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CONFERENCE

Fortieth Session

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2018-19 Biennial Theme - *Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO*

Executive Summary

The proposed biennial theme *Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO* for the forthcoming biennium 2018-19 is the result of a process of review in the relevant governing bodies during the 2016-17 biennium. The proposed theme was endorsed by the Council at its 155th Session (December 2016).

Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to approve the proposed biennial theme.

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

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Background

1. In line with Recommendation 1 of the *Assessment of FAO Governance Reform* (C 2015/26 rev.1), a proposal for the selection of a “biennial theme” for the 2018-19 biennium was considered by governing bodies during 2016-17.
2. Following approval by the Conference, sessions of relevant governing bodies will include discussion of the biennial theme *Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO*. The purpose is to engage in a critical review of the intrinsic linkages between exogenous trends and challenges relating to climate change, and the multitude of related work and activities of FAO, including *vis-à-vis* nutrition, food security, migration, oceans, fisheries, resilience, land uses, forestry management, disaster risk reduction and other related themes.
3. It should be recalled that development of the Strategy for FAO’s work on Climate Change¹ was prompted by the 2015 *Evaluation of FAO’s contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM)* which highlighted FAO’s unique strengths to address CCAM and the impact of climate change in all areas of FAO’s mandate. The developing process of the Strategy involving comprehensive consultation across all Technical Committees, culminating in approval by the Council in December 2016, represents a benchmark model.
4. Several important global developments occurred recently, among others the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and entry into force of the Paris Agreement on climate change, guided preparation of the reviewed Strategic Framework into which climate change is closely woven. Furthermore, the Programme Committee at its November 2016 session in stressing the importance of FAO’s work in cross-cutting themes under Objective 6 requested that its title better reflect its scope and be renamed *Technical quality, statistics and cross-cutting themes (gender, governance, nutrition and climate change)*.

2018-19 Biennial Theme “Climate Change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO”

5. End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the same time, climate change is already impacting agriculture² and food security and will make the challenge of ending hunger and malnutrition even more difficult. This consideration is at the base of Council endorsement at its 155th session in December 2016 of the proposal for *Climate change and its impact on the work and activities of FAO* as a biennial theme for the 2018-19 biennium.
6. The prime role of FAO in this context is to support countries in adapting the policies, strategies, institutions and activities that are supporting the development and sustainability of food and agricultural systems, so that they also become more resilient to the impacts of climate change and, to the extent possible, also contribute to the mitigation of climate change. Ultimately the objective of FAO’s interventions is to generate food and agricultural systems and dependent livelihoods that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
7. The Strategy for FAO’s work on climate change, fully integrated in the reviewed Strategic Framework, guides how the above objectives will be achieved. Specific considerations and valuable insight emerged from discussions in the 2016-17 governing bodies leading to the development of the Strategy.

¹ PC 121/2

² Agriculture is to be understood in its broad sense, including crops, livestock production, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

Proposal for topics which may be considered for discussion in 2018-19

8. The following is a proposal for climate-related topics which may be considered for discussion in meetings of governing bodies during the 2018-19 biennium:

- a) *Technical Committees* - impacts on marine, coastal and inland fisheries; sustainable management of mangroves; sustainable management of forests; sustainable livestock; pests and diseases (crops and animals); role of trade.
- b) *2018 Regional Conferences* - regional impacts with special focus on natural resources; intra-regional variations in vulnerability; inter-regional perspectives with special focus on impacts in Small Island Developing States, mountains, trade and sharing experience.
- c) *Other bodies* - progress on FAO's work on climate change within the Strategic Framework.

Suggested action by the Conference

9. The Conference is invited to approve the proposed biennial theme.