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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COUNCIL

Hundred and Fiftieth Session

Rome, 1-5 December 2014

Report of the 116th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 3-7 November 2014)

Executive Summary

The Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to evaluation and to programme planning and priority setting, in particular with regards to:

- a) Review of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 – Technical Priorities (para. 3)
- b) Indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2015-17 (para. 5)
- c) Evaluation of FAO's contribution in crisis-related transition – linking relief to development (para. 6)
- d) Evaluation of FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in middle-income countries (para. 7)
- e) Joint FAO-WFP Evaluation of the food security cluster coordination (para. 8)
- f) Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (para. 9)
- g) Follow-up on the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry (para. 10)

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these and other matters to the attention of the Council.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as its recommendations on matters within its mandate.

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

Rakesh Muthoo
Secretary, Programme Committee
Tel. +3906 5705 5987

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 3-7 November 2014

Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Sixteenth session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden), the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	Mr J.A. Carranza (Ecuador)
Mr A. Ammouche (Algeria)	Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)
Mr G.O. Infante (Argentina)	Mr V. Sharan (India)
Ms N. Feistritz (Austria)	Mr M. Hooper (New Zealand)
Mr E. Robinson (Canada)	Ms C.E. Grieder (Switzerland)
H.E. Jingyuan Xia (China)	Mr H. Shoja'adin (Yemen)

Review of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 – Technical priorities¹

3. The Committee welcomed the *Review of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 – Technical Priorities* and the teamwork displayed in the preparation of the document. The Committee:
 - a) noted the recent developments in trends and emerging issues of importance to the work of the Organization during 2014-17;
 - b) agreed with the technical priorities under the Strategic Objectives expressed by the four Technical Committee sessions held in 2014² as summarized in the document, and underlined the importance of identifying areas of emphasis and de-emphasis in FAO's programme of work;
 - c) reiterated the need to leverage FAO's comparative advantages within the overall context of its broad mandate, and to continue the use of meaningful partnerships;
 - d) supported an adaptive approach to dynamic circumstances, including in respect of emergencies;
 - e) took note of the effects of urbanization and migration and underlined their relevance to the work of the Organization within its mandate *inter alia* with regard to social protection;
 - f) recalled the importance for FAO to continue refining its work on collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics, and supporting member countries in this regard;
 - g) noted the need for attention to the impact of technological changes on smallholder and family farming, the upscaling of agricultural investments, increasing productivity and reducing food loss, and opportunities for men and women in activities supporting the Organization's objectives;

¹PC 116/2

² Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Fisheries (COFI), Committee on Forestry (COFO), Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP)

- h) requested an information note for the 150th Session of Council consolidating priorities aligned with the Strategic Objectives as identified by the Regional Conferences, Technical Committees and other relevant bodies during 2014;
- i) looked forward to articulation of the connection between the work of the Organization and the Post-2015 development process; and
- j) welcomed the progress on monitoring Output indicators in the MTP results framework, and looked forward to an update in the Mid-Term Review Synthesis Report 2014 to be presented at its next session in March 2015.

Globally Important Agriculture Heritage System (GIAHS)³

4. The Committee reviewed document PC 116/3-FC 156/8 *Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)*, and consistent with the approach undertaken by the Finance Committee, decided to postpone discussion of this issue to its next session, possibly at its Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee.

Indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2015-17⁴

5. The Committee welcomed the indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2015-17 and its shift to results-based evaluations. In endorsing the work plan, the Committee:

- a) welcomed the thematic evaluations of the five Strategic Objectives;
- b) underlined the importance for evaluations to cover Objective 6 on Technical quality, knowledge and services, as well as the cross-cutting themes, including on gender;
- c) recognized the challenges of measuring impact and counseled awareness of this fact;
- d) appreciated that country programme evaluations will also be focused on results and underscored the importance of geographical balance in selecting the country programmes to be evaluated;
- e) highlighted the value of potential joint evaluations of strategic nature;
- f) considered it important for the work of Article XIV Bodies to be also evaluated, while recognizing that the decision rests with the Bodies themselves;
- g) discussed the need for an adequate time-frame between evaluations and their follow-up report, and considered flexibility in such time-frame where appropriate; and
- h) looked forward to discussing the terms of reference for the planned independent evaluation of the evaluation function, in line with the Charter of the Office of Evaluation, at the next session of the Committee.

Evaluation of FAO's contribution in crisis-related transition – linking relief to development⁵

6. The Committee welcomed this timely evaluation since the linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development are major concerns to countries in crisis, and:

- a) took note of the overall conclusion of the evaluation that FAO was taking the right direction in the area of transition work, now embedded in the larger FAO "Resilience agenda" within the overall context of the reviewed Strategic Framework, noting that the Organization had a widely recognized comparative advantage in this regard;

³ PC 116/3-FC 156/8

⁴ PC 116/5

⁵ PC 116/6; PC 116/6 Sup.1

- b) encouraged FAO to continue to apply an integrated approach towards a sustainable reduction in vulnerability considering relief, rehabilitation and development in a holistic manner;
- c) highlighted the importance of targeting FAO's contribution to the poor and the most vulnerable and stressed the importance of identification of target groups and of the neutrality principle;
- d) encouraged FAO to raise awareness of stakeholders, including donors and its own staff, so that related funding and operations are anchored on the new resilience paradigm that integrates relief, rehabilitation and development;
- e) underscored the importance of tailoring its approaches according to the country context and culture, and encouraged good contextual analysis and risk assessment;
- f) looked forward to the further refinement of Country Programming Frameworks that could better accommodate the flexibility needed in work on crisis-related transition; and
- g) looked forward to discussing management follow-up to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, including on gender mainstreaming, at a future session of the Committee.

Evaluation of FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in middle-income countries: Armenia, Colombia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam - Management Response⁶

7. The Committee commended the clear and frank analysis provided in the synthesis report, and:
- a) concurred with Management that a single strategy for such a diverse group of countries would not be appropriate;
 - b) encouraged a more flexible approach based on each country's circumstances and needs while addressing shortcomings presented in the report;
 - c) highlighted the need for capacity building of decentralized offices in supporting such a flexible and agile approach;
 - d) stressed the importance of FAO's visibility, particularly in middle-income countries, to remain relevant in these countries;
 - e) encouraged FAO to take a more proactive approach in middle-income countries, continuing to advocate important issues relevant to the countries, participate and initiate relevant activities, seek opportunity for South-South Cooperation, and suggest cutting-edge solutions.

Joint FAO-WFP Evaluation of the food security cluster coordination⁷

8. The Committee welcomed the findings and recommendations of this Evaluation, and appreciated the joint FAO/WFP Management Response. The Committee:
- a) commended FAO and WFP for the joint leadership of this important humanitarian cluster;
 - b) welcomed the fact that the implementation of the recommendations had already been started;
 - c) appreciated the benefits of the Food Security Cluster coordination and encouraged the two agencies to utilize the coordination's full potential;
 - d) underlined the importance of national and local ownership and involvement, and the need for the cluster coordination to continue to work with and adapt to national and local mechanisms;
 - e) underlined the importance of accountability to affected populations, and welcomed the recognition by the cluster coordination of this principle;

⁶ PC 116/7; PC 116/7 Sup.1

⁷ PC 116/8; PC 116/8 Sup.1

- f) encouraged the funding partners to further recognize the importance of cluster coordination in the effective and efficient humanitarian assistance, involving a large number of international and local partners, and the need for predictable funding for such coordination;
- g) encouraged the two agencies to continue working on the issues raised in the report, such as on preparedness and cross-cutting issues; and
- h) looked forward to being kept informed of progress, and encouraged further use of the Evaluation by the Office of Evaluation.

Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries⁸

9. The Committee took note of the Report to the Programme Committee (PC 116/9), entitled: "Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries", and:

- a) recognized that it is still too early to see the full impact of actions taken and that more tangible results may be available during the 2016-17 biennium;
- b) requested the Secretariat to ensure full and easy access to the instruments developed and adopted through the CCRF;
- c) stressed the importance of wide dissemination of CCRF, including through the Blue Growth Initiative; and
- d) underlined the importance of close collaboration with regional fisheries bodies and resource partners.

Follow-up on the Strategic Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry⁹

10. The Committee appreciated the clear and comprehensive report and presentation, and:

- a) appreciated the continued efforts at integrating FAO's work in forestry into the reviewed Strategic Framework in support of the Strategic Objectives;
- b) underlined the need for greater integration of the work of the Regional Forestry Commissions into Regional Conferences and COFO;
- c) emphasized the importance of COFO's intersessional work; and
- d) encouraged FAO to fully participate at an early stage in the upcoming review of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) and further development of international forestry policy, to ensure *inter alia* linkages and synergies with all stakeholders.

Any other business

11. The Committee discussed the possibility of an amendment to its Rules of Procedure in relation to a deadline for despatch of documents in all languages prior to each session, and resolved to revert to the matter at its next session.

⁸ PC 116/9

⁹ PC 116/10