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Food and Agriculture  
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Organisation des Nations  
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Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная организация  
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las  
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Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة  
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# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Sixty-fourth Session

6-10 July 2020<sup>1</sup>

### Report of the 128<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee (8-18 June 2020)

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<sup>1</sup> Rescheduled from 8-12 June 2020

### **Executive Summary**

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

- a) Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable;
- b) Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 (paragraph 6);
- c) Provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework (paragraph 7);
- d) Evaluation of FAO's support to Zero Hunger (SDG2) and Management Response (paragraph 8);
- e) Follow-up Report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the Eradication of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (SO1) (paragraph 9);
- f) Evaluation of FAO's Statistical Work and Management Response (paragraph 10);
- g) Enhancing FAO's capacity to evaluate contributions at country level: Proposal for Strengthening Evaluation in Decentralized Offices (paragraph 11);
- h) Progress Report on the preparation for the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) World Food Systems Summit (paragraph 12);
- i) Progress Report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (paragraph 13);
- j) Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors (paragraph 14);
- k) Update on the Work Plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding for Antimicrobial Resistance (paragraph 15);
- l) Progress on efforts for the Eradication of *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR) (paragraph 16);
- m) The GFFA 2020's call upon FAO's Governing Bodies "to support a process" for "the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture" (paragraph 17);
- n) Update on COVID-19 and its consequences for food security and food systems (paragraph 18);
- o) Update on FAO's response to the Desert Locust upsurge (paragraph 19);
- p) Update on Sustainable Forest Management (paragraph 20);
- q) Progress Report on the implementation of Programme Committee recommendations (paragraph 22);

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these 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.

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## Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following Report of its Hundred and Twenty-eighth Session.
2. The Session was convened virtually on an exceptional basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This followed the endorsement by the Council Members of the Director-General's proposal, pursuant to Rule XXV, paragraph 13 of the General Rules of the Organization, that each Council Committee be convened at the earliest opportunity by conducting its upcoming Session virtually, to consider matters that require urgent consideration and decision by the Council within the first half of the calendar year.
3. The Programme Committee confirmed, pursuant to Rule VII of the rules of procedure of the Programme Committee, that they agreed to the suspension of Rule II (5) of the PC rules of procedure, which require that sessions shall be held at the seat of the Organization.
4. In addition to the Chairperson, H.E. (Mr) Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands), the following representatives of Members were present:

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| H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina)                 | Mr Laith Obeidat (Jordan) <sup>2</sup>         |
| Ms Jennifer Fellows (Canada)                                   | Mr Muhammad Rudy Khairudin Mohd Nor (Malaysia) |
| Ms Tamara Villanueva (Chile)                                   | Ms Traoré Halimatou Kone (Mali)                |
| Mr NI Hongxing (China)   | Mr Donald G. Syme (New Zealand)                |
| H.E. (Ms) Delphine Borione (France) <sup>3</sup>               | H.E. (Ms) Marie-Therese Sarch (United Kingdom) |
| H.E. (Mr) Mohammad Hossein Emadi<br>(Islamic Republic of Iran) | Mr Kayoya Masuhwa (Zambia)                     |

## I. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable<sup>4</sup>

5. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda for the Session.

## II. Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21<sup>5</sup>

6. The Committee:
  - a) appreciated that the Organization, under the leadership of the Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu, was focusing on making FAO a dynamic, inclusive, transparent and efficient Organization, which was demand- and challenge-driven; science-, evidence- and professional-based; and results- and impact-oriented to ensure FAO were fit-for-purpose;
  - b) commended a more holistic and cross-functional approach to addressing complex and interconnected challenges facing agriculture and food systems;
  - c) welcomed the innovative approaches for the Further Adjustments through seeking efficiencies and reallocation of resources within a flat nominal budget to further support FAO's vision of attaining Zero Hunger, achieving sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of all people;
  - d) welcomed that the new structure was aiming to achieve an Organization which was more fit for purpose, efficient, effective and innovative and was strengthening coordination and collaboration while avoiding silos and duplication of work;

<sup>2</sup> Mr Laith Obeidat was designated to replace H.E. (Mr) Fayez Khouri as representative of Jordan for the 128<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee

<sup>3</sup> Ms Delphine Babin-Pellier was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Delphine Borione for part of the 128<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee

<sup>4</sup> PC 128/1 Rev.1; PC 128/INF/1

<sup>5</sup> CL 164/3; CL 164/3 Web Annexes 2-4; CL 164/3 Information Note 1

- e) noted that modular management had been proposed to allow the Organization greater agility in its response to Members' priorities and emerging needs;
- f) highlighted that FAO's organizational chart should reflect the principles of transparency, accountability and membership ownership and involvement;
- g) underlined the importance of synchronizing the proposed organizational adjustments with the strategic framework, and underlined the importance of the relationship between the long-term strategic framework and proposed organizational changes;
- h) requested further information on the theory of change and the change management strategy be provided as first draft for consultation with Members in September 2020;
- i) welcomed the explanation of the three types of units presented in the new structure (Annex 1), i.e. *offices*, which had a cross-cutting function within the Organization; *centres*, which had a strong collaboration with other partners (UN agencies and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)); and *divisions*, which housed the Organization's specific expertise and technical capacities which needed to be fully preserved or provided operational and logistical support;
- j) underlined the need for further information on the division of responsibilities between the Deputy Directors-General, Chief Economist and Chief Scientist as well as on specific reporting lines for each *office*, *centre*, and *division* and relationships between the different units;
- k) noted the importance of the *centres* reflecting the Organization's long-standing and important collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) on CODEX, with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on nuclear techniques in food and agriculture and the critical importance of working in partnership with other relevant UN agencies to overcome the complex and interconnected challenges to achieve the Agenda 2030;
- l) in light of the challenges posed by zoonotic diseases to sustainable agriculture and food systems, noted the proposal to include zoonoses in the Joint FAO/WHO Centre and requested further information on the foreseen working modalities both within the Organization to ensure best coordination with the technical division on Animal Production and Health, and with WHO and other partners such as the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), be included in the concept note requested to be prepared by Management on the Joint FAO/WHO Centre;
- m) underlined the importance of discussing the proposal on a Sub-Committee on Livestock at the forthcoming session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), taking into account amongst others the recent resurgence of zoonoses and the need for innovative approaches and technological tools to achieve sustainable development, within the framework of "One Health approach";
- n) noted the proposal for further innovative use of net appropriation resources, in particular by expanding partnerships with IFIs to enhance resources mobilization and foster public and private investments in sustainable food and agriculture;
- o) noted the timing and rationale for the disbandment of the Strategic Programme Management teams and the additional information provided, and highlighted the importance of capitalizing on experience gained and lessons learned for the development of the new Strategic Framework;
- p) underlined the need to strengthen the decentralized offices and in this regard, stressed the need to strengthen synergies and clarify lines of accountability between headquarters, regional, subregional and country offices;
- q) requested further clarification on the relation between headquarters and decentralized offices, in particular regarding the coordination of main FAO programmes and the implementation of the Repositioning UN development system, under the lead of the Resident Coordinators;
- r) stressed the need for full accounting of direct and indirect costs for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, and its sustainable funding via extrabudgetary resources;

- s) emphasized the need to take into account priorities for all countries, in view of growing challenges to achieving food security and nutrition, recalling para. 70.k) of the Report of the 41<sup>st</sup> Conference<sup>6</sup>;
- t) noted that Forestry and Fisheries were in the “Natural Resources and Sustainable Production” stream and noted the need to ensure their due visibility, especially given their role on important issues such as climate change and biodiversity;
- u) requested that reference to oceans and aquaculture as well as agriculture be inserted in the organizational structure to better reflect the Organization’s mandate;
- v) recalled the decision of the Council, at its 163<sup>rd</sup> Session, on establishing strategic result framework indicators for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and expressed the need for further clarification and improvement of and changes if needed to the proposed indicators on AMR, through discussion in corresponding Technical Committees, and requested further informal consultations with Members on these AMR output and outcome indicators;
- w) welcomed Management’s confirmation that the additional resources provided for FAO’s work on the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and on the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget of USD 1 million each remained ring-fenced in the base budgets of the related divisions<sup>7</sup>; and
- x) recommended the Council consider approval of the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* following the provision of the additional information by FAO Management, as requested by Members, prior to the 164<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council.

### III. Provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework<sup>8</sup>

#### 7. The Committee:

- a) stressed the importance of aligning FAO’s Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030 and measuring results through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators;
- b) highlighted the importance of measuring the impact of FAO’s contribution to the SDGs and other progress at national, regional and global level and lessons learned for adjusting policies and programmes;
- c) acknowledged the crucial role of scientific and evidence-based normative work of FAO and welcomed Management’s commitment to increase the visibility of the Organization’s normative work in the Strategic Framework;
- d) noted increasing global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergencies such as the desert locust outbreaks, increasing food insecurity, malnutrition and obesity and requested lessons learned from these crises to be incorporated in the further development of the framework;
- e) highlighted the importance of the Strategic Framework in setting direction for the Organization’s long-term work and welcomed the proposal to include priority areas linked to global challenges, and anchored in the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs;
- f) recognized that the postponement of the Regional Conferences impacted the development of the Strategic Framework;
- g) reiterated that formal input, particularly priorities established by the Regional Conferences were crucial elements for the development of the Strategic Framework and, hence, must be taken into account in further developing the Strategic Framework;
- h) underlined the need for a formal, inclusive and transparent process for the development of a substantive, Member-owned Strategic Framework;

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/na421en/na421en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> For IPPC, the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP); and for food safety scientific advice, the Food Systems and Food Safety division (ESF)

<sup>8</sup> PC 128/2; PC 128/2 Sup.1

- i) noted the lack of substance in the *Provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework* and underlined the need for further developing the content of the Strategic Framework in close consultation with Members;
- j) stressed the importance of balancing normative work, risk and crises management and investments within the Organization;
- k) welcomed the focus of the proposed adjustments to FAO's organigramme on an Organization which was more fit for purpose, efficient, effective and innovative and was strengthening coordination and collaboration while avoiding silos and duplication of work;
- l) underlined the importance of synchronizing the proposed organizational adjustments with the strategic framework, and underlined the importance of the relationship between the long-term strategic framework and proposed organizational changes;
- m) stressed the importance of strengthening regional and national offices in particular with regard to the implementation of the Repositioning UN development system;
- n) reaffirmed the importance of an inclusive consultation process with Members in the different steps in developing the Strategic Framework;
- o) highlighted the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders and the significance of collaboration among all stakeholders, including the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs);
- p) looked forward to formal consultations, as well as informal consultations, on the substance of FAO's new Strategic Framework with broad involvement of FAO Members, external experts, partner organizations and staff;
- q) requested further information on the theory of change and the change management strategy be provided as a first draft for consultation with Members in September 2020; and
- r) noted the information provided in Annexes 2 and 3 and requested a further refinement of the roadmap for consultation on the FAO Strategic Framework provided in Annex 1 with more regular consultations with Members.

#### **IV. Evaluation of FAO's support to Zero Hunger (SDG2)<sup>9</sup>**

##### **8. The Committee:**

- a) welcomed the first phase of this evaluation and progress made;
- b) underlined the complexity of the evaluation that covered such an extensive ground;
- c) welcomed Management's response and supported actions already taken in response to the evaluation's recommendations;
- d) appreciated FAO's role and contributions at the global level, noted significant progress made by FAO aligning its Country Programming Framework (CPF) guidelines within the UN Development System and further noted the need for FAO to transform its strategic framework, structures, delivery mechanisms, partnership approaches and programmes in order to better support countries to achieve SDG2;
- e) appreciated FAO's focus on the entire food system, to account for all the value chains that were part of the agriculture and food systems, including the mechanisms of commercialization and insertion to international value chains;
- f) stressed the importance of partnerships with other UN agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) among others, in order to take advantage from the comparative advantages of each agency to bolster income in agriculture, especially for women and young farmers;
- g) recognized the importance of FAO's role as a knowledge hub providing advice on evidence-based and proven sustainable food and agriculture approaches so that Members can be provided with possible solutions, according to their contexts, to achieve SDG2, among others;
- h) underlined the recommendations to particularly support countries in conflict, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs);

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<sup>9</sup> PC 128/3; PC 128/3 Sup.1

- i) highlighted that the reform of the UN Development System was an opportunity for FAO to further strengthen operational and programmatic capacities for quality and growth of assistance to Members' needs on the ground and at national level;
- j) concurred with the evaluation conclusion that the simultaneous use of Strategic Objectives (SOs) and the SDGs produced a degree of confusion, and requested that the next Strategic Framework be fully aligned with the SDGs;
- k) highlighted the need to give due attention to inherent trade-offs in achieving SDG2, as well as other SDGs, and the importance of supporting countries to manage risks and attract investment in implementing the SDGs including through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative;
- l) supported Management's recommendation for evaluation to look at the critical roles of natural resources and ecosystems, climate change, biotechnology, partnerships, including public-private partnerships, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and a more concrete recommendation on country needs;
- m) looked forward to receiving the results of the second phase of the evaluation at its 129<sup>th</sup> Session; and
- n) recognized that un-earmarked voluntary contributions could promote an effective and balanced programmatic approach and boost FAO's comparative advantages to achieve Zero Hunger.

## **V. Follow-up Report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the Eradication of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (SO1)<sup>10</sup>**

9. The Committee welcomed the evaluation, and:
  - a) welcomed the significant progress made by the Organization in implementing the agreed Management response as well as in addressing the four recommendations of the evaluation;
  - b) highlighted especially the broadening of the range of partners covered in the results framework of SO1; strengthening evidence-based policy assistance, including through policy effectiveness analysis in 25 countries under the FAO-EU Food and Nutrition Security Impact, Resilience, Sustainability, and Transformation (FIRST) Programme; developing new and enhanced data tools, knowledge products, advocacy and policy guidance notes, utilizing pathways from agriculture and food systems to better diets and nutrition, providing particular attention to gender equality and strengthening of advisory and advocacy channels through intra- and inter-Parliamentary dialogues;
  - c) urged the Organization to redesign its Strategic Framework and its Strategic Objectives in alignment with the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs;
  - d) stressed the need for strengthening capacity and capabilities at country level to provide evidence-based policy support to governments and development partners to achieve the SDG2 targets;
  - e) underlined the need for improved data collection at country level;
  - f) emphasized the focus on a food system approach to achieve food security and to address malnutrition in all its forms by supporting healthy diets for all and making affordable food available for all, as well as strengthening efforts to make food production and consumption more aligned to sustainable development;
  - g) stressed the importance of strengthening partnerships with the private sector in order to build effective value chains;
  - h) highlighted the need to redesign FAO governance at country level and for strengthening coordination with the UN Country Teams and other agencies, within the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, as well as with the RBAs;
  - i) welcomed intensifying attention to achieving healthy diets through sustainable food systems;

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<sup>10</sup> PC 128/4



- j) encouraged the Organization to avoid fragmentation at country level through common understanding of problems and solutions based on scientific evidence and sound data, information and analysis, inclusive governance mechanisms and stakeholder coordination, and coherent frameworks for policy investments as well;
- k) recognized the pivotal role of Parliamentarians in achieving Zero Hunger and fighting malnutrition and emphasized, in this respect, the need to increase Parliamentary Alliances;
- l) noted FAO's contributions to the SDGs and in particular to SDG2, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and the development of the FAO Strategy and Vision for FAO's Work on Nutrition provided new concerted efforts to work towards more sustainable food systems, which provided additional entry points for accelerating FAO's contribution to achieve multiple SDGs; and
- m) reiterated the need for using agreed UN language and concepts in FAO documents.

## VI. Evaluation of FAO's Statistical Work <sup>11</sup>

10. The Committee welcomed the timely and thorough Evaluation of FAO's Statistical Work, and:
- a) highlighted the importance and critical role of the Organization's statistical work; and supported the recommendation to allocate more core resources to FAO's statistical work from 2022 onwards;
  - b) noted that this was an assessment of FAO's statistical contribution to agricultural and rural development and food and nutrition security from 2012 to June 2019, welcomed the initiatives taken by Management since then to achieve a more coherent, productive, efficient and timely statistical system, as well as the measures proposed in the Management Response to further improve FAO's statistical work, but noted with concern that several problems in the coordination and governance of statistical work still remained;
  - c) requested further information to clarify the coordination of statistical work with regard to the proposed organizational changes, reporting lines within the Organization and relationship with new initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative;
  - d) welcomed the assurance of Management that the governance of FAO statistical activities would be improved to strengthen the oversight and enhance relevance, coherence and quality standards of all of its statistics, and looked forward to considering a proposal for this at its 130<sup>th</sup> Session;
  - e) requested that the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's Statistical Work be taken into account in the framework of the proposed organizational adjustments;
  - f) noted a draft strategy for FAO Statistics had been prepared and requested that the strategy be improved to reflect the evaluation findings and the Management Response, and requested more consultation with Members;
  - g) welcomed FAO's coordinating role and methodological work on the SDGs which had raised its profile in the international statistical community and increased awareness on national standards;
  - h) stressed the need to further involve Members in the refinement and update of the SDG indicators under FAO's custodianship and looked forward to further informal consultations;
  - i) stressed the importance of increasing the coverage of statistical capacity-development initiatives to enable countries to collect, produce and disseminate accurate, reliable and timely statistics, to increase the use of statistical information, including gender-disaggregated data, in decision-making and to enable transparent and accurate reporting on the SDG indicators;
  - j) recognized the importance of Strategic Plans for Agricultural and Rural Statistics (SPARS) and their integration in National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) for the development of statistics and the need for decentralized offices to systematically contribute to the further development and implementation of relevant SPARS/NSDS at country level;

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<sup>11</sup> PC 128/5; PC 128/5 Sup.1; PC 128/5 Sup.2

- k) stressed the need to further involve Members in the development of the strategy and requested further informal consultations;
- l) highlighted the importance of FAO's statistical work at country level and noted with concern that resources available to FAO's statistical work were not commensurate with its capacity-development objectives, particularly to support implementation of the SDG indicators at national level, and recommended increasing resources for the statistical capacity-development work especially at regional and country level;
- m) looked forward to the detailed assessment of staffing and other resources currently dedicated to FAO's statistical activities, as well as data system gaps, so as to identify the most appropriate funding sources, modalities and allocations; and
- n) noted that there was no forum for Members to regularly discuss statistical issues in FAO and looked forward to receiving regular updates on FAO's statistical work through informal consultations and at the Programme Committee sessions.

## **VII. Enhancing FAO's capacity to evaluate contributions at country level: Proposal for Strengthening Evaluation in Decentralized Offices<sup>12</sup>**

11. The Committee:
  - a) welcomed the proposal by the Office of Evaluation (OED) for enhancing FAO's capacity to evaluate contributions at the country level and took note of the Management observation;
  - b) highlighted the need for strengthening evaluation capacities in regional and national offices and ownership at national level;
  - c) recommended that the Programme Committee consider how to strengthen governance and oversight of FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) at its 129<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup> Sessions;
  - d) welcomed the aim of the proposal to develop evaluation capacities at regional and country levels, to enhance learning from evaluations for improved performance at the country level, to respond to the new context of enhanced country-focused accountability and the Repositioning of the UN development system, and to promote the ownership of programme results and evaluations by the countries;
  - e) recommended that FAO's CPF reflect on lessons learned from decentralized evaluations;
  - f) noted the proposed phased approach and underlined the importance of maintaining independence and quality of evaluations;
  - g) welcomed the proposed creation of Evaluation Teams in Regional Offices, composed of out-posted OED staff, that would oversee and support evaluation activities in the regions and countries;
  - h) welcomed Management's assurance that the proposal can be financed within existing resources, including through the Evaluation Trust Fund;
  - i) looked forward to receiving a summary of the results of *post hoc* assessment of evaluations at the Programme Committee; and
  - j) recommended the proposal as contained in the document PC 128/6, and looked forward to reviewing the draft Evaluation Policy covering both the centralized and decentralized evaluation functions at a future session.

## **VIII. Progress Report on the preparation for the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) World Food Systems Summit<sup>13</sup>**

12. The Committee:
  - a) commended the Secretary-General on his initiative to convene a Food Systems Summit in 2021 as a key event in catalysing increased and more coordinated efforts to ensure that food systems deliver as a potential entry point to accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs;

<sup>12</sup> PC 128/6; PC 128/6 Sup.1

<sup>13</sup> PC 128/7

- b) acknowledged the lead role that the Organization would need to play in supporting the Summit's preparatory process, *inter alia*, proposal for leading the knowledge and policy dimension, supporting dialogues to enhance the science-policy interface, and in developing the capacities of food systems stakeholders to identify, design and scale-up coordinated initiatives to catalyse meaningful food systems transformation, as appropriate, according to local contexts and capacities;
- c) acknowledged the recent efforts of FAO, through the development of more holistic strategies and initiatives, to promote a more systemic delivery of FAO's support to sustainable food systems;
- d) requested that preparation for the Summit be transparent and inclusive, and stressed the need of involvement of all stakeholders, governments, private sector, civil society, producer organizations, farmers organizations and academia in the Summit;
- e) highlighted the need for strengthening the involvement of Members and welcomed the creation of the "Group of Friends", which would allow Members to have a stronger input into the formal governance structure to feed into the preparations for the Summit;
- f) appreciated further update on the governance of the Summit, especially the formation of its secretariat and underlined strengthening of the more prominent role of FAO, and well as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in preparations for the Summit;
- g) noted with concern that the date and place of the Summit had not yet been confirmed, and recalled the offer from the Government of Italy to host this Summit in Rome;
- h) noted the importance of the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in this regard to feed into the Summit, especially the development of "Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition" and the "Policy Convergence Process on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that enhance Food Security and Nutrition which would lead to a set of policy recommendations";
- i) underlined the action and solution-oriented approach of the Summit with high level political commitment and requested the Organization to provide analysis of the proposed action tracks in the light of their support to the implementation and achievement of the SDGs, especially with the Decade of Action of Agenda 2030;
- j) requested to provide broader guidance on the opportunities that countries and their development partners via partnerships can use for amplifying the impact of the Summit;
- k) stressed the need for a holistic, systemic, scientific and evidence-based approach for the outcomes of the Summit and, in this regard, welcomed the establishment of a Scientific Group, which should include broad representation of all regions;
- l) recognized that a food systems approach would encompass trade-offs in order to ensure available, affordable and accessible safe and nutritious food for all while limiting impact on climate change and promoting biodiversity, strengthening value chains, promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and better livelihoods for farmers, and empowering women and youth;
- m) acknowledged the inclusion of COVID-19 consequences and its impact in the preparation of the logistics and the content of the Summit, especially with regard to the resilience of global food systems and capacity to withstand current and future crises;
- n) emphasized the importance of the RBAs and their Members having a significant role in supporting the entire Summit process, including the pre-Summit and Summit follow-up, collaborating closely with the Special Envoy;
- o) stressed the need for strong coordination between FAO, IFAD and WFP, including coordinated joint messaging, and all the international organizations working to support food systems transformations and achieve SDG2; and highlighted the importance of focusing on the SDG targets to facilitate this coordination;
- p) invited the membership of the RBAs to emphasise the importance and the goals of the Summit in common statements across their Governing Bodies; and
- q) requested that this item become a standard item on the Agenda of the Programme Committee, and looked forward to a further progress report be presented to the 129<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee.

## IX. Progress Report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative <sup>14</sup>

### 13. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the Organization's efforts to improve the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) action plan through development and use of the HIHI Geospatial Platform and the Big Data Lab; and encouraged Management to train Members to access and use the HIHI Geospatial Platform;
- b) welcomed the alignment of the HIHI with the FAO Charter mandates, the core objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the key objectives of the reform of the UN development system;
- c) appreciated that Members would benefit from access to the platform and from the ability to combine their own data with data contained on the data platform and encouraged the Organization to make the data accessible to all Members;
- d) raised concerns regarding data protection and looked forward to reviewing FAO's protocol on the use and protection of data;
- e) welcomed the HIHI as an innovative and efficient way to support Members' national planning priorities for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs;
- f) noted that an Organization-wide support framework had been put in place through the implementation of multi-level task forces for each country;
- g) appreciated collaboration between FAO Regional and Country Offices, UN Resident Coordinators, Country Teams, Rome-based Agencies and other stakeholders in implementing the Initiative;
- h) noted that full-scale implementation with 15 countries was underway and noted that approximately 20 countries, including middle-income countries with areas that had high poverty rates, had expressed interest in participating as both beneficiaries and donors;
- i) highlighted that enhancing country ownership and leadership was a fundamental objective of the Initiative;
- j) noted that the Organization had invited more than 60 countries to become contributor countries in the Initiative to provide material support, whether as donor or as contributor of in-kind support services;
- k) noted that the initial budget neutral proposal called for additional budgetary allocations in response to the growing number of countries adhering to the Initiative, given the additional 5 countries moving in to status of food crises, and to the expansion of the HIHI Geospatial Platform to all countries in the world;
- l) noted that the Big Data Lab was also supporting the response to COVID-19;
- m) stressed the need, through the HIHI Monitoring and Evaluation dashboard, for adequate ground-level monitoring to strengthen coordination and promote proactive intervention to address bottlenecks and impediments;
- n) encouraged adaptation to local dynamics, to share best local practices and promote national ownership;
- o) recommended inclusion of the HIHI matchmaking approach to partnership-building in FAO's partnership framework;
- p) noted that ownership of the initiative lay with Members, whereas the Organization's role would be to promote and facilitate science-based evidence and donor-recipient matchmaking;
- q) recognized that matchmaking was the result of dialogue with governments, donors and local stakeholders from all sectors, on a voluntary basis, with the support of the regional, subregional, and country offices and UN Resident Coordinators;
- r) reiterated that the HIHI had clear and objective criteria for country selection and noted that the list of selected countries would be expanded according to the defined criteria and would take emerging crises, such as the impact of COVID-19, into consideration in the selection process; and

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<sup>14</sup> PC 128/8

- s) looked forward to further updates on the Initiative at forthcoming sessions of the Programme Committee.

## **X. Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors<sup>15</sup>**

14. The Committee:

- a) reviewed the draft 2020-21 Action Plan for the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors;
- b) welcomed FAO's work on biodiversity since the approval of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and welcomed the progress made in its implementation;
- c) supported FAO's involvement in the preparatory work of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and highlighted its role in the Inter-agency Task Force mandated with the preparation of the Biodiversity Summit, called by the Secretary-General, scheduled to take place on 22-23 September 2020;
- d) noted that gender was not addressed sufficiently and requested that an action be added dedicated to gender and data collection;
- e) recalled the importance of including in the Action Plan all activities proposed by Members in the Strategy;
- f) welcomed comments made by Management in response to issues discussed, especially with regard to capacity development for developing countries and economies in transition, including actions relevant to access and benefit sharing;
- g) stressed the importance of mobilization of new and additional resources for mainstreaming biodiversity;
- h) stressed the need for the Technical Committees on Fisheries (COFI), Forestry (COFO) and Agriculture (COAG) to review the draft Action Plan, as mandated by the Council at its 163<sup>rd</sup> Session, before reviewing the draft Action Plan in the Programme Committee;
- i) stressed the need for a participatory and inclusive consultation process, looked forward to further discussion on the development on the Action Plan and requested that informal consultations with Members be held in support of the formal process; and
- j) recommended that the implementation period of the Action Plan would be extended to three years, starting from its approval by the Council.

## **XI. Update on the Work Plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding for Antimicrobial Resistance<sup>16</sup>**

15. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update on the Work Plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR);
- b) expressed appreciation for the Work Plan's five interrelated focus areas and the One Health approach as the key principle;
- c) requested that the forthcoming Work Plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding be developed following a consultative process with the membership of the Tripartite organizations and underlined that its lifespan should be defined in accordance with the complexity and broadness of the areas covered;
- d) stressed the need for FAO to focus on supporting countries in implementing their National Action Plans and capacity building at national level and reiterated the request made at the 127<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee for "more detailed information about the development of a data platform for antimicrobial resistance related to food and agriculture, including the expected timeframes and funding";

<sup>15</sup> PC 128/9

<sup>16</sup> PC 128/10

- e) reiterated the need to increase awareness of public and policy makers while acknowledging that awareness and behavioural change should result from a mutual collaboration involving science, policymakers, media, private sector and other stakeholders as well as the public;
- f) recognized the importance of addressing initiatives to optimize the use of antimicrobials, in an effort to avoid the non-responsible use of them, which could pose a threat to human health, food security and nutrition;
- g) recalled that the 163<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council invited COAG and COFI in their upcoming sessions to provide guidance for a new Action Plan of FAO for AMR 2021-2025, building on lessons learned and supported by inclusive consultations with Members;
- h) invited COAG and COFI to take into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and emphasized that it was essential to include strengthened animal health planning to improve infection prevention and control and lower the risk of animal diseases including zoonotic diseases in it;
- i) recalled the decision of the 163<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council on establishing strategic result framework indicators for AMR, and expressed the need for further clarification and improvement of and changes if needed to the proposed indicators on AMR, through discussion in corresponding Technical Committees, and requested further informal consultations with Members on these AMR output and outcome indicators;
- j) requested Management provide further information on the positioning of FAO's work on AMR in the new proposed FAO structure and in the context of the Joint FAO/WHO Centre;
- k) requested further updates taking into consideration the reports of COAG and COFI at future sessions of the Programme Committee;
- l) highlighted the need for further innovative use of resources, including expanding partnerships with other relevant UN agencies and IFIs to leverage additional investment;
- m) underlined the need to avoid duplication of activities undertaken by other actors such as Codex and its Ad hoc Codex Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance; and
- n) took note of the latest developments in the implementation of the UN Interagency Coordination Group (IACG) recommendations, in particular the possibility of establishing a Global Leaders Group on AMR and the Independent Panel on Evidence for Action Against AMR for which feedback from Members had been requested by the Tripartite organizations.

## **XII. Progress on efforts for the Eradication of *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR)<sup>17</sup>**

### **16. The Committee:**

- a) welcomed the progress on efforts to eradicate *Peste des Petits Ruminants* (PPR), within the partnership between FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and noted that PPR was a fast spreading viral disease that deeply affected the food security and livelihoods of millions of the world's poorest rural families;
- b) acknowledged that the control and subsequent eradication of PPR could contribute significantly to achieving several SDGs and raised concerns about the progress made in the eradication of PPR and highlighted the aim to eradicate PPR in 198 countries by 2030;
- c) appreciated the support provided by FAO, OIE and partners for the production of PPR thermos-tolerant vaccines and capacitating laboratories, as well as the sero-surveillance and vaccination carried out in several countries as important steps to advancing the PPR eradication;
- d) appreciated the Organization's work and key role in animal health protection, stressed the need to strengthen FAO's work in this area, increase its visibility and awareness on a global scale to mobilize resources from donors and development partners;

<sup>17</sup> PC 128/11

- e) recognized the potential increase in the funding gap resulting from the COVID-19 crises and appreciated FAO's efforts in seeking more affordable solutions to mobilize resources, including through partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders; and
- f) encouraged Management to reach out to review progress as recommended in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (April 2015) during the FAO-OIE International Conference on PPR, and Members especially those from infected countries, as well as other non-state actors to commit and invest more resources towards PPR eradication by 2030.

### **XIII. The GFFA 2020's call upon FAO's Governing Bodies "to support a process" for "the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture"<sup>18</sup>**

#### **17. The Committee:**

- a) welcomed the initiative as well as the provided document and the additional Information Note relating to the establishment of this proposed platform with further clarification of the platform's role and position within the governing structure of FAO;
- b) highlighted that the establishment of this proposed platform would further promote application and availability of digital technology globally and underlined the need to make digital technology and innovations available at all levels and to all, especially in countries with less technological development, to smallholders and family farmers;
- c) highlighted the importance of the ownership of big data;
- d) underlined that the proposed platform should be established under FAO's mandate and institutional framework and subject to its rules, stressed the need to have regional representativeness in the inter-governmental group, which should reflect regional balance, and requested further clarification of the rotation mechanism of this group as well as the relationship between FAO and the inter-governmental group;
- e) underpinned that the aim of setting up this platform is to: promote coordination and strengthen the linkages between international *fora* for agriculture and those for the digital economy to increase the awareness of the international community on specific issues of the application of digital technologies in the sectors of food and agriculture; support governments with policy recommendations, best practices, and voluntary guidelines; improve the availability and accessibility of digital technology and innovations by closing the gap in availability and accessibility of digital technologies and innovations between all stakeholders and contributing to more sustainable food systems;
- f) appreciated that the establishment within the FAO structure would provide day-to-day operational and administrative support to the platform's activities and requested further information and clarification on the incorporation of the platform and coordination within the Organization as well as how FAO Governing Bodies would be involved;
- g) stressed that the hosting of such a platform should not result in the creation of an autonomous legal entity nor a new FAO Governing Body but, rather, in a flexible, light, inclusive and voluntary coordination mechanism supported by the Organization while complying with its regulations, rules and procedures;
- h) stressed the need for funding of the platform through voluntary contributions; the need to establish a mechanism to periodically monitor and evaluate the targeting of funds to support specific projects, and requested more information on the sustainability of the funding for the platform;
- i) stressed the need for capacity building and training of users, especially of small holders, family farmers and medium-sized farmers, and farmer's organizations and associations in the efficient use of digital technologies and innovation to improve access and protect their data ownership rights, in the access and use of digital technologies and innovation to improve the application of new knowledge, and highlighted in this regard specific needs of women and youth;
- j) highlighted the need for further outreach and awareness raising to all stakeholders, especially those with significant gaps in the use and access to digital technologies;

<sup>18</sup>JM 2020.1/3; Information Note 1

- k) underlined the necessity of involvement of all relevant stakeholders including private sector, civil society and other related stakeholders in the platform, including in its funding; and
- l) recommended the Council to approve the recommendation that the proposed platform be called the “International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture”.

#### **XIV. Update on COVID-19 and its consequences for food security and food systems<sup>19</sup>**

##### 18. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update and the Organization’s early response to the crisis;
- b) expressed appreciation for the Organization’s continuous assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, in particular on trade, value chains, food availability and accessibility, and in providing evidence-based policy analyses and recommendations at country level;
- c) appreciated that the Organization had convened high-level meetings at global, regional and sub-regional levels to encourage Members to work in tandem to overcome the challenges of the pandemic;
- d) welcomed the Organization’s analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on food expenditures and agricultural imports, the classification of countries based on the degree of exposure as well as the intermediate inputs, food capital, labour and agricultural exports;
- e) noted that the COVID-19 crisis had highlighted the importance of the global food markets, based on rules agreed by WTO Members, for the resilience of food systems and that global food markets cannot function without open trade channels;
- f) stressed the need for governments to take commensurate action to ensure that food supply chains function without disruption;
- g) noted that the COVID-19 crisis had highlighted the importance of strengthening the resilience and sustainability of food systems at regional, national and local levels, in addition, open market and supply chain connectivity, were essential to ensure continuous flow of food, products and inputs needed for sustainable food production at all levels;
- h) stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic had hit the world at a time of already immense global challenges and underlined the need to tackle all food security and nutrition dimensions of this crisis, especially considering that food security and food systems were already under strain caused by conflict, natural disaster, climate change, and pests and plagues on a transcontinental scale, such as desert locust;
- i) encouraged FAO together with WFP and IFAD, to work across sectors and borders and to coordinate within the UN both to mitigate the immediate impacts and to reshape and restore food systems so that they support healthy diets for all, make affordable food available for all, and strengthen efforts to make food production and consumption more aligned to sustainable development;
- j) underlined, in addressing the COVID-19 crisis, the need to cooperate within the RBAs and the UN in order to work together across sectors and borders to mitigate the short- and long-term impacts of the pandemic;
- k) noted with concern that actors in all parts of the food system had been impacted by this pandemic and that deep global economic shocks caused by COVID-19 had the potential to affect both food supply and demand, which would be experienced at different points in time, and would impact cash flow and financial liquidity of producers, small and medium agribusinesses to financial institutions, due to inhibited production capacity, limited market access, loss of remittances, lack of employment, and unexpected medical costs;
- l) noted with concern that all actors along the agriculture and food systems had been impacted by this pandemic and that the ongoing global economic recession caused by COVID-19 could affect in different levels both food supply and demand;

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<sup>19</sup> JM 2020.1/4



- m) encouraged countries to provide safety nets and social protection for affected smallholders and rural actors in countries impacted by COVID-19;
- n) stressed the need for governments to: take commensurate action to support people in need, including investments in tools that could enhance crisis response now and in the future production, marketing and distribution as essential services everywhere; ensure the protection of workers and keep trade corridors open within and among nations; expand real time food security systems; ensure relief and stimulus packages reach the most vulnerable; and strengthen social protection systems, in particular the most vulnerable groups, mainly elderly and disabled, as well as women and youth;
- o) emphasized the importance of the Organization's ongoing work with the UN Country Teams and other agencies, within the reform of the United Nations development system, especially the Rome-based Agencies;
- p) highlighted the urgency of simultaneously accelerating resources in sustainable food systems, including restoring broken food systems and maintaining food systems functioning, in reducing food loss and waste and in resilient systems;
- q) called for the Organization to increase work in data analytics and data collection including Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) activities as well as surveillance capacity at country level and emphasized FAO's policy-making role to support countries in mitigating the COVID-19 impact and build agriculture sector resilience;
- r) stressed the importance of the One Health approach to avoid future crises caused by the spread of zoonotic diseases;
- s) stressed the importance of mobilizing necessary resources and managing the COVID-19 related risks facing FAO's programme of work, including the risk that resource mobilization may be disrupted, as well as working with Members to anticipate and address emerging threats to food supply and food security and nutrition;
- t) underlined FAO's role in the broader UN system in analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic, monitoring and sharing lessons learned, at the global, regional and national level; and
- u) looked forward to future updates on FAO's work in tackling the COVID-19 crisis.

## **XV. Update on FAO's response to the Desert Locust upsurge<sup>20</sup>**

### **19. The Committee:**

- a) acknowledged the essential role the Organization was playing in the fight to control locust upsurges;
- b) welcomed the update provided by Management on the ongoing situation of the upsurge in additional countries that were affected or at risk of locusts and complimented the Organization for the excellent work done until now;
- c) appreciated the Director-General's advocacy role in leading crisis response efforts, personally engaging with other UN agencies and resource partners including new ones;
- d) noted with concern that the current situation was the worst situation faced by countries in several decades and underlined the need to step-up efforts and funding;
- e) appreciated the Organization's quick response and anticipatory action in mobilizing internal resources to augment affected governments capacities to scale up their control and survey operations to contain the pest;
- f) highlighted that increased locust activity could result in severe food insecurity in affected areas, recognizing that in view of their transboundary nature the risk of desert locust migration to other countries raised further concerns;
- g) appreciated the Organization's efforts to implement the recommendations of the Multilateral Evaluation of the 2003-05 Desert Locust Campaign as well as the gains achieved under the Organization's Strategic Objective 5 "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises" especially by adopting an anticipatory approach combining locust control with livelihood safeguarding operations;

<sup>20</sup> PC 128/INF/2

- h) recognized that surveillance and monitoring tools used in assessments were essential for FAO's quick response in addressing this global challenge;
- i) noted with satisfaction that over USD 140 million had been mobilized since the launch of the Desert Locust Crisis Appeal for Rapid Response and Anticipatory Action, but noted with concern the significant shortfall in funds needed to address this upsurge as well;
- j) encouraged FAO to continue efforts in resource mobilization, in particular, noted with concern that, short of additional contributions, the Organization's efforts in the Horn of Africa may have to stop in September;
- k) noted that the Organization's Desert Locust response would need to continue through December 2020, sustaining control efforts in the Greater Horn of Africa, scaling up operations in Southwest Asia and preparing for a potential upsurge in West Africa and the Sahel while safeguarding livelihoods and quick starting recovery efforts, with continued emphasis on support to national surveillance and control capacities;
- l) welcomed the fact that an impact assessment was underway and looked forward to completion of the cost-benefit study on potentially avoided costs due to the early control actions benefits in terms of saved harvests and consequent reduced need for expensive humanitarian assistance;
- m) underlined that lessons learned and best practices be used in programmes for the prevention of locust spread to other countries and regions;
- n) stressed the importance of developing regional response action plans at country level and highlighted the need for training to combat desert locust crises;
- o) encouraged FAO to increase international cooperation and coordination in joint efforts and funding to fight desert locust and avoid this type of plague and its reappearance;
- p) welcomed the launch of a real time evaluation of the locust response in order to draw lessons from the first 40 days of operations and further strengthen the quality of response in the coming period;
- q) recognized the commitment to transparency and information sharing on the forecast and response with resource partners and affected and at-risk governments, through a publicly accessible dashboard (<http://www.fao.org/locusts/response-overview-dashboard/en/>) and a number of member briefings in various locations, including monthly meetings jointly organized by FAO and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as frequent bilateral meetings with various partners; and
- r) appreciated the regular briefings provided to Members and looked forward to receiving updated information at the 129<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee.

## **XVI. Update on Sustainable Forest Management<sup>21</sup>**

20. The Committee welcomed the Update on Sustainable Forest Management, and:
- a) noted the key findings of the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2020, including progress made in light of the SDG indicators;
  - b) requested FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts and science and evidence-based linkages in flagship publications, such as SOFO;
  - c) noted that although the rate of deforestation had decreased substantially in past years it remained a source of concern as it may not meet the Agenda 2030 targets;
  - d) highlighted the importance of the Organization's role in achieving sustainable development and its contribution to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030;
  - e) noted the initiative "Transforming food systems to feed the planet without deforestation" and requested that Members be consulted on its development;
  - f) highlighted the need to halt deforestation in order to achieve sustainable forest management, sustainable food systems and prevent the loss of biodiversity;
  - g) noted that deforestation, forest and environmental degradation posed a threat to sustainable development resulting in high vulnerability of the livelihoods of many communities;

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<sup>21</sup> PC 128/INF/3

- h) encouraged FAO to continue to support Members to prevent, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation, and to enhance FAO's work and capacity in the area of prevention, prediction and control forest fires, dust and haze and emergency issues;
- i) stressed the need to mainstream biodiversity conservation into forest management practices and for sustainable land use;
- j) encouraged FAO to support Members in integrating global and regional forestry policies and strategies into relevant national policies and legal frameworks, taking into account countries' priorities and diversities;
- k) noted that appropriate implementation of forest restoration can contribute to the restoration of habitats and ecosystems, and the creation of jobs and income, and was an effective solution to achieve sustainable development through an ecosystem-based approach;
- l) encouraged FAO to explore innovative ways of improving the interconnection of sustainable agriculture and sustainable forest management and development of agroforestry;
- m) noted that 85% of annual delivery came from extra-budgetary resources and highlighted the need for sustainable funding, including from the regular budget;
- n) encouraged FAO to strengthen activities to enhance big data, remote sensing and up-to-date technology to assist Members to better monitor progress of forest coverage;
- o) suggested that COFO review the drivers of the expansion of agricultural land in the light of sustainable forest management;
- p) encouraged FAO to support multidisciplinary and forest quality assessment approaches for the dissemination of best practices in forestry for land management;
- q) highlighted the need for further consultations on the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 and the State of the World's Forests 2020 with Members in the next session of COFO;
- r) suggested an assessment of Global Forest Resources every 2-year instead of a 5-year cycle; and
- s) looked forward to further review by the forthcoming COFO and based on the review an update report in a next session of the Programme Committee.

## **XVII. Tentative Agenda for the 129<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee<sup>22</sup>**

### **21. The Committee:**

- a) took note of the tentative agenda for its 129<sup>th</sup> Session and welcomed the improved presentation and format of the document aligning items by category;
- b) acknowledged that the document presented to the 128<sup>th</sup> Session was a first draft of the Agenda for the next session;
- c) requested inclusion in agenda item, risks posed by COVID-19, in addition to the assessment of its impact on FAO's programme of work;
- d) requested the inclusion of an agenda item on the change management strategy in addition to the Outline of the Strategic Framework and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25;
- e) called for a progress report on the UN Food Systems Summit and FAO's work in food systems transformation, including a review of the proposed action tracks;
- f) acknowledged that agenda items requiring deliberations from Technical Committees would be presented to the Programme Committee for taking into consideration after the meetings of the Technical Committees had been held, ensuring a bottom-up approach;
- g) agreed that, given the evolving circumstances posed by COVID-19, the Committee would hold informal meetings prior to the formal session to consolidate arrangements and finalize the agenda for its 129<sup>th</sup> Session; and
- h) recommended the Programme Committee consider how to strengthen the governance and the oversight of FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) at the 129<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup> Sessions.

<sup>22</sup> PC 128/12

## **XVIII. Progress Report on the implementation of Programme Committee recommendations<sup>23</sup>**

22. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the Progress Report and appreciated it as a useful tool to monitor the status of implementation of the Programme Committee's recommendations;
- b) welcomed the "traffic light system" which clearly demonstrated the status of implementation of recommendations and other improvements in the presentation and format of the document;
- c) noted that the document had appraised Programme Committee recommendations made since its 125<sup>th</sup> Session, welcomed the progress made in closing recommendations of the Programme Committee, and urged the Secretariat to continue efforts to close the remaining outstanding recommendations;
- d) noted that the status of most of the recommendations were ongoing in nature, marked as "orange", while those which were short-term in nature and completed were shown as "green";
- e) requested that action 40 "to improve FAO's performance on gender parity" be marked as ongoing;
- f) emphasized that the bottom-up approach be applied, and requested that technical topics be reviewed first in Technical Committees, recalling, in particular, that action 76 should refer to the need to elaborate an Action Plan on AMR and not a Strategy as included in the next COAG agenda; and
- g) requested action 97 be marked "ongoing" and looked forward to discussion on this action at a future session of the Programme Committee.

## **XIX. Date and place of the next session**

23. The Committee took note of the proposed dates for its 129<sup>th</sup> Session, beginning on the 9<sup>th</sup> with an indicative end date of 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020, and acknowledged that the arrangements and the duration of the session would be established in accordance with the evolving COVID-19 restrictions.

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<sup>23</sup> PC 128/INF/4