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منظمة  
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# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Sixty-fourth Session

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

## Use of the Unspent Balance of the 2018-19 Biennial Appropriation

### Executive Summary

This document presents an updated proposal for the use of the 2018-19 unspent balance of USD 3.6 million, based on the guidance from the Joint Meeting, for review and approval by the Council.

### Suggested action by the Council

The 164th session of the Council is requested to:

- a) approve the use of the unspent balance of the 2018-19 appropriations of USD 3.6 million for the five proposed items presented in *Table 1*;
- b) take note that implementation of the projects for the five proposed one-time uses would be reported to the Finance Committee as part of regular reporting on budgetary performance, and to the governing bodies as part of the Programme Implementation Report 2020-21.

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

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

## Use of the Unspent Balance of the 2018-19 Biennial Appropriation

1. The Conference at its 41st Session in July 2019, authorized the Director-General, notwithstanding Financial Regulation 4.2, to use any unspent balance of the 2018-19 appropriations for one-time uses in 2020-21, based on a proposal to be submitted to and agreed by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, and the Council at their meetings in May-June 2020.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and Finance Committee at its session in June 2020 reviewed Annex 1 of document FC 180/6 (JM 2020.1/2), *Use of the Unspent Balance of the 2018-19 Biennial Appropriation*. It expressed general support for four proposals presented in *Table A-1.1* of Annex 1, namely: 1) Digitalization improvements; 2) Information security and geospatial data; 3) Emergency Operations Centre; and 4) Security and crisis management control facilities.

3. It furthermore stressed the need to strengthen the resilience of global food security and food systems in light of the COVID-19 global crisis. It requested Management to identify appropriate alternative uses of USD 1.3 million proposed for the kitchen facilities upgrade and of USD 0.7 million for “Short-term increase in human resources to meet country-and territory-specific data, analysis and policy support needs”, while prioritizing COVID-19 response, and submit these alternative uses prior to the 164th Session of the Council for review and endorsement.

4. This document presents an updated proposal for the use of the 2018-19 unspent balance of USD 3.6 million, based on the guidance from the Joint Meeting, for Council’s review and approval.

5. The COVID-19 pandemic and its health and socio-economic impacts, combined with the impacts of extreme weather events, pest infestations and other unanticipated events, present a threat to modern food systems unprecedented in modern times. Furthermore, the protection of staff and premises worldwide are key concerns. In this context, five elements for the use of the unspent balance of the 2018-19 appropriation are presented in *Table 1* and further outlined below.

**Table 1: Proposal for use of the 2018-19 unspent balance (USD million)**

Item		Amount in USD
1	<i>New proposal: Global food systems and food security – FAO’s Comprehensive Response to COVID-19</i>	2.0
2	Digitalization improvements	0.6
3	Information security and geospatial data	0.3
4	Emergency Operations Centre	0.2
5	Security and crisis management control facilities	0.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.6</b>

6. FAO has responded quickly and effectively to the onset of the COVID-19 crisis by drawing upon the varied experiences of past food crises to identify the most likely sources of food security and food system disruption that arise through a variety of channels that include financial crises, food shortages, health pandemics, border closings, production shocks and demand collapses, as well as a host of local disruptions.

7. The Organization has established a working model of food systems to identify channels of transmission of crisis, adapted its newly launched geospatial platform to capture and integrate a wide array of relevant real-time information, assessed regions and countries against identified risks, and moved swiftly to engage political leaders with timely policy advice to minimize unintended impacts of policy actions to suppress pandemic or respond to economic recession.

<sup>2</sup> [C 2019/REP](#) paragraph 73

8. FAO is moving swiftly to raise awareness of, and advocate for the basket of country-specific needs among Members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, activate technical support and resources, and mobilize and match experts with projects. In this regard, funds are proposed to be used in support of:

- i. *FAO's Comprehensive Response to COVID-19* designed under a newly established Umbrella Programme for COVID-19, for activities with impact and where efforts could be scaled up, under the following six cross-cutting development priorities: trade, including intraregional trade and food safety standards; poverty reduction, economic inclusion and social protection; preventing pandemics of animal origin through an extended one health approach; boosting the resilience of smallholder for COVID-19 recovery; data, information and analysis; and food systems transformation (**Table 1, item 1, USD 2.0 million**).

9. The importance of moving forward rapidly with a Digital FAO has also been put into stark focus. In this regard, two proposals are put forward to modernize ways of working, enhance agility of staff through collaborative tools, and strengthen IT support to key/priority programmes, as follows:

- ii. modernization and digitalization improvements including purchase of portable devices and encoders for videoconferencing (**Table 1, item 2, USD 0.6 million**); and
- iii. information security and geospatial data storage improvements, including to support the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (**Table 1, item 3, USD 0.3 million**).

10. The need to provide improved, state-of-the art tools for the protection of staff and premises worldwide, as well as to facilitate emergency response and corporate level scaled up emergencies, has also been highlighted in the current context of COVID-19. In this regard, the following two proposals are put forward:

- iv. upgrade the current Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health and Corporate Scaled Up Emergencies to create a full-fledged Emergency Operations Centre (**Table 1, item 4, USD 0.2 million**); and
- v. modernization and enhancement of Security and Crisis Management Control Room and creation of a Crisis Management Room to allow interaction with FAO offices worldwide during crises (**Table 1, item 5, USD 0.5 million**).