Executive summary

In its Report of its 134th Session, the Programme Committee:

1) makes specific recommendations for decision by the Council on: the FAO strategic priorities for food safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31; and the Work Plan of Evaluations 2022-2025 – Update;

2) brings to the attention of the Council for its endorsement, its conclusions regarding: the preparation for the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 - Regional and Technical Priorities; the Real-time evaluation of FAO’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme – Final Report and Management Response; the Evaluation of FAO’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Management Response; the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Support to Zero Hunger (SDG 2); the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme; and the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations; and

3) informs the Council of the Programme Committee’s considerations related to: the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative; the update of statistical tools and data for statistics; the update on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and the UN Statistical Commission; the update on the Governance of FAO’s statistical data and other data activities and their alignment with cross cutting FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights; the update on the development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy; and the update on the action plan for the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031.
Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to:

1) **endorse** the recommendations of the Committee on:
   a) the FAO strategic priorities for food safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31; and
   b) the Work Plan of Evaluations 2022-2025 – Update.

2) **endorse** the conclusions of the Committee on:
   a) the preparation for the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 - Regional and Technical Priorities;
   b) the Real-time evaluation of FAO’s COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme – Final Report and Management Response;
   c) the Evaluation of FAO’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Management Response;
   d) the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Support to Zero Hunger (SDG 2);
   e) the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme; and
   f) the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations.

3) **note** the Committee’s considerations on:
   a) the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative;
   b) the update of statistical tools and data for statistics;
   c) the update on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and the UN Statistical Commission;
   d) the update on the Governance of FAO’s statistical data and other data activities and their alignment with cross cutting FAO policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights;
   e) the update on the development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy; and
   f) the update on the action plan for the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031.

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

Ms Jiani Tian
Secretary, Programme Committee
Tel: +39 06570 53007
Email: Jiani.Tian@fao.org
Introduction

1. The Programme Committee (PC) submitted to the Council the following Report of its Hundred and Thirty-fourth Session.

2. In addition to the Chairperson, H.E. (Ms) Yael Rubinstein (Israel), the following representatives of Members were present:

   - H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina)
   - H.E. (Mr) Fernando José Marroni de Abreu (Brazil)
   - Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada)
   - Mr LI Bo (China)\(^1\)\(^2\)
   - Mr Michel Lévêque (France)\(^3\)
   - H.E. (Ms) Neena Malhotra (India)

3. Iraq was not represented.

I. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

4. The Committee noted that items 5, 6, 13, 14 and 15 will be addressed under a written correspondence procedure, agreed to add an oral briefing on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative under Item 18 - Any Other Matters, and adopted the Provisional Agenda and Timetable for the Session, as amended.

II. Preparation for the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 - Regional and Technical Priorities

5. The Committee welcomed document PC 134/2 Preparation for the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 – Regional and Technical Priorities, presented in line with the established planning and programming cycle.

6. The Committee:

   a) took note of the priorities expressed by the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees during their Sessions in 2022;
   
   b) appreciated efforts to operationalize the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 with regards to the specific conditions, needs and priorities of Members in each region and technical area;
   
   c) noted the overarching themes emerging from the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees including the state of food and agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and agricultural commodity markets in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of conflicts on global food security, addressing climate change, science and innovation, and agricultural trade, amongst others;
   
   d) noted that the consequences on food security of the war in Ukraine were raised by the Technical Committees and some Regional Conferences\(^5\) and that they should be taken into account in the review of the FAO Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25;
   
   e) noted the mapping of Regional Priorities/Regional Initiatives and technical priorities to the 20 Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) for implementation of the four betters to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while fully utilizing the four cross-cutting accelerators of technology, innovation, data and complements, and embedding the cross-cutting themes of gender, youth and inclusion across FAO’s work and should be continued;

---

\(^1\) Mr HUANG Fei was designated to replace Mr LI Bo for part of the Session.

\(^2\) Ms ZHU Baoying was designated to replace Mr LI Bo for part of the Session.

\(^3\) Mr Michel Lévêque was designated to replace Ms Delphine Babin-Pelliard.

\(^4\) Ms Jenny Reid was designated to replace Mr Donald G. Syme.

\(^5\) The 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe and the 7th Informal Regional Conference for North America.
f) took note of the updated results framework 2022-25 presented in Annex 1 as the basis for formal monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the MTP 2022-25, and appreciated the adjustments to certain terminology in line with Council guidance; and

g) recalled the importance of incorporating the conclusions of the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees in the review of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25.

III. FAO strategic priorities for food safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31

7. The Committee:

a) appreciated the high quality of the strategic document FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety, and welcomed the strong alignment within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;

b) further welcomed FAO’s close coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO), within their respective mandates, to ensure mutual compatibility and complementarity with the WHO Food Safety Strategy, and looked forward to updates on the joint implementation plan;

c) recognized that food safety provides key contributions to One Health, transparent markets and trade, the development of sustainable agrifood systems, food security and nutrition, and constitutes an essential prerequisite to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs;

d) highlighted the importance of normative work, including the Codex Alimentarius standard setting processes, including FAO’s role in providing the scientific basis for deliberations of Codex in developing food safety guidance materials for Members;

e) recognized the critical importance of Codex Alimentarius science-based standards and risk assessment, guidelines and codes of practices to ensure that food is safe and can be traded at all levels, and recalled the need for sustainable funding, including multi-year contributions, for the joint FAO/WHO Scientific Advice Programme and the Codex Alimentarius Secretariat;

f) encouraged FAO to continue mobilizing resources in order to ensure the ongoing provision of demand-driven policy and technical support to countries in their efforts to improve food safety;

g) encouraged FAO Members to partner and invest in food safety at national, regional and global levels, through continuous improvement of their national food control systems, data collection and analysis, and active participation in international food safety governance, as a key contribution to One Health, safe food trade, enabling the sustainable development of inclusive agrifood systems and food security; and

h) recommended the Council to review and endorse the FAO Strategic Priorities for Food Safety within the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 at its 171st Session.

IV. Update on One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative (Item for information)

8. The Committee:

a) appreciated the progress made on the FAO One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative, acknowledged its key elements and recognized its role in strengthening national ownership and in assisting Members to leverage their unique potential by identifying Special Agricultural Products (SAPs);

b) recognized the positive contribution of food and agricultural trade for promoting economic growth, social well-being and environmental sustainability objectives;

c) encouraged continuous strengthening of the coordination and implementation mechanism at global, regional and national levels, in particular the needed support, extra-budgetary resource mobilization and partnerships to implement its field activities, and agreed that it should be aligned with the Strategic Framework; and

d) welcomed future updates on the initiative including on its activities, impacts, resources, sustainability and future activities related to this initiative, and asked FAO to provide an
update on the list of countries which are part of the Initiative as well as the products which were selected.

V. Update of statistical tools and data for statistics (Item for information)

9. The Committee:
   a) acknowledged the actions taken by FAO to modernize and improve the quality of its information technology (IT) infrastructure supporting data and statistics work;
   b) noted with appreciation the progress in the implementation of the project for improving and modernizing FAO’s statistical systems; and
   c) encouraged Management to continue pursuing the current objectives, while ensuring support to a sustainable and integrated enhancement of FAO’s statistical systems.

VI. Update on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators and the UN Statistical Commission (Item for information)

10. The Committee:
   a) welcomed the update provided on FAO statistics work for SDG indicators, in particular the three methodological refinements approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG) in July 2022;
   b) recognized the approved methodologies remain in force, took note of the two proxy indicators proposed by FAO and their intended use as a provisional stop-gap solution for countries facing difficulties to produce official indicators, recalled that countries are under no obligation to report on the proxy indicators, and called on FAO to step up its capacity development to support Members, upon request, in enabling reporting on the official SDG indicators; and
   c) encouraged FAO to continue the regular reporting to Members through relevant Governing Bodies, in particular at the next Session of the Programme Committee, as well as formal and informal briefings and communications to Members on FAO’s statistics work, in particular the SDG indicators.

VII. Update on the Governance of FAO’s statistical data and other data activities and their alignment with cross cutting policies on Protection of Data and Intellectual Property Rights (Item for information)

11. The Committee:
   a) appreciated the progress made, following the guidance from the Council and recommendations of the Programme Committee, on the implementation of the improved internal coordination of FAO’s statistical data and other data for statistics activities, and steps taken to ensure their alignment with the cross-cutting Data Protection Policy;
   b) welcomed the creation of the Data Coordination Group and Inter-departmental Working Group on Data and Statistics, which is renamed as Technical Data Coordination Group on Data for Statistics and Statistics (DCG-T), and looked forward to receiving regular updates on the implementation of their respective programmes of work;
   c) further welcomed Management's efforts in harmonization with existing principles in other relevant UN system bodies; and
   d) encouraged Management to continue the alignment of FAO’s statistical data and other data for statistics activities with FAO’s policy on data protection, and looked forward to Management’s report on the alignment of FAO’s statistical data and other data activities with the policy on intellectual property rights, once promulgated.
VIII. Update on the development of regional action plans for the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy (Item for information)

12. The Committee:
   a) noted with appreciation the update on the regional action plans for the Science and Innovation Strategy based on the high-level framework which was welcomed by the Technical Committees, building on the request by the Regional Conferences to consider local, national and regional circumstances and differences;
   b) invited Management to continue taking into account the guidance provided by Members in the development of the regional action plans, while considering the global and inter-regional perspectives to minimize the risk of marginalizing a range of opportunities, such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and reporting the progress to the relevant Governing Bodies as appropriate;
   c) encouraged FAO to ensure that regional action plans align with and contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031, the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors and the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025;
   d) looked forward to receiving further updates on the implementation of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy in line with the established corporate reporting processes, including through the Programme Implementation Report; and
   e) welcomed the organization of the first FAO Science and Innovation Forum, and encouraged Management to schedule this event on an annual basis.

IX. Update on the action plan for the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 (Item for information)

13. The Committee:
   a) noted with appreciation the update on the development of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031;
   b) recognized the importance of mobilizing additional resources to support the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan;
   c) acknowledged that the Action Plan will be a living document, aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031, stressed the importance of reporting on progress in the implementation of the Strategy in line with the established corporate reporting processes, and looked forward to receiving a draft as soon as possible so that Members are informed and involved, noting the Action Plan is a living document; and
   d) requested FAO to provide regular updates to the Governing Bodies on progress made in the implementation of the Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031, taking into account the guidance and feedback from Members.

X. Indicative rolling work plan of evaluations 2022-2025 – Update

14. The Committee:
   a) welcomed the first official presentation to the Programme Committee delivered by Ms Clemencia Cosentino, Director of the Office of Evaluation (OED);
   b) further welcomed OED’s renewed focus to enhance the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of evaluation work in line with the transformative strategic aspirations of FAO, delivering evidence in support of innovative and durable solutions to defeat hunger and poverty, and appreciated OED’s engagement with FAO stakeholders to identify and focus on key learning priorities in support of FAO’s aspirations, mission and vision;
   c) supported OED’s five priorities for 2023 and emphasized the importance of sufficient available resources for evaluation work;
d) noted the steep increase in FAO’s work in emergency and resilience and encouraged OED to develop a response plan for these growing evaluation needs, taking into account the activities of the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and relevant organizations;

e) recognized that the work plan is a living document and looked forward to regular updates to be presented to the Committee for review and endorsement;

f) welcomed the initiative to publish in one place all evaluations and efforts to include search functions to help add value;

g) endorsed the first update of the work plan of evaluations for 2022-2025, as contained in the document PC 134/4; and

h) recommended the 171st Session of the Council to approve the updated work plan of evaluations 2022-2025.


15. The Committee appreciated the useful and comprehensive Evaluation and Management’s acceptance of the Evaluation’s recommendations, including the proposed actions and commitments in the Management Response; in particular:

a) acknowledged the complexity and the innovative approach used by the Evaluation to identify and assess contributions, good practices and lessons learned emerging from Programme implementation;

b) appreciated the actual response and results achieved by FAO, and its contributions in mitigating the effects of the pandemic and strengthening the long-term resilience of agrifood systems and livelihoods through the seven priority areas of the Programme;

c) encouraged FAO to strengthen its activities to prevent the emergence of future zoonotic diseases notably by promoting the One Health approach;

d) further appreciated that the Programme was found to be relevant, mostly timely, and adaptive in addressing national priorities emerging from the pandemic;

e) recognized FAO’s ability to leverage internal collaborations and external partnerships in providing timely advice and support to government stakeholders and partners;

f) recognized the importance of trade for contributing to the availability, accessibility and affordability of food as well as the stability of markets and the limitation of extreme food price volatility; and

g) noted that the target Programme funding has not been fully raised, with differences in resource mobilization among the seven priority areas of the Programme and among regions, and encouraged FAO to continue exploring innovative funding mechanisms in view of the evolving and changing global situation.

XII. Evaluation of FAO’s South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Management Response

16. The Committee appreciated the Evaluation and Management’s acceptance of its findings and recommendations as the first step towards better work, in particular:

a) highlighted FAO’s long-term engagement and comparative advantage in facilitating and ensuring South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and its technical quality, and the prominent and potential role it plays in the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, as well as related initiatives and global actions; in particular, recalled the recent approved Strategies on Climate Change, Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors, Science and Innovation, and Private Sector Engagement, and encouraged FAO to promote SSTC projects in support of the implementation of these Strategies;

b) acknowledged the constraints and measures taken to better assess the contribution of SSTC to the implementation of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;

c) noted the potential benefits of further leveraging SSTC, including in emergency contexts, subject to resource availability;
d) acknowledged the opportunities to engage with existing institutional initiatives, such as Hand-in-Hand Initiative, One Country One Priority Product, Food Loss and Waste, among others, to enhance both the potential success of those initiatives and of SSTC to support transformative collaborations and actions; and
e) invited FAO to continue strengthening enabling environments for SSTC, project design, resource mobilization, as well as the strategic guidance and communication to better incorporate cross-cutting themes within and outside the Organization.

XIII. Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s support to Zero Hunger (SDG 2)

17. The Committee:
   a) welcomed the information provided in the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Support to Zero Hunger (SDG 2);
   b) encouraged FAO to enhance the level of implementation of the Evaluation recommendations in conjunction with the implementation of the Strategic Framework 2022-31; and
   c) further encouraged FAO to scale-up its continuous efforts to mobilize un-earmarked voluntary contributions to allow more flexibility in resource allocation where most needed.

XIV. Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme

18. The Committee appreciated the information provided in the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in relation to the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the TCP Evaluation within the context of the TCP Strategic Exercise, carried out in close consultation with Members.

XV. Follow-up report on the Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations

19. The Committee:
   a) welcomed the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs);
   b) reiterated FAO’s role as a neutral convener, ensuring engagement with a broad spectrum of stakeholders; and
   c) looked forward to future updates on the progress of a global CSO dialogue for strategic exchange among a wide range of civil society actors and FAO.

XVI. Tentative Agenda for the 135th Session of the Programme Committee (Item for information)


XVII. Date and place of the next session

21. The Committee took note of the proposed dates for its 135th Session, to be held from 13 to 17 March 2023, and acknowledged that the arrangements for the Session would be established in accordance with the evolving COVID-19 restrictions.

XVIII. Any Other Matters

22. The Committee took note of the oral presentation delivered by the Chief Economist on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and looked forward to continuing discussions on this topic at its 135th Session.