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	منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة	联合国 粮食及 农业组织	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	Продовольственная и сельскохозяйственная организация Объединенных Наций	Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura
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## COUNCIL

### Hundred and Forty-fifth Session

Rome, 3-7 December 2012

### Report of the 112<sup>th</sup> Session of the Programme Committee (5-9 November 2012)

#### Executive Summary

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

- transformational changes in the 2012-13 biennium
- reviewed Strategic Framework and outline of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17
- peer review of FAO's evaluation function, and
- update on evaluation rolling work plan 2012-14

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these and other 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.

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

Rakesh Muthoo  
Secretary, Programme Committee  
Tel. +3906 5705 5987

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## REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 5 – 9 November 2012

### Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Twelfth session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden), the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	Mr Guo Handi (China)
Mr M. Mellah (Algeria)	Mr M.A. Hassan (Egypt)
Mr G.O. Infante (Argentina)	Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)
Ms N. Feistritz (Austria)	Mr N. Fraser (New Zealand)
Ms S. Afroz (Bangladesh)	Mr G. Vega Berrio (Panama)
Ms D. Price (Canada)	Ms C.E. Grieder (Switzerland)

3. The Chairperson informed the Committee that:
  - Dr Magdy Anwar Hassan had been designated to replace Mr Essam Osman Fayed as the representative of Egypt; and
  - Ms Debra Price had been designated to replace Mr M. Valicenti as representative of Canada.

A summary of the qualifications of the substitute representatives can be downloaded from the FAO Governing and Statutory Body Web site at:

[www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/programme-committee/en/](http://www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/programme-committee/en/) .

### Programme planning and priority setting

#### Transformational changes in the 2012-13 biennium<sup>1</sup>

4. The Committee welcomed the document on Transformational changes in the 2012-13 biennium as transparent, necessary and useful, and noted the progress on measures previously approved by the Council, as well as further initiatives for institutional strengthening presented in the document.
5. The Committee considered in particular progress made in implementing decentralization measures, the Multidisciplinary Fund, and the establishment of the Office for Communication, Partnerships and Advocacy. The Committee also considered the changes relating to the Technical Cooperation Department, the Economic and Social Development Department, as well as issues related to nutrition and consumer protection and knowledge, research and extension.
6. The Committee:
  - a) underlined the need to implement transformational changes whilst ensuring the continued, full delivery of the approved programme of work in 2012-13, in particular activities relating to technical cooperation at the country level;
  - b) emphasized that initiatives resourced by the Multidisciplinary Fund needed to be consistent with the Strategic Objectives and Members' priorities;

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<sup>1</sup> CL 145/3

- c) underscored once again the importance of gender as a cross-cutting theme mainstreamed in all of FAO's work;
- d) supported the measures to improve accountability and internal control; and
- e) looked forward to considering further transformational changes in the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2014-15, and encouraged the identification of further efficiency gains in this regard.

### **Reviewed Strategic Framework and outline of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17<sup>2</sup>**

7. The Committee expressed its appreciation of the Strategic Thinking Process, and its iterative, analytical and consultative steps which enabled the reviewed Strategic Framework. It commended the thematic and cross-sectoral approach, as well as the participatory nature of the process.

8. The Committee welcomed the reviewed Strategic Framework, and the five cross-cutting Strategic Objectives, as well as the Objective designed to maintain and enhance the technical quality of the Organization's work relating to norms, standard-setting, knowledge and provision of global public goods. In this regard, the Committee:

- a) underlined the importance of keeping focus on the two cross-cutting themes of gender and governance as they are mainstreamed across the Strategic Objectives, and the need to integrate further gender issues in FAO's work;
- b) highlighted the basic role of FAO's Core Functions and welcomed their reformulation;
- c) re-emphasized the need to take into account the joint programmes by FAO and its Member States, including in relation to sustainable globally important agricultural heritage systems;
- d) reiterated that guidance and priorities arising from Regional Conferences and Technical Committees be taken into account;
- e) in this regard, recalled the importance of sustainable management of natural resources, including those related to forests and eco-systems, as discussed at the Committee on Forestry, in particular in relation to Strategic Objectives 2 and 5;
- f) requested that the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security be taken into account;
- g) on specific Strategic Objectives, requested a formulation of Strategic Objective 1 to be better aligned with the goals of the Organization and suggested better alignment of Strategic Objective 3 to FAO's Core Functions; and
- h) suggested that the Council should endorse the five Strategic Objectives, taking into account the comments of the Programme Committee, as a basis for preparing the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15.

9. The Committee noted that the outline of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 was work in progress, and provided guidance for the preparation of the draft MTP 2014-17 and PWB 2014-15. Specifically, the Committee:

- a) welcomed the outline of the future budgetary chapter structure;
- b) emphasized the need for further elaboration of the Objective designed to maintain and enhance the technical quality of the Organization's work relating to norms, standard-setting, knowledge and provision of global public goods;
- c) underlined the need for clarity on modalities for leadership, delivery, accountability, monitoring and resource allocation for the Strategic Objectives;
- d) recalled the usefulness of considering lessons learned from implementation of the current Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan;
- e) requested clear delineation of organizational structure, and related reporting lines and roles and responsibilities;
- f) recalled the importance of a robust results framework, with appropriate definition of performance indicators with baselines and targets;

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<sup>2</sup> CL 145/4

- g) reiterated the need for specific gender-related indicators;
- h) with regard to Action Plans, underlined that the outcomes and outputs should be operationally implementable and measurable;
- i) recalled the need for a smooth and transparent transition from the current four-year results framework in the MTP 2010-13 to the new results framework in the MTP 2014-17 in terms of areas of work to be continued or dropped and new areas of work, and for information in this regard to be conveyed to Member Nations..

10. In line with the established process, the Committee looked forward to reviewing in 2013 the draft MTP 2014-17 and PWB 2014-15 prepared on the basis of guidance of the Council.

### **Strategy and vision for FAO's work in nutrition<sup>3</sup>**

- 11. The Committee welcomed and commended this important strategy.
- 12. The Committee:
  - a) supported the use of criteria for prioritizing nutrition work, while indicating that the list should be further elaborated;
  - b) stressed that work in nutrition should be firmly based on scientific data, which must be maintained and updated in order to learn from past experiences;
  - c) emphasized the importance of working in synergy with partners, in line with FAO's comparative advantage, including UNICEF, WHO, WFP, and UNSCN; and through SUN and REACH, especially at country level;
  - d) stressed the need to avoid overlaps and enable FAO to focus on its Core Functions;
  - e) noted that political commitment was paramount to success in making nutrition an integral part of national education planning;
  - f) requested clarification on cooperation mechanisms with the private sector; and
  - g) agreed with the results-oriented approach and underlined the importance of sound monitoring, oversight and evaluation mechanisms for better reporting to governing bodies.
- 13. Furthermore, the Committee:
  - a) strongly emphasized that the nutrition strategy should be fully integrated into the Strategic Framework, particularly in Strategic Objective 1; and
  - b) expressed the need for due attention to implementation of the strategy within the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15.

## **Evaluation**

### **Evaluation of FAO's role and work in forestry<sup>4</sup>**

- 14. The Committee welcomed the comprehensive and timely nature of the Evaluation, as well as of the Management Response. It recognised the usefulness of presenting the Evaluation to the Committee on Forestry in October 2012.
- 15. The Committee:
  - a) emphasised the importance of better prioritisation in work on forestry allowing FAO to take a leading role, while seeking partnerships for other areas of work;
  - b) highlighted the connection between work on sustainable forests on one hand, and food security and poverty reduction on the other;
  - c) encouraged FAO to increase its cross-sectoral work, focusing on integrated land use and sustainable forest management;
  - d) requested that work on REDD+ take into account the relation between agriculture and forests;

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<sup>3</sup> PC 112/2

<sup>4</sup> PC 112/3; PC 112/3 Sup.1

- e) looked forward to the recommendations of the Evaluation to be taken into account when preparing the next Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget;
- f) noted that the Evaluation should be presented to the six Regional Forestry Commissions;
- g) encouraged mobilization of additional resources, for implementation of FAO's forestry programmes; and
- h) noted that no low-forest cover country was visited by the Evaluation team.

### **Evaluation of FAO's support to the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries<sup>5</sup>**

16. The Committee commended the quality of the Evaluation report, its depth and detail, as well as the participatory methodology used. It felt that this document will be very useful in guiding future work of the Organization.

17. The Committee:

- a) highlighted the issue of IUU, where further measures needed to be taken;
- b) noted that work to reduce fishing capacity had not reached the desired level and suggested that FAO concentrate on output control, allocation of fishing rights, and fisheries management;
- c) regarding monitoring, stressed that the inclusion of a stand-alone section on the Code in the State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) would be useful, as would be a reduced frequency of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries questionnaire to four years, both for budgetary reasons and to increase response rates. As stated in the Committee on Fisheries, options for indexing and referencing the Code and related instruments should be explored for more effective implementation;
- d) noted that the work to facilitate access to the Code of Conduct is vital, as is the translation into national languages in order to increase national capacity to apply the Code. The development of a strategic framework with priorities for the development of the Code and support for its implementation are important points for the future success of the Code;
- e) encouraged FAO to concentrate resource mobilization on initiatives aimed at building capacity in fisheries management through the application of the Code, as well as allocation of, and securing fishing rights;
- f) strongly underlined the need to address the situation of small-scale fisheries that are among the most vulnerable, as well as having a robust gender component, and suggested that the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security provide an opportunity to further address small-scale fisheries;
- g) noted that FAO needed to consider its role in certification carefully as its comparative advantage lies in standard-setting, whereas certification should be left to other organizations;
- h) stressed that FAO must utilize the experience of, and cooperate with existing schemes such as that of the Marine Stewardship Council and those of Alaska and Iceland, as well as further intensify cooperation with regional fishery bodies; and
- i) supported the formulation of an action plan on aquaculture with appropriate stakeholder participation, especially to raise the level of the capacity of developing countries.

### **Follow-up to the Strategic Evaluation of FAO country programming<sup>6</sup>**

18. The Programme Committee welcomed the useful information contained in document PC 112/5, while noting that it was not intended as a full assessment.

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<sup>5</sup> PC 112/4; PC 112/4 Sup.1

<sup>6</sup> PC 112/5

19. The Committee:
- a) commended work on the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) and project cycle guidelines, as well as the related tools, templates and guidance notes;
  - b) welcomed the strong linkage between country programming and resource mobilization;
  - c) supported the analysis of challenges and opportunities with particular emphasis on ensuring country ownership of CPFs, enhancing country office involvement and accountability and the need to adapt CPFs to changing country contexts;
  - d) supported decentralization of country programming responsibilities to FAO representations with regional offices providing direct support, and headquarters providing the corporate framework and tools; and
  - e) looked forward to a further update in October 2015 including on results, field impact, and resource mobilization and the other components of FAO's country programming process.

### **Peer Review of the Evaluation function of FAO<sup>7</sup>**

20. The Committee considered the report of the Peer Review of the Evaluation function of FAO, and:
- a) welcomed the report, while noting Management's observations on its scope and methodology;
  - b) agreed with the report's conclusion that FAO has a mature evaluation function and supported its further enhancement;
  - c) agreed that functional independence of the Office of Evaluation (OED) was key to its credibility;
  - d) supported the report's recommendation for more strategic use of evaluations conducted by OED, and for the Office to be fully responsible for the content and the recommendations of the evaluations;
  - e) generally supported a more uniform approach to evaluations conducted by OED, while taking into account the subject to be evaluated;
  - f) encouraged greater resolve in Management Responses in not accepting Evaluation recommendations, with a supporting rationale; and
  - g) noted that the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation could be further refined, including the process of the recruitment of the Director of Evaluation.
21. The Committee noted the Management Observations on the report of the Peer Review (doc. PC 112/6 Sup.1), and welcomed further clarification of Management's position on the oversight functions. Accordingly, the Committee expressed understanding for Management's proposal for a comprehensive assessment of the evaluation function at FAO designed to address the: (i) lack of internal evaluation coverage focused on learning for use by Management, and (ii) the problems of overlap, inconsistency and efficiency of all oversight functions of the Organization.
22. The Committee was unable to achieve consensus on the various aspects of the comprehensive assessment as proposed by Management. The Committee noted that the Director-General had authority to initiate a comprehensive review as part of his managerial responsibilities. In this context, the Committee was also unable to reach consensus on whether to hold in abeyance the process of recruitment of the next Director of Evaluation.
23. The Committee noted that a high-level roadmap for the process of recruitment of the Director of Evaluation had been endorsed by the Council in June 2012, and observed that delay in its implementation thus far had been regrettable.

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<sup>7</sup> PC 112/6

### **Update on the indicative rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluation 2012-2014<sup>8</sup>**

24. The Committee discussed priorities for evaluations to be initiated in 2013 and 2014 and modalities for saving costs, while ensuring adequate access to information contained in evaluation reports and:

- a) endorsed the conclusions of the round of Evaluations of the regional and subregional offices and looked forward to the synthesis for the Conference in 2015;
- b) welcomed the proposal to achieve cost savings by having comprehensive executive summaries translated in the languages used in the Programme Committee, fully capturing the elements of the evaluation, while the entire evaluation report would be available on the FAO Evaluation Web site in the original language, but for its next session it would receive in the languages the comprehensive summary, as well as the translated evaluation to assess the results of the mechanism before taking a final decision;
- c) suggested the following work plan of evaluations:

In 2013:

- a) Sustainable intensification of crop production including a focus on smallholder agriculture and biotechnologies, with a perspective of integrated crop management in order to capture water use; the evaluation should encompass the period from 2004 so as to start from the Statement on Biotechnologies;
- b) Evaluation of FAO's work in post-crisis transition.

In 2014:

- a) FAO's work on climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- b) FAO's role in the dissemination of knowledge on food, agriculture and natural resources;
- c) FAO's work on genetic resources.

25. Furthermore, the Committee supported the Joint FAO/WFP Evaluation of the joint food security cluster, while cautioning that there would need to be sufficient experience with the cluster to allow for a meaningful evaluation. It also supported the Somalia country evaluation.

### **Report on implementation of the Council decision on funding of Evaluation in extrabudgetary activities<sup>9</sup>**

26. The Committee:

- a) noted progress made in the past year on implementation of the 2007 Council decision and observed that there was still room for improvement;
- b) suggested that FAO adopt a more proactive approach with donors on this issue; and
- c) underlined the potential of leveraging Evaluations carried out by donors themselves.

### **IPA implementation within the PWB**

#### **Review of Article XIV Bodies<sup>10</sup>**

27. The Committee examined document PC 112/9 "*Review of Article XIV Bodies*" in the light of the deliberations of the CCLM on the matter and agreed with Management's view that it was desirable to bring this IPA-related action to a close.

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<sup>8</sup> PC 112/7

<sup>9</sup> PC 112/8

<sup>10</sup> PC 112/9

28. The Committee:
- a) endorsed the proposed differentiated approach towards bodies established under Article XIV of the Constitution (“Article XIV bodies”) which have distinct statutory features and operational requirements;
  - b) noted the deliberations of the CCLM on matters such as the need for a review of whether adequate oversight mechanisms were in place as a condition for increased delegations of authority, official travel by secretariats of Article XIV bodies, adjustments to the Correspondence Manual and use of languages;
  - c) requested to be kept informed of the implementation of the deliberations of the CCLM in view of the fact that most of the recommendations were within Management’s authority; and
  - d) concurred with the proposals that a pragmatic, flexible approach continued to be taken in respect of the participation by non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector in meetings of Article XIV bodies.

### **Standing Items**

#### **Date, place and items for discussion at next session**

29. The Committee was informed that the 113<sup>th</sup> Session would take place on 18 to 22 March 2013.

#### **Any other business**

30. There was no discussion under this item.