria)	Mr S.K. Pattanayak (India)
Mr G.O Infante (Argentina)	Mr H. Yamada (Japan)
Mr Travis Power (Australia)	Ms M. Sabah Mohammad Al-Sabah (Kuwait)
Ms S. Afroz (Bangladesh)	Ms C.C. de Mauleon Medina (Mexico)
Ms M. van Dooren (Belgium)	Mr M. Haddad (Morocco)
Mr O. Vieira (Brazil)	Mr R. Elkhuizen (Netherlands)
Mr L.D. Couliadiati (Burkina Faso)	Mr N. Fraser (New Zealand)
Mr M. Valicenti (Canada)	Mr G. Vega Berrio (Panama)
Mr Handi Guo (China)	Mr V.V. Kuznetsov (Russian Federation)
Mr E.O. Fayed (Egypt)	Mr M. Eltayeb Elfaki Elnor (Sudan)
Mr F. Tesfu (Ethiopia)	Ms K.E. Johnson (USA)

3. The Joint Meeting appreciated the opening address from the Director-General, the full text of which may be found on FAO's Permanent Representatives' Web site <http://permreps.fao.org>.

Adoption of the Agenda¹

4. The Agenda for the Joint Meeting was approved.

Actions arising from the Vision for the structure and functioning of FAO's decentralized offices network²

5. The Joint Meeting reviewed document JM 2011.2/3 "*Actions arising from the Vision for the structure and functioning of FAO's decentralized offices network*", which will inform the Council on decentralization and other related topics, including Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13.
6. It noted the next steps in the governing bodies' review of FAO's decentralization activities in line with the decisions of the June 2011 Conference. Specifically, the Council's guidance at its 143rd session will facilitate the preparation of more region-specific documents on decentralization to be submitted to the Regional Conferences in 2012. Following the input to be received from the Regional Conferences, the Council in 2012 would aim to endorse the vision and underlying actions, and the Joint Meeting requested that this be supported by a comprehensive implementation plan, including

¹ JM 2011.2/1

² JM 2011.2/3

outstanding actions, as well as a paper to be submitted to the May 2012 session of the Joint Meeting describing the accountability and oversight framework.

7. The Joint Meeting acknowledged the complexity in successfully pursuing decentralization, which was dependent upon the completion of all areas of the Immediate Plan of Action, namely managing for results, functioning as one, human resources reform and reform of management systems, underpinned by culture change and effective governance and oversight.

8. The Joint Meeting expressed strong support for decentralization. It stressed in particular the need for a clear application of corporate human resources policies as underlined by the Conference, as well as strong accountability frameworks coupled with adequate administrative tools and training, and an effective system of inspection of decentralized offices.

9. The Joint Meeting underlined the urgency of completing the decentralization process. In particular, it:

- a) supported the proposal for increased emphasis on planning and priority setting through Country Programming Frameworks and actions to improve focus and coherence of FAO's actions, i.e. the greater involvement of countries, subregions and regions in articulating their priorities for collaboration with FAO and improving their input, through the Regional Conferences, into the results-based programming and budgeting processes of the Organization;
- b) welcomed in principle the proposed adoption of a more flexible staffing approach for country offices, which would need to be further reviewed. Resources made available from reallocation would be assigned to country offices according to their priority needs. It encouraged the Secretariat to explore measures to reduce General Service staff in decentralized offices;
- c) supported in principle the proposal for further delegation of authority for contractual instruments, which should be accompanied by a comprehensive framework for accountability and oversight in FAO, and preceded by adequate training and systems;
- d) agreed in principle with an enhanced role of the regional offices in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of all activities within a region, as well as increased fungibility in the use of resources allocated in the region to achieve the agreed results. In this respect, it recommended the formulation of guidance and procedures to allow fungibility within the region with appropriate corporate oversight and accountability;
- e) rejected the proposal to automatically allocate eventual additional savings, if any, under Functional Objectives X and Y to the decentralized offices, noting that the PWB adjustments should be addressed in accordance with agreed procedures, which include information on programme and financial implications for each action; and
- f) requested clarification on the role of the FAO Representatives in emergency activities and enhancement of their capacity to assume additional responsibilities, if this did not create any problems in regard to efficiency in emergency activities.

10. The Joint Meeting sought more information on proposals on adjustments to Liaison Offices and outposted Information Officers in future documentation on decentralization and adjustments to the PWB 2012-13, including at its next session in November 2011.

Resource mobilization and management strategy³

11. The Joint Meeting reviewed the corporate Resource Mobilization and Management Strategy. It expressed appreciation for the quality of the document and noted the good progress already made towards implementation. It also welcomed the emphasis on the role of decentralized offices in preparing subsidiary resource mobilization strategies.

³ JM 2011.2/4

12. The Joint Meeting:

- a) requested that further reference to South-South Cooperation be inserted;
- b) requested that the corporate resource mobilization Web site expand its information to all resource partners (donor governments, the private sector and foundations);
- c) asked for improvements to be made in tracking and reporting results, and how results achieved contribute to FAO's wider goals; and
- d) requested that a timeline for reporting be prepared.

FAO strategy on partnerships with the private sector⁴

13. The Joint Meeting welcomed the draft FAO Strategy on partnerships with the private sector, which contributes to achieving FAO's goals in line with the Strategic Framework. The Joint Meeting underlined the importance of meaningful consultation with the private sector prior to further consideration of this issue by Member States.

14. While recognizing the document as a positive step towards completion of the Strategy, the Joint Meeting:

- a) recommended that the implementation plan for the strategy be operational and results-based and aligned with FAO's Strategic Framework;
- b) underscored the importance of an approach that is coherent with that of the UN system, and in particular in synergy with the strategies of the Rome-based agencies;
- c) requested special attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in partnerships;
- d) emphasized the importance of consultation with FAO's decentralized offices and reflection of field-based examples of these partnerships in the Strategy;
- e) encouraged involvement of relevant statutory bodies that have had experience with private sector participation;
- f) noted the importance of the Corporate Social Responsibility components of the Strategy; and
- g) strongly emphasized the need to identify and manage risks, ensure transparency and avoid conflict of interests following the principle of due diligence.

15. The Joint Meeting looked forward to the results of further consultations within the FAO Secretariat and directly with the private sector, and subsequent refinement of the Strategy and its Implementation Plan.

Progress on implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)⁵

16. The Joint Meeting reviewed the status of TCP approvals and delivery against the 2008-09 and 2010-11 appropriations. It noted the progress made on the implementation of the TCP decentralization.

17. The Joint Meeting:

- a) recommended that staff from the decentralized offices receive further training to improve the effectiveness of the decentralized management of the TCP;
- b) encouraged the Secretariat to work on an improved reporting system in the next biennium which would include, *inter alia*, providing data on the share of TCP resources by budget component (e.g. staff, consultants, travel), and application of resources by Strategic and Functional Objectives, as well as information on the gender aspect in TCP projects;

⁴ JM 2011.2/5

⁵ JM 2011.2/6

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- c) appreciated that the approval time had been significantly reduced and reiterated the need for fast procedures in delivery of TCP; and
 - d) requested a report of how TCP selection criteria were applied in decentralized offices.

Any other business

18. There was no discussion under this item.