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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
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Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

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COUNCIL

Hundred and Sixty-sixth Session

26-30 April 2021

Report of the Joint Meeting of the 130th Session of the Programme Committee and 185th Session of the Finance Committee (22, 23, 25 and 26 March 2021)

Executive Summary

The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees brings to the attention of the Council its findings and recommendations on:

- a) Strategic Framework 2022-31;
- b) Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23;
- c) FAO's response to COVID-19: Building to Transform;
- d) FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme;
- e) Code of Conduct for Voting;
- f) Multilingualism at FAO;
- g) FAO Awards; and
- h) Proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings and recommendations of the Joint Meeting.

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

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Introductory Items

1. The Joint Meeting submitted its Report to the Council.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Ms Imelda Smolčić Nijers (Uruguay) and H.E. (Mr) Hans Hooegeveen (Netherlands), the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, the following representatives of Members were present:

H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina) ¹	Mr Toru Hisazome (Japan)
Ms Lynda Hayden (Australia)	Mr Mohammad Al Shabbar (Jordan) ⁵
Mr Manash Mitra (Bangladesh)	H.E. (Mr) Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino ⁶ (Malaysia)
Mr Rodrigo Estrela de Carvalho (Brazil)	Ms Traoré Halimatou Kone (Mali)
Ms Keva McKennirey (Canada) ²	Mr Benito Santiago Jiménez Sauma (Mexico)
Ms Tamara Villanueva (Chile)	Mr Donald G. Syme (New Zealand)
Mr NI Hongxing (China) ³	Ms Tahirou Rahila Rabiou (Niger)
Mr Haitham Abdelhady Elsayed Elshahat (Egypt)	Mr Denis Cherednichenko (Russian Federation) ⁷
Mr Addisu Melkamu Kebede (Ethiopia) ⁴	Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed Daak (Sudan) ⁸
H.E. (Ms) Céline Jurgensen (France)	H.E. (Ms) Marie-Therese Sarch (United Kingdom)
Mr Heiner Thofern (Germany)	Ms Jennifer Harhigh (United States of America)
Mr Shahin Ghorashizadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran)	Mr Kayoya Masuhwa (Zambia)

3. The Joint Meeting Session was convened virtually on an exceptional basis due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. The Joint Meeting confirmed, pursuant to Rule VII of the Rules of Procedure of the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC), respectively, that they agreed to the suspension of Rule II (5) of the PC Rules of Procedure and Rule II (4) of the Rules of Procedure of the FC, which require that sessions shall be held at the seat of the Organization.
5. The Chairperson informed Members that, should technical connection fail, the meeting would be suspended if the quorum was not reached.
6. The Joint Meeting thanked the Director-General for his comprehensive statement and appreciated his leadership of the Organization in these very unprecedented times of the COVID-19 crisis.

I. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

7. The Joint Meeting took note that, considering the particularly great number of topics on the agenda, and time constraints, the Items 7, 8 and 9 will be revised under Written Correspondence Procedure and, therefore, will proceed directly with the discussion of their preliminary draft conclusions.
8. The Joint Meeting adopted its Agenda.

II. Strategic Framework 2022-31

¹ H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak has been replaced by Mr Guillermo Valentín Rodolico for part of the Session.

² Ms Keva McKennirey was designated to replace Ms Jennifer Fellows.

³ Mr NI Hongxing has been replaced by Mr HUANG Fei for part of the Session.

⁴ Mr Addisu Melkamu Kebede was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Zenebu Tadesse Woldetsadik.

⁵ Mr Mohammad Al Shabbar was designated to replace Mr. Laith Obeidat.

⁶ H.E. (Mr) Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino was designated to replace Mr Muhammad Rudy Khairudin Mohd Nor.

⁷ Mr Denis Cherednichenko was designated to replace Mr Vladimir V. Kuznetsov.

⁸ Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed Daak (Sudan) had been designated to replace Mr Sid Ahmed M. Alamain Hamid Alamain as the representative of Sudan for the remainder of the term of office.

9. The Joint Meeting:
- a) appreciated the inclusive and transparent consultation process in the development of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031;
 - b) took note of the global trends and challenges which informed the review of the Strategic Framework and requested further deliberation to ensure global trends and challenges are covered properly;
 - c) noted with appreciation that the Strategic Framework aligns itself with the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the guiding lens of SDG 1, 2 and 10, which allows FAO to articulate its mandated targets and respective results in alignment with the goals of the UN development system at country level and with partners;
 - d) welcomed the strategic narrative of the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life*, leaving no one behind, to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and FAO's three Global Goals of Members;
 - e) welcomed that the Strategic Framework 2022-2031 builds on the momentum and harmonized transformations already taking place in the Organization, including increased efficiency, streamlining, and innovative approaches; a modular and flexible organizational structure; and initiatives including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme;
 - f) appreciated FAO's support in building resilience to persistent and emerging threats by focusing on timely science- and evidence-based responses, taking into account the three dimensions of the sustainable development, and highlighted the importance of global food supply chains and international trade taking into account the mandate of FAO in this respect;
 - g) acknowledged that the four cross-cutting/cross-sectional "accelerators": (i) technology, (ii) innovation, (iii) data, and (iv) complements (governance, human capital, and institutions), in all interventions with the intent to accelerate impact while minimizing trade-offs, would serve to accommodate a range of transformative solutions and drive change in line with national needs and circumstances;
 - h) reiterated the importance of achieving sustainable agriculture and food systems and as such, recalled that transformation of agriculture and food systems should be encouraged in a coherent manner, as appropriate, according to, and dependent on, national contexts and capacities;
 - i) noted with concern that in the Strategic Framework several concepts and language are used which are not inter-governmentally agreed, and stressed the need for FAO to use multilaterally-agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies, as appropriate, and adjust accordingly the draft Strategic Framework;
 - j) also took note of the introduction of twenty Programme Priority Areas, which reflect FAO's comparative advantages and guide interventions, representing the Organization's strategic contribution towards the SDGs;
 - k) welcomed FAO's cross-cutting themes of gender, youth, and inclusion, as well as indigenous peoples, in the context of promoting a more systematic mainstreaming and operationalization of these issues across all of FAO's work, and emphasized their essential role in achieving 2030 Agenda and leaving no one behind;
 - l) highlighted the importance of the One Health Approach, the Tripartite Partnership and the cooperation with UNEP, and other relevant international organizations, in line with their respective mandates in this respect;
 - m) welcomed the emphasis on strengthening partnerships and collaboration with Members, UN agencies, financial institutions, the private sector, producer organizations, academic and research institutions including the scientific community and civil society, and the Committee on World Food Security;
 - n) recognized the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and its expected outcomes, could support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, especially SDG2, and be considered by Members, as appropriate, through the Governing Bodies⁹;

⁹ [CL165/REP](#) para 10 r)

- o) appreciated the elaboration of elements of a reinvigorated, fit-for-purpose business model as an essential feature of the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, and requested Management to set out the principles that the business model should use to allocate the Regular Budget;
- p) welcomed FAO's commitment to strengthen risk management while also ensuring that the Organization is agile and flexible, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and other known and unknown future challenges in agriculture and food systems;
- q) noted the importance of innovative financing mechanisms and sources to complement traditional funding modalities;
- r) underlined the importance of all forms of innovation, including digitalization, as a driving force in agriculture, environment and food security and nutrition;
- s) supported dissemination of science-proven good practices on technologies to farmers upon the requests of Members and making data driven information available to Members for policy-based decision making, while ensuring protection of data and Intellectual Property Rights;
- t) stressed that responsible investment in agriculture and food systems by the private sector should be promoted in accordance with the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement;
- u) reiterated the strategic and catalytic importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and other technical work of FAO, within the context of FAO's institutional architecture, tailored to country-specific needs, in the efforts for achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda¹⁰; and
- v) looked forward to further deliberation of the Strategic Framework in the upcoming session of the Council and for approval by the Conference.

III. Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23

10. The Joint Meeting welcomed the Medium Term Plan 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23, and:

- a) noted that the Programme and Finance Committees would review the document separately according to their respective mandates, and provide recommendations to the Council;
- b) welcomed the reflection of the strategic direction in the Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work, with its focus on supporting the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*, leaving no one behind, to support the achievement of SDGs and 2030 Agenda;
- c) appreciated the anchoring of the Programme Priority Areas in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which articulate FAO's value-added and comparative advantages, including its normative work, in contributing to medium-term Outcomes and associated SDG targets identified for specific attention by FAO under the *four betters*;
- d) further appreciated the integrated presentation of all sources of funding directed to achieving the SDG targets in focus;
- e) noted with appreciation the maintenance of the increased level of funding for normative work from 2020-21, including for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice programme;
- f) appreciated that the resources for the Technical Cooperation Programme are maintained at a level of 14 percent of the net budgetary appropriation;
- g) recommended the name of the Fisheries Division to be changed to the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division in order to better reflect its responsibilities and work programmes;
- h) noted the proposal for the outputs to be elaborated in the second half of 2021, to ensure a good flow between top-down and bottom-up planning and delivery, and highlighted the importance of being able to measure and monitor progress and oversight;
- i) encouraged efforts by FAO to strengthen the work of Decentralized Offices, and emphasized the need for addressing capacities and systemic administrative issues through enhanced accountability and strengthened internal controls;

¹⁰ [CL165/REP](#), para 10 s)

- j) noted the proposal of resource reallocations to strengthen priorities within a flat nominal budget level, especially in view of prevailing global macroeconomic conditions, and welcomed additional allocations for the Office of the Inspector General and for the Governing Bodies Servicing Division;
- k) highlighted the importance to increasingly leverage innovative funding and financing for investment at scale;
- l) taking into consideration the existing challenges of attracting non-earmarked funding, suggested FAO work closely with Members and other potential funding sources to determine what information and mechanisms could be promoted or adapted to encourage more flexible funding contributions;
- m) reiterated the need for FAO to use multilaterally-agreed concepts and language and give preference to those adopted by FAO Governing Bodies, as appropriate, and adjust accordingly the draft Medium Term Plan 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-23;
- n) highlighted the importance of the three dimensions of sustainable development;
- o) underlined the need to address the three dimensions of sustainable development in a more balanced way;
- p) concerning the proposals to improve FAO's financial health, liquidity and reserves, recommended that consideration of the proposals for incremental funding of the after-service medical coverage past service liability and replenishment of the Working Capital Fund be deferred to a future biennium, and requested Management to continue to explore alternative strategies to address these requirements;
- q) recalled that activities in FAO languages are to be funded from the Regular Budget;
- r) encouraged Members and other partners to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate the implementation of the integrated Programme of Work under the results framework; and
- s) supported the budget level of USD 1,005.6 million at a budget rate of exchange of EUR 1 = USD 1.22, and recommended endorsement by the Council.

IV. FAO's response to COVID-19: Building to Transform

11. The Joint Meeting:

- a) took note that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a source of market uncertainty and of an expected major increase in acute and chronic food insecurity and malnutrition, and congratulated and supported the efforts by FAO for its ongoing advocacy and support of well-functioning agricultural trade and markets in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including through continued monitoring and provision of information on food prices, production, consumption and trade of major commodities;
- b) commended FAO for its timely response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its efforts for preventive actions, collection of data, analysis, humanitarian response and policy assistance for well-functioning food supply chains;
- c) acknowledged that an effective COVID-19 response should go hand in hand with equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination, taking into account the UN Secretary-General's appeal that vaccination is public good;
- d) highlighted the swift response and the results achieved by FAO through the comprehensive COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme and its seven priority areas of work, appreciated the crucial role of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and the Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS) in making decisions informed by timely and valuable data, and stressed the importance of continued efforts to be made for data collection and analysis, especially to focus on monitoring global agricultural products, markets and people in vulnerable situations;
- e) took note that the COVID-19 crisis has compounded the effects of conflicts and other shocks (extreme climatic events, pests, diseases, socio economic crisis, among others), threatening food security and nutrition;

- f) welcomed the ongoing provision by FAO of scientific advice to support food safety standards setting, and appreciated the international collaboration and cooperation that had been strengthened since the onset of the pandemic;
- g) stressed the importance of the One Health approach, and urged FAO, in the context of the Tripartite partnership, to continue its collaboration with UNEP, and with other relevant international organizations, in line with their respective mandates, to ensure that the One Health approach is included in the work of the Organization with a focus on preventing zoonotic diseases; in that regard, noted the ongoing establishment of the One Health High Level Expert Panel and participation of FAO in PREZODE Initiative;
- h) commended FAO's support to the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop a Framework for Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) in agricultural commodities and services in support of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and to improve the Biennial Review reporting on the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Malabo Declaration commitments;
- i) supported the FAO's work to adapt existing emergency and resilience programmes to better respond to emerging needs in the wake of the pandemic, welcomed the progressive shift in FAO COVID-19 response toward the medium and long term programmes, underlining the importance for the recovery to take into account the three pillars of sustainable development;
- j) noted FAO's resource mobilization efforts, which have reached 18 percent of the target, supporting countries facing extreme challenges posed by COVID-19;
- k) commended the active and leading role of FAO in the process of the policy recommendations and actions provided to its Members, drawing lessons learned from relevant experiences, and welcomed strengthened policy and technical assistance support to the countries most in need;
- l) acknowledged the support of the Food Coalition to the FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme for the activation of political and financial support and requested further clarity on their complementarity;
- m) emphasized that the efforts must be jointly undertaken by Members and international organizations to take advantage of existing good practices, and to seek innovative solutions with a view to ensuring sustainability of agriculture and increasing the resilience of agriculture and food systems including through local, regional and global value chains; and
- n) requested regular updates on FAO's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme, including resource mobilization, and additional progress reports on actions taken and results achieved.

V. FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme

12. The Joint Meeting:

- a) noted with appreciation the universal character of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and the proposal to align TCP-funded activities with the new Strategic Framework, regional and national-specific priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the repositioned UN development system;
- b) took note of the information provided regarding the background underpinning the resource distribution between regions and on the criteria for TCP resource allocation on the ground;
- c) underlined the importance of greater clarity and transparency on TCP criteria with regards to the allocations within the region, considering ways to ensure greater uniformity while keeping the required flexibility to respond to regional specificities;
- d) called for further enhanced collaboration on transboundary issues to ensure flexibility related with the share of resources allocated to regional and subregional TCP projects;
- e) welcomed the objectives of the proposed Roadmap for the strategic exercise to refine the criteria of resource allocation and re-imagine the TCP in close consultation with

- Members; requested this exercise to include the review of the criteria for indicative allocations to regions in line with the 35th (Special) Session of FAO Conference¹¹;
- f) requested FAO Management, in consultation with Members, to complete a strategic exercise with the aim to refine, and possibly unify, the criteria of resource allocation, beyond the traditional one of per capita income, and taking into account the specific needs of each region, to be submitted for approval by the 43rd Session of the Conference;
 - g) stressed the need for a performance monitoring system and mechanisms for quality assurance, enhanced transparency, efficiency and accountability of TCP projects; and
 - h) looked forward to a progress report at its next session.

VI. Code of Conduct for Voting

13. The Joint Meeting:

- a) took note of the status of the consultations carried out by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with FAO Members, underlined that these consultations are still on-going and recalled that this is a FAO Member-led exercise; and
- b) commended the ICC's continuing efforts to facilitate consultations to reach a consensus among Members on the contents of the draft Code of Conduct for Voting, to allow the FAO Conference at its 42nd Session to take a decision.

VII. Multilingualism at FAO

14. The Joint Meeting:

- a) noted the comprehensive preliminary analysis on multilingualism at FAO in its transversal dimensions, and solutions for its further enhancement;
- b) reaffirmed the importance of multilingualism as a defining characteristic of the Organization and a core value of the United Nations, which enables Members to participate in FAO's governance on equal footing, and that allows for greater dissemination of the Organization's products and services;
- c) noted that multilingualism is firmly rooted in FAO's Basic Texts, results framework and established policy. Rule XLVIII of the General Rules of the Organization establishes that "Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the languages of the Organization". Thus, all six languages enjoy equal status within FAO, without the distinction of "official" and "working" languages which exists in other multilateral and United Nations institutions;
- d) reaffirmed the importance of ensuring parity and balance in the use of FAO languages;
- e) recalled the concerns expressed in the previous sessions about delay in publications and simultaneous distribution of FAO documents in all languages, as well as insufficient interpretation of meetings;
- f) welcomed the measures introduced by Management to improve the quality and timeliness of publication of papers for meetings of Governing Bodies in all languages, including by strengthening the processes for preparation of documents in the original language in which they are drafted;
- g) welcomed, as a first step, the approach and solutions planned for enhancement of multilingualism at FAO, in particular with regard to increasing the quantum and balance of products and services in FAO languages, including with regard to translation of publications, as well as translation of documents and interpretation for Governing Bodies meetings;
- h) welcomed the additional allocation of USD 0.8 million in the PWB 2022-23, while requesting more information as to the measures planned herewith to strengthen multilingualism;
- i) supported the increase in the provision of products in non-FAO languages in a demand-based approach, without any implications to the Regular Programme budget;

¹¹ [C 2008/REP](#), para 35

- j) stressed the central importance of Human Resources (HR) policies, which boost the multilingual capacity of FAO's workforce, including in the areas of recruitment, promotion and training, and enhanced use of FAO languages by its employees; and requested Management to include in the HR Annual Report, data concerning the linguistic profile of the staff globally, disaggregated by grade, region and department;
- k) encouraged FAO Management to address Members in formal meetings of the Governing Bodies in their native languages, should these be recognized FAO official languages;
- l) looked forward to continued alignment of multilingualism at FAO with efforts in the broader UN system, and welcomed Management's commitment in this regard to timely implement all the recommendations of the associated UN Joint Inspection Unit Report¹², particularly on the adoption of the strategic policy framework for multilingualism, accompanied by administrative and operational guidelines, and appointment of a corporate coordinator for multilingualism; and
- m) recommended that Council request Management for a progress report at its next session, including with regard to a strategic policy framework for multilingualism, HR policies and use of digital innovations and language technologies, and further data on language products and services.

VIII. FAO Awards

15. The Joint Meeting:

- a) welcomed the consultation process carried out by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on defining consistent and financially sustainable conditions for the award of prizes;
- b) took note of the Management proposal in support of the process for a new set of systematic and financially sustainable FAO Awards in order to address Member concerns and inputs;
- c) noted the conceptualization of the new FAO Awards around topics of institutional relevance and strategic importance that would bolster their pertinence, as well as leverage the FAO Brand;
- d) requested to consider to optimize and reduce the number of proposed awards to raise their significance;
- e) appreciated the proposal to maintain those existing awards that are funded entirely by specific Members' contributions;
- f) noted that Management would develop detailed criteria and processes for each new award category, in the spirit of the Conference resolution and based on the current good practices and emphasized the importance of ensuring a transparent process and criteria for selecting award winners;
- g) emphasized the importance of ensuring the proposed new set of FAO Awards is capped at the current level of biennial funding (total USD 125 000, USD 95 000 prize/USD 30 000 travel and per diem) to avoid placing any additional financial burden on the Regular Programme Budget; and
- h) requested Management to further revise the proposal to reflect the areas of emphasis raised by the Joint Meeting prior to its consideration at the 166th Session of the Council.

IX. Proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Fisheries Management

16. The Joint Meeting:

- a) acknowledged the need to ensure that the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) addresses all technical issues in relation to fisheries management in an appropriate manner; and
- b) supported the continuation of the transparent and inclusive consultation process carried out on the proposal to establish a subcommittee on fisheries management.

¹² [JIU/REP/2020/6](#)