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Food and Agriculture
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Продовольственная и
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Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
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COUNCIL

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session

Rome, 4-8 December 2023

Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 6-10 November 2023)

Executive summary

In the Report of its 137th Session, the Programme Committee:

- 1) **makes specific recommendations for decision by the Council** on: the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25; and the Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations (update);
- 2) **brings to the attention of the Council for its endorsement**, the conclusions regarding: the Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14) and Management Response; the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian development-peace (HDP) nexus; the Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition; the FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management; the update on FAO response to global food security challenges; and the FAO innovation and technology accelerators: a fit-for-purpose business model to ensure an inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable agrifood system transformation; and
- 3) **informs the Council** of the Programme Committee's considerations related to: the update on the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative; the update on the Hand-in-Hand (HiH) Initiative; the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS); the Strengthening science-policy interfaces for agrifood systems; the outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation; the outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (GAMC); the FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action; and the Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is invited to:

- 1) **endorse** the recommendations of the Committee on:
 - a) the Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations (update); and
 - b) the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25;
- 2) **endorse** the conclusions of the Committee on:
 - a) the Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14) and Management Response;
 - b) the Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian development-peace (HDP) nexus;
 - c) the Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition;
 - d) the FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management;
 - e) the Update on FAO response to global food security challenges; and
 - f) the FAO innovation and technology accelerators: a fit-for-purpose business model to ensure an inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable agrifood system transformation;
- 3) **note** the Committee's considerations on:
 - a) the update on the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative;
 - b) the update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative;
 - c) the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS);
 - d) the Strengthening science-policy interfaces for agrifood systems;
 - e) the outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation;
 - f) the outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (GAMC);
 - g) the FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action; and
 - h) the Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture.

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

H.E. (Mr) Carlos Bernardo Cherniak (Argentina)	Ms Jenny Reid (New Zealand)
H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro (Brazil) ¹	H.E. (Ms) Nosipho Nausca Jean Jezile (South Africa)
Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada)	Ms Sadia Elmubarak Ahmed Daak (Sudan)
Mr Shindo Mitsuaki (Japan) ²	H.E. (Ms) Krisztina Bende (Switzerland)
Mr Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Wahab (Malaysia)	Ms Jacqueline Boniface Mbuya (United Republic of Tanzania)
H.E. (Mr) Marcel Beukeboom (Netherlands [Kingdom of the])	

I. Election of the Vice-Chairperson for the term November 2023 to June 2025

3. The Committee decided unanimously to elect Her Excellency Ambassador Ms Nosipho Nausca Jean Jezile of South Africa as Vice-Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the remainder of its term (November 2023 – June 2025).

II. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

4. The Committee agreed to add an oral briefing on Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function (EoE) under Item 21 - *Any Other Matters*.

III. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25

5. The Committee:
 - a) reaffirmed, consistent with FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, that a systemic approach shall be applied across all policy fields within FAO's mandate, and be reflected in its programming and budget. As a consequence, FAO shall identify potential trade-offs and consider the abolishment of silos. This agrifood systems approach shall be rooted in a more inclusive and effective multilateral system that looks for synergies and complementarity with other United Nations (UN) agencies and bodies;
 - b) welcomed the document reflecting the guidance and decisions of the Conference on the Medium Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25;
 - c) reiterated the importance of scientific, evidence-based normative work and statistics, and welcomed the assurance that FAO would continue to leverage its comparative advantage in science and evidence-based normative and standard setting work such as CODEX Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) along with its ePhyto Solution, as well as data and statistics global public goods, including streamlining of the statistical functions;

¹ Mr Arnaldo de Baena Fernandes was designated to replace H.E. (Ms) Carla Barroso Carneiro for part of this session.

² Mr Shindo Mitsuaki was designated to replace Mr Kuraya Yoshihiro for the remainder of the term as Member of the Programme Committee.

- d) reiterated the importance of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and encouraged the use and dissemination of products from CFS including across the results framework, as relevant;
- e) underscored the strengthening and expanding of partnerships and strategic alliances, and reiterated the importance of strengthened partnership arrangements to achieve the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs);
- f) recognized the important and instrumental role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in realizing the 2030 Agenda, and urged FAO to enhance and reinforce such collaboration, including through the growth and broadening of partnerships;
- g) emphasized the need to continue strengthening the mainstreaming and advocating for youth, gender equality and rural women's empowerment, both internally within the Organization and across FAO's mandate;
- h) recommended FAO to explore alternative proposals to develop the programmatic actions expected from the creation of an "Office of Youth and Women", including budgetary implications, to be presented at the 174th Session of the Council;
- i) welcomed the transition of the private sector partnerships function from the Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division (PSR) to the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU), and encouraged Management to continue to utilize the private sector's knowledge and technology;
- j) commended FAO's work on the Global Farmer Field School (FFS) Platform and supported the transfer of the FFS Platform team from the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) to the Office of Innovation (OIN);
- k) underlined the importance of One Health work playing a cross-cutting role in FAO;
- l) welcomed the updated Results framework of the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) and Objective 5 (*Annex 1*), recognizing it is delivered using all sources of funds;
- m) stressed the importance of Management and Members continuing dialogue about all sources of funds with full spectrum of financial resources and recommended FAO to develop a comprehensive approach for the funding of the Organization, including the use of assessed and voluntary contributions, the management of the various funding arrangements and how these contribute to the achievement of the Organization's objectives and the Strategic Framework in an effective, efficient and transparent way; and
- n) appreciated confirmation that the knowledge hubs and Global Food and Agriculture Museum and Network would have no regular budgetary implications.

IV. Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations (update)

6. The Committee:
- a) recognized the achievements of the Office of Evaluation (OED) in responding to the five focus areas of the OED's strategy and in responding to recommendations from prior audits and the evaluation of the evaluation function;
 - b) endorsed the updated work plan of evaluations 2024-2027 as contained in document PC 137/2, with the understanding that OED would revise the sequence of evaluations based on operational capacity and further informal consultations with the Programme Committee;
 - c) underscored that the work plan is a living document and looked forward to regular updates at future sessions of the Committee for review; and

- d) recommended the 174th Session of the Council to approve the Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations 2024-2027.

V. Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14) and Management Response

7. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the Evaluation report, its findings and recommendations and appreciated Management's Response;
- b) acknowledged FAO's unique position to contribute to SDG 14 through its technical expertise and convening power, including through the development and promotion of normative products and international standards;
- c) recognized the need for improving indicator 14.6.1 and its methodology, in particular to address situations that are not currently contained in the relevant survey questionnaire, and recommended FAO to request to the Interagency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, at its next 2025 Comprehensive Review, to assess the accuracy and utility of the relevant indicators under FAO's custodianship;
- d) recognized that despite FAO's substantial efforts in improving data quality on fisheries, data gaps remain, in particular for some small-scale fisheries;
- e) appreciated FAO's key contribution to develop capacity in fisheries data collection and stock assessment, appreciated and stressed that despite FAO's considerable efforts and progress there is room for improving persistent data gaps and discrepancies that undermine data quality, and recommended the need for a long-term programme on these, which are fundamental to improve country reporting on SDG 14;
- f) invited FAO to continue leading a shift to sustainable food production systems by considering intersectoral approaches that address trade-offs between food systems to reduce the risks of negative externalities and welcomed FAO's continued active participation in various international *fora*;
- g) stressed the importance of ensuring that FAO projects impacting Indigenous Peoples comply with the requirements to conduct free, prior and informed consent (FPIC); and
- h) recommended FAO to empower key stakeholders, including women, youth, people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples through the implementation of the gender action plan and the development of action plans for youth, Indigenous Peoples and people with disabilities that values and leverages the knowledge, capacities and needs of different groups.

VI. Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus

8. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the *Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus* and appreciated the actions taken on the implementation of the Evaluation recommendations, and the impact and changes made to date;
- b) recognized that fully addressing all forty of the Evaluation sub-recommendations will require time beyond the 2022-23 period covered by the report;
- c) reaffirmed the importance of the HDP nexus approach for FAO in order to reduce needs, risk and vulnerability through joined-up, multi-partner, flexible and adaptive programming;

- d) acknowledged FAO's expertise and experience in humanitarian and development contexts, as well as its contributions to sustaining peace;
- e) encouraged FAO to continue working on institutionally anchoring the HDP nexus approach across the Organization, including through strengthening partnerships at all levels to be better able to engage across the HDP nexus and continuing to learn and identify promising practices and experiences to inform scale-up of programmes with a HDP nexus approach;
- f) underlined the importance of formulating and rolling out a protection policy to guide FAO's work, and welcomed the concrete steps already taken to implement the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 2016 Centrality of Protection Policy; and
- g) recommended FAO to strengthen its efforts to develop a corporate position paper on the HDP nexus and noted that this is foundational for future work on the HDP nexus.

VII. Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition

9. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the document to present Component Document 1 of the Assessment, entitled *Contribution of terrestrial animal source foods to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets*;
 - b) recognized that Component Document 1 of the assessment highlighted key aspects of the contribution of terrestrial animal source foods (TASF) to food security and nutrition;
 - c) recognized the gaps in evidence on the risks and contribution of the wide range of TASF to healthy diets, and encouraged FAO to continue working in partnership with national, regional and international academic and research partners, taking into account regionally balanced representation, to capture different approaches and knowledge for evidence generation to fill critical gaps in evidence and knowledge; and
 - d) encouraged the consideration of the results of this report in combination with the forthcoming Component Documents, in the context of sustainable development, applying a sustainable food systems approach in support of a systemic perspective.

VIII. FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management

10. The Committee:
- a) congratulated FAO on developing the comprehensive conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management;
 - b) recommended that the conceptual framework acknowledges the contribution of Indigenous Peoples on important knowledge and practices that support conservation, restoration and sustainable use of land, soil and water;
 - c) appreciated that the conceptual framework clearly considers gender equality and encouraged FAO to ensure that gender equality remains a priority and is mainstreamed across all outcomes;
 - d) recommended further explicit consideration of biodiversity in the implementation of the conceptual framework;
 - e) commended the collaborative and coordinated work on an ecosystems-based approach with other relevant UN entities, including Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), as well as international organizations and other stakeholders, and encouraged FAO to continue and

strengthen this collaboration and explore more potential partnerships which could provide added value, particularly in local contexts, so that implementation of the conceptual framework better supports Members;

- f) recommended FAO to implement the conceptual framework through the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), the Value Added Impact Areas (VAIAs), impactful partnerships and relevant programmes and projects, including those submitted to vertical funds, taking into consideration guidance from the Technical Committees, and looked forward to additional feedback from Management on which PPAs will be targeted for concrete impact in integrated management of land, soil and water resources during the biennium, recognizing resources are limited, at the next session of the Programme Committee;
- g) recognized the need for FAO to use UN multilaterally agreed concepts and language; and
- h) encouraged FAO to mobilize resources to ensure a coordinated approach to the provision of demand-driven and contextualized technical support to countries for integrated management of land and water resources.

IX. Update on FAO response to global food security challenges

11. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the update on FAO responses to global food security challenges and expressed appreciation for the support provided to Members;
- b) appreciated the understanding of the basis of global food insecurity and the magnitude of challenges facing the achievement of SDG 2³ and urged FAO to continue strengthening the collaboration and coordinated actions with the objective to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
- c) appreciated the undertaking by Management to provide updated information on the food security emergency in Gaza and other conflicts;
- d) underlined that increasing conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns, persistent inequality, poverty, climate shocks and biodiversity loss undermine food security and nutrition and have negative impacts on sustainability of agrifood systems, and emphasized the role of FAO in monitoring and assessing the impacts of crises on global food security with focus on root and fundamental causes;
- e) expressed appreciation for FAO's policy proposals and technical initiatives in response to the global food security challenges, and urged the Organization to continue its efforts in this regard;
- f) recognized the impacts of climate shocks, in particular the El Niño effects, on agrifood systems, and therefore encouraged FAO to continue its work to assist with resilience-building;
- g) stressed the significance of market transparency and emphasized the importance of timely and credible market information provided by the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), amongst others, in particular in view of the increasing number of risks and uncertainties faced by agrifood systems, and recommended FAO to continue its efforts to support informed policy decisions and promote policy support and coordination by providing up-to-date and objective data and information, early warning systems, market assessments and outlooks, and policy recommendations;
- h) encouraged FAO to increase research efforts in food/agricultural inputs market distortions, including components of international trade, and monitor their effects on the resilience of the global agrifood system; and

³ Sustainable Development Goal 2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- i) encouraged FAO to explore the design of financing mechanisms in the context of minimizing risks to agrifood systems.

X. FAO innovation and technology accelerators: a fit-for-purpose business model to ensure an inclusive, efficient, resilient and sustainable agrifood system transformation

12. The Committee:

- a) noted with appreciation the progress made in advancement of innovation and technology accelerators in line with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 and the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy;
- b) acknowledged FAO's efforts in accelerating impact through development of the Global Innovation Model and its three key assets and services – acceleration zones, innovation hubs and incubators;
- c) encouraged systematic integration of innovation and technology into FAO programmes for closing the science, technology and innovation gap at all levels in support of Members' achieving the SDGs and agrifood systems transformation, in collaboration with relevant partners; and
- d) recognized the key role that youth, Indigenous Peoples and women play in innovation and encouraged FAO to further actively engage these priority constituencies in the work on science, technology and innovation.

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

13. The Committee noted the progress made in the first phase of the implementation of the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative and acknowledged the achievements made in the five OCOP demonstration countries as well as their potential for replicating and scaling up these results in additional project countries.

XII. Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (Item for information)

14. The Committee expressed appreciation for the update on progress in the development and implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HiH) Initiative, and for FAO's technical support, to date, to 67 Members for the preparation of investment plans, programming, monitoring and strengthened actions to transform agrifood systems.

XIII. Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) (Item for information)

15. The Committee noted and appreciated the progress made in advancing the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) initiative, and invited FAO to keep encouraging the opportunity for other traditional and indigenous crops to be included.

XIV. Strengthening science-policy interfaces for agrifood systems (Item for information)

16. The Committee recognized that strengthening science-policy interfaces (SPIs) contributes to the realization of the vision of the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy and noted the progress in the development of the draft guidance on strengthening SPIs for agrifood systems at national level, including diverse regional perspectives, and looked forward to receiving additional guidance at further levels.

XV. Outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation (Item for information)

17. The Committee took note of the highlights of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation and congratulated FAO for its successful organization and for its role as a neutral forum.

XVI. Outcome of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (GAMC) (Item for information)

18. The Committee:

- a) appreciated the organization of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (GAMC);
- b) acknowledged the GAMC was well received by Members and stakeholders and was timely in addressing issues which are pertinent and urgent in view of transformation to sustainable agrifood systems; and
- c) encouraged the follow up on the call-to-action addressed to national, regional and global communities of stakeholders in sustainable agricultural mechanization.

XVII. FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action (Item for information)

19. The Committee welcomed the information document on the development of *FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action*, noting the importance and relevance of the role of forests and forestry in addressing the challenges of climate change, food insecurity, poverty, and biodiversity loss and took note of the process for its development.

XVIII. Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture (Item for information)

20. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the rich information provided on the FAO's work on bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture and appreciated the progress made in the implementation of the Priority Programme Area: Bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture; and
- b) looked forward to further discussion at the Council at its 174th Session.

XIX. Tentative Agenda for the 138th Session of the Programme Committee (Item for information)

21. The Committee:

- a) having regard to Rule III of the Rules of Procedure of the Programme Committee, took note of document PC 137/INF/9; and
- b) stressed the importance of having a focused agenda in the next session of the Committee and recommended that possible items for information be addressed by a written correspondence procedure.

XX. Date and place of the next session

22. The Committee was informed that next session was scheduled to be held in Rome from 20 to 24 May 2024.

XXI. Any Other Matters

23. The Committee took note of the oral update on the evaluation of FAO's evaluation function, delivered by Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol.