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Продовольственная и
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Organización de las
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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session - Cent soixante-quatrième session -
164.º período de sesiones**

**Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020
VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

**Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020
PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL**

**Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020
ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
CONSEJO**

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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

<p>Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session Cent soixante-quatrième session 164.º período de sesiones</p>
<p>Virtual meeting, 6-10 July 2020 Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020 Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020</p>
<p>FIRST PLENARY SESSION PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA</p>
<p>6 July 2020</p>

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 9:33 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 33
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 9.33
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

I call the first meeting of the 164th Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to welcome Council Members and Observers to this historic Session. In acknowledging the extraordinary time we are living in, our Council Session is taking place virtually to respect continuing public health concerns as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic. In this regard, before beginning our meeting, I should like to draw your attention to the new procedures to be followed in our virtual meeting.

First, please ensure that your Zoom name appears on screen in the appropriate fashion for the conduct of meetings of the Council, and for ease of identifying participants. For Members of the Council, that means only the name of your Member Nation, or Member Organization. This applies to all delegates of any given Member. In keeping with the established procedure for conduct of Council meetings, when giving the floor to Members, I shall call on the name of the concerned Member Nation or Organization only – not names of individual delegates.

Similarly, for other Members of FAO, I would like to request that your Zoom screen name be adjusted to appear with the word “Observer,” followed by the name of your Member Nation or Associate Member – and not include the names of individuals. For all other Observers, please ensure that your Zoom screen name appears with the word “Observer,” followed by the name of your organisation.

Second, I would like to request all participants to follow the meeting in Mute mode and click the “Unmute” button only when you are given the floor.

Third, to request the floor, please use the “Raise Hand” function on the Zoom platform. Click the “Participants” button at the bottom of the screen, which will open the Participants Menu on the right-hand side of your screen. The “Raise Hand” button can be found at the bottom left corner of the “Participants” menu. I will pass the floor to Members based on the order that appears on my screen.

Interpretation is provided in all languages of the Organization. Due to a technical limitation of the platform, Arabic can be listened to on the Korean channel. To ensure accurate interpretation, please send your statement to FAO-Interpretation@fao.org as soon as possible. The interpreters will treat this information as confidential and check it against delivery.

Finally, it is recommended to use a headset with an integrated microphone and to speak slowly and clearly, to increase the quality of your intervention. Please refer to the Zoom guidelines for this meeting which may be found on the website of the 164th Session of the Council.

The recent meetings of the Council Committees were held successfully through this virtual platform, and I am sure that we will build on that success this week through our Council deliberations.

Before we commence the meeting, I would like to first take a moment to remember Dr Abdul Razak Ayazi, as this is the first Council meeting since his passing. Dr Ayazi was an exceedingly knowledgeable and valuable Member in our meetings over the years. Dr Ayazi contributed to the Organization in many ways, as a staff member, a Member of FAO’s Programme Committee for many years, and as Permanent Representative of Afghanistan. I cherish my memories of him both when we worked together as staff of FAO and later as representatives of our respective countries. He was a stalwart of governance who prepared himself meticulously for every meeting. I know he was often in the minds of the FAO Secretariat when drawing up documents, because they were always thinking, “What would Dr Ayazi say to this?”

I am sure I speak for everyone present when I say Dr Ayazi will always be very warmly remembered for his substantive contribution to the work of the Organization. I would like to propose that we have a brief moment of silence in his memory.

Minute of silence

Minute de silence

Minuto de silencio

Thank you.

I now wish to bring to the attention of the Council that the European Union is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution. Furthermore, the European Union will be participating in the Drafting Committee in accordance with the aforementioned paragraphs of Article II of the FAO Constitution and, on matters within its competence, will be exercising, on an alternative basis, the Membership rights of the European Union Member States elected to the Drafting Committee. The declaration made by the European Union and its Member States is contained in information document *CL 164/INF/3*.

Allow me now to extend a warm welcome to the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu. Without further ado, I invite him to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

It is my pleasure to address you at the opening of the 164th Session of the FAO Council. This is the first virtual Session in the Council's long history. The world has changed so much since our last Session in December 2019.

I would like to express my deep condolences to Mr Abdul Razak Ayazi for his life-long dedication to FAO as staff and as active Member of the governance from Afghanistan, and also sorrow for the lives lost to COVID-19. My empathy is with all those infected and my deep appreciation for the tireless work of medical staff, helpers, volunteers, and keepers of daily life running all over the world.

Gratitude is also due to the authorities of all nations hosting FAO offices and employees to operation. I am very happy to see that all of you, distinguished delegates, are well and safe.

My intervention today will focus on four elements. An update on activities since the last Session of the Council, early December of 2019. Progress in Implementing Adjustments since the Council Session of last December. A presentation of highlights on the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21*. Finally, the outlook into the Transformation of FAO.

Update on activities since the last Session of the Council.

Since the last Council, we continued to work on strengthening collaboration with Members and partners; and to increase FAO's international engagement, visibility and reputation. In the first months, with travel still possible, I visited a number of countries, attended several events and welcomed numerous high-level guests at FAO Headquarters.

Attending the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals Meeting in Geneva, I exchanged ideas with fellow principals on global humanitarian work issues and the role I see for FAO in that context. The personal involvement and participation of an FAO Director-General was recognized and highly appreciated. In my intervention at the meeting, I noted the need to explore new business models aimed at making the UN humanitarian system stronger, more tangible and more deliverable by anticipatory actions.

I participated at a second IASC Principals Meeting via Zoom at the end of June. It was a very intense time at 25th UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25) in Spain, where I participated at more than 20 events organized by FAO and others. FAO was at the center of discussions on agriculture, food security and agri-ecosystems, and we re-affirmed our priority to support countries in the global climate action. COP25 was also an excellent occasion to promote FAO's wealth of knowledge and expertise in providing solutions to help achieve the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On the sidelines of the climate summit, I exchanged with FAO's Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition, the Queen of Spain, on the importance of food and agriculture. I briefed her on the role of the Youth and Women Committees and appreciated her ongoing support to FAO's work and mandate. I also met Spain's Prime Minister and was pleased to see how we agree on the important role of women and youth in agriculture and rural development, and the great potential to improve smallholders' livelihood by introducing Spanish experiences on labor intensive farming and digital

technologies to the agricultural sectors. The signature of EUR 20 million programme with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Germany to boost the role of agriculture in addressing climate change also took place in Madrid.

In Egypt, where I spoke to a panel on *Food Security in Africa* at the World Youth Forum, I stressed the need for the potential of the youth to achieve rural transformation through agri-food related activities, with Africa having the youngest population in the world. At a meeting with the President of the Republic, who expressed strong support for FAO's work, I presented my vision of how the agricultural sector and the food system have untapped potential to harness the creativity and energy of the youth and create more decent employment opportunities.

On the margins of the World Youth Forum, I signed an agreement on Deepening Collaboration in Support of the Rural Youth and Women of Egypt with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The agreement foresees rolling out programs to promote employment on and off farm and in different value chains, as well as providing training and capacity development for youth and women. This visit was also an occasion to meet and interact with FAO employees at the Regional Office in Cairo, listening to their expectations and concerns.

In an address to the European Council of Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries of the European Union, in Brussels, I emphasized FAO's expertise in leading international coalitions with knowledge, innovation, networking and information and research support. I also expressed FAO's interest and ability to support the sustainable forestry commitments that were approved on that day, the 16 December 2019.

Taking part at an event with the 28 Ministers for Agriculture and Fisheries (AGRIFISH) was also an occasion to exchange with three key European Commissioners who had just taken office, namely, the Commissioners for International Partnerships, for Agriculture and for Trade.

In Berlin, I attended the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA), where agriculture ministers of 71 nations welcomed FAO's concept for the establishment of an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and, pledged to make trade contribute to global food security and help smallholders' access larger value chains.

Attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, was an occasion to advocate for transformative change in the world's agriculture and food systems. I intervened at a number of events dedicated to themes such as financing the Sustainable Development Goals, "catalytic philanthropy" in emerging economies and smallholder finance. As a new Member of the Food Systems Initiative Stewardship Board, I spoke at a Board meeting dedicated to the future of food. The Forum was also an occasion to hold bilateral meetings and discussions with numerous high-level participants, including the Queen of Belgium, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prince of Lichtenstein.

Furthering our outreach to the private sector and presenting the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, I met with global business leaders such as the chief executives of PepsiCo, Syngenta, Temasek Holdings and senior managers in charge of MasterCard's humanitarian and development initiatives. The private sector expressed a strong interest in the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, in capacity building, technology transfers and other modes of collaboration.

At a visit to New York, from 10-12 February 2020, I held fruitful discussions with the President of the General Assembly and participated in an interactive dialogue on *South-South and Triangular cooperation for Transforming Agriculture* that he had convened.

With the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), we discussed ways to bolster agriculture and food security and agreed on the launch of FAO's benchmark report, *the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, at the UN's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. This launch will be held next Monday.

In New York, together with Mr Mark Lowcock the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, we organized a resource mobilization meeting. We pushed

for greater and faster action to prevent a humanitarian crisis in East Africa, as the desert locust upsurge was then affecting seven countries and threatening to spread even further.

In a visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I met with the Prime Minister, and we agreed that strong leadership, investments and partnerships can pave the way to achieve middle income status. I confirmed FAO's support in transforming the food systems along the entire value chain, promoting value-added crops and taking advantage of e-commerce and digitization. I also visited an Organic Vegetable Farm and a Rice Research Centre.

In Pakistan, I was welcomed by the President of the Republic and we discussed ways to promote agricultural modernization and rural development with the aim of transforming the country's agri-food systems and accelerating progress towards reaching the SDGs, visiting a number of field stations and upsurge spot of locust with first hand of investigation. The visit was also the occasion to sign a USD 49 million project funded by the Green Climate Fund, which aims to transform the communities along the Indus Basin with Climate Resilient Agriculture and Water Management. During a field visit in the Punjab province, I saw how the excellent work of FAO is promoting climate resilient agricultural practices in rural communities to support livelihoods. In that respect, I am pleased to note that the total value of FAO's Green Climate Fund portfolio is now at USD 571.5 million.

In Thailand, I had the pleasure of meeting the Prime Minister where we discussed the potential of the country as a regional hub for innovation and food systems transformation and strengthening cooperation with FAO. A visit to a precision agriculture site allowed for an insight to the country's impressive innovative approaches to digital farming. In visiting the Regional Office of Bangkok within my first 200 days in office, I have set another first in FAO history. A town hall meeting allowed me to listen to comments and questions by our employees.

In the Vatican on 28 February 2020, we initiated the Rome Declaration on Ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI) together with the Pontifical Academy for Life and others. This declaration that was endorsed by Pope Francis, allowed us to stress the need to balance technological advancement with social progress to close the digital gap. A follow-up event to scale up the positive impact of AI in Digital Agriculture is currently being planned with strategic partners.

Another field where we are counting on the strength of modern technology and innovation is the combat of the fall armyworm. Fully aware that the expansion of this pest could seriously affect the role of maize in the world's food system, we designed a Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control to support and scale up ongoing efforts through a strong and innovative coordination mechanism.

Together with Pennsylvania State University, FAO developed a smartphone app known as Fall Armyworm Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) as a key tool that is available in 29 languages. It channels valuable real-time and field-level information about the pest's location and spread to a global data platform every two hours, while also giving smallholder farmers' specific tips on how to cope with and contrast infestations.

We established a Steering Committee that I chair, bringing together strategic leaders from governments, multilateral institutions, research institutes, civil society and the private sector, from five continents to help optimize the global action plan ahead of a high-level conference to be held this year. The implementation of the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control was impacted by COVID-19 control measures taken by governments. Therefore, FAO prepared a guidance document on "*Addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control*".

During a visit of the President of Argentina to FAO, we discussed how FAO can support the country in its work to guarantee food security and healthy diets for all, including the most vulnerable, notably through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, involving the private sector and boosting the agricultural sectors through innovation and digitalization in middle income countries.

The visit by the President of Mali to FAO was an occasion to review the ongoing support on matters ranging from strengthening resilience to climate shocks, supporting youth and women in rural areas and future support through FAO's Investment Centre and the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

In a strong sign of putting the spirit of Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration into practice, we overcame a number of technical and logistical challenges to hold the 43rd Governing Council of IFAD at FAO Headquarters in early February.

Our strong belief in UN solidarity and collaboration was also reflected in hosting the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in late February. The meeting that was attended by more than 1 000 delegates, was also an occasion to highlight FAO's interest and willingness to collaborate on environmental issues given their direct link to agriculture.

The Prime Minister of Moldova visited FAO and we discussed ongoing projects and the mutual interest for a closer collaboration. The Prime Minister took office recently and FAO was the first UN agency he visited, indicating its importance for a country with a substantial rural population and where agriculture plays large economic role.

At a visit by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary on 28-29 January, I presented the new business model for FAO that facilitates increased and targeted support to the most vulnerable and accelerates achievement of the SDGs. We agreed on the need for more innovation, investment and enabling policies, as well as on the important role that the private sector, civil society and academia have played in supporting global efforts to enhance agriculture and food systems.

Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic was based on two principles: the health and wellbeing of our employees, and the continued delivery of our mandate. Our successful crisis management used three instruments: governance, planning and communication. Right from the beginning in February, I put in place a Crisis Management Team to monitor, plan and manage FAO's response to the crisis, which allowed us to be ahead of the curve.

As Designated UN Official for Italy, we also coordinate the interaction of all 25 UN Agencies with our host country of Italy. I signed an agreement with the Italian Red Cross, on behalf of all UN Agencies operating in Italy, on measures aimed at protecting the health of employees and visitors to the agencies' premises in the context of the pandemic.

We keep planning at a global level to stay ahead of the virus. This includes office closures, physical meetings, travel, and healthcare taking into account of World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines; Rules of the host countries; and the provisions of the UN Teams, for our country offices. Our business continuity plans, the solid management and financial systems, our internal control, and the efficient teleworking by our dedicated staff ensured that we maintain our productivity.

We have introduced maximum flexibility by adapting our rules on administration, information technology, travel, human resources, and procurement to the evolving situation around the world. We are communicating quickly and well to different audiences. The first virtual celebration was on March 6 for International Women's Day.

We use different platforms, such as internal emails, our web page, the Intranet, and the Emergency Notification System (EMS) to mobile phones, and the Members Gateway for permanent representatives. We also use social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter and TikTok.

Our internal response through all these measures and actions ensured that FAO adapted swiftly to the crisis, focused on using new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools and continued delivering without even a single day of interruption to its work.

Externally, we started from the early days of the outbreak to monitor the global situation in relation to the impacts of the pandemic on food security and food systems. It soon became evident that the combined impacts of COVID-19, its suppression measures and subsequent global recession will increase the number of the hungry and poor, especially in low-income countries that rely on food imports.

We made sure to raise our findings at the international stage. I participated at the G20 leaders meeting, the UN Security Council on food security, both historic firsts, and the G20 Agricultural Ministers meeting, calling upon them to produce more and better based on agriculture calendars.

I participated at the United States of America's congressional briefing on *Preventing a Hunger Catastrophe* that FAO, as the first Director-General who presented, co-hosted with the Alliance to End Hunger and the bipartisan House and Senate Hunger Caucuses. An event that had more than 1 000 attendees via webinar.

As a historical first for a FAO Director-General, I spoke at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2020, highlighting the disease's impact on humanitarian and hunger crises. We have convened and participated in a number of other high-level meetings and events organized by the UN Secretary-General, ECOSOC and the World Economic Forum, raising awareness and encouraging Members to work in concert to overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

At the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), I expressed FAO's commitment to transforming food and agricultural systems so that they are more climate-smart, resilient and biodiversity-friendly. I mentioned various FAO initiatives that help deepen understanding on biodiversity's importance for our food, livelihoods and environment, and highlighted agriculture's role as a positive force for nature, including the first-ever comprehensive Report on the *State of the World's Biodiversity for Food And Agriculture* from "Sufferer, buffer to contributor". This was also an occasion to present our thoughts on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 that FAO will co-lead with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

We raised international awareness by publishing joint statements, such as the one with the WHO and World Trade Organization (WTO) on mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on food trade and markets. In addition, the joint statement issued just before the G20 Agriculture Ministers' meeting together with the World Bank, WFP and IFAD. We convened a number of meetings with Ministers to ensure countries designate food and agriculture as essential services during lockdowns.

As a historic first, and in collaboration with the African Union, we held a virtual meeting with 45 of Africa's agriculture ministers, with the attendance of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, and representatives of the African Development Bank and the World Bank.

The resulting Ministerial Declaration and the established task force, focus on four areas of work:

1. Disseminate widely the political declaration and its key recommendations;
2. Ensure that COVID-19 related interventions are aligned as much as possible with existing programs, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP);
3. Assist countries in mobilizing resources to support implementation of the recommendations in the political declaration; and
4. Provide coordinated and systematic support to new food insecurity "hot spots", resulting from COVID-19, with focus on countries facing multiple threats, such as Eastern Africa with the desert locust infestation.

A Tripartite Ministerial Meeting (Agriculture, Trade and Finance) is to be held at the end of this month. FAO assisted the Agriculture Ministers of 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries sign an agreement to join forces to protect food supply for the region's 620 million people.

Another example of concrete and swift support is the creation of ad-hoc COVID-19 task forces to improve FAO's response capacity in support of Latin American Members, including seven Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Members. These task forces include former Ministers of Agriculture and retired Senior Officers of FAO. They help formulate tangible COVID-19 recovery proposals that can be submitted to financial institutions for possible investment support.

FAO and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) prepared a joint report containing policy recommendations that address the increased hunger resulting from the pandemic in the Region.

I shared FAO's views at the *High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond* that was organized by Canada, Jamaica and the United Nations. I called for the need for decisive action to ensure that all countries recover and build back better from this unprecedented crisis. The event also launched a collaborative effort to enable discussions on concrete proposals to be reported back at the margins of the High-Level Political Forum, the General Assembly in September, and at the end of the year.

Our concentrated effort to raise awareness on the importance of protecting food supply chains was disseminated across media outlets globally. We also use modern ICT tools to service our Members on a regional level. For example in Latin America, where FAO launched a weekly Regional COVID-19 Electronic Newsletter. The newsletter provides decision makers in governments, the private sector and civil society with useful information, tools, and resources to support the design and implementation of actions against the effects of the pandemic.

Likewise, regular webinar series were launched across the five regions to engage government authorities, the private sectors and civil society in matters related to Food Systems and COVID-19. Numerous electronic consultations with Members are being held in the various regions.

The programmatic objectives of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative – to eradicate poverty (SDG1) and end hunger and all forms of malnutrition (SDG2) – overlap with the goals of FAO's comprehensive strategy for combating the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition. The underlying approach, including the analytical, technical and policy support and the working partnerships, can also play a central role in coordinating integrated and coherent responses to combat the country-specific impacts of COVID-19.

Eighteen countries have begun initial engagement in the Hand-in-Hand process (Burkina Faso, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kiribati and Tuvalu, Lao PDR, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Yemen and Zimbabwe), and several others, including middle-income countries, have expressed strong interest in joining. A multi-dimensional, organization-wide support framework has been put in place including task forces for each country.

Key public and private institutional partners have been engaged and possible areas of country-level engagement have been identified and initial activities in each country had started. A robust, technology-aided monitoring and evaluation framework has been outlined and proposals for implementation are under review. The outreach to countries is also generating proposals for South-South and inter-regional partnerships.

The Hand-in-Hand geospatial platform has been fully implemented bringing together data assets on 18 topics and 9 distinct types of resources, including nearly 4 000 data sets and more than one million geospatial layers.

The geospatial platform has been repurposed and expanded to serve as underlying platform enabling integration and, where feasible, geospatial visualization of all FAO or associated third-party data. All FAO Members will benefit from access to the platform and from the ability to combine their own data with data contained on the data platform.

To date, FAO has signed formal data-sharing agreements with the World Bank Group, International Labor Organization, International Telecommunication Union, World Trade Organization, World Health Organization, WFP, IFAD and the Inter-American Development Bank.

In the past months, we have also dedicated considerable efforts to support COVID-19 related policy analyses. To date, FAO has published 41 policy briefs and eight publications, presenting both quantitative and qualitative assessment of the pandemic's impact on food supply chains, food trade and markets, smallholder producers, food insecurity, protection of the most vulnerable, statistical systems, as well as safe, resilient and sustainable food systems.

We are also using big data to monitor trade and collect information on logistical issues, such as real-time vessel movements, daily price information for 14 main food products in all countries. We are

using media and Twitter as early warning tools and to assess how problems have been resolved thereby reducing market uncertainty. Through the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), a G20 initiative that we host, we provide more transparency and information on market conditions — from production and consumption to stocks and prices — to countries and investors. We also use the Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis (FAPDA) to help ensure global markets function smoothly.

The concentrated efforts of the past months have also strengthened the cooperation of FAO within the UN System from UNHQ to the frontlines. We are part of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and collaborate closely with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). We are engaged in several UN humanitarian communication initiatives and collective advocacy. We are active in the Global Food Security Cluster's Technical Working Group on COVID-19, providing technical advice to maintain livelihoods assistance during the COVID-related restrictions and to meet emerging needs. We are collaborating with WFP on data collection and analysis, which will provide real-time update on the situation on the ground concerning acute food insecurity as a result of COVID-19-related restrictions and we are working to implement our Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) through phone surveys to all vulnerable countries. This analysis can guide rapid response to avert food crises and to better target policies.

Looking at the longer term, FAO has been strongly engaged in discussions on the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19, as part of the UN Sustainable Development Group. We work with the UN Country Teams and other agencies on data collection and analysis, reprogramming and scaling-up assistance.

While international attention was focused on COVID-19, we continued to support our Members in the battle against another dangerous enemy: Desert Locust. We did so with early warning and early action.

Since the beginning of the year, the desert locust upsurge continues to threaten food security in the Greater Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and parts of southwest Asia, with a risk of it further spreading to the Sahel region. Since January 2020, FAO and government partners have scored notable successes in locust control campaigns and, despite COVID-19 related challenges, the scale of infestations was reduced in many areas.

Initial estimates suggest that controls conducted in East Africa and Yemen have saved close to 1 million ton of cereal from locust damage. This is enough cereal to feed nearly 7 million people for one year. Through damage averted to rangeland, 451 000 pastoral households have been spared from livelihood loss and distress. In this respect, I would also like to highlight our strong partnership with the World Bank Group that recently launched a USD 500 million programme to help countries in Africa and the Middle East withstand the locust's impacts.

What is really impressive about the Bank's new Emergency Locust Response Programme is that it focuses on livelihoods recovery in the medium term, while also providing funding for investment in surveillance and early warning systems, so that countries are better prepared in the future. This is a vision and an approach we share and complementary role we can play together.

We need to sustain ongoing operations; scale up to meet emerging needs, and prepare for new desert locust threats, so that the impacts of the pest – combined with COVID-19 impacts – do not have catastrophic consequences for livelihoods and food security.

Our activities covered many other areas. I briefed the UN Security Council on measures needed to break the vicious cycle between conflict and hunger. I made panel speech at the launching of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication that was organized by the President of the UNGA. We intensified our dialogue with the European Union through bilateral meetings with the new EU Commissioners for Agriculture, Crisis Management, Health and Food Safety, Neighborhood, Partnership and Trade.

We strengthened our presence, contributions and interaction at events geared towards Humanitarian Action, such as UN Call for Yemen Humanitarian Crisis and the Ministerial Conference on supporting the future of Syria. I strongly support Food Coalition Initiative for food supply chain and participated

at an FAO-EU online event on the European Green Deal, highlighting the vital role of biodiversity in building sustainable food systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in January, at a meeting with FAO's Staff at the Director Level 1 (D1) and above, I declared 2020 to be the Year of an efficient FAO. I am proud to state that we did not let the lockdown stop us from working towards that goal. On the contrary, not only did FAO continue to deliver, but we became more efficient and responsive under difficulty time!

The dedication and hard work of our employees all around the world is recommendable, really accountable and I am appreciative to them. I from my side, will continue setting steps to further improve staff morale and work for the wellbeing of our employees.

The Organization made a tremendous leap into the digital age in the last months. Our daily use of digital tools multiplied by a factor of five since we started teleworking. Around 1 500 online meetings are held every day across FAO. About half a million e-mails are sent every day from our offices around the world!

We modernized and revamped our website, held virtual meetings with all FAO Representatives around the world and organized virtual global town hall meetings with all FAO employees. The town hall meeting had a record-breaking participation of 4 300 colleagues from outside Rome. In another historic first, we brought together young employees and FAO retirees from around the world in a virtual meeting and are now preparing a sophisticated modern coaching and mentoring programme in FAO.

Progress in implementing adjustments since the Council Session of last December.

At the last Session of the Council, I proposed a number of initial structural, programmatic and operational adjustments. These adjustments incorporated the vision that I presented to you during my campaign, of building a dynamic FAO for a better world, while remaining committed to the original aspirations, mandate and mission of the Organization (FAO). Following approval by the Council, we implemented these adjustments.

We recruited the Ethics Officer. The Ethics Office is now a separate distinct office with a direct reporting line to the Director-General. We appointed the Director of the new Office for SIDS, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developed Countries (LLDCs). Two Professional staff have been seconded and one G Staff is onboard. We recruited an Ombudsperson who is to take up duties next month and is administratively located in OSP. The further adjustments we are presenting today, include the proposal to establish a separate office for the Ombudsperson as requested.

Resources for FAO's work on the International Plant Protection Convention and on the Joint FAO/WHO food safety scientific advice program/CODEX Alimentarius were increased by USD 1 million each. A new Biodiversity Cluster was established in the Department (CBD), with USD 0.8 million in non-staff resources and a new Professional Level 5 (P-5) Senior Biodiversity Officer. The Youth and the Women's Committees were established, they serve as conduits to drive women and youth solidarity and engagement within FAO and beyond. The two Committees have been very active and have contributed greatly to the emergence of a spirit of unity and solidarity among FAO employees, while translating our vision of a catalytic role that youth can play in FAO into concrete activities.

Lockdown virtual activities, such as yoga lessons, cooking classes and random coffees, maintained connections between people – especially those on their own – during physical isolation. Innovation Wednesday events are incubators using the power of youth to spark change and make FAO a better and more productive place to work. Another excellent initiative is the InnoVentures Lab - a new event series around innovation and development that brings distinguished personalities from academia, business and media to inspire us with their thoughts on the important *innovation-technology-young enterprise-sustainable development nexus* for food and agriculture. The InnoVentures Lab is an incubator, receptor and disseminator of out-of-the box ideas and solutions.

A new Office for Innovation was established to consolidate and strengthen FAO's innovative spirit, including innovation in science and technology, innovation of approach and cooperation models, and capacity building. Efforts are ongoing to reach the widest range of potential candidates for the post of Chief Scientist.

A number of adjustment actions have been made to ensure that efficient and effective oversight functions are in place, as well as strong financial control and human resource management. The Office for Human Resources (OHR) was moved in the structure closer to the other HR management and servicing functions to ensure better integrated services under one accountability and quality control, at the right level of management. These services include communication with Staff Representative Bodies and FAO's participation in the United Nations Chief Executive's Board's High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM). A new HR Director was selected through a competitive process.

However, we have also valued internal candidates with a strong record of delivery, for senior positions, the newly appointed Assistant Director-General's (ADGs) heading the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok is a good example for this.

The Office of the Inspector-General (OIG), received an additional USD 400 000 to strengthen the investigations function. It was the first time it benefitted from an increase after years. I am committed to ensuring that OIG is provided with the necessary resources to implement its work program, and I will make additional resources available from within the net appropriation resources in 2020-21, if necessary. A new Inspector General has been appointed and will start his duties later this summer.

Furthermore, the four auditor posts previously located in the Regional Offices were re-located to Headquarters, allowing for synergies and a better distribution of work by having a pool of auditors in one location where assignments can be given based on the profile (language skills, experience) instead of the location of the auditor.

A new position (D-1) was added in the Finance Division, to strengthen managerial oversight, ensuring the Division maintains the integrity of its function.

I am pleased to state that, despite the challenging last five months, we have implemented nearly all the proposals approved at the last Council Session.

Proposed Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21.

The further adjustments that I am presenting today are a logical continuation of the changes approved in December 2019 and are guided by the same vision: creating an inclusive and agile FAO that serves its Members to achieve the "four betters": better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life by further transparent, open, innovative, responsible and effective reform.

I would like to recall the extensive, detailed, open and transparent discussions that we have had on the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, in which I have been deeply involved and where we spared no effort to ensure full transparency and clarity.

In the past weeks we organized, two informal Seminars for Members that I attended; two Sessions in the Joint Meeting; separate Sessions in the Programme and the Finance Committees; a number of briefings for Regional Groups.

Furthermore, we issued six Information Notes that provide detailed information that answers all the questions raised by Members. I deeply appreciated the frank, sometimes demanding discussions, advice and contributions provided by the Members. My team and I have approached these exchanges with openness and a strong willingness to interact and benefit from your comments. We firmly believe that that this dialogue is a crucial element in building mutual trust and strengthening the FAO governance.

We are also convinced that all of us here share the common goal of building a better FAO and therefore see all the exchanges and deliberations of the past three months in a very positive way. Thinking together for the benefit of our Organization.

In FAO's history, no Council had such an intense preparation and vivid exchange of ideas. I want to thank the distinguished delegates and Members of the various Committees for their strong involvement as well as all my colleagues who have been contributing to this joint open thinking process and doing their best to reply to all queries.

Let me share with you the main highlights of the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Concerning internal management arrangements, to improve the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness while avoiding silos and establishing transparency and accountability at the optimal levels, we propose a number of structural and programmatic adjustments.

A more modular and flexible organigram is proposed, to allow for optimal cross-sectoral collaboration and to enable adjustments to managerial assignments and reporting lines to respond to emerging needs and priorities. This is also a lesson we learned during the pandemic, as we were forced to adapt quickly and effectively. The results clearly show that it works. This is the cornerstone for an agile FAO.

The core leadership team consists of the three Deputy Director-General's (DDG), the Chief Economist, Chief Scientist and Director of Cabinet. They support me in all areas of the Organization's mandate. This core group exemplifies the new collaborative approach of FAO. No more silos, no more small kingdoms – one strong team that works in harmony and synergy.

The ADGs in Headquarters will be involved in pre-coordination of big projects and visible external activities of key importance and less in internal daily management issues. We strengthened the accountability of the heads of offices, centres and divisions, in line with best practice given their role as experts in their respective areas. They will report to a DDG or one of the Chiefs as the "A" role and to another member of core leadership as the "B" role at same time or directly to myself.

This change allows for the Director Level 2 (D2) to play a relevant role as real experts and push for cross-cutting sharing of information as they must report to the core leadership following the A and B lines at the same time. They will also Carbon Copy (cc) to relevant directors at D2 or D1 level. This will build consensus, strengthen internal synergy and avoid the creation of silos. The proposed structural and programmatic adjustments are to improve the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness while avoiding silos and establishing transparency and accountability at the optimal levels.

The specific reporting lines are established taking into consideration the background, skills, and knowledge of the individuals in the leadership team. There is a primary role ("A") and a secondary role ("B") within the reporting line, with the "B" role playing a complementary function and with mutual regular support and update. This flat, accountable and cohesive structure will be established for a more efficient and accountable FAO by minimizing exchange costs and less bureaucracy.

Regarding the Organizational structure, based on previous evaluations and recommendations, a new Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is proposed, which would coordinate the corporate engagement in the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review, working closely with concerned units across the Organization.

I will oversee the SDGs Office. I will put all comprehensive efforts to strengthen FAO decentralization at Country offices, Regional offices and others for the frontlines (talent, resources and services and responses from HQ). This empowering of our offices will be accompanied with a clear push for more tangible deliverables and by a 360-degree evaluation. We will start evaluating selected offices by the end of the year.

We are aware that the grass-roots level is not solid and lacks the ability to serve. We need to create a sense of access and satisfaction at that level. Establishing this Office will ensure a stronger focus of FAO on the SDGs and end a situation where SDGs related efforts were scattered across the Organization.

We propose the strengthening of three centres, where FAO works in close collaboration with other UN Agencies or with international financial institutions (IFIs). Following positive exchanges with the relevant entities, I was encouraged to design bigger and do more concrete.

We need to think and plan bigger in order to deliver more and better for our Members. Working in partnerships is increasingly critical to address complex and multifaceted issues and by strengthening the centres we proposed to make catalytic use of FAO's limited net appropriation resources (Big, old and poor).

The Investment Centre (service centre) supports public and private investment in countries of the Membership to help them achieve the SDGs. An increase of USD 8 million is proposed to harness its catalytic role in supporting countries and enabling financing at scale. In that respect, it is important to highlight the excellent collaboration and complementary role we have with the World Bank, our longstanding strategic partner.

Not only is there a strong interest from the World Bank leadership to cooperate with us, we see concrete results in current activities, such as the desert locust response I had mentioned earlier. We want to scale up not only with the World Bank but also with other IFIs.

The Joint FAO/WHO Centre, which could also be considered a coordination platform, would house two important joint efforts: the Codex Alimentarius Commission as well as all of FAO's work on zoonotic diseases and others (One Health, AMR, food safety).

Expertise on zoonotic diseases is brought together to ensure this work continues in a focused and coordinated manner within FAO and in close consultation and collaboration with WHO, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other global partners. Clearly, we need to have a good discussion with WHO and also with OIE, to define our collaboration after the pandemic, but more urgently we have to prepare ourselves first.

The Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre, that is a physical centre or laboratory, reflects the longstanding strategic partnership between FAO and IAEA in sustainable agriculture development and food security using nuclear science and technology, is proposed for strengthening by USD 1 million.

Here again, there is very strong interest to further strengthen the cooperation from the IAEA, starting with their Director-General, and solid funding from their side to our collaboration is the proof of that. They gave USD 4 million extra in the last two months.

We propose a new division on Food Systems and Food Safety, which would provide strategic leadership in the development of more sustainable food systems. The Division would integrate FAO's scientific and economic analysis to provide improved policy guidance and targeted investment in food systems. This is directly linked to one of FAO's important future-oriented mandates: transforming the global agricultural food systems. Here again, we are taking a concrete step to strengthen focus and abolish silos. Fragmented work is not an option anymore.

All proposals are made within the biennial net appropriation approved by Conference of USD 1 005.6 million.

Outlook into the Transformation of FAO.

The 75th Anniversary of FAO comes at a time of big challenge and historical chance. 'Food for all' is our aspiration. First of utmost, we should have enough food with ending hunger first. Food for different regions and specific demands, balanced food that is adequate to address malnutrition and obesity.

Our thinking and acting needs to go beyond the mere production of food and include food consumption, food quality, food culture and other aspects. We need to think what good food means. Food that fits requirements, biological needs, for the child, the sick the obese, for consumers at different ages. We need to look at the specific formula and pattern.

Our attention needs to go to scientific, evidence-based food consumption and how to produce food. Looking at the environmental impacts and make changes to production modes and methods, being contributors to sustainable development. Looking at animal protein, we need to examine feed productivity and output per unit in terms of environment impacts.

Our attention is also geared towards the food chain, supply chain and cold chain and the related challenge of eliminating food loss and waste both on innovation and policy. This is where digitalization and modern solutions such as e-commerce come into play as ways of transforming and rationalizing our food systems. We need to think about a feed CODEX, addressing pressing issues like AMR, residues, heavy metals and the use of additives and the environmental pollution that goes with it.

Exploring new methods of using food residues, using more the recycled and the by-products to produce feed, thereby increasing the value of biomass and achieving environmentally friendly results. Looking at fibers, we need to explore natural ways of developing new ones. This is a field, where innovation is needed. Biofuel, biogas and even bioreactors are another area of interest for the future. Agriculture needs to contribute to fuel production using grass or bush or non-edible parts of crops and other commodities. Looking at forestry, we need to go beyond the limited view of it being about planting trees. It is also a source of feed and fiber. Bamboo and rattan come to mind, as examples.

We need to highlight the cultural heritage of agriculture, transferring knowledge, indigenous knowledge (IK), tradition and habits from one generation to the next. Then, there is the touristic value and aspect of agriculture, an area that is well worth investing into, as a sophisticated complementary tool for decent labour-intensive jobs in the rural development. The Agri-environments should be addressed as man-made environments, including wetlands, like rice paddy fields and aquaculture ponds; reforestation for ecosystems, like bushes and grass; installations in the semi-desert, using solar energy on green houses, animal shelters for cattle, and feed production sites.

This leads us to the Eco-Economy, where economic value is paired with environmental sustainability. When combining rice farming, raising duck, fish and water vegetables in a rice paddy field for example. Farming diversity lead to numerous income generation. Standard large farming plays fundamental supply to food security. Sustainable Farming is keeping sustainable and friendly use of ecosystem in local environment with maximum values of their products and by-products.

That is agriculture at large with five 'F's which are Food, Feed, Fiber, Fuel and Friends. We need to link biodiversity with food diversity, as food diversity is explored from biodiversity by science. We also look at integrating agri-food systems into the environment, like we do in the urban and peri-urban environment with our vision of green cities.

To make the expertise of FAO different and unique, we need real experts and strategic scientists. They will have to master knowledge of various areas and combine it. True multidisciplinary experts and talents working as a team and offering comprehensive service. This is what makes FAO's world reputation. Experts that go beyond their area of specialization to add other aspects of the issues at hand. For instance, aquaculture experts that work on *Fish Wharf Tourism*, thereby contributing to rural development at large.

To become the most prestigious UN Organization, we need support, investment and even stronger partnerships, with the UN System, the international financial institutes (World Bank and others), the Private Sector and many others. We need multidisciplinary talents, more internal coordination with cohesion and less bureaucracy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with the proposed further adjustments I presented today, all the building modules for the new FAO are in place, if we work together and trust each other, working as a whole-system team, as we are in the same boat.

A demand and challenge driven, professional and innovation-based, results and impact-oriented FAO. Demand from farmers, decision makers, the industry, society; challenges from environment, economy and nature disasters; professional through dedicated, knowledgeable and experienced staff; innovation by new agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, bio-products and others), new business

models, digital tools and systems, block chains; results, delivered to farmers in vulnerable regions, to governments, consumers, the private sector and to society as a whole; and impacts, on the agri-food systems, at the socio-economic level, culture, on the environment and on reaching the SDGs.

That is the new FAO and we see the following major activities and actions in the immediate future.

Reviewing FAO's Strategy. This is an exercise that we intend to start in August with the aim of drawing up a new Strategic Framework by the end of the year. We need your, Member's, contribution and commitment to support long term of projects and initiatives.

Eliminating bureaucracy. This is a crucial element in the formula. We will start with an early harvest in the human resource management area: internal recruitment, career design and promotions. We will strengthen our cooperation, in that respect, with the private sector and focus on the delivery in our country offices.

Improving accountability, our dual reporting system of role "A" and role "B" will be the basis of strong internal control. Frequent internal coordination among the D1 and D2 level will also strengthen accountability. Senior managers need to lead by example by taking responsibility, working hard, sharing information and thinking holistically. Accountability for each project, working hard and pragmatic for the farmers, for the beneficiaries, ensuring optimal results. Accountability of Members, increasing their contribution to the Organization, be it financially (short term and long term) or by strengthening their country's involvement. Building links to decision makers in the Ministries of finance, innovation, health, environment, nature resources, infrastructure and others. Connecting FAO to the private sector and to the civil society in their countries.

Minimizing risk, this will be based on a solid sharing of information and on respecting the rules. We need more dialogue: between senior staff and professionals, with our Members and with the private sector. All this will be backed up by a solid understanding of the scientific methods to analyze risk and maximize benefit. This is the modern risk management approach that will be disseminated throughout the Organization. Strengthen the OIG and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) assessment.

Holding FAO Regional Conference. The pandemic forced us to postpone the Regional Conferences, but we are working to have them taking place soon. We need them to receive the regional perspectives for the strategic framework, to identify regional champions for the agri-food system transformation and we are counting on benefiting from them within the framework of preparing the UN Food Systems Summit.

Strengthening Country Offices: our country offices are the backbone of FAO's delivery. We will ensure that they receive adequate support and service on the ground, while regularly checking their tangible delivery through 360-degree evaluations. They need to be empowered. We are linking them directly to the responsible DDG and core leadership. They also have direct access to the responsible FAO regional representatives and regional coordinators in Office of the Director-General (ODG). The Heads of Country Offices will have P5 as a minimum grade with competence. They deliver to our Members at the frontline and therefore they are at the center of our attention!

We will also put a strong emphasis in our work on transboundary diseases. Fall Army Worm, the Global Action Steering Committee agreed to host a High-Level Conference, to be co-hosted with the African Development Bank, with key donors in order to mobilize resources for Fall Armyworm control. The Conference was initially scheduled to take place in Abidjan this month, but due to the pandemic will now possibly be held virtually during September this year, at a date to be determined.

FAO will continue to monitor and analyze the impact of COVID-19 and related measures on Fall Armyworm control activities. We will hold the next meeting of the Steering Committee next week.

Desert Locust. The fight against locusts is far from done. In Kenya, we are beginning to see the light through the swarms, but much more needs to be done in Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen in the coming months if we are to get this upsurge under control. In India, Iran and Pakistan, too, we are seeing massive progress thanks to the determination of governments and local authorities, but the locusts are not yet under control. As we depend on both control efforts and weather conditions, we need to remain

vigilant and have a no regret approach to prepare for a potential upsurge in the Sahel and West Africa. Our collective actions in the coming month will have enormous implications for the food security of millions of people in countries stretching from West Africa to Southwest Asia.

COVID-19. FAO is at the forefront of addressing the new and emerging global challenges posed by COVID-19 from the food security, nutrition and resilient food systems perspective. From the start of this pandemic, FAO has adopted a comprehensive and holistic approach to proactively address challenges by COVID-19 and to plan for recovery and building back better. Our comprehensive response to COVID-19 brings together all the aspects of our work on the pandemic, ranging from the immediate requirements and humanitarian actions to the medium-longer term development interventions. This comprehensive response is prepared through an inclusive process of consultation with the involvement of the country offices and Headquarters based on precise needs and demands on the ground.

As a result of which six, plus one, areas of work are identified as priority for FAO's intervention (in the context of COVID-19):

1. Trade including Intra-regional Trade and Food Safety Standards
2. Poverty Reduction, Economic Inclusion and Social Protection
3. Preventing Pandemics of Animal Origin through an Extended One Health Approach
4. Boosting the Resilience of Smallholder for COVID-19 Recovery
5. Data, Information and Analysis
6. Food Systems Transformation
7. FAO's Humanitarian Response, as part of UN response: Addressing the Impacts of COVID-19 in Food Crisis Contexts.

Only a corporate, holistic, proactive and unified approach will allow not only FAO, but the entire United Nations, to position itself among the main actors involved in the crisis response, mitigation and prevention. A high-level event where this comprehensive response package will be presented is planned for ECOSOC in 14 July 2020.

The coming months also represent our best opportunity to avert predicted large increases in the number of people facing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why we are speeding up our roll out of primary data collection and monitoring on the ground so we can pinpoint emerging hotspots and take the most appropriate, cost-effective anticipatory action to avert rising hunger.

We will also continue planning ahead to adapt the Organization to COVID-19.

The Hand-in-Hand Initiative. The COVID-19 pandemic unveils and accentuates the existing weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the global and country food and agriculture systems. This creates an urgent need to cope with the combined impacts of the pandemic, mitigation measures, and a major global economic recession. The multi-dimensional nature of the crisis will require the coordinated efforts and actions of multiple stakeholders and partners to address the diverse economic, social, and environmental challenges.

For the purposes of integrated COVID-19 response for food and nutrition security, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative offers a ready-made coordination structure linking a diverse array of central and provincial government offices, donors, IFIs and private sector, NGO/CSO and research entities – all working under the central direction of the host government. As we continue including new countries into the initiative, this coordination potential will be of added value and importance to the Members.

Strengthening Resilience. Conflict and climate extremes remain the main drivers of acute food insecurity. We are committed to scaling up multi-risk early warning systems and their links to early actions, so we actively reduce the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. We have the evidence – anticipatory action not only demonstrates value for money, but more importantly helps people retain their livelihood and dignity even during times of crisis.

At FAO, we believe that people and their communities are inherently resilient and that resilience is the foundation of development. When people can withstand shocks and continue to provide for their families, their communities, they can reap the benefits of development efforts.

Supporting the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS). We understand that this is the Secretary-General's event. But FAO, as the major UN Agency focusing on the issue of food systems, offers all the support we can provide, with our leading role as platform for Members to interact on all related matters. The year 2021 will be a big year for FAO. We will make use of FSS as one of most important events to catalyze transformation of agri-food system and speed up integration of key players in the food system.

Distinguished Delegates, every generation has its historic responsibility. FAO is entering a new era. FAO is ready to make history, with your support, involvement and integration. FAO Management, including myself, we will spearhead to contribute 100 percent of our engagement, dedication and input to make the new FAO a reality (one year has four seasons but I have no day and night).

We are prepared to change, we will change, and just as so many asked us to do. Let's take more concrete action for an efficient, transparent, inclusive FAO that is more dynamic and more agile.

I thank you again, and appreciate your cooperation, your support and all your suggestions. My door is always open. I am from the people, by the people and for the people.

Let us trust, respect and keep the commitment to each other, and make new history together.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General.

I would like to congratulate you on completion recently of one year since your election as Director-General. This is the second Session of the Council that you have addressed since taking office. In that time, you have no doubt brought in renewed energy and dynamism to the Organization, as well as openness in your dialogue with Members.

You have also had to face the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Members have appreciated your able and proactive handling of the crisis for FAO.

This Session of the Council will consider your proposals for *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, which builds on your initial adjustments approved by the Council at its 163rd Session in December of last year.

These further adjustments include proposals for budgetary shifts, enhancements to delivery mechanisms, and a new paradigm for organisational structure which you have just articulated. Members of the Council will review these proposals, and other matters of importance for FAO, during the course of this Session under specific Agenda items.

For now, I would like to ask Members for any initial comments or observations they may have on your address. The floor is now open for any questions from delegates in case they wish to make a comment.

Before starting with Agenda Item 1, I have to inform you that Uganda is considered to have resigned from the Council under the terms of Rule XXII, paragraph 7 of the General Rules of the Organization regarding arrears in payment of financial contributions. Therefore, Uganda participates in this Council Session as an Observer.

The first Item on the Agenda for this Council Session is the *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable*.

As indicated in my pre-Session letter of 29 June to the Members of the Council, the special arrangements and procedures for the 164th Session of the Council, in light of the virtual modality, are submitted to the Council under this Agenda Item. Annex 3 to Council document *CL 164/INF/5 Rev.1*, Note on the Methods of Work of the Council, contains the relevant information on these special procedures.

Other relevant information for the *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable* for the Session is set out in documents *CL 164/1*, *CL 164/INF/1* and *CL 164/INF/3*.

With regard to the Provisional Timetable, I refer further to my pre-Session letter of 29 June proposing that Item 3: *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*; Item 4: *Programme Implementation Report 2018-19*; Item 9: *International Platform for Food and Agriculture*; and Item 10: *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems*, be deliberated under the designated items and not when we consider the reports of the Programme and Finance Committees, their Joint Meeting, or the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM).

For ease of reference, the relevant paragraphs in the reports of the Committees are included in the Provisional Timetable under the respective items.

After a number of consultations between myself and the regional groups, and with FAO Management, and based on the experience of the recent virtual meetings of the Committees of the Council, the special procedures proposed for this virtual Council Session are outlined in *CL 164/INF/5*, Annex 3.

The Council is invited to confirm their endorsement for the suspension of any rules incompatible with this virtual setting, specifically Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council which stipulates that each Session of the Council shall be held at the seat of the Organization.

It is also proposed to adopt a written correspondence procedure for items presented to the Council for information, namely, Item 11: *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council (2-6 December 2019)*; Item 12: *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21*, Item 13: *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*, and Item 14: *Tentative Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (30 November – 4 December 2020)*.

A dedicated webpage on the Council website of this 164th Session presents the written exchange between Members and the Secretariat under this correspondence procedure.

This written exchange will also be included in the verbatim records of the Session and the draft conclusions for these Agenda items will be addressed in the virtual meeting on Wednesday morning.

The remaining items on the Agenda of this 164th Council Session will be addressed in the virtual format as per the Timetable.

I should like to propose the addition of Sub-Item 15.1: *Appointment of Representatives of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee*, as one seat has become vacant due to the departure of one Member.

I should also like to propose one Sub-Item 15.2: *Statement by a Representative of FAO Staff Bodies*.

If the Council is in agreement, each of these items could be addressed on Wednesday morning under Item 15, as per the Provisional Timetable.

I would like to ask the Council whether the Council approves the Agenda and Timetable for the Session as well as the amended modalities for this virtual Session, including the suspension of any incompatible rules of this virtual setting, specifically Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council outlined in Annex 3 of the document *CL 164/INF/5 Rev.1*.

I see I have Members requesting the floor. United Kingdom, you have the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you, Director-General, for your statement and for FAO's advocacy on COVID-19. I would particularly like to congratulate FAO on the success that you have had in supporting your Members to access the Green Climate Fund. The United Kingdom is a proud contributor to the Green Climate Fund.

As we look forward to the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), we urge FAO to support its Members to develop their Nationally Developed Contributions (NDCs) that reflect the challenges to

their food systems. I think all the Members of Council will share our concerns about the growing threats to global food security and to our food systems. These no longer include just climate change but also desert locusts, other pests and diseases and of course the secondary impacts of COVID-19.

The United Kingdom looks forward to working with the Director-General and other Members as FAO embarks on its strategic planning process. We recognize that difficult choices will need to be made in agreeing priorities and we urge FAO to focus on supporting its Members to prepare and respond to the threats that we are tackling in food systems around the world. I do not have any comments on Agenda Item 1.

Ms Alexandra BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

I wanted to thank the Director-General once again for his commitment and incredible energy on the part not only of FAO but more generally, food security. We are all exhausted by hearing the accounts of his very extensive engagement, which is incredibly important at this moment. We are also very supportive of his vision for a very agile, innovative and inclusive FAO and his commitment to transparency and accountability.

We do support his efforts to break down silos and to promote cross-sector and trans-disciplinary collaboration and coordination across the department. Change is never easy, particularly organizational change. I wanted to echo what my colleague from the United Kingdom was saying as well. We will work very closely but we do have concerns, as we move forward, that we not undermine the very critical work that the FAO does with regards to standards and guidelines and particularly in areas of its expertise on forestry, fisheries and food safety. He gave us reassurances today.

I know that as he moves forward, he will make sure that in his effort to provide a greater collaboration, that we will not lose this essence of FAO and its absolute expertise on science. I would just close with saying that this is an important year, as we go forward to the 75th anniversary of FAO, and we hope that we will have the pleasure of your actual presence in Canada to celebrate the 75th anniversary, if not virtually, in Quebec City. We look forward to working with you with regards to the World Summit on Food Systems where FAO, along with other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), will be critical.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, I have a few speakers. I think there was a technical glitch on my computer and I did not see the 'Raise Hand' request of the various Members.

Therefore, we will go ahead with that. The next speaker is China.

Mr Niu DUN (China) (Original language Chinese)

I would like to thank the Director-General for his very complete and informative opening statement. Since the last Council and in a context of the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO accords great importance to innovation. It has maintained the normal functioning and the continuity of its work. In particular in its response to the impact of COVID-19, in the fight against the desert locust and other important areas of activity. FAO has acted quickly and effectively, and it has supported many developing countries. We greatly appreciate this.

Given the new situation and the new challenges and uncertainties, we support the reform and the adjustments of FAO, which aim to make the Organization more effective and efficient, with fewer responsibilities and accountability. An FAO which is more agile in its responses to emergencies, providing better services to Members, more inclusive, transparent and responsible.

We support the creation of the Office of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we appreciate the efforts of FAO to maintain the level of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to improve the equality and implementation rate, given the constraints of the zero nominal growth budget. Examining and adopting the new *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* will create a solid foundation for the next stage in FAO's work.

FAO has an important responsibility in the achievement of the SDGs. We support the active participation of FAO in the 15th UN Biodiversity Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), which is planned for October 2020 in Kunming, in China. We support a more active role of FAO in the preparation, holding and then follow-up of the UN Food Systems Summit.

We believe that Rome, as the home of the three United Nations' specialized Agencies for food and agriculture, is the ideal location to host the UN Food Systems Summit. The use of digital technology in food and agriculture worldwide is very important. China supports the creation by FAO of an international platform for digital food and agriculture within its mandate and institutional framework. The platform would function in a framework of the Organization's Programme of Work and Budget and it would respect the regulations, rules and procedures of FAO.

China supports the fact that FAO, through the Hand-In-Hand Initiative, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the Technical Cooperation Programme and strengthening of partnerships, supports agricultural and rural development of developing countries, and improves their overall capacity in terms of agricultural production. China is prepared to share with the other Members its experience and practices in the area of promoting rural and agricultural development and reducing poverty, to continue supporting FAO and to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Mr Jan TOMBINSKI (European Union)

The European Union congratulates the Director-General with his first year in office. This was perhaps the most difficult you could imagine, and we have also seen your leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and thank you very much. We have to commend you and the leadership of FAO for all the responses and continuity of work and for all your efforts not to allow the pandemic crisis to turn into a hunger crisis.

As you are aware, the European Union institutions are a proven partner of FAO, and therefore we wish FAO also to be a very efficient tool in this international global response to the challenges. In this context, I have to underline also the need to strengthen the cooperation between Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). Nowadays there is joint action and the synergy between all the elements of the international systems are more important than ever.

In the incoming months, FAO, its Management and its Membership, will be engaged with the Management in discussion on the Strategic Framework. I join my voice to the arguments already named by our British and Canadian colleagues on the need to include the regulatory role of FAO as one of the key elements in the Strategic Framework. Also, to ensure that all the expertise within FAO is not only maintained but expanded. We may be confronted in the future with more crises, therefore, FAO should have this expertise not only in the development field but also in areas that allow evidence- and science-based expertise for further action.

You proposed, Director-General, an adjustment to the structure, to overcome this siloed mentality, to strengthen the cross-sector population. I invite you also to reflect on the need to revisit this new structure in the light of the outcome of the discussion of the Strategic Framework, the structure should follow the function and the tasks of the institution.

The European Union has been for past years the main provider of funds for projects and actions of FAO. Therefore, we have to look at the need of accountability. We will all be facing huge financial crises, therefore, we are in charge to give answers to our taxpayers with results on all the money spent.

As this being my last intervention at the Council, I wish to thank you all for the friendship, and the Director-General and the Management of FAO for four very intensive years of work.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Germany, you have the floor.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Good morning, Independent Chair of the Council, I wish you a good hand and under your confident leadership we will experience a constructive and productive Council Session and we are counting on you in this regard.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive opening statement. Speaking on behalf of the European Union and the 27 Member States, I can assure him and the Members that the European Union and the 27 Member States fully support the objectives of the Director-General and the Management of making FAO a more dynamic, inclusive, transparent, efficient and flexible Organization, through strengthening science and evidence-based approaches.

My request for the floor actually relates to Item 1 of the Agenda and I am speaking here on behalf of the European Union and the 27 Member States. I would like to ask you and the Council to reschedule the discussion of Item 3 on the Agenda of this Session of the Council for the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, from today to either Tuesday 7 July, or Wednesday 8 July. Bearing in mind that tomorrow afternoon between 14:00 hours and 17:00 hours there is the first meeting of the Advisory Group, at which the Director-General and several of our permanent representatives have to participate. This would be my request on behalf of the European Union and the 27 Member States, that we could consider this amendment proposal for consideration of the Council as a whole.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Buen día a todos mis colegas. En un contexto de incertidumbre global agravado por el COVID-19, es necesario que los temas más sensibles para la comunidad internacional, como es el tema del hambre y la malnutrición, estén a cargo de liderazgos con visión, con compromiso, con conciencia de la problemática de los países en desarrollo y disponibles a dialogar permanentemente con los Representantes Permanentes. Por eso, Director General, Dr Qu, lo alentamos a que siga con tanta energía avanzando para hacer un mundo mejor. El nivel de incertidumbre requiere que todos seamos humildes, asumiendo que nadie tiene la posibilidad de saber exactamente cómo va a evolucionar la post-pandemia. Por eso, es necesario ser flexible y mantener un permanente diálogo con los Miembros como usted lo está haciendo.

En relación a lo manifestado por mi querido colega de Alemania, en representación de la Unión Europea, me gustaría entender la lógica porque considerando otras reuniones anteriores, ha sido muy difícil pensar en cambiar los órdenes de la agenda cuando todo está organizado y planificado de determinada manera. La verdad, no encuentro la lógica ni las razones para que esto pueda justificarse. Por lo tanto, en principio, salvo que existiera situaciones graves, urgentes que podrían ser muy bien justificadas, en principio creo que deberíamos mantenernos en el orden de la agenda preestablecida.

CHAIRPERSON

May I just clarify one point, because of a technical glitch on my computer, the “Raised Hand” icon did not appear on my screen, that is why Members were not given the floor in response to the Director-General’s statement. That situation has been sorted out and the United Kingdom kindly pointed it out also. May I suggest that we now restrict our comments to the statement of the Director-General, then the comments regarding the Agenda and Timetable, we will take them up immediately after these comments finish.

Now, I have got quite a few speakers on my list, I see. I would like to give the floor to only those who have some comments on the Director-General’s statement. Once we have completed that, I will give you the floor for the Agenda items and timetable. I have two speakers who have commented on the Agenda and Timetable and I would like to request that we reserve that after we finish.

Therefore, could I know from the Members who have requested the floor, do they want to make a comment on the Director-General’s statement?

If so, I will give the floor and the next speaker is Japan. Please comment on the Director-General's statement and we will come to the Agenda and Timetable after.

Mr Hiroshi OE (Japan)

Japan would like to express views on the suggested Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) regarding the proposed adjustment in the organizational structure.

We welcome the Director-General's idea to pick up the siloes and increase efficiency to flattening the Organization and enhancing flexibility of internal cooperation. However, our concern is that we have no information on how the Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) can work when they no longer have offices. How can they execute these special tasks assigned to them by the Director-General? Do they have staff workers to assist them? Further clarification is needed on this point.

We recognize the importance of transparency and accountability of Management and decision-making of international organizations, giving greater attention to the current situation. In this regard, we request how to integrate the reporting lines to the new organizational chart in due course, ensuring consistency with the portfolio of each position.

We request FAO to constantly ensure proper engagement of the Members when discussing changes and the additions to priority reporting lines and the assignment to the ADGs. Most importantly, we request FAO to keep ensuring adequate communication and exchanges with Members and call for timely variation of the efficiency gains from the structural change. We welcome the enhancement of the capacity of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and the Director-General's commitment to allocate additional resources in the future. OIG should be strengthened and adjusted to fulfil its duties.

Lastly, Japan commends FAO's global leadership to maintain the supply chain amid COVID-19. We also appreciate FAO's briefing and sharing of information with the Members. FAO can maximize this impact on site based on its comparative advantage. When food security is at risk, due to the prolonged COVID-19 crisis, it requires future activities of FAO.

Mr Nemat ALIYEV (Azerbaijan)

I would like to express our gratitude in the capacity of Council Member to the Director-General and his team for the excellent work that keeps FAO functioning in this particular and difficult time.

The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented disruption to the global supply chain as production and consumption are on a downward trend across the world. While the outbreak weakened considerably the global value chain by disrupting the balance between supply and demand, the economic repercussions are having a profound adverse impact on every sphere of life. In this connection, FAO is one of the multilateral frameworks that has important mandate to help humanity to overcome the current situation.

FAO uses digital frameworks successfully to keep communication with permanent representatives and released important publications and guidelines that were useful in terms of presenting policy responses to Members to address negative affect of the pandemic on food security and to promote global approach to prevent global food insecurity. Online platform of FAO was very helpful in terms of getting familiar with the best policy responses introduced by Member Countries. It is obvious that this pandemic is happening against the backdrop of the fourth industrial revolution and some countries take this situation as a favorable condition to redesign their economy. We are lucky that in this difficult situation we have FAO leadership which is willing to make reformation in FAO.

We all witnessed that FAO people was working hard in this difficult time and managed to submit new organigram. We believe that this new management system with the valuable contribution of all Member Countries will convert FAO to be responsive to recent challenges. We appreciate the desire of the Director-General to make FAO more digital. Overcoming COVID-19 also stipulates using digital technologies. We support the initiative of establishing a digital platform on agriculture and food which we will discuss within this Council. Azerbaijan is ready to actively participate in this platform to share its experience, which is very useful amid COVID-19. Intensive utilization of digital platforms in its

interaction with Member Countries makes FAO even more inclusive. It is only inclusiveness and transparency that will make FAO belong to all Member Countries.

Today, we need to be together more than ever. We should duly appreciate the value of multilateralism. As mentioned by Mr António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the UN, we are in an unprecedented situation and the normal rules no longer apply, and this is a human crisis that calls for solidarity.

My country, in its turn, actively contributes to multilateralism within FAO and multiple other frameworks, when the world is facing a global disaster and all countries need international solidarity and cooperation. Azerbaijan-FAO partnership programme financed by Azerbaijan is an important contribution of Azerbaijan to multilateralism. Within this programme, while engaging in deep reformation being currently implemented in Azerbaijan, FAO experts get closer information about the particularity of the region, which they use in their activity in other countries of the region. We are happy that we are contributing to agricultural development in the whole region.

At the same time, Azerbaijan has provided USD 10 million in assistance to the World Health Organization (WHO), which will help countries in the world that are suffering from the pandemic and financially struggling to fight the pandemic. The donation has been distributed to the most vulnerable Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Member Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The President of Azerbaijan, in the capacity of the Chairman of NAM has proposed convening a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to strengthen the global efforts to combat COVID-19.

The proposal has been supported by more than 130 UN Members, which demonstrates confidence and trust in Azerbaijan. This initiative was protested by only one country. High support to this initiative is clear evidence that the international community understands that only through solidarity we can overcome this crisis. We are grateful to the Member Countries that supported this initiative and hope that FAO leadership will also contribute to this initiative within its mandate.

Mr Hee-soeg KWON (Republic of Korea)

My delegation truly expresses its sincere appreciation to the Director-General and the FAO's staff for their continuous efforts towards ending hunger and poverty under the dire situation due to the COVID-19 spread. My delegation would also like to congratulate the Director-General on making successfully one year from his inauguration.

We convey our full support and trust in FAO taking uninterrupted strides under your able leadership. While we struggle to combat the pandemic's negative impacts on worldwide food security and socio-economic environment, COVID-19 compelled us to change our attitude, behaviour and way of thinking. We believe that this applies not only to national governments but also to international organizations, including FAO.

In this regard, we consider this Council itself and all deliberations on all the items as crucial in charting new adaptable ways in this crisis. We believe that the proposed Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-2021 and international platform for digital food and agriculture is extremely important, and we are ready to discuss with FAO Secretariat and Council on further details of this important proposal.

We are supportive of the Director-General's overall direction of breaking the silo mentality and unintended bureaucracy, and making FAO more agile, transparent and accountable. We are reminded of Director-General's three words, as he said this morning – big, poor, and old – showing the current FAO's status. We also extremely hope that FAO will work in closer cooperation and coordination within the Organization and Member States and other humanitarian agencies, given the formidable challenges of our time.

We therefore look forward to having rich discussions, not only confined to the Agenda itself but also in consideration of the broader challenges and the direction in which we have to move. My delegation will continue to render its support to the FAO's key programmes and the Director-General's tireless efforts to accomplish major objectives.

Mr Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (Dominican Republic)

Thank you, Sir. I will speak in Spanish.

Continúa en Español

La delegación dominicana desea llamar la atención del Consejo a los párrafos 72 y 130 de la intervención del Director General, donde refiere la comparecencia histórica que realizó junto al Director Ejecutivo del Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) en una sesión especial del Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas. Por primera vez en la historia del sistema internacional, en abril de este año, el Consejo de Seguridad abordó la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional y esto fue hecho a iniciativa de la Presidencia pro tempore de República Dominicana en ese órgano. Porque como entonces el líder alemán occidental Willy Brandt dijo ante la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas en 1974, “El hambre es también la guerra.”

Pasaría casi medio siglo antes de que el Consejo de Seguridad reuniese la voluntad política y el coraje moral para reconocer que no puede existir paz verdadera, ni la paz puede ser duradera, mientras persista la inseguridad alimentaria y las diversas formas de malnutrición. Así que, muchas gracias Director General, por responder a la convocatoria de República Dominicana y advertir al Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas en términos inequívocos que la relevancia de la FAO en la arquitectura internacional es única y es indispensable.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Je voudrais remercier le Directeur général pour son intervention et pour son action à la tête de la FAO, depuis sa prise de fonction pour rendre la FAO toujours plus agile et plus réactive. En particulier, ce qu'il a entrepris dans le cadre de la crise de COVID-19, pour faire en sorte que la FAO réagisse au mieux et que la question de la sécurité alimentaire prenne toute sa place dans l'agenda international.

Je voudrais également le remercier de ses mots sur sa disponibilité au dialogue, car c'est en effet dans le cadre d'un dialogue franc et confiant que la gouvernance de l'Organisation pourra se dérouler au mieux dans l'intérêt de tous. Je voudrais enfin, Monsieur le Directeur général, saluer ce que vous avez dit concernant la prise en compte des défis si importants que présentent le changement climatique, la perte de la biodiversité, les questions de déforestation et plus généralement la durabilité des systèmes alimentaires, qui seront aussi au cœur de nos discussions à propos du Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires.

Comme le montrent tous les rapports scientifiques récemment produits, ce sont en effet des thèmes fondamentaux qui permettent nécessairement de traiter la question de la sécurité alimentaire et des systèmes alimentaires dans l'avenir, nous vous remercions donc de les prendre vraiment à cœur, au cœur du mandat de la FAO.

Mme Maria De Fatima JARDIM (Angola)

En premier lieu, nous voudrions féliciter la FAO et son Directeur général pour la dynamique qu'il a su créer, grâce à des scénarios alternatifs pour réduire les impacts sur le développement agricole, et pour les consultations qu'il a encouragées.

La FAO nous a permis de réfléchir à nos priorités communes et sur lesquelles le Conseil s'apprête à travailler. Nous félicitons aussi le Directeur général pour les objectifs du nouveau programme et de la nouvelle structure qui définit les priorités de manière transparente et responsable, et fait des prévisions modulaires et flexibles en vue des besoins et priorités nouveaux pour la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable. Une nouvelle division des systèmes de la sécurité alimentaire, le renforcement des centres de coopération en mesure de créer des capacités nationales transversales et interactives en vue de relever le défi du développement qui, nous en sommes sûrs, débouchera sur de bons résultats.

Notre succès réside dans le dialogue et dans les efforts dans la réalisation de nos programmes nationaux et mondiaux. Nos priorités doivent être en faveur de la résilience et les politiques nationales doivent garantir la sécurité alimentaire. Nous pensons que réussir cela avec succès, nous ne pouvons manquer de mentionner l'Afrique, ce qui fait la résilience du continent et comment le continent peut

donner la priorité au développement durable. Et si nous voulons faire face au défi du développement ce doit être par une action au niveau du climat en particulier, de l'adaptation dans le domaine d'une agriculture résiliente, qui devraient être stimulés, pour éliminer la faim, par des travaux axés sur la durabilité et l'intégration des différents secteurs.

Enfin, nous tous pouvons faire plus pour le développement humain et je vois que beaucoup d'entre nous sont jeunes ici. Je crois que le Directeur général de la FAO a fait un exercice incroyable et je l'en félicite ainsi que tout le monde.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Netherlands)

Good morning Director-General, Members of the Council, and Observers, it is great to see you all here in the first digital Council. I would like to thank the Director-General for his excellent and balanced statement. The Netherlands supports the direction of the Director-General to make FAO more fit for purpose, dynamic, inclusive, efficient, and effective and also, evidence- and professional-based.

Along what the Director-General said, to the Netherlands is very important that we align ourselves much more to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is great to see that it will hopefully be, the main focus of the new Strategic Framework. For the Netherlands it is rather important that we get the new Strategic Framework as soon as possible.

We compliment and applaud FAO for the work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and desert locust. That is one of the reasons why the Netherlands, within the framework of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) will make extra budgetary resources available for FAO's response to COVID-19, food losses and the food coalition. This should be done in close cooperation with the private sector so that it also will increase its investments, especially in Africa.

Mr Abdoul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

Director-General, I must say I am very impressed with your schedule of work. I must, again, commend your approach [XX] and of course I welcome the open dialogues and briefings that we had over the course of the year. Once again, I must commend FAO and the Director-General for their efforts towards achieving food security and I hope this continues to be on the Agenda of FAO.

On the part of the food security, we have started dialogues and we welcome FAO to be more involved, especially in trying to find platforms which have already been developed especially with countries that need support, in the Pacific and so on. We need to have more platforms for people to voice their concerns, especially when it comes to the Food Systems Summit. On that, we support the proposal by the Director-General and we hope that we can continue having an important dialogue in the next two days.

Mr Angung HENDRIADI (Indonesia)

With regard to the proposal of the [XX] structure, we are [XX]. However, it is important to stress our support to [XX]. Indonesia encourage [XX] at the country level. In this regard, we are looking towards more concrete action regarding the [XX].

Ms Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

As the only Caribbean country at the Council this time, we could not miss the opportunity to say something very briefly at this juncture. We agree with much of what has been said by many of the other speakers, so we only wish to thank the Director-General for his very comprehensive introductory remarks.

This type of comprehensive way of introducing what he has done is very important for small delegations like the Bahamas that are not represented in Rome. We commend the Director-General for the direction in which he is taking the Organization. We are very heartened by his enthusiastic approach which puts people front and centre. We commend FAO on its support of the Caribbean region and over the course of the week we look forward to offering our observations on the Programme of Work and Budget and other items.

M. Jorge FIGUEIREFO GONÇALVES (Cabo Verde)

Je vous remercie de m'avoir accordé la parole, ce sera pour moins d'une minute et juste pour rebondir sur le grand discours du Directeur général à propos de ce qui a été fait pendant l'année écoulée et ses perspectives.

Je le remercie pour l'excellence du discours, de vouloir plus de transparence dans la gestion de la FAO, plus de rapidité et plus d'efficacité. Cabo Verde est tout à fait d'accord avec ces propositions et les soutient pleinement. Je saisis aussi l'occasion pour rappeler les spécificités des des petits États insulaires en développement (SIDS).

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russia)

I just want to welcome distinguished delegates and the Director-General for his statement and for his presentation. Of course, we fully support many of the ideas that have been put forward for the delegation and of course we are mostly interested in the reform suggestions that were proposed by the Director-General. Russia would like to support his initiative and we believe it is important to give flexibility to the Director-General in implementing his reform initiative. Members demonstrate a constructive approach and support the changes in the organizational structure which was quite recently demonstrated during the WFP Executive Board session. I believe that the FAO platform will also show the very same customary approach.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a request from observers, so I will give the floor to Israel.

Mr Yael RUBISTAIN (Israel) (Observer)

We would like to thank the Director-General for his opening remarks. These are difficult times globally in terms of health, hunger and economic crises. We wish to show our appreciation for FAO's work, rising up to the challenge and working tirelessly to find answers and solutions for COVID-19, desert locusts, climate change and their devastating effects.

We have a lot of work ahead of us, the next ten years, to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and we have to do it together. Only a global commitment to a plan which is actionally entered and based on cooperation can move us in the right direction, hopefully fast enough and efficiently enough. Israel would like to take this opportunity to share with the Director-General, FAO staff and Members the message we have just received from our government which decided to allocate a significant amount of money to FAO's contribution to the Food Systems Summit.

This coming week Israel is going to replace Austria at the FAO Council. We are looking forward, ready to work hard with all of you and to promote FAO's global assurance in achieving a better world.

M. Papa Abdoulaye SECK (Sénégal)

Je voudrais, au nom de mon pays, féliciter et remercier le Directeur général pour la vision qu'il vient de nous exposer. A n'en pas douter, cette vision repose sur la prise en charge de trois enjeux qui nous paraissent essentiels, dans le cadre de la construction d'un système alimentaire efficace, efficient et durable. Ces trois enjeux sont précisément des enjeux socio-économiques, des enjeux environnementaux et des enjeux de santé publique, c'est-à-dire, une agriculture fondée et soutenue par une matrice à neuf colonnes qui auront pour nom productivité, qualité sanitaire, qualité phytosanitaire, qualité organoleptique, étalement de la production dans le temps, étalement de la production dans l'espace, gestion des ressources naturelles, résilience au changement climatique, et enfin, la diversification. Ceci suppose effectivement une approche systémique, vous l'avez dit Monsieur le Directeur général, une approche interdisciplinaire et une approche aussi qui place l'innovation au cœur de l'action. L'innovation s'entend effectivement en étant stratégie majeure de transformation structurelle des agricultures du continent. Pour toutes ces raisons, nous tenons à vous féliciter, mais aussi pour votre ouverture d'esprit et pour le leadership que la FAO a montré dans la prise en charge

de la pandémie de COVID-19 que nous vivons actuellement. Je voudrais après ces félicitations, Monsieur le Directeur général, insister sur la nécessité et l'urgence d'une décentralisation effective des activités de la FAO, mais aussi et surtout sur une fortification des bureaux de la FAO en Afrique, pour que ces bureaux puissent jouer d'avantage un rôle essentiel dans le cadre de la transformation des agricultures africaines. Monsieur le Directeur général, vous avez un exercice difficile, et quel est le premier de ces exercices? C'est ce qu'on pourrait appeler la gestion de la peur du changement et dans une organisation elle exige beaucoup de dextérité, de courage, de détermination, mais aussi de concertation pour que la FAO soit la FAO de tous avec pour tous l'envie de transformer les systèmes alimentaires du monde.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

La délégation tient à remercier et à féliciter le Directeur général de la FAO pour la vision qu'il a exposée dans son allocution. Cette vision tient compte de plusieurs enjeux relatifs aux différentes missions de la FAO. Ces enjeux sont aujourd'hui, comme l'ont rappelé d'autres délégations, d'ordre socio-économique certes, mais relèvent aussi de la lutte contre la pauvreté rurale et enfin, essentiellement, de la lutte contre la faim, l'insécurité alimentaire et la malnutrition dans le monde.

La délégation félicite également le Directeur général pour le leadership de la FAO dans sa réponse face à la COVID-19. On connaît aujourd'hui l'enjeu qu'elle représente au niveau sanitaire mondial et ses différentes implications. Ainsi l'engagement de la FAO, en vue d'une adaptation très efficace face à cet enjeu, mérite vraiment nos remerciements et félicitations à son Directeur général.

Également à propos de l'Initiative Main dans la main, le Directeur général, qui aura bientôt accompli une année de service, a pris très tôt les devants en lançant cette initiative très prometteuse et qui pourrait effectivement aider la FAO à remplir ses différentes missions.

Cela dit, nous souhaiterions insister une fois encore sur les enjeux relatifs à l'innovation et à la décentralisation et, sur ces mots, présentons nos vives félicitations au Directeur général pour sa vision et pour son leadership à la tête de l'Organisation face aux enjeux conjoncturels auxquels le monde est confronté.

CHAIRPERSON

I thank the Members for their comments on Director-General's comprehensive statement. I now pass the floor to the Director-General.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I fully support your decisions. Firstly, no changes to the Agenda items. Every day I am busy, I have so many meetings. This afternoon I will have meetings with the Vice President of the European Union (EU). Therefore, please, keep your Agenda as it was planned.

Secondly, I appreciate all the Members who support me and, also in making FAO deliver more. I am listening carefully. I will make all my efforts to strengthen country offices. You know I was a Director at the Institute of Vegetable and Flowers, for the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences; I was a local government leader. I know how local people on the ground are in need of support from the Head Office and from other partners. I will use a different approach to strengthen the country and regional offices and build comprehensive teams to help countries.

Third. Of course, I will keep myself as open as possible. As I said last time, you are facing a new Director-General. You have to change how you deal with a new Director-General, to make business more tangible, more efficient. That is why I said, let us learn, think, work and contribute together.

Thank you for all your advice, suggestions and concerns, but Rome was not built in one day. I came to the office eleven months ago, and five of those months were under lockdown, with one month for Christmas and New Year's holiday and another month for summer vacation in August. Therefore, for my staff and most staff, the working months are less than three months, please. Of course, during the

past five-month lockdown, FAO was teleworking very efficiently. You can ask other sister UN Agencies and other international organizations.

I really appreciate all the employees and staff, including the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, and the Chairpersons of the Programme, Finance Committees, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), and of other Committees. You really work hard, I know. Therefore, let us invite all the Council Members, not for myself, for FAO employees, Committee Members, Chairpersons. That is a clear message, as I said, let us make history together.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

Point 1. Adoption de l'ordre du jour et du calendrier

Tema 1. Aprobación del programa y el calendario

(CL 164/1; CL 164/INF/1; CL 164/INF/3; CL 164/INF/5 Rev.1)

CHAIRPERSON

Members, we can now proceed to Item 1.

The background information and some clarifications have already been provided and we have reached the point where the Members will be asked for their approval of the Agenda and Timetable. Germany and Argentina will comment on the Timetable. The floor is open for Members to comment on this Item before approval is given by the Council.

Egypt you have the floor.

Mr Badr HISHAM (Egypt)

I thank the Director-General for his excellent intervention. We support fully his vision and restructuring programme which we have heard for the last few months. Egypt would prefer to keep the schedule as it is. We are all busy. We have many months at hand. I do not see how one day will make a difference in this. We have been informed many times about the restructuring programme during the last few months. As the Director-General said, many notifications and information notes have been provided. We have heard informally and formally through the different Committees.

Unless there is something extremely urgent, we are not in a position to reschedule or to accept the proposal that is going on.

M. Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I completely agree with Ambassador Hisham Badr of Egypt. I think we have already debated this topic enough during two informal meetings and other meetings attended by many representatives of the Organization. We are all up-to-date on what this debate requires. It would be better to maintain the Agenda as it is.

Sr. Benito Santiago JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico)

Tomo nota de la solicitud de la Unión Europea, presentada por Alemania. México es muy respetuoso de las solicitudes que hagan los Miembros y, como tal, nos gustaría saber mejor las razones por las que la Unión Europea solicita atrasar este tema. El tema 3 ya lo hemos visto varias veces.

Lo discutimos en la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones, hemos tenido muchas sesiones informativas. Me llama la atención que se quiere atrasar ese tema. Si hay algún problema, si hay algo que no nos guste en las propuestas contenidas en el documento bajo el tema 3, creo que lo mejor sería discutirlo lo más pronto posible para tener toda la semana para aclarar cualquier problema que podamos tener.

De todas maneras, reitero mi solicitud a la Unión Europea para que nos explique por qué desean retrasar la cuestión de ese tema. No me gustaría empezar esta semana teniendo una negociación sobre la agenda. Creo que lo mejor es empezar a trabajar lo más pronto posible.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

It is very easy to explain. We had a very interesting informal briefing on 26 June with Director-General and information notes were provided. The coordination process of the European Union started later than expected. Now, we are actually in the final stages of the European Union coordination and it is expected to have a coordinated view on this by tomorrow morning. It would be just a sign of flexibility from the partners' side but I understand and hear what they are saying. Still, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to request a sign of flexibility from you.

Mr Abdoul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I share the view with Mexico. We expect Members' consensus and views on the Agenda Item itself. However, I must again reiterate that we hope [XX] of this Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) has been done in a transparent and inclusive process. I was informed that there was at least 60 [XX] that was issued by Members and discussed with them. Now, I also made the proposal to discuss this at the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

On top of that, we also must realize that some of the adjustments need to be implemented as soon as possible. That means that the negotiations and the discussions must go on as scheduled. Do not forget also that Members are following from their host countries meaning that would require them to be on-line at a specific time. Most of them have already decided or made arrangements to attend the discussion this morning. The change of the timing will be difficult for Members who are in their home countries.

Based on that I would like to propose that we can continue to discuss this Agenda Item today, but obviously, it is a work in progress and we can continue to discuss it as the week goes on. However, initial discussions, I believe, should be done today.

Ms Sharon BERNNEN-HALOCK (Bahamas)

Similar to Malaysia, I just wanted to make the point that some of us are not in Rome, I am actually in the Bahamas now where the local time is 05:00, in the morning.

While I understand the concerns expressed, sometimes, when a delegation or groups of countries make a request, we should not necessarily knock it down. Sometimes that request, or whatever amount of time is needed for additional consultations by a delegation or a group of delegations might be helpful to the overall proceeding. We should not necessarily knock it down right away.

However, I do want to say that every time changes are made to the Agenda, it affects differently those who are participating remotely. I am not necessarily saying no to the request but simply to take into account the fact that some of us are not in Rome and are in different time zones.

Mr Angung HENDRIADI (Indonesia)

Regarding the proposal for rescheduling the Agenda Item 3, I find this Item very important because we are discussing the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*. Since this meeting is being held on-line, please, kindly consider the time difference in our offices and at our place. This is important because as what was mentioned last time and proposed for 14:00 that is early in the morning for us, so we cannot join the discussion.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

En consonancia con otros Miembros y, salvo que hubiera alguna consideración de fuerza mayor, Costa Rica considera que es mejor mantener la agenda como está establecida. Sobre todo, la importancia del tema 3 sobre nuestros *Nuevos ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2020-21*.

Considerando que hemos sostenido diversas reuniones y sesiones informales de avance y clarificación sobre este importante documento, el avance de este punto permitiría contar con una organización más eficiente frente a los retos que estamos enfrentando y potenciados por el COVID-19. Se podría tener

flexibilidad pero tendría que argumentarse algo de fuerza mayor. Costa Rica considera que debemos mantener la agenda como está.

Ms Natalina Edward MOU (Republic of South Sudan)

I would like just to congratulate Director-General for his discussion in the morning about the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, which aims at increasing the coordination element. We are very happy to work with him and support him on what he is doing to improve FAO's work.

I just wanted to add my voice to other colleagues who spoke with regards to the rescheduling of Item 3. I do not think it is a wise idea. We have to discuss it today because we have dealt with it so many times.

South Sudan rejects the idea for the rescheduling of this Item.

Mr Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (Dominican Republic)

I would like to echo what has been said by some of our colleagues, Mexico, the Bahamas, Costa Rica and others, who spoke on the need for flexibility. As you know, I have chaired a number of meetings, not more than you have, Sir, but the default would be to be flexible. If any single Member makes a request that is timely and reasonable, and if a regional group or a group of countries would put forth a proposal for better tackling the Agenda, then the default position is that we should listen and be flexible.

In this case, the space for flexibility is extremely narrow. We have been discussing Item 3 for a long time, the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21*. I believe that we have had two Membership-wide discussions chaired by the Director-General, actually, chaired by you, Sir. I believe we also have had at least two rounds of discussions between the FAO Secretariat and the regional groups. I participated in three meetings since I attended one for the Group of 77 and China Bureau.

We have been discussing this for months and it is not just a matter of discussing it for a long time, rather it is a matter of intrinsic importance of the adjustment to the PWB. Therefore, it is logical to have this item first, and this is why it is Item 3, following the two Agenda items for housekeeping and for the approval of the Agenda. Everything that follows the Agenda of the Council comes after this fundamental paramount crucial Item of *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Some of our colleagues have been pointing to the time differences. That is important, of course, but I would like to argue that even if we were all seated in Rome in the Red Room, as we were supposed to do if we had not had this pandemic. Even under those circumstances this Item has been given first placement in the Agenda for a very good reason. It is the most political and the most technical Item, both things at the same time.

It is about the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* that have been implemented for quite some time, and the issues of the COVID-19 among other things that we will get to the substance later on today. To sum up, the Dominican Republic is not only prepared to tackle this Item now only as the first substantive Agenda Item, but we are prepared to do it because the Council must see it first and resolve it first. After that other matters can be resolved.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Cameroon would be very grateful to first of all recognize the presence of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Cameroon as the Head of the delegation. He is present here with us. We are speaking with his authorization.

Cameroon is represented at a very high level during this Council. Given the fact that the Minister has a tight schedule, I would like you to recognize his presence and to understand that he also is tied down by some other issues as he is taking part in this Council from Yaoundé, Cameroon. In principal he was

supposed to address the Council on Agenda Item 3 on behalf of our regional group and he is prepared to do so, today, with this Agenda.

Let me share my long experience in FAO, it is getting to 20 years that I have been attending Council's and other meetings. Every time we have to change the Agenda or the Timetable, it is always a very difficult discussion. I would expect that we can avoid that. I would strongly suggest that since regional groups were not consulted prior to this proposal from the European Union (EU) that the EU should show a bit of flexibility by allowing the regional groups to go along with the schedule as it is – because of prior commitments. Otherwise, we will turn to the experience in the past of the Council being bogged down by long discussions on the Adoption of the Agenda.

Please, mind with us, I have a very high-level Head of delegation with me. He is willing to take part to this part in this discussion. Please allow him to do so today because he is scheduled to do so.

I sympathize with my colleagues from the Bahamas and the Caribbean area where waking up at two, three or four o'clock in the morning is not an easy thing. They did it today, and if we want them to do the same tomorrow, we have to reschedule it. It is also very painful. We are behind all those who are really willing to discuss the Item today.

Ms Esti Andayani (Group of 77 and China)

We trust in your leadership and guidance to have this virtual FAO Council Session be the first in the history of FAO.

Responding to the proposal on moving Agenda Item 3 to another day, the Group of 77 and China, including those Member Countries that are Council Members, support the Timetable that was circulated and which was supported by the Director-General. We stick to the Provisional Timetable. As we are situated in far locations, we hope that we can have concise and fruitful discussions on this Agenda, today.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ghana as an observer.

Ms Audora Quartey KORANTEG (Ghana) (Observer)

What I wanted to say has been already said by the representative from Cameroon and the representative Ambassador for the Group of 77 and China. We should keep the Agenda as already circulated and make sure to go through the programme in order to make progress. There is nothing more for me to add to their comments.

Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan OLARIRAN (Nigeria) (Observer)

Congratulations on your chairmanship and the way you have conducted this meeting. Congratulations to the Director-General too.

On this subject, I think Cameroon, Indonesia, and the people from the Pacific Islands have made their point, but I want to add this. When you look towards the West, it looks okay. Even when you look towards the East, I am looking at the Minister of Agriculture in Indonesia and I recognize that room where he is sitting and attending this meeting, because of FAO's mission to Indonesia. Let us consider this whole situation and also the people joining us from China.

Be flexible, I think that is the message. Flexibility is what will make us go an extra mile.

CHAIRPERSON

I have just been informed that for technical reasons the interpreters have to switch over. I believe it will take just a minute or a couple of minutes. We will resume our discussion after that.

I have been told that we can resume our discussion. Germany you have the floor.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Thank you to all colleagues who have made their points. As always, my dear friend, and colleague, Mr Yaya Olariran set the right tone.

Indeed, bearing in mind the time difference, with high ranking officials are participating in this opening Session and that their schedule is tight and that others are participating from capitals with different time zones, we do not want to insist on our proposal. I herewith, on behalf of the European Union and its Member States withdraw it.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for the flexibility and the cooperation. I give the floor to Nicaragua.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua desea respaldar la posición del G77 más China. Consideramos que a esta altura, y el respeto también a nuestros Ministros que están atendiendo desde nuestras capitales, el tema 3 de la agenda deba discutirse hoy. Estamos ya por finalizar la sesión de la mañana y todavía estamos discutiendo sobre la adopción de una agenda que ya ha sido consensuada. Por lo cual, consideramos oportuno ya a partir de las 14.30 de la tarde empezar la sesión de la tarde con el tema 3 de la agenda sin posponerlo en otros días.

Mr Mohammad Hossein EMADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (Observer)

Thank you to the Director-General for his strong statement today and I strongly need to thank Germany for its flexibility with the statement. I think now we have solidarity among all Members and I clearly echo the same statement by the Group of 77 and China and by all regional countries and thank you for your flexibility. Now I think we are on the right order and the right track.

CHAIRPERSON

With the cooperation and flexibility shown by Germany, I take that the Council approves the Agenda and Timetable for the Session, as well as the amended modalities for this virtual Session including the suspension of any rules incompatible with this virtual setting. Specifically, Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, outlined in Annex 3 of the document *CL 164/INF/5 Rev.1*, to be used on an exceptional basis for this virtual 164th Session of the Council are hereby approved.

Approved

Approuvé

Aprobado

Item 2. Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee**Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents et nomination du Président et des membres du Comité de rédaction****Tema 2. Elección de los tres Vicepresidentes y designación del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción****CHAIRPERSON**

We can now move to Item 2 of our Agenda, which is the *Election of three Vice-Chairpersons and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee*. Given the exceptional circumstances under which this Council Session is being held and the need, therefore, to streamline the Council proceedings the Regional groups were asked to submit nominations for the Vice-Chairpersons of the Council and the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee by Thursday, 25 June.

The following proposals for the three posts of Vice-Chairpersons have been received.

1. Mr Jorge Federico Zamora Cordero (Costa Rica);

2. Ms Lynn Marlar Lwin (Myanmar);
3. Ms Jennifer A. Harhigh (United States of America).

If there are no objections, I wish to congratulate the three Vice-Chairpersons on their election.

For the Drafting Committee the Regional groups have nominated Mr Benito Santiago Jiménez Sauma of Mexico as Chairperson and the following countries as Members: Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Egypt, Finland, Germany, India, Russian Federation, South Sudan and the United States of America.

Are there any objections? I see none.

Thank you, the Drafting Committee Chairperson and the Committee Members are approved.

Approved

Approuvé

Aprobado

CHAIRPERSON

I would remind Members that in the light of the amending modalities for the 164th Session of the FAO, introductions to various Agenda items of this have been circulated in written form to Members and Observers of the Council in an effort to streamline the proceedings of these meetings. In such cases where regional introductions have been circulated, the introduction of the Secretariat will not normally be delivered verbally at the virtual meeting. All introductions can be found on the website of the 164th Session of the Council. I also wish to remind Members that following the discussions on each of the Agenda items I will draw up conclusions to facilitate the drafting of the report of this Session.

In this regard, in line with the practice implemented at our previous Sessions, the draft conclusions will be shared on your screen after the close of discussions on each Item through the shared screen function of the Zoom platform. This will enable Council Members to see the draft text while it is being read out and react with comments more easily. Non-English speakers of Council will be able to follow and provide comments through interpretation.

I wish to emphasize that my conclusions will be concise and focus on decisions by Council, in some flexibility afforded to the Drafting Committee in finalizing the Draft Report by not reopening substantive discussions, which will remain the prerogative of the plenary meeting.

That brings us to our next item, which is Item 3.

Item 3. Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21

Point 3. Nouveaux ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2020-2021

Tema 3. Nuevos ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2020-21

(CL 164/3; CL 164/3 Information Notes; CL 164/3 WA2 Rev.1, CL 164/3 WA3; CL 164/3 WA4)

CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraph 9)

CL 164/6 Rev.1 - Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (paragraph 6)

CL 164/7 - Report of the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraphs 15-21)

CHAIRPERSON

Dear colleagues, we will begin our substantive work now on Item 3, *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021*. Before we start our deliberations, I wish to urge that Members keep their interventions as brief and focused as possible with preference given to Regional Group statements rather than single countries repeating comments already made. I would also remind you to speak more slowly than usual to assist the interpreters in this virtual setting.

For Item 3, the documents before the Council are *CL 164/3; CL 164/3 Information Notes 1-6* and *CL 164/3 Web Annexes 2-4*. In addition, the introduction of this Item by Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 3: Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21

Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management

As anticipated in the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21*, approved by Council in December 2019, the Governing Bodies would have the opportunity to consider a broader review and adjustments to the implementation of the PWB during 2020, including at the 164th Session of the Council (July 2020).

In this regard, the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* has been considered by the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting at their Sessions in June 2020 and is presented for approval by the Council at this 164th Session in July 2020. In addition to the information provided in the document *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 (CL 164/3)* and its Web Annexes, six Information Notes have been issued in response to Members' queries and requests from the Programme and Finance Committees, and their Joint Meeting.

The proposals presented in the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* are a logical continuation of the Director-General's vision of building a dynamic FAO for a better world, while remaining committed to the original aspirations, mandate and mission of the Organization.

These further adjustments are guided by the vision of creating an inclusive and agile FAO that serves its Members to achieve the "four betters": better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life. The proposals are focused on creating an Organization that is fit-for-purpose, transparent, open, innovative, responsible and effective.

As shown in the proposed Headquarters structure (*Annex 1 of CL 164/3*), the Organization would move away from a traditional pyramid structure and embrace a flatter, more modular approach reflective of the new realities and more digital world that we live in today. The proposed structural and programmatic adjustments aim to maximize cross-sectoral cooperation, improve the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness, avoid silos and establish transparency and accountability at the optimal levels. It aims to build FAO's comparative advantages, both within FAO and by working with other organizations outside of FAO.

All proposals are made within the biennial net appropriation approved by the Conference of USD 1 005.6 million.

Organizational structure: Highlights

The three elements of the proposed Headquarters structure are: i) offices, which have a cross-cutting function within the Organization; ii) centres, which have a strong collaboration function with other UN agencies or with international financial institutions (IFIs); and iii) divisions, which house the specific technical, economic and social expertise of FAO or provide operational and logistics support.

Highlights include a new Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would coordinate the corporate engagement in the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review, working closely with concerned units across the Organization.

The three centres, where FAO works in close collaboration with other UN agencies or with International Financial Institutions. Working in partnerships is increasingly critical to address complex and multifaceted issues and the centres are proposed for strengthening to make catalytic use of FAO's limited net appropriation resources:

- The Investment Centre supports public and private investment in countries of the Membership to help them achieve the SDGs. An increase of USD 8 million is proposed to harness its catalytic role in supporting countries and enabling financing at scale;
- The Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre would house two important joint

efforts: the Codex Alimentarius Commission as well as zoonotic diseases. Expertise on zoonotic diseases is brought together to ensure this work continues in a focused and coordinated manner within FAO and in close collaboration with WHO and other global partners;

- The Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre, which reflects the longstanding strategic partnership between FAO and IAEA in sustainable agricultural development and food security using nuclear science and technology, is proposed for strengthening by USD 1 million;
- A new division on *Food Systems and Food Safety*, which would provide strategic leadership in the development of more sustainable food systems. The Division would integrate FAO's scientific and economic analysis to provide improved policy guidance and targeted investment in food systems;
- The Strategic Programme (SP) management teams are proposed to be disbanded;
- The Office of Support to Decentralized Offices (OSD) is proposed to be removed, with its functions redistributed to other divisions;
- The decentralized offices would continue to work in a cross-functional manner with Headquarters.

With these proposed changes, the Organization would continue to work collaboratively on the 2020-21 results-based work plans which were developed under FAO's *Results Framework for 2018-21* following Conference-approval of the Medium Term Plan (MTP)/PWB in June 2019.

Management structure and reporting lines: Highlights

The core leadership team would consist of the three Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs), the Chief Economist and the Chief Scientist and would support the Director-General in all areas of the Organization's mandate.

The Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) would focus on specific assignments given by the Director-General in key areas of work of the Organization. The ADGs would no longer be encumbered by internal management issues associated with their previous role of heads of Departments and can rather focus on high-visibility, high priority, external activities.

The accountability of the Heads of Offices, Centres, and Divisions is strengthened in line with best practice given their role as experts in their respective areas. They would report to the Director-General, or to a DDG, the Chief Economist, or the Chief Scientist.

Reporting lines are established under the authority of the Director-General and are communicated to staff and to Members.

Conclusion

The Council is requested to:

- take note of the programmatic and operational adjustments;
- approve the revised budgeted post establishment (Web Annex 3), with the changes indicated in document CL 164/3 Information Note 2, and structural changes (Annex 1); and
- approve the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in Table 3.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings us to our discussion. So the floor is open for Members to make their comments. I give the floor to Australia.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I am quite excited to be opening the discussion on this Item today. I am looking forward to all of everyone's thoughts as we move forward.

To start I would like to stress that the Southwest Pacific appreciates the proposals that have been put forward in the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* and we very much support the recommendations in the reports of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, in this matter. We also appreciate the prompt provision of the information notes to better inform our discussion today.

Firstly, on the restructure of the Organization, we welcome the efforts to create a results-oriented, agile and innovative Organization and we look forward to ongoing transparency of arrangements as the new structure is embedded. In particular, we are keen to see how the restructure will strengthen the synergies and clarify the lines of accountability between Headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country offices as well as between centres, offices and divisions within Headquarters itself.

By way of example from a practical level, we look forward to better understanding how the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre will link with the new Food Systems and Food Safety Division. The rest of my comments today, which notably happens to be World Zoonosis' Day, relates to the work of the proposed centres.

Let me start by saying that we welcome the initiatives to address the important issues of zoonotic diseases, food safety and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through strong partnership arrangements, including enhancing collaboration with other international organizations.

On the FAO/WHO Centre, we understand the intention of this Centre is to act as a platform of coordination for these important issues and we would welcome further opportunities for consultation as the proposal evolves. For the Centre to be successful, though, it is clear to us that partnerships are essential. In this regard, in relation to the Codex Alimentarius arm of the Centre, we welcome the consolidation of the FAO/WHO partnership to strengthen the development and revision of crosscutting policy and standards towards foodborne AMR, food safety and food security. We also appreciate the advice that the Codex Alimentarius Commission will remain a separate entity and operate under its existing mandate.

On the zoonotic diseases arm of the Centre and noting the details outlined in Information Note 6, we recognize that the issues this Centre is seeking to address fall within the nexus of the tripartite mandate and capabilities. As such strengthened partnerships with the WHO and also the World Organisation for Animal Health, the OIE, are imperative. We welcome the comments made by the Director-General this morning, which really emphasize this important collaboration.

We were pleased to see the broad support for the World Health Assembly COVID-19 Response Resolution, which reiterated the need for continued collaboration between the OIE, WHO and FAO. We consider the Centre provides an ideal platform for FAO to take an active role in demonstrating the clear merits of the tripartite, including addressing the challenges presented by COVID-19.

We note that further discussions are required to define the working modalities of the Centre and we urge these consultations to refer between the FAO, WHO and the OIE at the foundational level. To ensure cooperation is not only continued but strengthened through the purposeful design of collaboration pathways and cooperative working modalities.

Further, in line with the One Health approach, we strongly encourage strengthened cross-sectoral mechanisms for monitoring, early warning, preparedness, prevention, detection, response and control of zoonotic diseases. In addition, developing science-based international guidelines on more effective safety and hygienic measures for zoonosis control, including for wildlife wet markets. Also, given the link between zoonotic diseases emergence and anthropogenic environmental changes, we would encourage a broader collaborative approach with relevant international organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Programme.

Finally, we welcome the advice that the Centre will coordinate FAO's work on antimicrobial resistance within the context of the FAO Action Plan for AMR, including the development of a data platform for active microbial resistance related to food and agriculture. This will support Members' approach towards responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents.

Just quickly to end on the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre. We note that it will be a major player in the post-COVID-19 work on zoonotic diseases and that the IAEA Director-General has launched the Zodiac Project to strengthen global preparedness to prevent future pandemics like COVID-19. While we welcome increased efforts to minimize zoonotic disease risk, we seek clarification on the intentions of the Centre, with regard to the tripartite mandate and responsibilities on zoonotic diseases. In addition, on how future initiatives such as Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) will be coordinated not only through the Tripartite, but also with other FAO centres, offices and divisions.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

Kuwait is proud to make this statement on behalf of the Near East Group. The Near East Group would like first and foremost to express its heartfelt thanks to the Director-General, Mr Qu Dongyu, for this document prepared for us. There are indeed several adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21. We would like to express our gratitude to the Director-General. He is dedicating himself to the revival of this Organization, so that this Organization is more efficient, more dynamic and certainly closer to the most vulnerable people.

The Near East Group fully understands the need to decrease bureaucracy and it also understands the need to not to do the work twice, because indeed we need to work faster, efficiently and better, so as to respond to the needs of Members. We believe that through this new structure the objective can be achieved.

We would welcome the fact that these adjustments have no financial and budgetary implications. We urge the Organization to exert further efforts in order to improve the role of the Evaluation Office so as to improve evaluation capacities and to allow for more improvement to the work of this Organization. Thanks to better evaluation.

The Near East Group would further recommend that the work of regional offices be strengthened for the future, so that those regional offices will be more efficient, professional, technical and they will become able to implement the plan of action of the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General's. We think in particular of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developed Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) – all of these need their regional offices to be strong.

We also look into the need to react to a number of plagues in our region. I am thinking particularly of Africa and we would support the co-partnership with the private sector. We support the new strategy for finding new resources because these new resources will allow us to reach the Sustainable Development Goals. We encourage further transparency within the Organization, and we encourage the Organization to be transparent when it comes to the implementation of the adjustments before Members.

When we look at the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021*, we believe that these are favourable to the Organization. We approve them and we approve the changes having to do with the regional and country offices, and within this Organization. These will be quite positive and at later stages. We will have more interventions in further details.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 12:30 now. I think we can adjourn for the lunch break and we will take up this Item again at 14:30 sharp.

The meeting is now adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:29 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 29

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.29

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session Cent soixante-quatrième session 164.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020 Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020 Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020
SECOND PLENARY MEETING DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SUGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA
6 July 2020

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14.36 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 36
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.36
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 3. Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 (continued)**Point 3. Nouveaux ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2020-2021 (suite)****Tema 3. Nuevos ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2020-21 (continuación)**
(CL 164/3; CL 164/3 Information Notes; CL 164/3 WA2 Rev.1, CL 164/3 WA3; CL 164/3 WA4)

CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraph 9)

CL 164/6 Rev.1 - Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (paragraph 6)

CL 164/7 - Report of the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraphs 15-21)

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, we will now continue with Item 3.

The list of speakers which had requested the floor before we adjourned the meeting is slightly different from what I see on the screen now. What I will do is, I will go through the list, which was there before lunch and probably, you will amend your raising of hands on the new list.

In the list I had before, I gave the floor to Indonesia, as a Member of the Council. The Ambassador probably would have comments on behalf of Group of 77 and China. Indonesia, you have the floor.

Ambassador of Indonesia you have the floor.

Ms Esti ANDAYANI (Group of 77 and China)

Indonesia has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Indonesia will also give national statement later. The Group of 77 and China welcome the Director-General's proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, which aims at increasing coordination and, eliminating silos in dealing with complex and inter-connected challenges, facing agriculture and food systems today.

We also thank the Director-General for holding a series of consultations on his proposals, which have brought clarity to the workplan, and conveyed a sense of urgency to its implementation. We appreciate that the workplan falls within the Conference approved net appropriation budget level for 2020-2021 and transforms the organigram into a more modular and flexible one, in order to respond to emerging needs and priorities.

We fully support the proposed establishment of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for coordinating FAO's engagement and follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We stress the importance of the Office of SDGs in assisting developing countries and economies in transitions and achieving the Agenda 2030 to ensure that no one is left behind.

In this regard, we view the strategic importance of improving the effectiveness of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and producing tangible results on the ground. All that FAO does, as a knowledge Organization, including its normative mandate, necessitates the TCP for uptake and implementation by Member Nations. Against this backdrop, the Group of 77 and China is looking forward to discussing further on the TCP, including its criteria for resource allocations on the ground at the next Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC) in November 2020.

We also support the proposals regarding strengthening the Investment Centre and Joint FAO Centres with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) respectively. We also welcome the proposal to establish new divisions on food systems and food safety.

The Group of 77 and China acknowledges the importance of innovations, including all sustainable innovative approaches, digital tools and new technologies, as one of the core priorities of the PWB. We support the proposals to strengthen the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic, to focus on rapid response to changing needs and we look forward to the expansions of the initiative to other countries in all regions.

We take note of the proposal to reduce multi-disciplinary funds from USD 10 million to USD 8.5 million while stressing the need for FAO to explore ways to increase the funding. Improvement in the quantity and quality of funding lie at the heart of last year's Funding Compact in the framework of UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 72/729. In that line, we highlight that non-core resources are critical for FAO's activities to expand on the ground, in order to achieve SDG1 and SDG2 and their impact is enhanced when they are predictable and unearmarked.

We take note of the statement of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices and the mainstreaming of its duties. We are certain that this adjustment will expand and strengthen the decentralized network so that FAO can better serve all its Members. We expect to see that efforts to deliver at regional and country levels are amplified and reinforced.

Against this background, the Group expresses its fervent hope that FAO will deliver more efficiently and effectively to give more impact on the ground.

During the struggling COVID-19 pandemic period, the developing countries' economies are projected to decline steeply and, in some cases, catastrophically. Incoming data on the pandemic's negative impact, both in terms of human suffering and socio-economic damage, is staggering and on a continuously rising curve, even as we speak. Hundreds of millions of people across the globe in developed and developing countries alike risk falling into extreme poverty and hunger.

We call to put an end to financial labels, economic sanctions and unilateral measures undertaken against international law, which hinder the access to food and livestock amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this context, the Group of 77 and China stresses the need to strengthen multilateralism, global solidarity, and partnership, particularly in safeguarding global food supply chains and markets, and calls on FAO to give a decisive response to the fullest extent of its mandate.

Our group would like to assure our support on both prevention and crisis-response measures taken by FAO in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. We call on FAO to give more attention and use its expertise to assist developing countries and economies in transition in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic to food systems in short, medium and long terms.

We conclude by commending the Director-General for his proposal, which aims at mobilizing FAO against a perfect storm that is threatening all we have built in seventy-five years of multilateralism and jeopardizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The current pandemic is making everything worse. Today, more than ever, we all need an FAO that is stronger, more flexible, and more responsive. The adjustment that the Director-General is proposing tends to address these needs.

The Group of 77 and China endorses the adjustment and calls for all Council Members to approve them.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor, I would just like to repeat that I have a print-out of the list of Members who had asked for the floor before lunch and the order is likely different from the order which appears on the screen now.

I am still following the list which was there before lunch.

In case your name appears on the screen now, you may want to, once you have been given the floor, delete it from there.

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

Independent Chairperson of the Council, I would like to start by welcoming you and wishing you every success in your work. We would also like to thank the FAO Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, for his report and his proposals to reform the organizational structure of the FAO Secretariat.

We thank the Secretariat for providing interpretation in the official languages of the Organization. This allows for the involvement of experts and specialists from Capitals. The full text of our statement will be provided to the Secretariat, to be included in the verbatim record, and it will also be put on the website of our permanent representation also in English.

In order to speed up the work, given that this is a virtual Session, I will now switch to English and I will mention three main issues in relation to our statement.

Continues in English

My delegation would like to support the proposal on the updated organizational structure by the Director-General. It looks viable to us and in our opinion fit for the purpose principle. We hope that the re-arrangements that are going to be implemented within a flat nominal budget will contribute to building up the technical expertise of the Organization. We also thank the Secretariat for the additional information on the new organizational structure proposed by the FAO experts at the request of the Programme Committee. We also believe that it is important to give flexibility to the Director-General in implementing his reform initiative.

Earlier we had a discussion, on whether we need to move the Agenda items up to down. We believe that we all need to demonstrate constructive approaches when it comes to the re-organizational issues. Recently, last week, we heard the very same discussion at WFP's Executive Board, where countries insisted on taking the decision of the structural issues before the report of the Director-General. We believe that we all need to demonstrate a constructive approach when it comes to the organizational work, since we are all interested to have Rome-based Agencies work as effectively as possible.

We also want to stress the need to support the restructuring of the Organization by the financial stability and financial resources, therefore, we call on Member States to make their payments in full and in due time. From the Russian side, we do so already.

We do not invent or introduce reforms just for the sake of reforms. We need those reforms to be effective and efficient. For that matter, we fully support the initiative by the Director-General to go ahead with the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which in our opinion is very important and we are looking forward to starting, as soon as possible, its practical implementation.

When it comes to the reform issue, we support the suggestion to create a specific Division of Food Systems and Food Safety, which could also make a significant contribution to the preparation of the United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021. If we talk about the future Summit, we believe that the Rome-based Agencies must play an active role and we reaffirm this position that we are all interested in playing a major role in the preparation for the Summit. We believe that the central entry point for the position of Members is in drafting the Agenda, and it must be the Rome-based Agencies and their Executive Boards and the FAO Council. I just want to inform you that I was introduced in the Advisory Committee for the preparation of the Summit and I am ready to cooperate with all interested States to deliver the message to the respective people.

I would end my intervention by stressing one more important thing about the size of the Organization. FAO must act effectively in the areas of need. Now we are all living through the COVID-19 pandemic and we see how the people on the ground are working effectively to help the population.

We also count on FAO's active work in countering the threat of locust outbreak in Africa and in Asia. The Government of the Russian Federation made a decision to allocate USD 10 million for this purpose in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. The financial arrangements are at the final stage and we will sign this agreement with FAO soon.

Mr Dun NIU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I would like to invite my colleague from Bangladesh to make a statement on behalf of the Asian Group.

Mr Manash MITRA (Bangladesh)

Bangladesh has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. Asia Regional Group appreciates the Director-General and FAO staff's efforts to look after the employees and to deliver FAO's mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the outset, we support the efforts to attaining zero hunger and improving the livelihoods of people through better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life. We welcome the Director-General's proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21* that aims to promote a more holistic and coordinated approach to addressing the complex and inter-connected challenges facing agriculture and food systems in these challenging times.

We appreciate the information notes provided as necessary supplements to the structural adjustment. In terms of the structural adjustments, we welcome the approach to move from a traditional pyramid organization to a flatter, more modular one, including the removing of a layer of hierarchy, changing the roles of the Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) from Heads of Departments to more issues oriented, outward looking and thematic areas. These changes could foreseeably improve the Organization's efficiency and agility in its response to Members' priorities and emerging needs.

We find the proposed establishment of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can function to ensure consistent messaging and communication to achieve sustainable development on key priorities for food and agriculture. We also appreciate the change in approach for decentralized offices. By allowing direct communication between these offices and the respective Divisions and for redistributing the coordination work to the responsible Deputy Director Generals (DDGs), Chief Economist and Chief Scientist for more direct support.

In addition to this, the proposed Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre could also reinforce FAO's efforts in Codex and the area of genetic diseases, which are becoming more crucial in the situation of COVID-19 that we are facing at the moment. We hope that the increased funding of the Investment Centre will generate more resources to support Member Countries to achieve the SDGs. We are also glad with the proposal to establish a Division for Food Systems and Food Safety, which can provide better strategic leadership by FAO in integrating and extending food systems support to Member Countries.

With regard to the budget distribution, we support FAO's plan to manage these adjustments within the approved budget level through cost savings and efficiency measures, as well as adjustments to existing posts. We welcome the additional funding to the investment centre and Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre. We appreciate the investment to leverage more resources on the food and agriculture area.

We commend FAO's intention of enhancing the coordination of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to accommodate the increasing number of interested countries and expansion of the data platform. We request FAO to ensure transparency in terms of resource use, including the use of additional resources for the coordination of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which was not planned initially in PWB 2020-2021.

We notice that the multi-disciplinary fund was reduced by USD 1.5 million and hope that FAO can find creative measures to increase this, including by encouraging unearmarked voluntary contribution and/or reallocating part of the unspent balance of 2018-19 biennium. We find the adjustments responding to the Conference's decisions and guidance from Member Countries, it is important to evaluate the positive impact of transformative moves in the adjustment on FAO's work in terms of its effectiveness and adaptability to the changing global environment.

With these comments, Asia Regional Group supports the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

México apoya la nueva estructura administrativa presentada por el Director General. Como otros Estados miembros, México deseaba cambios y estos están aquí. Confiamos en que estos cambios mejoren a la FAO y sean aptos para su finalidad. Agradecemos la información adicional sobre las líneas de reporte contenidas en la Nota Informativa número 5. Estamos satisfechos con las explicaciones. Esperamos que esta nueva estructura y líneas de reporte aumenten la cooperación al interior de la FAO, agilicen la acción en el terreno y respondan de manera más eficiente a las necesidades de los países.

Solicitamos al Director General que nos mantenga informados sobre las modificaciones a las líneas de responsabilidad o funciones de los Subdirectores Generales (ADG), incluyendo cambios a los organigramas o líneas de reporte de las oficinas descentralizadas y despachos regionales. Solicitamos también compartir con el Consejo, cada cierto tiempo, sus apreciaciones sobre el funcionamiento de esta nueva estructura administrativa y líneas de reporte con miras a monitorear si esta estructura es apta para los trabajos de la FAO.

Apoyamos los esfuerzos de la Dirección para asignar un funcionario adicional a la oficina del Inspector General, como se menciona en la Nota Informativa número 2. Con esto se cubre la solicitud del personal adicional planteada por el Inspector General Ad-Interim. Estamos conscientes que las necesidades de investigación se han incrementado en los últimos años por lo que el incrementar recursos a la Oficina del Inspector General debe ser una prioridad en el siguiente Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP).

Agradecemos la información adicional respecto a los tres centros de la FAO contenida en la Nota Informativa número 6. Agradecemos la información relativa a las enfermedades zoonóticas. Esperamos que en esta área en particular, la FAO refuerce la colaboración tripartita con la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y con la Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal con miras a mejorar sistemas de alerta temprana y respuesta a enfermedades zoonóticas. Asimismo, apoyamos que ese centro coordine el plan de acción de la FAO por la resistencia a los antimicrobianos. Esperamos que su trabajo sea de manera amplia y no únicamente desde el punto de vista veterinario.

Apoyamos la transferencia de USD 8 millones al Centro de Inversión ya que tiene el potencial de incrementar de manera importante el apalancamiento de recursos de la FAO. Apoyamos que la FAO refuerce sus asociaciones con otros organismos incluyéndolas, Instituciones Financieras Internacionales (IFI), de forma que incremente y visibilice su propuesta de valor. Dados los cambios propuestos por los centros, solicitamos que se mantenga informado al Consejo al respecto al desempeño de sus centros y sus nuevas funciones.

Estamos conscientes que quizá se requiera nuevas transferencias presupuestarias como resultado de necesidades emergentes de la COVID-19 o de la orientación de las conferencias regionales: solicitudes que deben seguir lo establecido en los reglamentos financieros. Agradecemos la nueva meta fijada para el indicador 10.3.f relativa a las políticas, procesos y procedimientos eficaces para compartir el (financiamiento) de otros comportamientos identificados. Esperamos que para el siguiente plan de trabajo bienal el porcentaje establecido para la meta 2021, establecido en 70 por ciento, se incremente a un porcentaje mayor en el futuro.

El papel de los países de renta media en la FAO y las iniciativas que estamos aprobando son fundamentales. Si bien los países más pobres requieren todo nuestro apoyo, los países de renta media también requerimos el apoyo de la FAO. En el contexto de la COVID-19, diversos análisis indican que América Latina es ahora la región más afectada. En ese sentido, reiteramos lo expresado por el Consejo en sus períodos 161 y 163 respecto a la necesidad de tener en cuenta las prioridades de todos los países, incluidos los de ingresos medios y ingresos medios altos.

Mr Bommakanti RAJENDER (India)

India aligns its statement with the statement of Asia Regional Group. We welcome the Director-General's initiative for restructuring FAO. This will create a cooperation within FAO and build up

comparative advantages to work with other organizations outside FAO. This structure will break the silos. The proposal is progressive and result oriented. With the establishment of Office of Sustainable Development Goals which will be focused on achieving the objectives. While we support this proposal, we have a few observations and comments to make.

In any multilateral organization or United Nations organization the process is as important as the end result. In the case of FAO, removing the Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) and making them advisors is a major decision that was taken and has already been implemented. It would have been appropriate to discuss such important matters with all the Members in detail and suggestions and comments would have been incorporated before it was implemented.

I would like to give an example of WFP, recently they have restructured the top management. There was a consultation with all the Member Countries in detail and a note was circulated, the rationale was explained. In the case of FAO it was also explained, but it was just before Council. It was approved in the WFP Executive Board and now the implementation will start. In this particular case, the implementation is already taking place. I think the process is also very important. We appreciate the proposal. It is very good and very important for the changing needs.

Regarding the reporting lines, the document which was circulated mentions the names of the Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs) only. I think the individual is not important, the institution is more important. We propose to designate the post rather than the reporting line by name. It is explained that this is for the flexibility, but I think, in my view, it is the designation and the institution is more important.

The third issue which we feel is important, we are talking about decentralization and delegation, but the structure which is going to be created appears to be centralized. More number of advisors at one place and taking decisions centrally. I want some kind of an explanation and from Management in this regard.

We believe in inclusivity, we believe in transparency. The outcome is very important, the intention is good, so as a consensus we support the proposal, we appreciate the Director-General for his efforts in restructuring to changing the needs.

Sr. Paul OQUIST (Nicaragua)

La delegación de Nicaragua ratifica las declaraciones realizadas por el Grupo G77 más China y por el Grupo Regional de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC). Expresamos nuestro agradecimiento al Director General, la Secretaría por la preparación y presentación del documento: vemos ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto 2020-2021. Señor Presidente, nuestra delegación considera que, a la luz del nuevo escenario mundial complejo e incierto, generado por la actual pandemia del COVID-19, sumado a otros desafíos ya conocidos, la FAO y sus miembros estamos llamados a buscar nuestras mejores energías, capacidades e inteligencia en innovarnos, esforzándonos constantemente alcanzar el mejor cumplimiento y ámbito de acción para responder a las demandas urgentes de nuestras poblaciones, principalmente aquellas más desprotegidas.

En esta perspectiva, la Dirección nos presenta los nuevos ajustes al plan de trabajo y presupuesto 2020-2021 alineados al contexto actual. Entendimos la propuesta como una respuesta ante la necesidad de contar con una FAO más ágil, dinámica, eficaz y eficiente como lo demanden los Estados Miembros y sus pueblos. Respecto a la configuración orgánica propuesta por la Dirección, consideramos oportuna la propuesta. La FAO debe encaminarse hacia nuevos modelos de acción para renovarse y estar acorde con los nuevos tiempos.

Sobre los ajustes propuestos, acogemos con satisfacción el incremento de USD 8 millones en el presupuesto por bienio de la consignación neta del Centro de Inversiones. Un paso importante en la financiación necesaria para ampliar los servicios de apoyo y la inversión en sistemas de alimentación y agricultura. Las alianzas estratégicas y colaboración de FAO con otras agencias son fundamental.

La ciencia y la tecnología, hoy más que nunca, pueden contribuir a enfrentar los grandes retos en materia de sanidad animal y vegetal. Por ello, acogemos con beneplácito la instauración del centro

conjunto FAO/Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y alianza de FAO/ Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica (OIEA), esperando que estas alianzas pueden contribuir a mejorar la producción, la productividad y abordar las demandas y desafíos de los ámbitos pertinentes.

Esperamos con optimismo que la nueva división entre sistemas alimentarios e inocuidad de los alimentos pueda contribuir al desarrollo de los sistemas agroalimentarios más sostenibles, proporcionando mejores orientaciones en materia de políticas e inversiones. El asesoramiento científico es necesario para fundamentar las normas y mejorar la gestión de la inocuidad alimentaria y la prevención de enfermedades transfronterizas y preservaciones comerciales, favoreciendo el comercio interregional y mundial para el desarrollo de los pueblos.

Señor Presidente, como consecuencia de la situación mundial del COVID-19, fueron propuestas las conferencias regionales programadas en el primer semestre 2020: consideramos que debemos aprovechar de estos espacios de los órganos rectores para garantizar que a nivel regional sean auscultados y evaluadas nuestras prioridades, retos y expectativas de y en los Países Miembros. En particular, quisiera referirme a la 36ª Conferencia Regional de América Latina y el Caribe a realizarse en Nicaragua, para la cual el gobierno de Nicaragua continúa comprometido para asegurar una conferencia exitosa y con resultados tangibles.

Por último, señor Presidente, en los últimos años el papel desempeñado por FAO ha jugado un rol fundamental en el fortalecimiento de los Estados miembros para la atención a los temas y desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional. Por ello, manifestamos nuestro respaldo a la presentación de los nuevos ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto 2020-2021.

His Excellency Gabriel MBAIROBE (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for the Republic of Cameroon)

Cameroon, together with South Africa, speak on this Agenda Item on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group supports the declaration of the Group of 77 and China. Our regional group welcomes the preparation of the Document 164/3, including the sixth Information Note and the three Web Annexes. It is a comprehensive document that understands that it provides information on the overview of new direction and the Director-General's mission of attaining zero hunger and improving the livelihoods of people through better production, better nutrition and better environment and a better life.

This equally provides information on structural and programmatic adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21. In the document, the Director-General has responded to the requests and guidance of the 41st Session of the Conference in June 2019, as well as those of the 153rd Session of the Council. We welcome the Reports of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee whose guidance is essential for the Council decision making progress. We therefore take note of their comments.

Continué en français

Le Groupe régional Afrique prend note de l'accent mis sur la réponse à la pandémie de Covid-19, qui a un impact sur la plupart des domaines d'intérêt de la FAO, y compris l'appui aux pays en développement à anticiper et atténuer les effets de la pandémie sur la sécurité alimentaire et les moyens de subsistance, la contribution en vue d'atténuer l'impact de la Covid-19 sur le commerce et les marchés alimentaires mondiaux, l'appui à l'évaluation des risques, la surveillance et le renforcement des capacités afin de faciliter la détection précoce des situations d'urgence et de contenir la propagation des maladies, la prise en compte des besoins spécifiques des petits États insulaires en développement, des pays sans littoral et des pays les moins avancés et en déficit alimentaire.

En ce qui concerne les nouveaux ajustement structurels et programmatiques, nous prenons note du fait que la proposition respecte le niveau des ouvertures de crédits nettes approuvées par la Conférence pour 2020-2021, soit 1 005,6 millions de dollars américains.

En ce qui concerne la structure organisationnelle, nous prenons bonne note du processus en deux étapes décrit dans le document, qui prévoit de commencer d'abord par le Siège et de continuer par la suite dans les bureaux décentralisés.

Nous prenons également note de la nouvelle proposition d'organigramme du Siège, qui prévoit des bureaux, des centres et des divisions. Nous avons conscience des prérogatives dévolues au Directeur général, lui concédant le droit de procéder aux ajustements structurels nécessaires qui pourraient mieux soutenir la mise en œuvre de sa vision. Nous appuyons donc entièrement le processus lancé par le Directeur général et prenons acte de sa décision de mettre en œuvre un organigramme modulaire par rapport à un organigramme traditionnel. Ainsi, le regroupement de l'équipe de la haute direction avec trois Directeur généraux adjoints, un Économiste en chef, un Scientifique en chef, un Chef de Cabinet au Bureau du Directeur général semble être une idée novatrice.

Nous acceptons de lui accorder un essai, mais nous attendons d'être informés dans les meilleurs délais possibles des lignes hiérarchiques clairement définies pour les niveaux inférieurs des bureaux, centres et divisions à l'endroit de la haute direction.

Il nous semble néanmoins qu'il manque au moins quatre considérations dans cet organigramme. Premièrement, comment les arrangements, l'intégration et les liens entre les processus organisationnels sont-ils reliés et s'imbriquent-ils afin d'éviter des opérations indépendantes des centres, divisions et bureaux, et la compétition pour les ressources?

Deuxièmement, comment est conçue la structure de l'autorité pour éviter des improvisations dans les délégations d'autorité?

Troisièmement, la conception du rendement organisationnel est-elle en mesure de clarifier l'ensemble des besoins opérationnels de l'Organisation afin d'éviter la décomposition des objectifs menant à atteindre des sous-objectifs de la part des bureaux, centres et divisions?

En dernier lieu, comment la conception organisationnelle concernant les bureaux, centres et divisions est-elle capable d'impacter l'allocation des ressources?

En ce qui concerne, le démantèlement des équipes de gestion des programmes stratégiques, qui seront remplacées par des équipes de programmes multidisciplinaires, notre Groupe régional ne s'y oppose pas, car la vision du Directeur général doit être soutenue par une nouvelle approche opérationnelle. Tout en étant d'accord sur la période de transition de six mois pour ce changement, nous attendons d'être mieux informés sur le rôle et les responsabilités des équipes de programmes multidisciplinaires.

Nous comprenons qu'un nouveau cadre stratégique pour la FAO sera élaboré pendant la période de transition; la FAO peut compter sur notre soutien et notre contribution dans sa finalisation. Nous appuyons la nomenclature des bureaux, y compris la création du Bureau des objectifs de développement durable (ODD), et le coût qui lui est associé. Ce bureau jouera, nous en sommes convaincus, un rôle de coordination à l'échelle de l'Organisation dans le suivi et l'examen du Programme 2030.

Continues in English

The Africa Regional Group has always raised its voice in support of a broader, enhanced network of FAO Representatives in our region. We need reassurance that the disbanding of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices will not negatively impact the number and quality of services earmarked for regional, sub-regional and country offices.

We agree with the proposed investment and budget increase of the business model of the Investment Centre. This has brought, over the years, an impressive contribution to the work of decentralized offices through policy development, knowledge sharing and innovative intensive investment solutions. While noting the creation of two other centres, mainly Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centres, we look forward to receiving regular reports on synergies stemming from the implementation of these partnerships to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We support the new labelling of the regions and their full operative teams. We welcome the creation of a Food System and Food Safety Division to provide strategic leadership for the Organization's support to Members in their development of more sustainable food systems. We take note of the project of adoption of the multidisciplinary funds and look forward to receiving a detailed report on its use in the Mid-Term Review 2020 and in the Programme Implementation Report 2020-2021.

Concerning the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, our Regional Group continues to lend its full support to the initiative as stated under the 163rd Session. We approve the new budgetary chapters' redistribution revised this on the guidance of the Finance Committee as per the conference approve net appropriation.

In closing, the Africa Regional Group is ready to work closely, at this Council, with the entire Membership to finalize the proposed structural and programmatic adjustments, with a view to give the essential management tool to the Director-General to carry out his duties.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Señor Presidente, la delegación dominicana reafirma todos sus puntos expresados por la Embajadora Esti de Indonesia en su calidad de Presidenta del Grupo de los 77. Presidente, mi delegación intervino en el 163 Consejo, en diciembre, para apoyar los ajustes que el Director General propuso para modificar el Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP). Nuestro primer argumento en aquella oportunidad fue este: El Doctor Qu asumió la Dirección General de la FAO para comenzar a implementar un PTP de dos años de duración, cubriendo la mitad del mandato para el cual fue elegido sin haber tenido participación alguna en el diseño de dicho programa.

De hecho, mientras el PTP estaba siendo debatido durante el primer semestre de 2019, el Doctor Qu viajaba por el mundo en campaña electoral comunicando a los gobiernos de los Estados miembros su visión y sus prioridades en la eventualidad de que fuese electo al cargo. El Doctor Qu ganó la elección de un modo decisivo; es decir, los Estados miembros reunidos en la más reciente Conferencia General, adoptamos su visión para administrar esta organización nuestra.

Bajo esa lógica, mi delegación acompañó el consenso que este órgano alcanzó en diciembre. Pocos días después se desató la pandemia del COVID-19. Luego de 6 meses de su asalto a la humanidad, las últimas dos semanas registran el período de mayor expansión del virus. Estamos viendo el colapso de los sistemas alimentarios en muchos países desarrollados, donde se han cerrado plantas de empaque de carne, se sacrifican animales de granja a destiempo y se descartan toneladas de frutas, vegetales, huevos, leche y sus derivados y demás alimentos perecederos.

Estamos ante la mayor oleada de pérdidas y desperdicio de alimentos jamás vista en la historia. Los países desarrollados poseen sólida infraestructura, fortaleza institucional y estabilidad política. Mientras tanto en el mundo en desarrollo la curva de contagios asciende en vertical. En África, en el Cercano Oriente, en Asia, en el Pacífico y en Latinoamérica y el Caribe. El daño a los sistemas alimentarios a la nutrición es enorme y aún no tenemos una idea clara de cuáles serán las consecuencias de esta crisis.

En su comparecencia de abril ante el Consejo de Seguridad de Naciones Unidas, junto al Director General, el Director Ejecutivo del Programa Mundial de Alimentos advirtió que se estaba gestando para los próximos meses una crisis alimentaria global de dimensiones bíblicas. Estas fueron las palabras del señor Beasley. Y este es el momento al cual se refería en aquel discurso. Tres meses después la pandemia se recrudece.

Tres meses después del señor Beasley y el señor Chuy ir al Consejo de Seguridad, la pandemia se recrudece y sus efectos negativos se multiplican debilitando a los gobiernos de todos los países del mundo. Es el momento, entonces, de fortalecer el multilateralismo, la cooperación, la solidaridad. Es para circunstancias como esta que nuestros países, emergiendo de las cenizas de la última guerra mundial, construyeron la comunidad de las Naciones Unidas para encontrar soluciones a los problemas comunes de la humanidad.

En los 75 años del sistema internacional, el hambre y la malnutrición constituyen ahora, como nunca, un reto global amenazando a todos los habitantes del planeta. En este contexto, necesitamos una FAO fuerte y resiliente, una FAO flexible y ágil, una FAO innovadora y renovada, una FAO eficaz y eficiente, una FAO transparente, dinámica y cada vez mejor posicionada para dar respuesta rápida, coherente y útil en las áreas de su mandato a las solicitudes de sus Estados miembros. Los desafíos son enormes. La pandemia complica la desaceleración que ya habíamos observado en el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030.

La crisis climática continúa poniendo en peligro la producción agroalimentaria, la salud del agua, de los suelos y de los océanos y los ciclos de vida en los reinos vegetal y animal. Los conflictos bélicos persisten mientras la industria armamentista continúa produciendo municiones, cohetes y bombas a ritmo desenfrenado. Mujeres, hombres y niños huyen de la pobreza rural, de las sequías, de las inundaciones y de la violencia armada. Allí donde vayan los espera el virus que no conoce fronteras, ni distingue género, color de piel o ideología.

Mientras ciudadanos de algunos de los países más ricos del mundo forman colas de kilómetros de largo y horas de duración para mendigar comida en bancos de alimentos y otras entidades caritativas, la fabricación de un solo portaviones cuesta USD 13 mil millones con un costo de operación de USD 2 millones y medio de dólares al día. Así que, mientras derrochamos riquezas en producir máquinas de destrucción, nuestras hermanas y hermanos y sus hijos mueren de hambre. Por este motivo, nuestra próxima conversación deberá ser sobre el nivel de presupuesto que la FAO necesita para liberar los esfuerzos globales hacia el hambre cero.

Tenemos un debate pendiente para abordar y acordar una expansión en las contribuciones del Fondo General para garantizar que la Organización pueda cumplir su mandato en el medio y el largo plazo. Y esa conversación deberá iniciar la semana próxima. Señor Presidente y colegas miembros y observadores del Consejo, la relevancia de la FAO debe certificarse aquí en este Consejo, y debe certificarse ahora en esta sesión, porque los hambrientos exigen acción concertada y decidida.

Es la responsabilidad individual de cada Estado miembro y es la responsabilidad colectiva de este órgano colegiado conceder a la FAO las herramientas que necesita para ayudarnos a todos a superar esta crisis y a erradicar el hambre y todas las formas de malnutrición. Aquí y ahora, República Dominicana apoya sin reservas el paquete de ajustes que propone el Director General y exhorta al Consejo a aprobarlo para poner en manos del Director General las herramientas que necesita de modo que la FAO pueda hacer el trabajo para el que fue creada.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la presentación del documento /3 y nos alineamos con la intervención precedentemente pronunciada por Indonesia en nombre del G77 y China. Costa Rica es del criterio que los nuevos ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto para 2020-2021 debe ir encaminados a hacer que los trabajos de la FAO en el bienio utilicen modalidades más eficientes y eficaces para la seguridad alimentaria donde la pandemia causada por el nuevo coronavirus ha agravado más el retroceso en los logros que habíamos alcanzado hasta el 2015. Por ello, saludamos la mentalidad innovadora, el énfasis de la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios, la construcción de una FAO digital y el formato a las asociaciones con el sector privado.

Quisiera también reconocer la labor de la Organización en estas últimas semanas en cuanto a la convocatoria de encuentros y la provisión de notas informativas con el fin de clarificar cuestiones que no estaban suficientemente desarrolladas en el documento, especialmente aquellas relacionadas con las líneas de responsabilidad. Al respecto, me permito realizar los siguientes comentarios puntuales sobre los cambios propuestos.

Sobre las oficinas descentralizadas, para Costa Rica la oficina de apoyo a la descentralización ha desempeñado un papel fundamental: pues desde 2017 ha asistido la transición del trabajo de la FAO en el país hacia un modelo de acreditación múltiple, que ha permitido reducir costos y direccionar recursos hacia nuevas iniciativas en un entorno donde la etiqueta frecuentemente descontextualizada de un país de ingreso medio alto es cada vez más difícil de sobrellevar para nosotros.

La Nota Informativa 1 indica que el acervo de los Programas Estratégicos (SPs) pasará a las unidades que albergan los conocimientos especializados específicos con la finalidad de simplificar y eficientizar funciones lo cual, a nuestro juicio, implica algún tipo de dispersión. No obstante, confiamos en que el desmantelamiento de la oficina no implique ningún tipo de menoscabo en el proceso de sostén a la descentralización. Esto ha quedado ya recogido en los informes de los Comités y de la Reunión Conjunta. Empero, para mi delegación es importante que las conclusiones de este tema que nos ocupa aseguren que el fortalecimiento de la descentralización seguirá siendo prioritario dentro de la nueva estructura.

Sobre el Centro Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica (OIEA)/FAO, para Costa Rica el fortalecimiento financiero, técnico y científico del Centro es un asunto clave. Desde 1964, la FAO y el OIEA administran esta edición mixta nacida bajo el principio de que las técnicas basadas en tecnología nuclear proveen soluciones competitivas y a menudo únicas para ayudar a combatir el hambre, reducir la malnutrición, mejorar la sostenibilidad ambiental y garantizar la inocuidad y la autenticidad de los alimentos.

Es un hecho que el Centro apoya a los países miembros a utilizar estas tecnologías de manera segura y apropiada. De igual manera, mi país descarta y celebra la inauguración reciente de un nuevo edificio en Viena que alberga tres laboratorios de última generación, el Laboratorio de producción y sanidad animal, el Laboratorio de alimentación y protección del medio ambiente y el Laboratorio de gestión del suelo y el agua y la nutrición de los cultivos.

Este inmueble albergará equipo de vanguardia que aumentará la capacidad del Centro OIEA/FAO para ayudar a los países a combatir y prevenir las enfermedades animales y zoonóticas transfronterizas como el COVID-19 y para ayudar frente a los desafíos relacionados con el cambio climático y la inocuidad de los alimentos. Costa Rica como un país comprometido con el desarme nuclear cree en, como bien lo indica la Nota Informativa 6, la cooperación sur-sur y triangular, en el uso pacífico de las tecnologías nucleares que contribuya a la tecnología alimentaria, a la salud humana y animal y al desarrollo agrícola sostenible: por lo tanto Costa Rica considera que el Centro FAO/OIEA es un garante de esos objetivos.

Sobre el Centro Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS)/FAO, deseo externar el apoyo de mi país a la iniciativa de creación del Centro Conjunto FAO/OMS que albergará las cuestiones del CODEX Alimentarius y de enfermedades zoonóticas. Costa Rica fue el proponente inicial del Día Internacional de Inocuidad de los Alimentos y respalda plenamente los estándares basados en evidencia y ciencia del CODEX Alimentarius siendo el vínculo invisible entre quienes trabajan en la cadena alimentaria y el consumidor final. Las normas del CODEX son la clave para que los gobiernos, la industria y otros actores ayuden a garantizar que los alimentos sean inocuos para el consumo con independencia de las fronteras que hayan cruzado.

Señor Presidente, la labor de la FAO a favor de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición deben redoblar esfuerzos en circunstancias globales de dificultad e incertidumbre como la actual, involucrando a los países desarrollados, en desarrollo y economías en transición para trabajar en manera coordinada en el logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Ello debe verse reflejado en su Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto. Todo ello implica tomar en cuenta las disparidades existentes aun a lo interno de los países.

Si bien la Organización debe colaborar con los países más necesitados, debe tomar en cuenta las dificultades y retos que atravesamos los países de ingreso medio con un enfoque para determinar vulnerabilidades a partir de las brechas estructurales, logrando la superación de la pobreza multidimensional y promoviendo procesos de crecimiento sostenibles e inclusivos que se hagan cargo de la desigualdad social y la heterogeneidad productiva. Quiero ser muy vehemente en el tema de los países de renta media.

Con estos comentarios, Costa Rica aprueba la propuesta de Nuevos ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We would like to thank the Director-General for the efforts to modernize the Organization, strengthen science- and evidence-based approaches and modulate the staff to be prepared for future challenges. We fully support the objective of making FAO a more dynamic, inclusive, transparent, efficient and flexible Organization. Furthermore, we would like to thank Management for the submission of the information notes following the respective requests of the Council Committees. They were helpful for us in understanding the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, and we suggest the future adjustments to the PWB are presented in this way and in a timely manner.

Before we make our comments on the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, we would like to express our strong support for the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee request to prioritize sustainable funding for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) within existing resources. Moreover, we agree that after the disbanding of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices (OSD), there is need to continue supporting decentralized offices, as to ensure FAO's impact at country level. In this context, in order to avoid any misconception, we would like to recall the Council's decision that any strengthening of the decentralized offices themselves would have to be implemented on a cost neutral basis.

We welcome the new focus on innovative approaches and recall the importance of achieving Zero Hunger, working towards more sustainable agri-food systems, better management of natural resources, addressing climate change and improving the livelihood of all people. We also welcome the intention to clearly prioritize the work on One Health, in collaboration with the United Nations System.

As regards the proposed organizational changes, we would like to address a number of points, without going into micromanagement questions. We wish to highlight the need for maintaining both human and financial resources for technical divisions, in particular in relation to natural resources, One Health, food safety and sustainable agriculture. We would like the Fisheries Division to be renamed into Ocean Fisheries Division, in order to underline the growing global importance of aquaculture and that supplying fishery products and its outstanding role in contributing to economic, social and environmental sustainability. We have concerns about the fact that food systems, food safety and nutrition, which are horizontal topics, relevant for the whole Organization, are placed in the economic and social corner. We also do not understand why food systems is placed together with food safety. Food safety merits to be placed separately and not just in the socio-economic corner.

In light of the dimension of the proposed changes within the Organization, we would have preferred putting this restructuring exercise on hold until the adoption of the new Strategic Framework so as to make sure that the new structure is conducive to the implementation of the new Strategic Framework. We still have some concerns regarding the reporting lines. The organigram, which is a fundamental part of the governance and internal controls structure of the Organization, must comprise clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Reporting lines should refer to roles and portfolios, not to specific individuals. Both the organizational structure and the reporting lines are a fundamental part of the general structure of the administrative and technical services referred to in General Rules of the Organization Rule XXIV, paragraph 3(j). While we understand that a certain degree of flexibility is needed for organizing the reporting lines, we would like those to be submitted to the Governing Bodies.

We continue to have a number of questions and concerns on the proposed organizational changes and would, therefore, have difficulties to endorse the proposal as it stands. In order for us to agree, we need reassurances on the following three points. Number one, this consensus should not set a precedent for any future interpretation of General Rules of the Organization Rule XXIV, paragraph 3(j). Number two, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations should deliver an opinion on the new organigram. Number three, there should be the possibility to revise the organigram after the adoption of the new Strategic Framework at the 42nd FAO Conference in 2021.

We are looking forward to a fruitful discussion with a view to finding a solution that is agreeable to all Members of the Council.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quisiera asociarme a lo expresado por la Presidenta del G77 y reconocer el honor que significa para mi país y en mi persona el hecho de ser su vicepresidente. El discurso de la Embajadora de Indonesia fue un discurso excelente con gran sustancia.

Cuando el Director General se dirigió a este plenario hace poco más de un año, antes de su elección, prometió que promovería una nueva cultura organizacional en pos de una FAO más unida, eficiente y práctica, a la altura de los desafíos de desarrollo que enfrenta un mundo en continuo cambio y gravemente afectado por la inseguridad alimentaria. Hoy, nos complace ver los ajustes propuestos a la estructura de la Organización que entendemos necesarios para que el Director General pueda plasmar su visión para la FAO y cumplir con las expectativas que nuestros gobiernos han depositado en él.

Este es un documento de acción que traduce las palabras a los hechos. Pasar de las palabras a los hechos en el contexto de la burocracia de una gran organización requiere mucho valor, demanda mucha responsabilidad y genera mucha ilusión, al menos para quienes lo interpretamos como una señal positiva, como un primer paso hacia el cambio que tantas veces hemos demandado los miembros.

Durante todo el proceso previo al Consejo hubo requerimientos aclaratorios a la administración, particularmente respecto a las nuevas líneas de responsabilidad. Yo fui uno de ellos. Yo vi una administración muy disponible a tratar de responder a las aclaraciones solicitadas tanto en lo que nosotros como Argentina planteamos como el resto de mis colegas: tanto instancias informales como formales. Después de todas las aclaraciones ofrecidas, la gran mayoría de los colegas mostramos nuestra satisfacción con las respuestas.

Seguir pretendiendo ejercer un micromanagement previamente a que el nuevo Director General pueda poner en acción su plan, no parece razonable. Por eso me permito solicitarles a mis colegas que hagamos un esfuerzo por dejar de lado prejuicios, desconfianzas o una visión rígida en un contexto internacional dinámico e incierto. Que las tendencias globales a la fragmentación política no contaminen esta organización.

Tenemos objetivos sagrados o, como lo dijo el Embajador de la Federación Rusa, es momento para ser constructivos mientras el número de víctimas por el hambre y la malnutrición crecen de manera sideral. Y lo digo asumiendo que el nuevo epicentro de la pandemia es América Latina. No estamos firmando cheques en blanco, señor Presidente, tenemos muchas instancias en el futuro para verificar los resultados de la gestión de la administración. No son momentos para generar mayor incertidumbre.

Más allá de los ajustes estructurales y presupuestarios quisiera también referirme a algunas cuestiones programáticas que en este marco son prioritarias para mi país. La Argentina valora que la FAO otorgue atención especial a los países más vulnerables y, en particular, a los países menos adelantados, los países en desarrollo así literal, los pequeños estados insulares en desarrollo y los países en conflicto.

En estos países es profunda la gravedad de la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición y es por eso que la Argentina apoya todas las iniciativas en curso, las viejas y las nuevas tendientes a acompañar a los que todos universalmente e indiscutiblemente reconocemos como los más pobres de los más pobres. Países que antes de la pandemia ya estaban viviendo situaciones críticas como el caso de la langosta del desierto, conflictos internos, gusano cogollero, los desastres climáticos como en el caso del Sahel.

De la misma manera, la Argentina da fe de la existencia de otro grupo de pobres, que también son los más pobres de los más pobres pero que no son reconocidos ni considerados como tales. En su misión de lograr un mundo libre de hambre y malnutrición, sin dejar a nadie atrás, la FAO quiere dar visibilidad a los que no están obviamente visibles. Los países de renta media concentran el 62 por ciento de los pobres del mundo y son los países en los que más se ha acentuado el aumento del hambre

según el Estado de la Inseguridad Alimentaria en el Mundo (SOFI) 2019. Solo en los países de renta media alta hay 104 millones de personas que padecen inseguridad alimentaria. No podemos dejar atrás a esas 104 millones de personas solo en función de un criterio unidimensional como el nivel de renta del país en el que les ha tocado vivir.

Es por eso que la Argentina insiste en tener ese párrafo aparte, la consideración entre las prioridades programáticas de la organización, de las necesidades de los países en desarrollo de ingresos medios y altos porque estas necesidades y desafíos que enfrenta este grupo de países para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (OSD) 1 y 2, no son tan visibles y debemos poner esta problemática sobre la mesa y discutirla y considerarla como hacemos también con otras cuestiones que, a veces, incluso exceden la misión fundamental de esta Organización. No se trata de plantear una dicotomía entre países de renta baja y países de renta media ni una grieta entre los vulnerables. Todos los vulnerables merecen la atención de la FAO. La FAO debe ser una organización de todos y para todos y los países en desarrollo sabemos que no nos conviene dividirnos.

Con este mismo espíritu, pero trasladando esa lógica al cómo producir más con menos y conscientes de las dimensiones económica, social y medioambiental de la sostenibilidad de los sistemas alimentarios es que la Argentina subraya la importancia que en el Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto haya espacio para que la FAO apoye y potencie todos los enfoques y herramientas de agricultura sostenible. La FAO, como centro de conocimiento, debe ofrecer y apoyar diferentes alternativas de producción sostenible aplicables a diversos contextos nacionales.

En este sentido, la discusión que contraponen la agroecología con intensificación sostenible o que plantea un enfoque como superador de otros o que presente enfoque como paradigma hacia el que todos debemos realizar una transición, es reduccionista mientras la tasa de hambre del mundo y de malnutrición sigue creciendo dramáticamente. Por eso, la Argentina celebra que la FAO considere en sus trabajos los múltiples enfoques de agricultura sostenible, agroecología, agricultura de conservación, entre otros, y reconozca el valor de la innovación y las herramientas como la siembra directa, la biotecnología, las tecnologías digitales y otros elementos que contribuyen al logro de nuestro objetivo común.

Señor Presidente, y lo digo con mucha franqueza, sobre esta base será más fácil construir consensos y dejar atrás dicotomías inexistentes. Para ir terminando, Presidente, quisiera demarcar la importancia de que la FAO fortalezca su asociación con otras agencias de las Naciones Unidas como la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y la Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica (OIEA). Es por ello que la Argentina apoya fuertemente la creación de los centros conjuntos con estos organismos, ya que los desafíos que debemos abordar en materia de alimentación y agricultura están fuertemente interconectados en sus áreas de acción.

En la misma línea, también coincidimos con la visión del Director General de ampliar las alianzas con otros actores relevantes, como las instituciones financieras internacionales y el sector privado. Es importante que la FAO tienda puentes entre las múltiples partes interesadas para que a través de la cooperación, en todas sus formas, podamos cumplir con la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Con estos comentarios, señor Presidente, la Argentina toma nota de los ajustes programáticos y operacionales y apoya la aprobación de los cambios estructurales y la distribución revisada de la consignación metas.

Mme Marie De Fátima JARDIM (Angola)

Je voudrais vous remercier et m'associer à toutes les délégations qui ont félicité le Directeur général. L'Angola soutient l'intervention faite par le Groupe des 77 et la Chine, l'Indonésie et le Cameroun au nom du Groupe régional Afrique.

Nous soulignons l'aspect important de la décentralisation, de l'allocation des financements au niveau local, de l'implication de tous les acteurs, notamment dans le secteur privé, qui pourront renforcer nos capacités, sans oublier que le Gouvernement, aujourd'hui de plus en plus décentralisé, devrait pouvoir, dans la présentation du programme de coopération, tel que le PCT, trouver une solution dans un partenariat, prioritaire et renforcé.

Nous ne pourrions manquer de mentionner la priorité africaine. Mon pays, tous les ans, subit les effets du changement climatique avec la sécheresse, la désertification, auxquels s'ajoute à présent la Covid. Le Programme de développement durable devrait évaluer cette situation pour nous aider à faire face aux défis du développement, avec une action en vue de l'adaptation aux effets du changement climatique et d'une compensation. Et cette compensation ne peut pas être seulement envisagée à un simple niveau de solidarité, mais bien de sécurité face au changement climatique affectant l'agriculture. Ainsi, une agriculture résiliente devrait toujours être stimulée par une compensation, pour éliminer la faim, mais il faut aussi voir sa durabilité et l'intégration des différents secteurs, en vue surtout d'améliorer le développement.

Nous pensons que pour la réforme que le Directeur général nous propose, l'intégration régionale doit disposer de personnel. Nous voudrions ici faire une remarque, car l'Afrique a besoin de renforcer ses capacités techniques, avec les ressources africaines, et nous sommes pour la promotion de la nutrition si nous avons les connaissances adéquates. Ainsi, les échanges, la participation, l'échange d'expériences, etc. nous permettront d'améliorer nos capacités, et surtout encourageront les pays africains à participer aux activités qu'organisent la FAO, le groupe régional et toutes les représentations.

Je terminerais en rappelant que nous vivons dans des situations d'urgence, avec sécheresse, désertification, COVID-19 et mauvaise nutrition. Et nous voulons confirmer que la structure et les réformes que le Directeur général nous a présentées méritent nos félicitations. Nous considérons cette réforme et le programme de la FAO non seulement comme une ambition, mais aussi comme un défi, où les priorités qui nous concernent tous, peuvent faire beaucoup pour le monde, pour la planète, car ils sont aussi plus tournés vers l'avenir, pour que la faim et la pauvreté soient éradiquées d'ici 2030. La solidarité mondiale, avec ce programme, devrait être assurée parce que c'est par l'agriculture et sa productivité que nous pourrions mener un combat serré contre la faim et la malnutrition de nos enfants.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by Bangladesh on behalf of the Asia Regional Group and the statement made by the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We echo appreciation for the Director-General for the transparent, inclusive and participatory approach to open dialogues, regular updates and promote briefings for us to discuss *Further Adjustments to Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

We fully support the new moderate approach to FAO structure, which allows flexibility and avoids silos. We appreciate a clear differentiation between the different offices, same facing departments and we look forward to seeing how the new structure enables closer collaboration between them. In this context, we urge the flexibility be accorded to the Director-General to undertake these structural changes.

We also support the disbanding of the strategic programme teams and to deploy our technical experts in specific departments where the expertise is not needed. At the same time, we stress the importance of continuing our Strategic Objectives (SOs), aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to keep us on track in achieving Agenda 2030. We note that the disbandment of Office of the Support for Decentralized Offices (OSD) will allow country offices to deal directly with their respective Divisions, to have authority to make decisions. We hope that FAO can clarify the relation between the headquarters and the decentralized offices. In particular, the coordination of the mean FAO programmes and implementation of the United Nations resident coordinator system.

Malaysia is confident that the new approach could transform FAO into a more flexible, fit for purpose and more responsive to a changing global situation.

Malaysia supports the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

I would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the *Further Adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* document. Indonesia fully aligns itself with the statement made by my colleague,

Ambassador Esti Andayani on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and also the statement made by Bangladesh on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We welcome the Director-General's proposal for *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* in order to support FAO's vision in achieving Zero Hunger and increasing livelihood, enhancing contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'s achievement. We note with appreciation that funding proposal remains the appropriate by getting appropriation of around USD 1 billion. We also support transformative changes to continue strengthening the role of regional offices for overseeing the work of country offices. Moreover, it is also important to express our support for the formation of the Biodiversity Cluster, as well as the new Food System and Food Safety Division.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

Cabo Verde supports the statement delivered by Cameroon and South Africa on behalf of the African Regional Group, and by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We appreciate the effort made into the preparation of the document *CL 164/3*, which lays out the vision of the new leadership and the proposal to implement a modular organizational structure against the hierarchical, traditional structure. We support the new offices' proposal and we believe they will help the Organization to better focus its purpose to the ones that need it more, to achieve Zero Hunger and eliminate poverty.

Our support also goes to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HHI) and its approach of responding to the media, but also supporting the other Member States with data and information to support development. We take note and look forward to seeing FAO's response initiatives to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the containment of pests and diseases, especially in developing countries, small island developing countries, landlocked countries and least developed, food deficiency countries. We support the proposal as a way forward to enabling conditions for FAO's Director-General to deliver his programme.

Mr Kip TOM (United States of America)

The United States appreciates the Director-General's vision for a new FAO that is leaner, values transparency and accountability, incorporates innovation and the private sector, and uses scientific data and evidence to informed thinking. We are pleased that the scientific advice for food safety and the work streams of the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius Commission will retain their independence, notwithstanding these proposed adjustments.

We are pleased to see the additional position for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), as requested in *Information Note 2*. The OIG is essential to maintain FAO's reputation and we expect it to be funded appropriately to reduce the backlog of cases.

We are also discussing the structure of the Organization, which has implications for Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). Indeed, this is the Item under which we are discussing the reporting lines. We appreciate the additional information and information briefing provided on the reporting lines. The structure includes details on reporting lines and positions within senior staff because these implications are on the budget, privileges and immunities for certain staff and terminations at the end of the Director-General's term. All of these topics are under Member oversight through the various FAO Committees.

We note the discussions during the informal PWB meetings on 26 June with the Director-General continue to reflect Members' questions about these reporting lines, including requests for further clarification on the Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) and the Deputy Director-Generals (DDGs) portfolios. We are not seeking to tell the Director-General how to structure his leadership team. That is within his rightful purview. What we are asking for is the opportunity to consult with the Director-General on any future proposed changes, ahead of their implementation.

We also seek to understand how the new proposed structure will align with FAO's Strategic Framework and United Nations best practices. Other UN organizations have clear organigrams, with defined reporting lines. We urge FAO to provide such organigram for purposes of transparency and accountability to FAO staff and Member States. We also request the new organizational structure be reviewed by Council, if approved, following the 2021 Conference adoption of the new Strategic Framework.

We are highly concerned by the inclusion of language in an Information Note that stated that the Director-General could make further changes to the organizational structure and would tell staff and Members for information purposes only. FAO is a Member-driven organization. We should not cede our oversight responsibilities. Member States should always be consulted in advance of any future structural changes and that FAO Management will always reply to Member States' questions and requests for clarification. This will ensure transparency and accountability, two priorities that the Director-General shares.

Ms Mi Nguyen (Canada)

Good afternoon to all colleagues. Canada appreciates FAO continuity in the strategic direction and welcomes FAO's overall objective of eliminating silos and encouraging collaboration across the Organization. We hope this will help FAO join the ranks of dynamic, modern, agile organizations, as it should, and position the Organization well to confront interconnected and complex challenges.

We also welcome FAO's commitment to efficiency with cost savings, while noting that adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) should continue to be balanced by settings that do not jeopardize the delivery of the technical work of the Organization.

Canada supports the Director-General's commitment to transparency and accountability, this applies to restructuring within FAO. As the Organization is Membership based, it is important to continue to consult Members and we appreciate the several briefings and information notes produced in this regard.

Canada looks forward to further updates on changes and further developments on the restructuring plans, as well as progress on how they are helping the Organization break down silos, foster cross-sectoral collaboration and achieve results. Close dialogue and consultations with Members are also part of change management, so we can all understand where the changes are and embrace them in order for respective efforts to be mutually supportive. As the FAO Director-General said this morning, this is a FAO of all and for all, and it is particularly important, given the need to synchronize the adjustments in organizational structure with the upcoming new Strategic Framework, as recommended by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

Regarding the adjustments themselves, we support the recommendations made by the Council Committees. In particular, we support the establishment of an Office of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should help contribute to greater alignment of the FAO's activities with the SDGs.

We also continue to propose that further sustainable funding for the Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme in the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) beyond USD 1 million be put forward. We welcome the confirmation that the additional USD 1 million will be ring-fenced and the unit remains independent. It is welcome, but it is still insufficient.

Regarding the combining of the food safety unit with the food systems in one Division that is meant to provide improved policy guidance in targeted investment into food systems, we welcome the profiling that food safety will resume, given its importance to food security and food systems, but we stress the need for a clear delineation of resources for the food safety standards setting system, separate from the food systems. That was confirmed by FAO Management as noted in the Joint Meeting, which we welcome.

We also note that there was a confirmation that there would be a clear delineation of the resources for Codex in the combination of the Codex Secretariat with the zoonosis work in the Joint FAO/World

Health Organization (WHO) Centre, which we welcome, and we support Australia's calls for strengthened partnerships, in particular the tripartite collaboration with the WHO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in the work of the centre on zoonotic diseases.

Canada also notes that forestry and fisheries were in the natural resources and sustainable production stream, and we stress the need to ensure dual visibility. This can be done through continuing engagement by some of the seven Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs), as well as building on FAO's increasing engagement, distributed in these areas.

Canada supports and welcomes the fact that gender is now reflected in the title of the Division, which has not been the case since 2019 in the past, or in the current revised Strategic Framework. We feel that this will help give more visibility to this important cross-cutting issue and we look forward to the revised gender strategy, as well as an action plan in response to the important evaluation of FAO carried out in 2019.

We welcome the new position created in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and support the Director-General in the quest to prioritize sustainable funding for this office within existing resources, also important for overall accountability.

Mr Won-chul JOO (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement delivered by Bangladesh on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We all know that COVID-19-related restrictions are now fully affecting global food security. It is leaving governments and stakeholders with no other option but to choose uncontact communication in their work.

With this background, Korea supports FAO's structural adjustments to enhance flexibility by moving away from rigid departmental structures and hierarchies. Korea also welcomes FAO's decision to make such changes within the Conference approved policy.

Korea notes that it is a positive move that three centres are newly established to have a strong collaboration function with other UN agencies, especially when there was a need for enhanced cooperation with them.

As for the Investment Centre, I hope that it can pipeline new investments from international financial institutions (IFIs), the private sector and corporation projects to the place where additional budget is needed, including Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) and the digital platform. I sincerely hope that the new centres can create synergy by cutting the redundancy of the work.

Korea has high expectations for chief experts and Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) who are tasked with new duties. As for experts, Chief Economist and Chief Scientist work in the core leadership team with the Director-General. Important decisions will be made, based on more scientific and sub-scientific evidence in data. ADGs are also expected to focus on the role of adjusting cooperation with outside agencies. I hope they can contribute to growth and development of the Organization.

For the initial goal of structural change, we need to change the software, not only the hardware, of this Organization. This means that the ways to work and think also need to change. I would like to ask all staff members of FAO to take on their new task with a spirit of innovation.

I look forward to seeing that FAO, as a representative international body in agriculture and food areas, will better respond to the demands of Member Countries more effectively and efficiently.

Mr Shoib SARWAR SANDHU (Pakistan)

Pakistan is pleased to be part of this historic Session and appreciates the efforts of the Secretariat in making this first ever virtual Session of the Council a successful reality. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive overview on the working of the Organization during these difficult times.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group and the Group of 77 and China. We welcome the Report and the structural and procedural adjustments envisioned in it. We believe

these will better equip the Organization in achieving its goals of Zero Hunger and improving the livelihoods of millions across the globe.

We appreciate the creation of a new Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We would appreciate if the Secretariat could provide us with more information about the Management who will help the Office and its working modalities.

The report states that the Office will enhance FAO's engagement in High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). We would like to enquire whether the Office of SDGs will also assist the Member Countries in preparation of their voluntary national reviews, in the context of SDG1 and SDG2.

Sr. Julio Eduardo MARTINELLI (Peru)

La delegación de Perú ha examinado el documento que contiene los nuevos ajustes del Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto 2020-2021 y coincide en la necesidad de introducir los cambios propuestos como parte de un proceso continuo de mejora a la Organización. Por esta razón se adhiere a la declaración del Grupo de los 77 y China.

Comprendemos que la propuesta del Director General tiene como objetivo lograr una FAO más dinámica, inclusiva, transparente, eficiente, innovadora, en concordancia con su compromiso y mandato. Hemos seguido atentamente las deliberaciones sobre el tema en las reuniones del Comité de Programa, el Comité de Finanzas y en su Sesión Conjunta. Así como las recientes reuniones informativas realizadas por las Dirección de la FAO que han permitido esclarecer algunos aspectos sobre los cuales manteníamos inquietudes.

En particular, nos preocupaba la integración del trabajo de las áreas técnicas y los órganos que las componen, así como la coordinación en el terreno de las oficinas regionales, subregionales y en los países. Por lo que invocamos a la Dirección a asegurar la estrecha articulación del trabajo de estas dependencias.

Apreciamos los alcances brindados a través de las notas informativas que nos han permitido obtener una mayor claridad, tanto sobre la estructura orgánica general así como sobre las líneas de responsabilidad, principalmente a nivel del equipo directivo superior. Señor Presidente, los desafíos que enfrentamos en la lucha contra el hambre y la pobreza se han acrecentado con los efectos de la pandemia del COVID-19 y es evidente que estamos sufriendo graves retrocesos para alcanzar los ODS. En tanto la situación reclama respuestas rápidas, coherentes e integrales, así como soluciones audaces e innovadoras, la delegación del Perú acoge con interés la propuesta en discusión e invoca a los miembros del Consejo para su aprobación.

Ms Natalina Edward MOU (South Sudan)

South Sudan aligns itself with the Africa Regional Group, the Group of 77 and China's statements. We welcome and support the Director-General's newly proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* that deliberated towards increased coordination and eliminating silos in dealing with the complex challenges facing the agriculture and food systems.

The Republic of South Sudan is in full support of the proposed establishment of the Office of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the aim of coordinating the further engagement, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We appreciate and emphasize the importance of the office of the SDGs for better result related programmes, specifically on SDG1 and SDG2 of Zero Hunger and poverty reduction, in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

We recognize the importance of innovation, including all sustainable innovative approaches, digital trends and new technology as the core priority of the programme of work and budget.

We support the proposal to strengthen the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HHI), in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic to focus on rapid response, changes and needs.

We look forward to the expansion of the initiative to other countries in all regions. We also support the strategic importance of improving the effectiveness of Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) by introducing tangible results on the ground.

We also welcome the proposal to establish a new Division on Food Systems and Food Safety. We also support the proposal of strengthening the Investment Centre and Joint FAO/WHO and IAEA Centres. We appreciate and have taken note of the disbanding of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices and the maintenance of its duties. We are certain that this adjustment will expand and strengthen decentralized networks so that FAO can better serve all Members through improved programme implementation and tangible results on the ground.

With these few remarks, South Sudan endorses the proposal for the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Ms Sharon BERNNEN-HALOCK (Bahamas)

Let me convey our appreciation for the Report on the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, as well as the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee, and the various information papers that have sought to bring clarity to the changes that are being proposed.

As we all know, by the time processes such as this reach the Council, they have already undergone quite a bit of discussion at the level of the Committees, as well as during the informal consultations. Thus, the countries not represented in Rome and small delegations like the Bahamas have to rely on the work that is done in the Committees to ensure that our concerns are met, as well as to ensure that the integrity of the Programme of Work and Budget is respected. This is because we are not in Rome we also are not fully looped into how these recommendations have come about.

With the above in mind, the Bahamas, the only Caribbean country as a Member of the Council now will offer a few observations. We reaffirm our support for the decision taken up at the last Session of the Council for the establishment of the Office for Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Landlocked Countries (LLDCs) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and we now, in a similar way, welcome the creation of the new Office of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We note with appreciation that the Director-General's vision of attaining Zero Hunger and improving the livelihoods of people through better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life continues to be a driving force.

We also note with appreciation the recognition within paragraph 11 of the report about the special concerns of SIDS. Indeed, SIDS have been hard-hit by COVID-19, especially in the tourism sector, when many of us had to close our borders. Jobs were curtailed or lost, not only in the sector itself, but also in other related sectors. Fortunately, our food supplies remain strong in the Bahamas and the Government has put in place measures to ensure food has reached all persons in need. We have worked closely with Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) countries to put in place measures beneficial to nationals of our region. CARICOM has collaborated closely in the reopening of our borders and the economy, which is now happening gradually.

While we are rightly focusing on how to deal with the adverse impact experienced by our countries as a result of COVID-19, I would be remiss if I did not remind us that the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season started as of 1 June 2020. There are sixteen named storms and eight hurricanes that are forecasted. Experts predict that four of the hurricanes will become major storms of category three to five. The hurricane season runs until 30 November. Not only can a hurricane exacerbate the fight against COVID-19, it can also bring about major disruption in the economy, including loss of life and livelihoods.

We all saw the damage wrought by Hurricane Dorian to some parts of the Bahamas, September last, and we are still in the process of rebuilding. I, therefore, feel that the work of the Organization has to focus not only on the support outlined in paragraph 11, but also on how to help SIDS to build resilience and to build stronger, in order that SIDS can have the capacity to fend for themselves, as well as to ward off the double threat of COVID-19 and hurricanes.

In this context, we agree with those who have spoken about the need to strengthen the country offices and subregional offices, and especially to strengthen them programmatically. In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, FAO was among the first of the United Nations Agencies to arrive in the Bahamas. However, FAO is not physically present in the Bahamas, so this makes even more necessary a strong country office to support not only the country where it is located, but others under its jurisdiction. The subregional office of the Caribbean should also be strengthened to assist with strengthening the regional collaborative platform for research and development in the priority commodities and value chains.

We commend the Director-General for the work undertaken on this in order to make the Organization fit for purpose, including the management structure and programmatic proposals that he and his team have made towards this end. We agree with the need for efficiency and effectiveness across the Organization. At the same time, we caution that the change process be as smooth and as seamless as possible. Sometimes when implementing management changes in an organization they forget the impact that it might have on staff, or they might have top-down approaches that are beyond middle-managers, and we get so caught up in endless meetings and planning sessions we run the risk of losing sight of what is really important. We need to be mindful that whatever FAO does during the process of change, food security for all should be the end result of its efforts.

We note *inter alia* the use of digitalization in agriculture and new technologies is one of the core priorities of FAO's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), while continuing to promote sustainable development in all its three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. This is also critical for the Caribbean region to improve Member States' capacity to meet the greater needs of their populations for safe and nutritious food. While digital technology contains unlimited positive potential, as we said during the pandemic, we also have to bear in mind that digital and emerging technologies also contain limitless challenges. SIDS are particularly burdened by these challenges, based on new digital technologies today, as some governments still lack the necessary capacity to further analyze them in a holistic, inclusive and comprehensive manner. Therefore, we need close global cooperation in order to address both the challenges and opportunities arising from digital technologies, especially in combating climate change.

Without going into too many details, we see many opportunities within the PWB for the Caribbean region to deepen its engagement with FAO and we look forward to developing that in the not too distant future.

While we agree in general with the findings and the Report of the Programme and Finance Committees, we do share the concerns that have been expressed about the reporting lines and look forward to the further clarification that has been requested on this, as well as on other issues.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statement submitted by the African Regional Group and Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the Director-General's proposal for *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*, outlined in document *CL 164/3*, its information notes and web annexes which aim to increase coordination, responsiveness, efficiency and eliminating silos within the FAO. We are confident that this will facilitate the organization in fulfilling its mandate to achieve Zero Hunger.

Zimbabwe appreciates that the One FAO approach with a modular organigram seeks to address complex and inter-related issues through the breaking up of silos and the creation of a new rapid and flexible communication channel. Hopefully this will allow knowledge and information sharing across sectors and locations, rapid articulation of needs and possible responses, and the sharing of lessons learned, leading to innovative ideas and hopefully, an organization better equipped to address challenges facing food and agriculture today.

Furthermore, we support the establishment of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We are all aware the world is off-track in achieving SDG2, Zero Hunger. The Office for Sustainable

Development Goals could play a part in enhancing FAO's engagement in the follow up and review of Agenda 2030, and in assisting developing countries to achieve their targets.

We also support the proposals that cover the strengthening the Investment Centre and Joint FAO Centres with World Health Organization (WHO) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) respectively. We also welcome the proposal to establish a Division of Food Systems and Food Safety in this coming ahead of the important Food Systems Summit (FSS). Zimbabwe believes that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) is a viable strategy to accelerate agricultural transformation. We support the proposal to strengthen this initiative, particularly in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic which threatens to exacerbate an already precarious situation with regard to food security, malnutrition and hunger.

Furthermore, we understand the disbandment of the Office of Support to Decentralized Offices is to ensure that the various functions are streamlined and carried out in an efficient and effective manner under the One FAO approach. We appreciate that it would also remove a management layer between Heads of Decentralized Offices and relevant units hosting the expertise. We hope that this adjustment will expand and strengthen the decentralized network leading to the improved results.

Currently, the world is facing a precarious situation, with a global pandemic that has led to deep economic and health impacts. The effects of the pandemic are still to be fully understood. Zimbabwe appreciates the work that the FAO has and continues to do in assessing COVID-19 and its impacts to food and agriculture. It is our conviction that the further adjustments outlined will enhance FAO's work in this regard.

With these few notes, Zimbabwe supports and endorses the proposed adjustments.

Ms Hmway Hmway KHYNE (Myanmar)

Myanmar aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Bangladesh, on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. It is with our sincere gratitude that we welcome the vision of the Director-General to build a dynamic, inclusive, transparent and efficient FAO, which is demand and challenge driven, science and professional based and results and impact oriented. In this way, we have noted some proposals for specific structural and programmatic adjustments. Among those proposals, Myanmar particularly welcomes the creation of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we hope that the new office will effectively coordinate cooperate engagement in the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review.

Myanmar further welcomes the proposal to establish the FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre to develop international food standards, guidelines and codes of practice and to bring FAO's expertise on zoonotic diseases. We believe that the centre would be able to address today's challenges of zoonotic diseases to both public health and agriculture and food systems. We are also encouraged by the proposal to increase funding to the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre.

While welcoming innovative approaches to reduce bureaucracy and improve flexibility, we encourage Management to ensure that duties and responsibilities of the members of leadership teams are well defined to avoid overlapping and confusion. Myanmar is pleased to note that the proposed adjustments remain within the approved budget level for 2020-21. In view of the above mentioned reasons, Myanmar requests the Council endorses the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Mr Badr HISHAM (Egypt)

Chairperson, thank you very much for your leadership. I know it has been a long day for you and thank you for all the efforts you have been doing, not only now, but for the last 50 years. Thank you, very much.

Egypt aligns itself fully with the statement of the African Regional Group and of the Group of 77 and China and the statement of the Near-East Group. I would like, at the outset, to thank the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, for his opening remarks that enlightened us on his vision to build a dynamic FAO in order to attain Zero Hunger and improve the livelihoods of people on the ground, given the unprecedented and devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition, especially in the developing countries that are already suffering from different challenges in this regard.

We would like to highlight a few items. One, Egypt truly supports the vision of the Director-General to reform the Organization in order to make it fit for purpose and effective in response to the needs of the Member Countries, and it would like to thank the Director-General and his leadership team for holding a series of consultations and informal briefings with members of the regional groups in order to clarify the rationale behind the proposed changes, including to the organizational structure of the Organization, by providing additional information upon request of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and during meetings as well.

Two, we believe the proposed changes to the organizational structure are timely and required to make the FAO more efficient, demand driven, results and impact oriented in addition to eliminating silos and administrative bureaucracy.

Three, Egypt welcomes, like other Members, that the proposed changes to the organizational organigram remain within the Conference-approved budget level and will not foresee any financial implications.

Four, Egypt welcomes the establishment of a new Office for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the new Division on Food Systems and Food Safety, which are timely and needed amid the preparations for the Food Systems Summit. This should take into consideration the role of the Rome-based Agencies in implementing the SDGs, in particular SDG1 and SDG2, in addition to promoting food systems and fighting all forms of malnutrition amid the challenges of the COVID-19.

Five, we also welcome the opportunity for the new unit to engage with United Nations Organizations that will enable FAO to play a more active role within the reform process of the United Nations Development System.

Six, Egypt welcomes the assurances of the Director-General that the current proposed changes that within the Headquarters will be followed by reforming the decentralized offices in order to address their complex and unprecedented challenges amid COVID-19 impacts and to enable them to deliver large and efficient response to the emerging needs of the Member Countries.

Seven, we support the proposal regarding strengthening of the Investment Centre, which we believe will help FAO to mobilize more funds to address the needs of the Member Countries following the pandemic, given that health and emergency is the main focus.

Egypt fully, I repeat, Egypt fully endorses the proposed changes to the organizational organigram, which will help the Director-General to carry out his duties and implement his vision without any micromanagement.

Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by Bangladesh. Our Ambassador has already touched upon Japan's thoughts on the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* after the Director-General's opening remarks in the morning session. I do not want to repeat them and I have some comments on the structuring of the Organization.

Paragraph 15 of *CL 164/3 Information Note 5* says "the Director-General may at times make changes to the reporting lines or to the Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) assignments" and also in the end of the paragraph, "such changes will be communicated transparently to staff and Members for information purposes." I think these changes are really important and, as India has pointed out at WFP Executive Board last week, with the request from the Executive Board Members, the Board discussed

and approved the change of structure and reporting lines of the WFP. As the United States pointed out, I believe those possible future changes should be discussed with Members at the Governing Bodies to ensure transparency, accountability and the governance.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

La France s'aligne bien évidemment sur la déclaration de l'Union européenne et de ses États Membres. La France voudrait tout d'abord remercier la FAO et son Directeur général pour leur disponibilité et les précisions apportées lors de ses réunions informelles sur les ajustements, et l'apport des notes additionnelles en réponse aux demandes des États Membres.

Permettez-moi de souligner quatre points en particulier.

Je voudrais d'abord saluer, à travers ces nouvelles propositions d'organigramme, la volonté du Directeur général de rendre la FAO plus efficace, agile, réactive, de façon à pouvoir répondre aux immenses défis rencontrés sur la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable, et qui ont été renforcés de façon dramatique avec la crise de COVID-19.

Je me réjouis aussi de cette discussion. L'exigence de transparence, de redevabilité et de confiance entre la FAO et les États Membres est nécessaire au bon fonctionnement de l'Institution. Je voudrais insister ainsi sur la nécessité des États Membres d'assurer leur rôle de gouvernance dans le cadre d'un dialogue ouvert et continu entre les États qui constitue l'identité propre du mode de fonctionnement de cette Institution multilatérale. C'est pourquoi nous soutenons aussi la proposition de tirer les leçons de ce nouvel organigramme au regard de l'adoption du nouveau cadre stratégique, et au regard de l'expérience acquise.

Deuxième point, il est important que la FAO conserve ses compétences techniques et sectorielles, qui constituent son avantage comparatif unique, comme beaucoup d'intervenants l'ont dit d'ailleurs avant moi.

Nous constatons une baisse des ressources allouées aux divisions techniques de la FAO, qui concerne notamment les divisions ressources naturelles et production durable. Cela ne semble pas aller dans le sens des multiples engagements et de la vision de la FAO en faveur d'une transition durable des modes de production et des systèmes alimentaires. Il nous semble donc important de continuer à placer au cœur de l'expertise technique de la FAO, les thématiques de l'agroécologie, de l'environnement, du climat, de la biodiversité, de l'agriculture familiale, la santé des sols, la lutte contre la déforestation, la pêche, toutes ces problématiques, dont certaines aussi ont été mentionnées par le Directeur général ce matin, aptes à assurer, dans la durée, des systèmes alimentaires résilients, sains et productifs.

Troisième point, je voudrais aussi attirer l'attention sur la nécessité de porter une vigilance particulière à l'approche «Une santé», et à la bonne coordination des entités chargées de traiter de ces points, et des questions de santé animale et de zoonose, notamment du lien entre le Centre conjoint FAO-OMS et la Division NSA, tout en collaborant étroitement avec l'organisation mondiale de la santé animale, l'OIE.

Dernier point, plusieurs délégations, avant moi, ont mentionné l'esprit constructif qui avait présidé aux discussions du Conseil d'administration du Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) concernant les propositions de modification sur l'organigramme.

Permettez-moi simplement de rappeler que les propositions du PAM, qui ont été soumises pour approbation au Conseil d'administration, comportaient des lignes hiérarchiques clairement identifiées, comme c'est une pratique normale dans le système des Nations Unies.

La France soutient donc les propositions présentées par l'Allemagne au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses États Membres, tout en soulignant, comme cela a été dit, notre volonté de rejoindre le consensus en soutien à la FAO et à son action, de façon à répondre aux immenses besoins rencontrés, notamment dans les pays et les populations les plus vulnérables.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The European Union countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the European Union's (EU) statement.

We recognize and welcome the emphasis that the Director-General puts on making FAO a part of the solution. We need a strong FAO in order to succeed in the fight against hunger and in transforming the food systems to be more sustainable. We have to mitigate and adapt to the climate change and instead of being a driver of biodiversity loss, agriculture should strive to increase diversity and widen its use. We also need a strong FAO in the Tripartite work to handle the antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

We recognize that within the mandate it is the responsibility of the Director-General to make FAO Organization fit for purpose. We welcome the changes that include shorter decision lines, less bureaucracy, the efforts to breaking down silos, strengthening the science base and, last but not least, the efforts to strengthen staff motivation. However, we highlight that the clear and consistent reporting lines provide accountability and stability for the staff and the information on responsibilities is essential for the Members too.

We welcome the intention to prioritize the work of One Health in collaboration with the United Nations system throughout the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre. However, it is important that there is a close link from the Centre to the work that is carried out by the units responsible for food systems and food safety, animal production and health and plant production and protection, to ensure the required coherence. We would also encourage FAO to include the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in the work of the Centre.

Furthermore, we very much welcome that the centre coordinates FAO's work on AMR within the context of the FAO action plan for AMR. FAO, with its mandate to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases is uniquely placed to address the core efforts to curb AMR. We understand that the new offices highlight important focus areas of FAO's work. In that respect, we request information on how highly relevant cross-cutting issues, which are not included in offices, like gender equality and nutrition, will be anchored and promoted in FAO.

We believe that the name of the Fisheries Division does not reflect the growing global economic, environmental and nutritional importance of aquaculture, which now accounts for more than half of fish consumed and is the fastest growing industry. We consider it important that aquaculture is visible in the name of the Division.

The Nordic countries stand ready to work together with you, Director-General, and with FAO staff to improve the delivery and functioning of FAO. There will be challenges and concerns, but we stand ready to find solutions. We need FAO to change, in order to deliver better its unique mandate.

Ms Marie- Therese Sarch (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom has taken note of the proposals and the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*. We agree with our European colleagues and the others who have endorsed the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance's request to prioritize sustainable funding for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

We welcome the Director-General's vision for FAO's organizational restructuring. We agree that emergencies and resilience, climate change and biodiversity, One Health, including antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and zoonosis, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and FAO's statistics work should be priorities.

We note that lines of delegation and accountability have not been included in the proposal submitted for our approval and we note the rationale for this is to provide greater flexibility and resilience to change. While we agree flexibility and resilience are important, clarity is key. In particular, clear lines of authority are essential for internal control.

We have welcomed FAO's work to progressively strengthen its internal control framework. The current framework is based on the organizational structure that was in place in February 2019. FAO's internal control framework will need to be updated to reflect these proposals. Please, would Management confirm that the framework will be updated and shared with the External Auditor, Audit Committee and Finance Committee for their consideration at their next meetings? We suggest that Council welcomes confirmation of this in our conclusions.

FAO's organizational structure should reflect its strategic priorities and we would expect the organigram to be reviewed and revised following Conference approval of FAO's new Strategic Framework next year and, we would welcome Council's recognition of this in our conclusions.

We support the disbanding of the Strategic Programme teams, on the understanding that FAO will also move away from its five Strategic Objectives towards a Strategic Results Framework that is better aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. We request Management to share an outline of the Strategic Framework and the strategic results framework by September to ensure a meaningful consultation with Members takes place.

We welcome the proposal for the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre to coordinate FAO's work on AMR, within the context of FAO's Action Plan for AMR and we would like to see Council endorse this in our conclusions. We welcome the focus that the new Centre will bring to FAO's work on One Health, including on the prevention of zoonotic diseases and in partnership with WHO. As others have suggested, we would also encourage FAO to include the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in the work of the new Centre.

The World Health Assembly COVID-19 Response Resolution underlined the need for continued collaboration between the OIE, WHO and FAO and, as mentioned by Australia, the Centre is an excellent opportunity for FAO to take an active role in the Tripartite. We encourage FAO to take forward consultations on the centre with WHO and OIE and report back to Council on progress with this at our next session.

To close, finally, with a question, please would Management explain how overlap between the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Centre and the Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre on zoonosis will be avoided?

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of our list of speakers of Members of the Council. We will go to the Observers now. The first speaker will be Cuba, then Venezuela, and then Nigeria. Cuba, you have the floor.

Sra. Rebeca CUTIE CANCINO (Cuba) (Observer)

Apoyamos la declaración del G77 y China. Vivimos una de las crisis más profunda a nivel sanitario y económico desde el fin de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. La pandemia COVID-19 ha demostrado que la única forma de minimizar sus efectos es la solidaridad y la cooperación. La crisis afecta grandemente a los más pobres y vulnerables. También a los más de 32 países afectados por las sanciones económicas y las medidas unilaterales.

Se requiere en este contexto, una FAO que responda eficientemente al llamado de evitar que la crisis sanitaria se convierta en una crisis alimentaria. La FAO es una Organización clave dentro del sistema de las Naciones Unidas. Mientras debatimos aquí, el número de personas en inseguridad alimentaria aumenta. Con cambios propuestos como la delegación de una nueva oficina para los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible mejorarán los programas para el logro de la Agenda 2030, en particular los ODS 1 y 2, ya que eliminar la pobreza y el hambre son los objetivos que no pueden seguir siendo postergados.

En cuanto a la generación de los centros conjuntos de la FAO y la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), con un enfoque de una sola salud, así como la FAO y la Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica (OIEA), consideramos son un paso de avance en la aplicación de la innovación y la ciencia, en beneficio de la reducción agrícola, la seguridad e inocuidad alimentaria. Son aspectos indispensables para los países en desarrollo, en su mayoría hoy privados de las nuevas tecnologías de

aplicaciones científicas, de los mejores medios de subsistencia para evitar al máximo la pérdida y desperdicio de alimentos, para enfrentar las plagas y alcanzar el derecho a la alimentación, así como un mercado justo no discriminatorio y equitativo para todos.

Las oficinas descentralizadas han sido un gran apoyo para implementar la misión y la visión de la FAO a nivel del terreno; allí en el campo donde se producen los alimentos y donde esta producción se conecta con los sistemas de distribución en beneficio social. Apoyamos el trabajo de las oficinas descentralizadas.

En cuanto a América Latina, queremos señalar que la cantidad de personas que necesitan hoy asistencia alimentaria se ha triplicado como resultado del impacto de la COVID-19. Nos sumamos a lo planteado por los miembros del GRULAC sobre los países de renta media y también lo planteado por Bahamas sobre la situación en el Caribe y los efectos del cambio climático. Con estos comentarios, mi delegación aprueba los ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para el 2020-21.

Sr. Elias Rafael ELJURI ABRAHAM (Venezuela)

La República Bolivariana de Venezuela apoya la declaración hecha por la delegación de Indonesia en su calidad de presidencia del Grupo de los 77 y China y desea felicitar al Director General de la FAO y a todo su personal por los nuevos ajustes presentados al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto que se alinean con la actual situación que vive el mundo ante la pandemia generada por la COVID-19.

En particular, deseamos resaltar los ajustes estructurales, la reasignación de las prioridades y cada vez mayor colaboración con las demás agencias de Naciones Unidas, así como el creciente apoyo a las oficinas descentralizadas, la iniciativa Mano de la mano, y la propuesta de la plataforma internacional para la alimentación y la agricultura digitales. Pues, todo lo anterior, redundará en una respuesta más eficiente a las necesidades de cooperación de los países afectados por la mencionada pandemia.

Asimismo, tal como el mismo Secretario General de la ONU y otros altos funcionarios del sistema de Naciones Unidas han hecho, instamos el cese de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales que obstaculizan el acceso a los alimentos y medicamentos a los países afectados y sus esfuerzos por enfrentar la pandemia de la COVID-19. Es el momento de más multilateralismo, de mayor acceso a recursos financieros y, sobre todo, de mucha solidaridad.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a request from two Members, so we will go back to first the Members. Argentina, you asked for the floor.

Sr. Carlos Bernado CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sí, Presidente. Pido disculpas volver a intervenir pero hubo alguna expresión del representante permanente de Alemania en nombre de la Unión Europea que no me quedó claro porque interpreté en sus expresiones que había condiciones para que pudieran prestar consentimiento o consenso para la aprobación de la reforma. Pero en el punto 2 de la autodenominadas condiciones impuestas o sugeridas como para poder apoyar ese consenso, remitiría a la posibilidad que otro organismo por fuera de la FAO fuera el que pudiera dar el okay final a una decisión que, en realidad, debería ser resuelta en la soberanía de este Consejo.

No me quedó claro. O sea, yo no quisiera dejar pasar que corra esto como algo menor porque si yo lo interpreté mal quiero ser yo el primero que diga que pido disculpas. Pero si en realidad lo que se expresó es que el Consejo no tendría soberanía para decidir sobre las cosas que están a su análisis, entonces allí estamos en un problema. Entonces, Presidente, le pido disculpas haber pedido la palabra pero realmente me gustaría que antes de concluir podamos tener bien claro. Si yo me equivoqué, voy a ser el primero en pedir disculpas por haber interpretado incorrectamente la presentación del representante de la Unión Europea.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor for Jordan first, and then I will request Germany to offer clarification.

Jordan, you have the floor.

Mr Mohammad AL SHABBAR (Jordan) (Original Language Arabic)

The Kingdom of Jordan would like to support the Director-General's remarks as we have noticed that he is making great efforts in order to modernize FAO.

We appreciate the adjustments made to the organigram, as this will provide more flexibility to FAO in order to adapt faster and more efficiently to the imminent challenges, especially across Member Nations. This will allow the Organization to have greater powers to counter the COVID-19 impacts.

Jordan supports the Group of 77 and China statement and we would like to thank the Director-General once again for his efforts and we do support him in all his endeavours to modernize FAO's organigram.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Germany, if you could clarify the point raised by Argentina.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am, of course, happy to explain it, perhaps in more clarity. I said in the statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States that both the organizational structure and the reporting lines are a fundamental part of the general structure of the administrative and technical services, which were in the General Rules of the Organization, Rule XXIV, paragraph 3(j).

According to our information, and my French colleague referred to this in her intervention, standard practice of United Nations organizations is that the Governing Body not only approves an organigram, but also the reporting lines. As we have heard repeatedly, also when the WFP Executive Board asked for approval of its major reform of the senior management, also there in the organigram, the reporting lines were included. Therefore, the United Nations System knows one system-wide Unit, and that is the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), which basically defines best practices in United Nations organizations.

My distinguished Argentinian colleague, Ambassador Cherniak, asks whether FAO has not the autonomous right to take its own decisions, then of course it has this autonomous right. It is sovereign to take any decision it wants. However, it would probably be in the best interest of this Organization if it is in conformity with the standards and best practices of other United Nations organizations.

I hope that clarifies what I said before.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we will go back now to the Observers. The next speaker is Nigeria, followed by Kenya and then Ghana.

Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan OLANIRAN (Nigeria) (Observer)

It has been a long day, but it has been very productive. Let me start by coming from the angle of approval that God gives us two ears and one mouth. The reason for this it might be believed is for us to learn quickly, to respond carefully and slowly, but, thirdly, to be careful.

Nigeria fully supports the statements by the Group of 77 and China, and the Africa Regional Group statement and, of course, at the other end of the world, Nigeria found a lot of common ground towards the Dominican Republic statement and we agree with most of it.

Having said this, Nigeria does not believe, for any of the Rome-based Agencies' (RBAs) management, any form of micromanagement. We have the principles in position for them to discharge the responsibilities as required. However, it is also very important that the relationship between the FAO hierarchy, of any of the RBAs, should be a mutual, cordial one with the Governing Bodies that is the Membership of the organizations. This is key and I believe the United States of America put it very squarely, followed by Japan.

The modular management approach has gone through a lot of conversations and discussions among the officials of the FAO, shared with us and we had our inputs, which is good, and this is the way it should be.

Let me thank the Director-General for his vision, his deep rooted and well-meaning intention. I think it will not hurt if I say that FAO is an old elephant, it must not fall down because if it does, that is the end of the story. In attempt not to make it fall down, this is why he is bringing on these innovations, this method of doing things differently, which is welcomed. However, it is also good to know that the Programme would have been very well thought out, the “t”’s crossed, the “i”’s dotted, but you also need political support from all Members, which is where I feel concerned, mainly because of the informal discussion. I refer to the last one. The good intention of the Director-General was almost marred by whatever he might have had that caused him some agitation and that made him lose his humour and control. We need not to allow the Director-General any type of attitude to spoil the mutual relationship between Membership and your attempt with your team to work at this particular time.

With COVID-19, it has thrown everything out of gear, you have done an excellent job in collaboration with not only the RBAs, but with other agencies, the private sector and governments. This we want to you maintain and keep it going.

There is also an aspect that I want to agree with, the Offices that are setup, seven of them, the Office for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would appreciate for all nations to be able to have where to turn to, to be able to have better data with respect to what is expected of us and to get every other office to focus on the issue. To do this, Mr Director-General, will require you and your team to inform us, not only after the decisions have been taken, but to carry us along and discuss together and where there are disagreements or inability to see eye to eye, the sort of information needs, the six that we gave in an attempt to explain why you are taking the actions are the sort of things that are needed and has been the way to work.

We all know that we have common objectives, common interests and commitment to the billions of voiceless people in the field, feeding us, at least the smallholders in whatever category of the production are still feeding us up to 80 percent, or 85 percent, of the world’s population. Let us keep that at the back of our minds.

Finally, I want to also support the suggestion that that should not stop the idea of the digital age and the digital usage of where we are. However, the reality of it is that the Bahamas nailed it on the head, that there are different stages of digital know-how. Infrastructure has not been in place, so attempts to build all this will bring us to a common platform and we also have to walk the talk. Membership should make sure that while we commit FAO to zero budget, zero nominal growth. There must be a way by which the cost of the importance of FAO at this point in time and the collaboration with other agencies, there should be more monies coming in. Membership should pay out their contributions, to make the Organization work.

Before I forget, I agree with the Argentinian Ambassador with respect to this issue of getting that second point across to waiver the ticket or to endorse it. It will not be, nor should be, irregular growth, the Members tried their best to work within the Council, the Conference of FAO, and that of the WFP Executive Board and the IFAD Executive Board to come to an agreement to do their best for the Organizations.

Nigeria, finally, supports the *Further Adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

CHAIRPERSON

It is 17:30 hours now. I have nine more speakers, three of those nine are Members who have asked for the floor again.

I have a suggestion to make. We should try complete this particular Item today, since we have the interpreters. My suggestion would be to break for around 10-15 minutes, then reconvene to carry on with the discussion. I have nine speakers, three of them Members and six Observers. Then we can put

the conclusions on the screen, and hopefully finish Item 3 today. Would you all be in favour of this suggestion?

We could break for 10-15 minutes, reconvene we carry on with the discussion, then we will put the conclusions on the screen and, hopefully, come to a conclusion on Item 3, and then we will break up for the day.

The meeting was suspended from 17:33 to 17:58 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 33 à 17 h 58

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.33 a las 17.58

CHAIRPERSON

I have México, Argentina, Dominican Republic.

Then the Observers, Kenya, Ghana, Thailand, Iran, Netherlands and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

I will start with the Members and give the floor to Mexico.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

Mi intervención es sobre las preguntas que planteó Argentina y que está respondiendo Alemania en nombre de la Unión Europea. La idea de que una entidad externa dé una opinión sobre los cambios al organigrama es interesante pero no creo que este tema mi delegación lo planteó en el Comité de Finanzas e incluso pedimos que la Asesora Jurídica nos responda una pregunta particular, la cual era si el Consejo tenía la potestad de aprobar esos temas o si el Director General los podría aprobar por su cuenta, lo que contestó la Asesora Jurídica era que el Consejo lo puede hacer. En ese momento no se habló nada de una entidad externa emitiendo una opinión, tampoco en la sesión conjunta y no recuerdo que se haya mencionado en las semanas entre esas sesiones y ahora. Por lo que esta sugerencia es interesante pero suena como una sorpresa.

Quizás, señor Presidente, la Consultora Jurídica de la FAO pudiera iluminarnos en esta cuestión.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco en primer lugar, muy especialmente al Embajador Ulrich Seidenberger por sus aclaraciones, de sus palabras queda absolutamente claro para mí que, como lo dice la normativa y que también mi predecesor en el uso de la palabra, Benito Jiménez de México expresó, este Consejo es absolutamente soberano. La segunda cosa es que traté en el break de ir a buscar lo que expresaba el *Artículo XXIV-3(j)* que dice del Consejo, “Estudiar y aprobar las recomendaciones del Comité de Finanzas o de la Comisión de Administración Pública Internacional acerca de la escala de sueldos y las condiciones de empleo del personal así como las recomendaciones del Comité de Finanzas sobre la estructura general de los servicios administrativos y técnicos de la Organización.”

No surge de este artículo ningún elemento que pueda dar lugar a que estas condiciones planteadas por mi estimado colega de Alemania puedan tener algún sentido normativo. Y si no tiene carácter normativo, entonces tiene un carácter político, o sea, un carácter aspiracional, un deseo. Lo que les gustaría a algunos países que ocurriese sin ningún sustento normativo luego de tener una agenda aprobada. Me parece que la cosa está muy clara. Igual me parece muy bien lo que dice mi colega de México sobre que también se puede consultar a la Oficina Legal pero yo creo que “a confesión de parte relevo de prueba,” dicen mis colegas, los abogados.

De todas maneras hay otro punto. En varias oportunidades se mencionó el rol del Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) y yo creo, por allí, repito otra vez, soy yo el que quizás me equivoque, pero nadie sabe más seguramente que mi colega de Alemania sobre el PMA porque él es Presidente Independiente y creo que el PMA reporta a la FAO y al Consejo Económico y Social de Naciones Unidas (ECOSOC), pero no es al revés. La FAO reporta a este Consejo. Entonces, me parece que podemos seguir conversando este tema en otra oportunidad pero ahora tenemos una agenda, tenemos un Consejo que es soberano y respeto la aspiración o el deseo, el gusto de algunos colegas sobre cómo

podría ser de otra manera pero las normas son las normas y las normas se usan para darle certidumbre y predictibilidad a las organizaciones.

CHAIRPERSON

We could follow your suggestion and after we are finished with the list of speakers, we could ask the Legal Counsel to give us some views.

I have two more Members so we will go through the list of speakers and then get the Legal Counsel to give us her views.

I give the floor to the Dominican Republic.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Yo voy a ser muy breve porque las intervenciones que hicieron el Embajador Olaniran de Nigeria, antes de la pausa, y luego lo que nos dijo el señor Jiménez y el Embajador Cherniak, de México y Argentina respectivamente, cuando retornamos toca los puntos que yo iba a tocar, casi todos. Porque lo que sucede, Presidente, yo escuché con mucha atención la explicación que proporcionó nuestro colega, el Embajador de Alemania, entonces yo como mi formación es en ciencias jurídicas y en ciencias políticas, fui a la base.

Examiné, los textos fundamentales y no contento con eso, aprovechando la pausa, también contacté con Santo Domingo, con mi capital, leí en voz alta lo que estábamos allí debatiendo y me dicen, “Bueno, usted lo que tiene que hacer, Embajador, es convocar a la Consultora Jurídica para que explique lo que para nosotros aquí,” me dijeron mis superiores, “y lo que usted,” hablando de mi persona, “entienden que es lo que está muy claro, lo correcto. Las normas son para ser aplicadas y no podemos aquí inventar nuevas normas ni postergar la aprobación del debate y la eventual aprobación de un paquete de reformas buscando este detalle.”

Mi delegación quiere reiterar algo que ya se lo dijimos al Director General y que en una de las reuniones que tuvimos de manera abierta, porque yo no he hablado con el Director General en otro lugar que no sea en reuniones con usted y con otros colegas aquí, o sea no he tenido con él una reunión uno a uno, ya me habría gustado. El punto es que yo le aseguré al Director General que la delegación de República Dominicana tiene cero interés --ningún interés-- en hacer micro gestión.

Nosotros no queremos decirle al Director General de qué color tiene que pintar las paredes de su oficina ni de qué color debe ser la corbata que se ponga. Nosotros le hemos dado al Director General mandato --nosotros todos-- el gobierno de República Dominicana y los gobiernos de 193 Estados miembros de la FAO, le han dado mandato en la Conferencia General de junio del año pasado para que administre la organización, para que gestione la FAO, para que determine de acuerdo a la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, a la constitución y los textos fundamentales de la FAO cómo mejor debe utilizar los recursos humanos que han sido puestos a su disposición, el servicio civil internacional para que pueda cumplir de manera cabal, de manera óptima el mandato de la FAO.

Nosotros no vamos a estarle diciendo al Director General cómo micro gestionar, cómo micro administrar la Organización. Le hemos dado ese mandato y tenemos una estructura de normas dentro de las cuales, por supuesto, el Director General tiene que moverse. Para concluir, Presidente, nosotros lo que pediríamos es que por intermedio suyo preguntarle a la Consultora Jurídica cuál es la opinión jurídica de si el Director General, con estas propuestas que está sometiendo al Consejo está o no dentro de la ley. Si está o no violando las normas que gobiernan la Organización y que hemos aprobado los Estados miembros que somos los dueños de la Organización. La Organización pertenece a sus Estados miembros. El Director General es una persona que recibe mandato para administrar.

Queremos confirmar si estas propuestas están dentro de la norma, dentro de la ley.

CHAIRPERSON

Out of the list of speakers, I have three Members. I will ask Members to speak and then I will ask Legal Counsel to give her views.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY (Egypt)

This is the first time we are taking the floor and I just want to join what has been said by the representatives of Argentina, Dominican Republic and also Mexico. I also would like to emphasize what is being said by the Ambassador of Egypt in Egypt's statement earlier. We are now discussing this issue. We would urge all the Members of the Council to refrain from getting into micromanagement.

This is a request and we would also like to stress that we are not in a position to accept any kind of layer of responsibility on the sovereignty of the Council. The Council should have the right to approve or not the Organization's structure and I do not accept any kind of mixing between WFP and FAO. WFP is reporting to FAO's Conference and also to United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in New York. However, FAO as a Council is only reporting to the Conference so I would urge all the delegates to follow the current measures of working of the Council and not get into micromanagement issues.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Before you turn to the Legal Counsel, perhaps we could ask Management to respond to the points that were raised in my intervention and by other Members. There were a couple of points I asked to be clarified that it might help this discussion.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I think the discussion is going in the wrong direction. There is no need for consulting the Legal Counsel, as she was already consulted in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee for those comments. She has also expressed her legal opinion in the Informal Briefing, an opinion that some may share and some may not share. That is the tricky thing with law, you are not always right or wrong but you have legal opinions which always deserve respect.

The question is not whether the Legal Counsel is of one view or another, the point is that because we have different views on this, it may become a political issue. It is not in Germany's interest and not in the European Union's interest to block any consensus and we are not defining any conditions. The word condition came up again and again, that is not what we want. What we want is to make sure and that is in protection of the Director-General, the new leader of this Organization, that the rules are according to the best practices of the UN System. If the Council decides to adopt this, we are not standing in the way of the consensus.

What we would like to be reassured of, is that it does not set a precedent and that we may revise this organigram after the adoption of the new Strategic Framework. This is what we really would like to see. If everybody believes that this is fully in accordance with the UN System, then what would be the problem of having a UN System wide organization looking at it? This is nothing we are insisting on. It probably would not be a bad idea, but if the Council decides otherwise then we can live with that.

I do not agree with the repetitive use of the word micromanagement. This was a word that we heard very often under the predecessor of Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu, and it did not help. The question of accountability is never micromanagement. The question of best practice in the UN System is neither micromanagement, ever. We should really lead the discussion back in a more constructive direction. We are all working together to support the Director-General and to help him to reform this Organization, which is desperately needed. Please take our points and our interventions as what they are meant to be, a help in the way forward and not as being obstructive. From our point view, consultation of the Legal Counsel and prolongation of this discussion is really not necessary.

Mr Kip TOM (United States of America)

We support the comments made by Ambassador Seidenberger from Germany. We align with them completely, but I want to go back just one week, when we addressed to the World Food Programme some changes to their organizational structure. We had full transparency and full control over it as Member States, also referencing the Ombudsman and the Ethics Office with that movement. That is

the kind of transparency we have to have, our role as being a part of this Organization. Being involved with the governance of it.

We do not want to micromanage. I do not like using the word either, but I will use it in this context because we leave that up to the Director-General to take care of that. We are not telling him how to run his Organization, we are just simply asking him to explain the how. I ask that we, as Members, stand up for our responsibility and not sieve on oversight, and make sure we are all involved with this Organization and the structure of it.

CHAIRPERSON

We had different Members giving their views and quite a few of them have asked for the Legal Counsel to clarify some aspects of this discussion, and what is on the table is what is the Council competent to decide.

To get the opinion of the Legal Counsel off the table, I would like to request the Legal Counsel to give us a clarification on this view, so we can proceed without delay and without this aspect of the Legal Counsel in our mind all the time. I would like to give the floor to the Legal Counsel to help us clarify this issue.

Ms Donata Rugarabamu (Legal Counsel)

I believe there are two questions here. One is for the authority of Members to take decisions for the Organization and, then, more specifically the authority *vis-à-vis* the approval of this revised structure of the Organization and indeed whether or not there should be reporting lines in the structure.

In that regard, first *vis-à-vis* the authority of the Council, I refer again, as I did before in the informal meetings with permanent representatives to the FAO Basic Texts, General Rules of the Organization Rule XXIV, paragraph 2, subparagraph (d), clarifies that the Council shall decide on such *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* as may be required following the decisions of the Conference on the budget level.

With regard to the structure of the Organization, once again, it is the Members that are sovereign as reflected in the same Rule XXIV, subparagraph 3 (j) which states that the Council shall “consider and approve recommendations of the Finance Committee on the general structure of the administrative and technical services of the Organization.” In that context, as to what that entails, here I refer to the Constitution itself. As I mentioned previously, Article VII, paragraph 4 of the Constitution establishes that the Director-General shall have full power and authority to direct the work of the Organization under the general supervision of the Conference and the Council.

As I mentioned, the FAO Basic Texts, General Rules of the Organization, Rule XXIV.3(j) also refers to the general structure of the Organization. I believe here it is also very important to take into account Staff Regulation, 301.1.2, which was endorsed by the Council and which provides for staff members to be subject to the authority of the Director-General who may assign them to any of the activities or offices of the Organization.

Thus, my view from the legal perspective is that I do not see any limitation on the Members’ sovereign right to decide on how the structure of the Organization should be nor, however, do I see that as going beyond the general structure of the Organization mindful of the authority of the Director-General as established in the Basic Texts. For that reason, I do not see that there is a requirement in the Basic Texts for an organizational organigram that reflects reporting lines.

That is my legal opinion. Of course, I stand ready to provide any additional advice if that would be helpful.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I wanted to ask if Management might respond to my request for assurance that the internal control framework will be updated to reflect the new structure, and that it will be submitted to the External Auditor or the Finance Committee for their review.

CHAIRPERSON

After finishing the list of speakers, my intent was to give the floor not only to the Secretariat, but also the Chairs of the Finance and Programme Committees, whether they had anything to add.

The Secretariat has questions to answer. Members have raised various questions or requests for clarifications, so the Secretariat is going to get the floor. I just want to make this list of speakers first before giving the Secretariat the floor.

Now I will go to the Observers: Kenya, followed by Thailand, followed by Iran.

Ms Teresa TUMWET (Kenya) (Observer)

Kenya has the pleasure to contribute additional points to this Item. Kenya supports *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* and align ourselves with the statements read by Cameroon on behalf of Africa Regional Group and by Indonesia on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

We wish to bring out the point of supporting decentralized country, subregional and regional offices through increased allocation of resources and delegation of authority. There should also be enhanced capacity of FAO Representatives (FAORs) especially in Africa. While we welcome the structural adjustments to dismantle silos and reduce bureaucracy to make FAO more efficient and dynamic, we call upon FAO to have clear reporting lines.

Finally, Kenya supports the creation of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We believe this will facilitate smooth coordination and monitoring of SDGs towards attainment of Agenda 2030.

Ms Ratchanok SANGPENCHAN (Thailand) (Observer)

We align ourselves with the statement of the Asia Regional Group and the Group of 77 and China. We welcome the vision of the Director-General and his proposal on the organigram. We express our view of the modern management approach which aims to reduce bureaucracy, increase the agility, more dynamic, more transparencies and accountability.

We express our support to the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) and the establishment of the Investment Centre and the Joint Centres of FAO with World Health Organization (WHO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which we consider a great opportunity to enhance global technical collaboration to transform the food systems and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). More importantly, this joint effort will enhance the partnerships and pave the way for more investments on core priorities in line with the One Health approach.

For these zoonotic diseases and water management and food and environment protection, Thailand has implemented these concepts through multisectoral, multiministerial and multidisciplinary approaches. With regard to the decentralized offices, we stress the need to strengthen synergies and clarify lines of accountabilities among headquarters, regional and subregional and country offices. After redistributing the tasks and functions, this is to ensure that the national and impact of unique challenges faced by Member Countries are well reflected and produce tangible results.

As Thailand is hosting the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP), we will continue supporting FAO to enhance the capacity of the Member Countries to strengthen the decentralized office at the regional and national levels. Thailand commends the FAO leadership for taking quick steps in assessing and providing support to Members at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also support the adjustment of resources in response to the impacts on food security and livelihoods, as well as the enhanced investment in new emerging issues for the Member Countries.

We look forward to the new phase of the Organization that will bring out the core competencies and highlight its unique roles in transforming food systems that are more equitable, inclusive, resilient and environmentally sustainable.

Mr Mohammad Hossein EMADI (Iran) (Observer)

As a Nation, we support the statement of Near East Group and the Group of 77 and China as a Member of the team. According to the latest issues and discussions, let me go to the core of the actual discussion. I think there are three dimensions. The first one is legal and, after listening to the Legal Counsel, I think now everything is clear in terms of authority of the Council, authority of the Director-General, and authority of Members. Everything is written in the Basic Texts and according to what the Legal Counsel mentioned, it is clear who does what and who is responsible for what.

The second aspect is normative and a comparison with other organizations, which I think it is not possible to do any comparison between United Nations organizations, particularly, with the WFP and FAO. My colleagues have mentioned this case.

The management system, the sort of reporting lines is completely different because the tasks and the activities are different, therefore, we cannot put one size-fits-all to everybody and compare them with each other. Therefore, I think this is not applicable because the structure is different and the management system is different. We are all in the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and we know it very well based on the daily activities.

The third aspect is professionalism. I think in terms of solemnity and unity of the Members, we need to keep this a very clear environment between diplomats based on consensus and mutual understanding, which I think this type of discussion may go to the chain of political type of incentive and political motivation, which may have an impact on all the decisions that we are going to take in the future. Secondly, in terms of professionalism about management. We know that Management is not going to refer to micromanagement of any sort, but any manager needs the scope of authority and we need to protect that.

I am happy that my colleague from Germany said that we want to protect the Director-General for doing his job, but protecting somebody to prevent him to do his job are two different things. We need to protect him to have full rights, full power to do and in the meantime, as mentioned by my colleagues, we have our own control mechanisms. Live control mechanisms to do all of the controlling with the Director-General during the time and work. Therefore, there are no concerns about that. What we have here is a Member-driven Organization. We can control the Director-General all the time and we can monitor him based on all mechanisms – the internal mechanisms that have been there for 75 years.

Ms Marilique NIJMEIJER (the Netherlands) (Observer)

Thank you to the distinguished delegate from Argentina for asking for clarification on the European Unions' statements. We support the objective of making FAO a more dynamic, inclusive, transparent, efficient and flexible Organization, including through strengthening science- and evidence-based approaches. Therefore, while we understand that a certain degree of flexibility is needed for organizing the reporting lines, we would like those to be submitted to the Governing Bodies.

Ms Eudora Hilda QUARTEY KORANTENG (Ghana) (Observer)

While aligning with the comments by the distinguished Members from the Africa Regional Group and the Group of 77 and China, Ghana welcomes and congratulates the Director-General for this far-reaching change in proposals. The beginning of every journey starts with the first step. From his mission statement from last year, he has indicated that he is moving forward. This journey of change by the Director-General is innovative and aims to make FAO more responsive and efficient, especially in the face of current world challenges, particularly those caused by COVID-19 and towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Director-General emphasizes this new approach in his statement at the opening of the Council, for which we have already joined previous distinguished Member speakers in congratulating him for this bold, decisive move.

We note that it is important that in meeting its mandate FAO moves in tandem with other UN Agencies, particularly IFAD and WFP, which have also made some initiatives towards meeting the challenges of these times, in respect to food security and the improvement of the livelihoods of our peoples. The responsiveness of FAO to challenges, being able to meet crises, and to undertake its mandate to ensure the eradication of hunger and provide adequate livelihood would be key to its success. It is this that will make FAO into the modern institution proposed by the Director-General.

Proposing, implementing, and managing change is always a difficult path. With the principles of transparency and accountability, and in the spirit of inclusiveness, inclusivity, consultations, and consensus building, which has always been part of how we have worked and how we see ourselves moving forward. We believe that responsiveness is critical to the execution of FAO's mandate.

The creation of a more modern and responsive FAO will, therefore, facilitate more inclusive and responsive regional and country offices. This is what our statement would like to emphasize.

We believe that it is very significant for dealing with issues as they pop up in our respective region and our countries that FAO maintains this or develops this adequate responsiveness. We believe that it is very critical and important area for FAO to focus on in making it more fit for purpose. In the new structure, it is expected that the decentralized offices will, therefore, become more efficient.

Ghana would like to emphasize, therefore, that the strengthening of the capacity of regional and country offices to enable them to function effectively, especially with more improved technical capacity, is what will certainly make FAO a success. Ghana, therefore, supports this new initiative as other Members who have done so already, recognizing that there may be some fine-tuning needed to be done in order to meet the expectations of all Members in a consensus for change.

In conclusion, Ghana support the vision of the Director-General for this new proposal and would like to thank him and his team for what they have proposed before us today.

Ms Lieslot GERMONPREZ (Belgium)

Belgium would like to add its voice to the European Union (EU) statement made by Germany and also the interventions made afterwards by the United States of America. The EU does not want to get into any micromanagement, but we want to make sure that the new proposed structure is conducive to the implementation of the new strategic framework that is on its way.

M. Jean Philippe DOP (World Organisation for Animal health) (Observer)

L'Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OIE) se réjouit que dans le cadre du projet de nouvel organigramme de la FAO, la santé animale soit affichée comme une priorité, qu'ils s'agissent des maladies transfrontalières, dont l'impact sur les systèmes alimentaires n'est plus à démontrer, ou des zoonoses tels que la COVID-19 qui trouve leurs sources dans le réservoir animal. Une telle organisation est de nature, selon l'OIE, à faciliter les approches selon le concept « une seule santé ».

Je souhaite remercier les nombreux membres qui tout au long de ces discussions aujourd'hui, ont su souligner l'intérêt de cette approche « une seule santé », et qui ont rappelé l'existence de l'accord tripartite, FAO - OIE - OMS, dont justement, le but est de travailler selon cette approche « une seule santé ». L'OIE se réjouit aussi de la volonté de dialogue exprimée par le Directeur général ce matin, à l'occasion de son discours, et de son souhait de poursuivre les consultations, notamment avec des organisations comme l'OIE, et à ce titre, l'OIE souhaite assurer la FAO de son entière disponibilité pour poursuivre et développer les coopérations existantes, que ce soit dans le cadre de la tripartite FAO - OIE - OMS, pour ce qui concerne en particulier la lutte contre les antibiorésistances, ou à travers le cadre mondial pour le contrôle progressif des maladies animales transfrontalières.

Le fameux [XX] pour certaines maladies prioritaires. Une approche globale et conjointe et plus que jamais nécessaire pour parvenir au contrôle des maladies prioritaires que sont par exemple, la fièvre [XX] qui affecte encore de trop nombreux pays, la peste des petits ruminants (PPR), pour laquelle les efforts pour atteindre l'objectif d'éradication globale d'ici 2030, doivent être poursuivis, ou encore la

fièvre porcine africaine, pour laquelle la FAO et l'OIE ont élaborée une initiative globale qui sera officiellement lancé le 17 Juillet prochain.

Investir dans le renforcement des capacités des services vétérinaires est également une nécessité, alors que sera célébré en 2021 le 10ème anniversaire de l'éradication de la peste bovine qui n'aurait jamais été atteinte sans la réalisation de campagne de vaccination massive, confiée à ses services vétérinaires. Ils sont d'une ambition commune portée par la communauté internationale telle que représentée aujourd'hui au sein du Conseil.

Mr Günter WALKNER (Austria)

I would like to support the position of Germany speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We think that we have been very clear with the statement that the EU and its Member States are supporting the emphasis and all the ideas of modernizing the Organization.

The direction is clear and the only question was, which was already said and supported by the United States of America and from several of my colleagues, is that we want to support Management and give security and clearness. I think that this is the only thing that we were asking in this point. We want to show consensus in that spirit.

We support the proposal. It is just a small direction on how to go for the future.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of the list of speakers. I would like to ask whether the Chairpersons of the Programme Committee or Finance Committee would like to add anything.

Chairperson of Programme Committee, would you like to add some comments?

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of Programme Committee)

I think it is good to reflect also on the discussions of the Programme Committee because the Programme Committee discussed in a very constructive atmosphere the proposed changes in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), including the changes to ensure that FAO is fit for purpose. The Committee appreciated the Director-General's efforts for making FAO more dynamic, inclusive, transparent and efficient. The Committee noted that the modular management had been proposed to allow the Organization better agility in its response to Members' emerging needs and priorities. It committed to a more holistic and cross-functional approaches to address complex and interconnected challenges facing agriculture and food systems.

The Committee highlighted that FAO's organizational chart should reflect the principles of transparency, accountability and Membership ownership and involvement. The Committee welcomed the three new types of units in the proposed Organization's chart and requested that a reference to oceans and agricultural, as well as agriculture be inserted in the organizational structure to better reflect the Organization's mandate. The Committee also underlines the importance to strengthen the decentralized offices, the need to strengthen synergies between Headquarters and the decentralized offices as a priority.

The Committee underlines the importance of synchronizing the proposed organizational adjustments with the new Strategic Framework. Having said this, the Committee requested further information such as reports and concept notes on the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre and other centres and offices, and I am pleased to see that those requests for information have been provided and also the briefing for Members at the informal meeting for Permanent Representatives.

With that, the Programme Committee recommended that the Council considers approval of the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* taking into account consideration of the additional information provided by Management at the request of the Programme Committee and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

Ms Imelda SMOLCIC (Chairperson of the Finance Committee)

De la misma manera, tanto en el comité Conjunto como en el Comité de Finanzas, se abordaron los temas de la estructura orgánica y se mostró igualmente la preocupación por la necesidad de una nueva estructura en la FAO, así como se le dio la bienvenida a una FAO más ágil y más eficiente.

No obstante, tanto los miembros de los dos comités, del Comité Conjunto y del Comité de Finanzas expresaron la necesidad de recibir mayor información con respecto al cuadro brindado por la Secretaría. En ese sentido, en los dos ámbitos se solicitó que esa información fuera proporcionada antes de las reuniones del Consejo para que se facilitara la aprobación del programa presentado.

En ningún momento, y eso sí quisiera dejar constancia, durante las discusiones y deliberaciones en los comités, en el Comité Conjunto y en el Comité de Finanzas, más allá de las exposiciones y preocupaciones expresadas se puso en ninguna y no aparece así en las notas, se manifestó la necesidad de que la nueva estructura y tuviera que ser acompañada por el marco estratégico formulado a través de la dependencia [XX]. En ese sentido, sí quiero dejar constancia que toda la preocupación manifestada tenía que ver con una necesidad de ser resuelta en el ámbito de la FAO y particularmente en el Consejo. Muchísimas gracias, no tengo nada más para agregar.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I give the floor to the Secretariat to answer some of the questions and the issues raised by Members.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I think we have had a very in depth and frank exchange of opinions.

It also helps us very much to understand what the issues and concerns are, and this is why we have also prepared the six Information Notes, as we were requested to do by the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and their Joint Meeting. I can tell that you have all studied all of these notes very carefully in coming to our discussion today.

I just wrote down a few of the words that I heard mentioned by many of the distinguished delegates and there were things like: the understanding of the need to move towards an Organization that is more dynamic, efficient, effective, inclusive, transparent, innovative, focused on results, science-based, avoiding silos and, ultimately, of course, supporting the achievement of Agenda 2030. As many of you know and commented, embarking on change will always raise questions, concerns that we hope that, moving forward together with you, we will be able to address. So, I wanted to mainly focus a little bit on the forward-looking aspects and the other members of the leadership team will come in on some of the other topics, for example, on the centres, on decentralization, on the internal control framework and on some of the areas under the Chief Economist.

I wanted to comment on that many of you have talked about the need for the organizational structure to be in line with the Strategic Framework or for the two to be in sync. We fully agree with you on this. I just wanted to note again that if this organizational structure were to be approved, it would be in effect for the remainder of this biennium. I wanted to be clear on that too that there will be no changing that Management would make to that structure if it were approved by Council for the rest of this biennium.

At that point in time, we embark on the discussion of the new Strategic Framework. That Strategic Framework will come into effect in 2022 so, if this organizational structure is approved now by Council it will fall under the results framework for 2018-2021, which was a framework approved by Conference. Therefore, it is under that framework that we would be implementing, that we hope to show you how we are able to better achieve the results that we set out to achieve in this biennium, the 2020-21 biennium. And we will be reporting back to you on that. Firstly, in the *Mid Term Review Report 2020* that will come to you at your first Sessions of 2021 and in the *Programme Implementation Report 2020-21* after the closure of the biennium.

But, at the same time, we will be developing our new Strategic Framework. We will have then the opportunity to both learn from the implementation of this organizational structure and fine-tune it for the new Strategic Framework, which would come into effect in 2022 and with the 2022-23 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). So, we fully believe that we have a very strong path forward to make sure that the two remain aligned and to make adjustments for the next biennium based on the discussions that are coming out of the Strategic Framework discussion.

I just wanted to comment on one more specific point, if I understood the United Kingdom, I think she asked if we would have an outline of the Strategic Framework and the Strategic Results Framework ready in September. That would not be a timeframe that we would be able to meet. As you know, this is a process that will have input from many different points, including the Regional Conferences.

We will be setting up informal sessions throughout the process. We have discussed this quite a bit in the Programme Committee and we will have an informal session with Members in September, for example to talk more about the theory of change, but we would not have a full outline of the Strategic Framework available at that time.

Mr Thomas LAURENT (Deputy Director-General)

It is extremely useful for Senior Management of the Organization to help us better manage this Organization. I would like to make three points. The first point is regarding the comments made by the United Kingdom on the framework of internal control of FAO and the relationship with the proposed structural changes. On this point, I would like to say that FAO defines internal control as the actions taken by Management to manage risk and increase the likelihood that established goals will be achieved. That is the starting point.

We have an internal control framework, which is a policy framework that, together with the accountability policy and corporate policy on risk management, are mutually supportive and ensure that FAO has the right policy framework to achieve its objective in a cost-effective manner. As the distinguished delegate of the United Kingdom mentioned, we have been making some progresses over the past year in strengthening our internal control. We believe that we have to continue to do so. It is fundamental because an organization with strong internal control is the necessary condition to guarantee that it is a well-managed organization, worth investing in it by its Members and partners.

The question of the United Kingdom is: will Management update its internal control framework in light of the structural changes should they be approved? The answer is yes.

The further question of the United Kingdom was, will it be discussed and reviewed by the third line of defence - Internal Audit, Audit Committee, External Audit, Finance Committee? Yes. We believe that it is extremely important that this be the case. In fact, it is part of the internal control framework to have a dialogue with the third line of defence on these matters. We intend to do so. When we worked with the Director-General on revising and proposing these structural adjustments, we looked at the internal control framework to see what are the implications of risk management of the Organization and we concluded that the internal control framework the way it is existing today as updated in February 2019, all in all is still fit-for-purpose even with the new arrangement, but it needs to be updated. We have to do so.

The time framework to have this ready for the next Finance Committee maybe is a little bit early. In the sense that the next meeting of the Finance Committee is basically tomorrow. However, we definitely will aim and intend to have this dialogue with the Audit Committee, the Internal Auditor and the External Auditor, and ultimately with the Finance Committee. This is what I can say on internal control.

The second point I want to make is the question regarding decentralization. There were a number of comments calling the attention of Management of the Organization on the need to pursue first-level support to decentralization to ensure that the Organization improve its performance at country level and at regional level. I wanted to as the Director-General mentioned this morning, this is a top priority, this is something which we will work further after the structural changes at headquarters should they be approved, or even if they were not approved, we will work on this. Effective decentralization

continues to be a priority for FAO and the new administration. This will with the enforcement of the governance structures at the regional level, both the format and the organization of the Regional Conferences are being analysed and streamlined. We are making progress with all the recommendations of the 2018 Regional Conferences regarding decentralization and this was very much focused on the need for strengthening and re-engineering the presence of FAO at country and regional level taking into account the challenges of the Agenda 2030, but also of the United Nations reform in the course of implementation.

Therefore, we will be working on this, as the Deputy Director-General (DDG) overseeing the work of the regional representatives, I can inform you that we have already started to work with the Regional Representatives in defining what the changes would be to bring to the Organization of regional offices and to the network of FAO representations to make FAO more efficient in its performance at country and regional level.

The third point I want to make is very briefly is regarding the Investment Centre, just to say that I can share the appreciation of Management for what seems to appear as to be consensus on adding these USD 8 million for financing of the Investment Centre. Personally, I believe that should the Council confirm its approval, it would be difficult to find better investment in achieving the Agenda 2030, and particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2 which will require major increases in private and public investment.

As the DDG overseeing the work of the Investment Centre, I can tell you that this additional USD 8 million, from my own experience and knowledge of the Investment Centre, would generate easily an additional USD 1.6 billion in investment in food security and rural development. We were very conservative in the Note we shared with you on the USD 800 million but I can tell you from the evidence that we speak of probably something closer to USD 1.6 billion. Therefore, an investment return with multiplier factor of 200 difficult to find a better investment.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

First of all, let me thank all the Members for their enormous support to the activities being done on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, as well as for the activities of the Investment Centre, and the activities of FAO. We will keep working as hard as possible to keep accelerating our activities and to be able to achieve the tough calls before us.

There was a question regarding the three groups, the Nutrition group, the Food Systems Division and the Food Safety Division. Before the approval of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) changes, we had already a Division called Nutrition and Food Systems Division, which incorporated food systems and nutrition together and the logic behind the importance of generating a sole Division of Food Systems is because nutrition is one of the layers of food systems. There are many other layers which are crucial in the food systems analysis, as you all know, and that is the reason why we have now a Nutrition Division - Food and Nutrition Division - which maintains the staff regarding the system approach to nutrition, and we have a Food Systems Division, which is joined together with a Food Safety group.

Now, why there are divisions despite they are cross-cutting and many of the divisions today will be cross-cutting? It is because they are focused on technical work and they are focused on evidence-based, scientific back-up information to be mainstream across FAO. The idea is that here we create the knowledge and the evidence that we will mainstream across all the activities we do, across our Members. That is why all these divisions, no matter if it is the Nutrition Division, the Food System and Food Safety Division and many others, will have a technical expertise, now we have technical staff in the Division that we can later mainstream. Therefore, that is the logic of having them at the division and with the new vision of FAO, of having no silos. Their role is to collaborate across the board, across the different divisions and the different units at FAO, so that these can be mainstreamed.

The Food System and Food Safety Division will integrate on extended subsistence report across the Organization by bringing together FAO's long-standing experience and capacities in strengthening

systems of food safety and quality control, with its technical support to countries in the areas of value chain development and investment, agroindustry and agribusiness enterprise development.

The merging of the two allows FAO to be more effective, to help ensure that food systems are geared towards the production of food that is safe and healthy, while also raising the visibility of the work on food safety, by bringing it more centrally into the support provided to the Members on food systems transformation. The high visibility of food safety is already evidenced by the current formulation of the first action track for the Food Systems Summit (FSS), for safe and nutrition food for all. So, we are extremely consistent with what is happening in the Food Systems Summit.

Within the new approach, this new Division of Food Systems and Food Safety will interact with all other Divisions embodying the food systems approach, which is the new vision that we have for FAO. For example, in the case of the Nutrition Division, as I mentioned before, the specialized staff on nutrition and food systems will remain in the Division, but will be integrated through the programmatic work with this new Division, given that nutrition is one very important layer of the systems approach.

Just to add, the Codex Alimentarius Commission is housed in Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre and this new Division of Food Systems and Food Safety will continue to deliver food safety risk assessments through Joint FAO/WHO expert bodies to Codex Alimentarius. The new structure allows FAO to better implement the separation of food safety risk assessment, scientific advice and risk management to Codex Alimentarius in accordance with the globally accepted risk analysis model, which requires organizations to ensure the strict separation of the science-based work for the food safety risk assessment from the more politically motivated standard setting activity of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The new structure will ensure that both functions - Codex Alimentarius Secretariat and the food safety risk assessment activities - can work fully independently, with effective interactions with the risk managers and risk assessors.

In summary, we believe that this is the way to increase the capacity of FAO and to create the evidence and knowledge that can be mainstreamed across all units of FAO.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

I would like to talk mainly regarding the two Centres, the FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre on Codex, Food Standard and Zoonotic Diseases, and the FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. At the outset, I would like to thank all the Members for the very positive comments, I could see that after we shared the Information Note 6, we could clarify some doubts or some unclarity in the understanding of the centres, and the relationship between the Centres and the Division.

Australia asked some question and also the United Kingdom. What I wanted to say is that the two Centres are under construction. The Centre between FAO and IAEA is a transformation of a Division, a Joint Division, into a Joint Centre. It is easy to do because we have already the basis. However, the FAO/WHO Centre on Codex, Food Standard and Zoonotic Diseases will be a new Centre and as the Director-General said this morning, we are still involved in discussions with WHO and also World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), for sure OIE if you read the Information Note, OIE is fully a part of the Centre and I thank Mr Jean-Philippe Dop for being here and for expressing the good relationship we have. As it has been requested, we will keep the Members fully informed on the evolution on the negotiation between FAO and WHO and also on the implementation of the Centre. This is the first point.

The second point is to assure the membership on the safeguard of the independence and impartiality of the Codex Alimentarius. As it stated in the Note, it is housed in the Joint Centre, we keep independence of the Codex Secretariat will be completely linked to the Codex Committee and its budget will be not used for any other means for the zoonotic diseases.

The third point is the relationship, I think Mr Máximo Torero Cullen already responded, between the Food Systems and Food Safety Division and the Codex, I think Mr Torero Cullen has already said that

the support on the science base, the scientific advice of the Codex will be done by the Food Safety group, even though it is with the Food System Division, this will be kept.

The fourth point is the Codex and FAO/WHO Centre will be working in close synergy and coordination with the Animal Production and Health Division, because we are working on transboundary diseases, zoonotic diseases, known zoonotic diseases, as it has been said, and they will be working in close coordination and cooperation. It has also been said that we will be working on the One Health approach. The One Health approach links animal, human and environment. It will be closely linked with the different technical divisions, the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment.

The questions regarding the ZODIAC project, maybe for those who do not know, the ZODIAC project is a project launched by IAEA and it means Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) for early detection and global response. The IAEA multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach for the detection of zoonotic diseases and for preventing their spread. What is the difference between what the Centre which WHO does is in IAEA we use the nuclear science and application for zoonotic diseases and the cooperation is for the use of those technologies but to use FAO, WHO and OIE labs and veterinary services in the field and this is the approach we will be moving with the ZODIAC project.

FAO, WHO and OIE have all responded that they want to be part of this project that IAEA will be launching very soon. As you could see, we do not have an overlap between the two Centres, all zoonotic diseases they are different, but they are cross-sectoral and they can be integrated and building a better office on zoonotic diseases and animal production and health. This is maybe what I could say in a nutshell, if you want better information we can share with you, but I think zoonotic and transboundary diseases, as the Director-General said this morning, will be very high in FAO agenda to respond and to avoid that the new outbreaks will be happening.

CHAIRPERSON

Are there any further comments from Members? I see none. I thank everybody and now, colleagues, allow me to conclude Item 3. I will ask my colleagues to put the conclusions on the screen. Let me conclude on Item 3, as follows.

Item 3: Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021.

1. Council expressed satisfaction with the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021*, taking into consideration the guidance provided by the Programme and Finance Committees at their Joint Meeting and their Sessions in June 2020 and appreciated the information notes provided by Management in response to their queries and feedback.
2. The Council supported the Director-General's vision for the Organization to be fit for purpose, modern, inclusive and agile, while preserving its technical capacity, in particular through a more modular and flexible structure, aiming to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and cross-sector collaboration.
3. The Council also welcomed the focus oriented on increasing efficiency, breaking silos by reducing bureaucracy and including flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities through innovative approaches.
4. The Council:
 - a) welcomed the Director-General's vision of attaining zero hunger and improving the livelihoods of people through better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life;
 - b) appreciated the proposed adjustments remained within the overall approved budget level for 2020-2021, of USD 1005.6 million;
 - c) appreciated the additional information provided by the Director-General on reporting lines, *CL 164/3 Information Note 5* which would establish for the proposed organizational structure changes, Annex 1 of *CL 164/3*;

- d) noted the provision of *CL 164/3 Information Note 3* on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.
- e) supported the establishment and strengthening of the centres, noting their strong collaboration function with other UN Agencies, all with international financial institutions (IFIs), and welcomed *CL 164/3 Information Note 6*, illustrating in more detail the work foreseen for the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre, i.e. Codex food standards and zoonotic diseases, and the Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre, nuclear techniques in food and agriculture.
- f) welcomed the fact that resources and independence of the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius condition and of the food safety and quality unit in the new Food Systems and Food Safety Division will be maintained within the new organizational structure.
- g) supported the peace binding of the strategic programme management teams.
- h) welcomed the creation of the new Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to coordinate, cooperate, engagement in the 2030 Agenda for follow up and review.
- i) requested that decentralized offices continue to receive full support by Headquarters, following the disbanding of the office of support to decentralized offices;
- j) welcomed measures taken to strengthen the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) within existing resources. *CL 164/3 Information Note 2*;
- k) noted that the FAO internal control framework would require updating to reflect the outlined organizational changes;
- l) look forward to updated information on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) being submitted for review by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in November 2020;
- m) supported focus on innovation, including all sustainable innovative approaches, use of digitalization in agriculture and new technologies as called priorities for FAO;
- n) strongly supported FAO's focus on sustainable food systems and expanding partnerships, including with the private sector.

5. The Council:

- a) approved the revised budget post establishment as reflected in *CL 164/3* with the changes indicated in document *CL 164/3 Information Note 2*, and the structural changes as reflected in Annex 1 of *CL 164/3*;
- b) approved the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter, as reflected in table three of *CL 164/3*; and
- c) noted that further budgetary transfers that could arise as a result of requirements stemming from COVID-19, guidance from the Regional Conferences, further work planning and from the most efficient and effective modalities of implementation, which would be handled in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.

That brings me to the end of the draft conclusions and now I open the floor for your comments.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I have four suggestions to make. The first one is in subparagraph 4(e). I am hoping that we can include the words antimicrobial resistance (AMR) after zoonotic diseases in the penultimate line.

My second point is on subparagraph 4(j). While I did hear colleagues welcoming the additional post in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), I think quite a number of us did also reiterate the point that was made by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, which was that we would like sustainable funding for the OIG. I wonder if we could include that in subparagraph 4(j).

Moving onto subparagraph 4(k), I would like to add at the end of it something along the lines of “and welcomed Management confirmation that the updated framework would be submitted to the External Auditor, Audit Committee and Finance Committee for their review.”

My final point is that we should have an additional bullet point under paragraph 4, which reflects the quite widely-made comment on the need for FAO to revisit the organizational structure once the new Strategic Framework and Strategic Results Framework had been agreed.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I have a suggestion for subparagraph 4(c). Instead of “appreciated,” to put “took note of.” Regarding the suggestion that the United Kingdom just made on subparagraph 4(j), I would like to suggest that we add, after “office,” the line “as a matter of priority.” Coming to the suggestion of the United Kingdom for a new subparagraph, which I think to be 4(o), we would suggest, before “looked forward,” to start with “welcomed the reassurance given by Management that the new structure will be evaluated and possibly revisited, and looked forward,” and then continuing like it was.

Sr Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

No me recuerdo el párrafo, pero hay dos párrafos donde hablan de las oficinas descentralizadas. Hay uno donde apoyamos la desintegración de la Oficina de Apoyo a las oficinas descentralizadas. Está bien, y luego hay un par de párrafos abajo donde pedimos que se apoye a las oficinas descentralizadas. Mi sugerencia es ponerlos juntos porque en medio hay otros temas pero hablamos que, quizás, esos dos párrafos deberían estar uno después del otro.

No estoy pidiendo cambiarlos, solo cambiarlo de orden. Por ejemplo, el (g) y luego lo que está en el (h). Poner juntos el (g) y lo que está ahora como letra (i) porque ambos hablan de las oficinas descentralizadas. Quizá tenga mejor sentido, es decir, mover lo que está en el (h) abajo donde está el (i). No sé si me explico bien. Es solo cambiar el orden, no estoy cambiando ninguna parte del texto. El (g) dejarlo como está y el contenido de la letra (i) ponerla justo después de la otra.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you please repeat? Making specific reference, to which subparagraphs do you refer to?

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

¿Puede subir un par de bullets, un par de párrafos más arriba, por favor? A El subpárrafo (g) dejarlo como está. Inmediatamente después mover hacia arriba el contenido del subpárrafo (h). Perdón, subpárrafo (i) que es el que habla de las oficinas descentralizadas. No estoy pidiendo tachar nada solo cambiarlo de orden.

La otra es una idea nueva. No es nueva porque es algo que refleja lo discutido hoy en la mañana y en la tarde que es sobre la cuestión de países de renta media que varios países lo hablaron. Ese sería un párrafo nuevo. Quizá se podría poner al final, del párrafo cuatro, por ejemplo. El texto sería, prácticamente el mismo que el aprobado por el Consejo en el 163 Período de Sesiones. Déjenme leerlo a velocidad de dictado en español. “Reiteró la orientación que había proporcionado en su 161 y 163 Períodos de Sesiones sobre la necesidad de tener en cuenta las prioridades de todos los países, incluidos los países de ingresos medios y los países de ingresos medios altos;”.

Es una cita prácticamente exacta del Consejo pasado.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En el subpárrafo 4(l) si pudiera verlo en la pantalla, por favor. Luego de “*Technical Cooperation Programme*” sugiero incluir “*including its criteria for resources and location on the ground*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, actually your sound kept coming and going. May I request you to kindly repeat your intervention because we lost you?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Decía que, punto 4, subpárrafo (l), luego de “*Technical Cooperation Programme*” agregar textual: “including its criteria for resources and...”

CHAIRPERSON

May I say something, Argentina? When you switch language, we do not hear you. Perhaps it is better if you stick to one language.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Including its criteria for resources allocation on the ground. That is right. This was part of the declaration of our Chair of the Group of 77 and China. Okay? And the last point is to add “highlight that non-core resources are critical for FAO’s activities to expand on the ground in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 and 2, four months, and their impact is enhanced when they are predictable and unearmarked”.

Continúa en Español

Estoy hablando en español ahora. Mi último punto es respaldar la posición de México que fue expresada respecto de los middle income countries and high-income countries, el subpárrafo (o).

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia would like to propose an additional subparagraph under 4(b). So, we considered this would be a new subparagraph between (e) and (f), where we say, “welcomed confirmation that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) would be fully involved in the Joint FAO/WHO Centre and that Members would be kept informed of the evolution of the Centre.”

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

I just have a few very slight adjustments to propose. First, I wanted to state that we support the additions of the United Kingdom and Germany. Regarding subparagraph (k), we would like to propose moving the clause within existing resources” to after the word “office”, “sustainable funding for the office within existing resources.”

The next proposed change we would like to propose is for subparagraph (o), sorry, it’s now subparagraph (p), after the word, “revisited,” we would like to propose “in consultation with Member States.”

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

Thank you, Chair. Just want to make some comments on the proposed changes. When it comes to subparagraph 4(o), now it is 4(p), which was introduced by the United Kingdom and supported by some other delegations. This paragraph as it stands now basically means that we will be reviewing the Organizational structure every year and I believe that this was not the way most of the delegations supported the changes that had been introduced in the reform structure.

We also discussed the issue that we need to give some flexibility to the Director-General. Well, unfortunately we did not do our initiatives, but we only take note of his initiative. Therefore, at the same time maybe we can use the language that we are taking note of certain proposals to possibly review the structure of the Organization. This is point number one.

Point number two, of course we are working now at a late hour and, of course, it will need some time to talk with the experts and, once again, I need to read my original hold to the delegations to give a constructive approach to the structure reform in various organizations here in Rome. Therefore, if we are going to revisit the organizational structure of FAO, by the same token, we will be discussing the very same issues in other organizations, which also need to be reviewed from the perspective of their work.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

If you just could go down to the subparagraph suggested by Ambassador Cherniak from Argentina, now it is subparagraph (r). I think what he wanted to say is voluntary contributions, not non-core. I think the right terminology would be highlighted that voluntary contributions, instead of non-core resources.

Mr Shoib SARWAR SANDHU (Pakistan)

I would like to go to subparagraph 4(h), on the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the newer subparagraph (i), “welcomed creation of new Office of Sustainable Development Goals,” here in its current form it appears that a new office is being created only to coordinate the core arrangement, which in our opinion is limiting the scope of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals. We believe there is a need to broaden the horizon of this Office and a language maybe something along the lines that “welcoming the creation of new Office of Sustainable Development Goals to coordinate corporate engagement and to assist Member Nations in the 2030 follow up and review.” Any other distinguished colleagues may add on this.

Ms Mi HNGUYEN (Canada)

We wanted to express support for the proposals made by the United Kingdom, as well as for subparagraph (p), as well with the amendment from the United States of America.

We wanted to go back to subparagraph, I think it is (g) and add at the end, “stressing the need for sustainable funding for the FAO/WHO Food Safety and Scientific Advice Programme and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).”

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I just want to reflect in the text my proposal on with what was originally introduced by the United Kingdom for subparagraph (o), now it is subparagraph 4(p), we wanted to leave the word “welcomed the reassurances” and change it for, “takes note of the explanation by the Management.”

When speaking about the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and this is subparagraph 4(k), we are speaking about financial resources to the office as a matter of priority, I do not think that we need to prioritize between different aspects, we just have the very different type of language when it counts to different programmes.

If we are going to prioritize, let’s do it for all agencies. If we are not, we just only speak that the Director-General must provide and the Secretariat or the OIG might provide necessary resources.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY (Egypt)

Egypt adds its voice to what has been said by Ambassador of Russia regarding subparagraph 4(p), it is a clear now took note of the clarification given by the Management, we need to move given after the clarification, and also we support that we should delete “as a matter of priority.” Regarding the Inspector General, we are looking for sustainable funding for the Inspector General, so within the existing resources.

KUWAIT

A small request from the suggestion given by the United Kingdom and Germany, on subparagraph (p), the word “possibly” is like “maybe, maybe not, can we, can we not” somehow does not go well with the whole paragraph and with the whole decision that we have taken today. I ask our German colleagues maybe to give another wording, I can suggest maybe to go that way, the new structure will be evaluated for any further improvement in consultation with Members, instead of possibly revisited and possibly not.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Je voulais revenir sur le sous-paragraphe devenu maintenant (q) parce que je ne comprends pas ce que veut dire “those countries”, “ces countries”; je pense que la proposition était plutôt pour dire tous les pays “all countries”, de façon à refléter aussi ce qu’il y avait comme formulation. Nous avons eu une longue discussion au Comité du Programme sur le fait qu’il y avait aussi bien sûr des priorités à donner aux pays les moins développés et à faible revenu, mais si l’on veut garder cela, et en plus “upper and middle income countries”, les pays de la couche supérieure qui font partie des pays à revenu intermédiaire, il faudrait donc dire “y compris” sinon cela donne quelque chose qui n’est pas logique, même si cela avait été adopté dans le paragraphe 70 (k) du rapport de la 41e Conférence. L’autre solution aurait été de garder la formulation exacte du rapport du Comité du Programme qui faisait référence au paragraphe 70 (k).

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I would like to support the comments made by the Russian Ambassador with regard to subparagraph 4(p), to change that into the clarifications. I totally agree with his comment. I also basically agree with the modification made by Kuwait. Whether we should add for “any further”, to change that into “for any possible improvement.”

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Could you go up to the subparagraph of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), I cannot remember which subparagraph it is now (k), “and look forward to sustainable funding within existing resources”.

I would like to draw the attention of my distinguished colleagues from Egypt and Russia to the fact that in the Annual Report of the Inspector General 2019, the Finance Committee concluded the need for prioritizing resources to cover the increasing work of the Office of the Inspector General within the existing appropriation, and so we have here in this Report of the Finance Committee, in subparagraph (g), explicitly mentioned the need for prioritizing resources.

Therefore, I would like to come back to that as a matter of priority. I had another point, but you corrected that already in subparagraph (p), in consultation, yes, that has been already inserted.

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

I also wanted to comment on subparagraph (k), to agree with my German colleague, and I have one suggestion we could propose again to reflect the Finance Committee’s conclusions as well as comments made during this session today. I would like to suggest after the word “and”, “urge prioritization of sustainable funding for the Office.”

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Just to support this proposal of the United States of America and also referring to the fact that also the Joint Meeting in subparagraph 4(j), requested Management to prioritize sustainable funding, so also the Joint Meeting explicitly spoke of prioritization, therefore I think that the American proposal now is very good.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿Me podría poner en pantalla el subpárrafo (p), por favor? Después de “Members” incluiría “de acuerdo al reglamento general.” “De acuerdo a lo establecido por el reglamento general.” “*According to established by...*”

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any further requests for the floor, so do I take it that this text is acceptable to the Members, so that we can pass it for consideration to the Drafting Committee? México?

Sr Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

¿Podemos poner el último subpárrafo del párrafo 4? No, era el (g). Está bien.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Could you just, please, show the whole text once again? There were so many changes, now we go through it once again, so that everybody has the chance to see it. Could you scroll down to paragraph 4, please? Is the text finished after “unemarked”?

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, have you finished with your intervention?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am finished. Thank you very much for showing the text to us once again.

Indonesia

Sorry to take this floor at this stage, but can you go back to subparagraph 4(h) please? Can we add at the end of this, after offices, “with a view to enhancing building sites on the ground.”

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

One slight edit for subparagraph (p). With regards to the phrase “according to the rules and regulations of the Organization,” surely everything we do is in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization, so I would suggest deletion of this phrase as unnecessary.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY (Egypt)

I would like to go back to subparagraph (h), which was discussed right now by my colleague from Indonesia. I think we have already discussed this, and agreed on “language”, so we can add it here.

In the “Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and Finance Committee”, after “Decentralized Offices”, I would like to add “to ensure FAO’s impact at country level.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Dos cosas, en ese mismo subpárrafo (h), “Impact at the regional and country level”. “Regional” esa palabra es importante. “At the regional and country level.” El subpárrafo (p), la lógica por la cual propusimos “de acuerdo a los procedimientos y a las reglas” es porque justamente la discusión que tuvimos era la única manera de ser saldado, a mi criterio, era a partir de manejanos estrictamente por las normas de la Organización. Por lo tanto, si no es algo que va en contra de nadie y a todos nos da seguridad y tranquilidad, me parece que deberíamos dejarlo en el subpárrafo.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Apenas para regresar un poco, un momento, a lo que acaba de decir Argentina porque hemos tomado nota. Si podemos ir al subpárrafo 4(h). Exactamente, allí teníamos un párrafo, entonces, el Embajador de Argentina acaba de intervenir para indicar donde decía, el último renglón, “impact at the country level” él ha sugerido poner regional también.

La red descentralizada de la Organización, como usted bien sabe, contempla la existencia, además de la sede, de la red centralizada de oficinas regionales, subregionales y nacionales. Por tanto, allí estaría faltando “subregionales”.

Sobre lo otro que mencionó Argentina, si podemos ir al párrafo donde Argentina hizo unos argumentos. En efecto, lo que quería decir mi delegación, Presidente, es que lo que dijo Argentina sobre ese párrafo cuenta con todo nuestro apoyo.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I take note of what our colleague, the Ambassador for Argentina has suggested, and I would like to propose that we move “in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization” to the top of paragraph 4, so that it would apply to every point in the paragraph. It should look like “The Council, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization.”

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

On subparagraph (p) of paragraph 4, particularly on the issue of “look forward to a review,” my delegation is of the view that evaluation may or may not be covered for the review, so we would like to add after “look forward,” the line “the possibility for a review.”

Sr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Presidente, discúlpeme por haber pedido la palabra nuevamente pero mi querida colega de Estados Unidos me invita a que yo pida la palabra nuevamente. No tiene nada que ver el párrafo que ella establece o sugiere incorporar al comienzo del artículo con lo que yo estaba diciendo. Si ella quiere incorporar también al principio del artículo, yo no tengo problemas.

Lo que yo quiero es que este párrafo refleje exactamente el debate que tuvimos hoy, que fue un debate muy interesante, muy maduro, muy inteligente donde se resolvió, a partir de ajustarnos estrictamente a las normas. Si además queremos poner más ajuste a las normas de todo el artículo, yo no me opongo pero, específicamente, en este acápite, en este punto, debe estar el tema “de acuerdo a las normas y reglamentos de la FAO”.

Le pido por favor, pues no es mi intención tener una discusión. Lo que hemos discutido en la reunión de hoy estaría reflejado aquí. No pretendo incluir nada que no haya sido analizado y debatido por los representantes, por mis colegas.

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I understand the logic by the United States of America delegation, so maybe we shall apply this logic that we add all the rules and regulations of the Organization to the whole text, not only to paragraph 4, maybe to the whole Item 3.

Otherwise, I will definitely agree with our distinguished colleague from Argentina that this is a little bit too much.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I understand the comment made by the Ambassador of Argentina. If this paragraph is to fully reflect the discussion that we had today, then I would propose after “Organization” in sub-paragraph (p) adding, “in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization and United Nations best practices” because that also was discussed today during the addressing of this topic.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Se dijeron muchísimas cosas en el debate de hoy pero fue saldado a partir de la consulta a la Oficina Legal de la FAO. Entonces, quedó claro que este Consejo era soberano y, por lo tanto, para que esto quedara claro es porque tiene normas determinadas la Organización, y son esas las normas y regulaciones.

No tiene nada que ver incorporar “the United Nations best practices” al cual, por supuesto, estoy de acuerdo, pero no estoy de acuerdo incluirlo en este párrafo porque cambia el sentido del debate. Todo lo que uno hubiera querido en términos, como yo expliqué en la discusión hoy, todo aquello que no es de acuerdo a las normas es aspiracional. Es un deseo. Nosotros tratamos de manejarnos estrictamente de acuerdo a las normas. Por eso se hizo una consulta a la Oficina Legal que ratificó y confirmó que el Consejo es soberano.

Así que, me parece que si queremos podemos discutir hasta mañana, yo no tengo ningún problema. Pero para nosotros está clarísimo.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

With all due respect to my colleagues, everything we do is in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization. If the argument is made that we must include that phrase in that

subparagraph then, as a reflection of the discussion, I feel strongly we need to include “in accordance with the United Nations best practices.” That was also, very much, a part of the discussion today.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Presidente, si queremos seguir discutiendo del tema, entonces, lo que podemos hacer es reflejar directamente lo que dijo el Consejero Legal en el párrafo. Es técnicamente lo que él dijo en el párrafo, lo cual entonces resolvemos el tema y hacemos una propuesta superadora. Entonces, ya no es “de acuerdo” solamente con las reglas, sino que refleje estrictamente lo que dijo el Consejero Legal.

Como esto es un debate que no tiene límite, podemos seguir hasta mañana. Yo creo que no se puede pretender en el wording final de las conclusiones de un documento ir en contra de lo que claramente quedó establecido, los cuales eran la lógica o la racionalidad de las posiciones con las cuales cada parte discutió o intercambió ideas durante la reunión.

Entonces, repito, tratemos de mantener claramente lo que se discutió y si hay alguna duda, citemos estrictamente lo que dijo la Oficina Legal de la FAO.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAMAÑO (República Dominicana)

Mire, aquí vemos que hay una discusión bien interesante, bien rica. Son las 20:20 horas de la noche y es cierto lo que dice el Embajador de Argentina, que no hay un límite de tiempo ahora y que se podría continuar esta discusión mañana. Pero lo bueno sería, quizá, llegar a una conclusión. Yo lo que quiero aportar es lo siguiente, porque para eso sirve la experiencia que uno adquiere aquí haciendo este trabajo, modestia aparte. Y es que a mí me tocó presidir el Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial en el período anterior, del 2017 al 2019.

Entonces, allí se presentó en una de nuestras sesiones anuales, por motivos completamente distintos a lo que estamos conversando aquí. Es decir, una discusión que no tenía nada que ver, sobre otro tema. Pero se llegó a la conclusión, y así lo aprobó el Comité, la Plenaria, de que se pudiese poner alguna nota al pie donde allí se hiciera una referencia o se pusiera en extenso lo que había sucedido en la conversación.

Entonces, esa podría ser una solución. Es decir, allí en ese párrafo no pongamos ni: “in line with the clarification by the legal counsel during the stage”, ni: “in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organizations” ni: “according to UN best practices”, sino que todo eso se resuma en una nota al pie. Entonces, en esa nota al pie, allí se pone: *verbatim*, una transcripción de lo que dijo la Consultora Jurídica cuando se le consultó sobre este tema.

Porque, aquí, lo que hay en este párrafo, Presidente, es una decisión política. Ya hemos dicho hoy, y lo sabemos todos, que los Estados miembros somos el propietario del sistema internacional puesto que fuimos quienes lo creamos. Somos los Estados miembros, no hay otra entidad que no sean los dueños, propietarios del sistema internacional, incluyendo la FAO.

En ese sentido, nosotros tenemos una Consultoría jurídica que ha provisto una opinión legal en base a lo que está escrito en las leyes, en la Constitución, en el texto, en la Carta de Naciones Unidas, y entonces eso lo ponemos allí con las palabras de la persona que hace el trabajo de la Consultoría jurídica, la persona que habla por esa oficina.

Entonces, allí se pone esa nota con lo que esa persona dijo entre comillas, que se especifique que es una cita textual y solo se pone, entonces, la decisión política que tomaron los dueños de la Organización, los Estados miembros con esa nota que es la que ha permitido, que es la puerta legal que se abrió, la ventana legal para tomar una decisión política porque no podemos tomar ninguna decisión política que contravenga las leyes.

Hay espacio para cambiar las leyes y esa también es una decisión política. Pero, en este caso, lo que estamos diciendo es aquí el Consejo, punto (p) decidió, “*Took note or clarifications in line with the clarification provided by the Legal Counsel during the session, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Organization, according to United Nations best practices.*”

Y donde está esta discusión, toda la propuesta, allí se pone esa nota al pie. Y así, el que lea este informe ve la decisión y ve lo que se dijo para abrir la puerta jurídica de que esa decisión pueda ser tomada con apego a las leyes.

CHAIRPERSON

That is one way out, but I would like to say that the Legal Counsel was called specifically to explain the authority of the Director-General and the authority of the Council, what is in the FAO Basic Texts.

If there has to be a possible evaluation, what is the harm in saying what the Legal Counsel explained? As not one Member, but various Members asked. There was a doubt in their mind about what the mandate of each entity is. It would just refine this guidance if we put what the Legal Counsel said, as many Members were not clear about it, and they specifically asked the Legal Counsel to explain it. It would not be quite correct to ignore all that.

I give the floor to China.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original Language Chinese)

My intervention is to say that I do not agree with the proposal by the United States of America, which is to add “in accordance with the United Nations best practice,” because the Council has enough mandate and authority to carry out its work and it does not need to refer to best practice of the UN. There is no standard for how to define best practice.

If we add this term here, it will cause obstacles and risks to our work. Therefore, I suggest that we remove “UN best practice”.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY (Egypt)

I really lost my concentration on this paragraph, but I fully understand the rationale behind the intervention by Argentina, China and the Dominican Republic about the fact it is very hard to put the United Nations best practices here. As the Ambassador of Argentina said, the Council has sovereignty and it has the right to do what it wants.

In order to help to reach a consensus, the word “evaluated” is strong language here, so I would propose to delete “evaluated” and put instead “reviewed”. It should read “took note of the clarification given by the Management that the new structure will be reviewed for any possible improvement in consultation with Members.”

Mr Victor VASILIEV (Russian Federation)

I do not want to prolong the discussion, I wanted just to remind that we need to delete “in accordance with the rules and regulations” at the heading of paragraph 4. We are talking about a specific Item, and maybe to follow suit what my distinguished friend from Egypt proposed, maybe we can insert the reference to the Legal Counsel, “took note of the clarifications given by the Management, including the Legal Counsel, on the new structure.”

We will delete the brackets and, of course we will have the verbatim, which will be attached to our meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

I take it that the Members have reached a consensus on this wording for this Item, so it can be transmitted to the Drafting Committee for its review.

This brings us to the end of Item 3.

We will adjourn the meeting now and take up Item 4, *Programme Implementation Report*, tomorrow when we meet. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 20:31 hours
La séance est levée à 20 h 31

Se levanta la sesión a las 20.31

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatrième session
164.º período de sesiones**

**Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020
Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020
Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020**

**THIRD PLENARY MEETING
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

7 July 2020

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:32 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 32
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 09.32
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 4. Programme Implementation Report 2018-19**Point 4. Rapport sur l'exécution du Programme 2018-2019****Tema 4. Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19**

(C 2021/8; C 2021/8 WA7; C 2021/8 WA8)

(CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraphs 10 and 11))

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning to you all and we can start the session going straight into Item 4, which is *Programme Implementation Report 2018-19*. The documents before you are C 2021/8 and C 2021/8 WA7/8.

I note that the introduction of this report by Ms Beth Crawford, Director of The Office of Strategy, Planning and Resource Management (OSP) has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 4: Programme Implementation Report 2018-19

Ms Beth Crawford, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management

The *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19* is FAO's accountability document. It informs the Membership about the work carried out by the Organization over the last biennium for all sources of funds. It is retrospective in nature, reporting on what the Organization has achieved in terms of programmatic results and financial performance compared to the targets set out in the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19.

This is the first PIR under the Medium-Term Plan 2018-21. It presents results against the results chain. At the top of the results chain are the five Strategic Objectives, which are the development impacts of FAO's work, and are measured exclusively through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. The next layer of the results chain comprises the 20 outcomes which are changes in capacities needed at country level and globally to achieve these higher-level objectives, and the 40 outputs, which is what FAO delivers with results measured by indicators and targets.

The PIR also includes the enabling functions for improved corporate performance which are measured by key performance indicators. This includes Objective Six on technical quality, statistics, and the cross-cutting themes of climate change, gender, governance and nutrition, as well as the four Functional Objectives and three special chapters that provide the internal enabling environment for FAO's work.

Each of the five Strategic Objectives provides an overview, as well as specific achievements at global, regional, subregional, and country level. The mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and key lessons learned are also described. FAO achieved 95 percent of the Output indicator targets under the five Strategic Objectives.

Throughout the document, we demonstrate how the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a unifying element for FAO's work, which drives actions in countries and underlies our measurement of progress. FAO is of course also custodian or contributing agency for 26 SDG indicators.

FAO's work on emerging opportunities and threats is also highlighted, including agroecology, biodiversity, innovation, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), biotechnologies, antimicrobial resistance, fall armyworm, and desert locust.

In the final section of the document, the PIR reports on FAO's means of delivery and describes improved approaches, and provides an overview of resources management.

In this regard, it is highlighted that FAO's total expenditure was 7.2 percent higher compared to the preceding biennium, and 2018-19 also saw a 17 percent increase over 2016-17 voluntary contributions mobilized from resource partners in support of FAO's programme of work.

Key lessons learned in the previous biennium, highlighted throughout the document have been instrumental in shaping the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* and will feed into the preparation of the new Strategic Framework.

A dedicated Annex reporting on the progress with the Climate Change Action Plan was included in this PIR, following guidance by the Programme Committee at its 122nd Session in November 2017.

We look forward to Council's feedback and guidance on the 2018-19 PIR.

CHAIRPERSON

The floor is open for Members' comments. I give the floor to Cabo Verde.

M. Jorge FIGUEIREDO GONÇALVES (Cabo Verde)

Cabo Verde, avec la Guinée et le Nigéria, s'expriment sur ce point de l'ordre du jour au nom du Groupe régional Afrique. Notre Groupe régional se félicite de la préparation du document *C 2021/8*, y compris ses deux annexes web. Le document fournit des informations complètes sur les travaux effectués et les résultats obtenus par l'Organisation au cours du dernier exercice biennal. Il fournit des informations sur les enseignements tirés, sur ce qui doit être fait ou sur les mesures déjà prises pour renforcer l'exécution des programmes.

Nous notons que, malgré le fait que la faim, la sécurité alimentaire et la malnutrition soient restées au premier plan du programme de développement, les rapports indiquent que la faim est à nouveau en hausse et que la dénutrition continue d'affecter des millions d'enfants, une tendance que la COVID-19 menace d'augmenter.

Dans ce contexte, nous apprécions la participation et la contribution de la FAO au Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030 sur les objectifs de développement durable (ODD), ainsi que ses rapports se référant aux politiques de haut niveau des Nations Unies sur le développement durable.

Nous comprenons que le *statu quo* n'est plus acceptable et que les besoins d'innovation architecturale de l'Organisation sont importants pour améliorer l'efficacité et la cohésion des programmes, sans entraver la responsabilité, la transparence, la responsabilisation et le suivi.

Nous reconnaissons les efforts déployés pour améliorer l'efficacité de la gestion dans le cadre de l'efficacité et des économies de coûts pour améliorer l'exécution, accroître la délégation des pouvoirs aux bureaux décentralisés et les efforts visant à améliorer l'efficacité et l'utilisation opportune du Programme de coopération technique.

Nous continuons de souligner qu'il est important de disposer d'un réseau relativement large de bureaux décentralisés dans notre région, doté d'un personnel complet et de ressources suffisantes dans le cadre de la dissolution du Bureau de l'appui aux bureaux décentralisés.

Nous demandons donc l'assurance d'un mécanisme délimité, qui assure la coordination mondiale des bureaux décentralisés et des bureaux régionaux, des informations claires sur la décentralisation des pouvoirs, ainsi que sur les lignes hiérarchiques visant à faciliter la communication et la rapidité de la collaboration entre toutes les parties prenantes au niveau local. Le Groupe régional Afrique avait proposé, lors de la 41^e session de la Conférence en juin 2019, de reconduire tous ses représentants des pays de la FAO au grade minimum de P5, ce qui a été accepté. C'est pourquoi nous aimerions que cette diffusion soit pleinement mise en œuvre et nous remercions des rapports réguliers sur la question.

Nous saluons la poursuite des travaux visant à renforcer la collaboration, conformément au mémorandum d'accord signé entre les trois organismes ayant leur siège à Rome, afin d'unir les efforts pour renforcer la collaboration et la coordination, et accroître l'appui aux pays.

Pour l'Afrique, la priorité reste les quatre initiatives régionales à savoir (i) l'accélération de l'action des pays membres dans la lutte contre la faim (engagement de l'Afrique pour éradiquer la faim d'ici à 2025); (ii) la promotion de pratiques innovantes et de principes durables de production et de post production, intensification de la production durable, développement de la chaîne de valeur en Afrique; (iii) le renforcement de la résilience des communautés agricoles et des éleveurs vulnérables, et le renforcement de la résilience dans les zones arides d'Afrique; (iv) la facilitation pour promouvoir le partenariat et la gestion des connaissances.

Nous félicitons l'engagement de la FAO dans son programme spécifique de lutte contre la résistance aux antimicrobiens, la recrudescence actuelle du criquet pèlerin, la chenille légionnaire, la peste des petits ruminants et la promotion d'actions visant à répondre davantage aux besoins des pays sans littoral et des petits États insulaires en développement. Nous soulignons que le genre, la jeunesse, le changement climatique et la malnutrition devraient être intégrés dans tout le programme du projet.

Au moment où l'on enregistre une baisse des investissements publics dans l'agriculture, les petits producteurs de denrées alimentaires et les agriculteurs familiaux nécessitent un soutien et des investissements plus importants dans les infrastructures et les technologies pour promouvoir le développement durable.

Nous soutenons la décennie d'action pour atteindre les ODD d'ici 2030 et le rôle de chef de file de la FAO dans l'aide qu'elle apporte aux pays pour commencer à communiquer les informations sur les indicateurs des ODD relevant de son mandat et pour faire la transition vers une agriculture et des systèmes alimentaires durables.

Nous saluons l'intégration de la biodiversité et l'utilisation de l'agroécologie et d'autres technologies innovantes pour promouvoir une production agricole et une consommation durables.

Concernant l'Initiative Main dans la main et son potentiel pour promouvoir la transformation des systèmes agricoles et alimentaires en catalysant un financement flexible, un partenariat ciblé et l'innovation dans les pratiques de gestion des données, les technologies et les institutions, nous attendons avec intérêt de recevoir des rapports d'étape et d'apprendre sur les résultats pratiques de l'esprit d'initiative et d'entreprise, et leur poursuite en vue de la réalisation du mandat de la FAO.

En ce qui concerne les résultats des objectifs stratégiques, nous prenons note des cibles des indicateurs des produits 2018-2019 de la FAO, atteintes au niveau global de 95 pour cent. Le rapport mentionne qu'environ 79 pour cent des résultats des extras ont été livrés au niveau régional. Bien que nous voudrions souligner que la meilleure performance de la FAO doit être atteinte au niveau des bureaux locaux pour la mise en œuvre effective des projets du programme, nous restons préoccupés par cette performance et appelons donc à une amélioration.

Nous saluons les efforts déployés pour mobiliser des ressources extrabudgétaires pour les travaux actuels et futurs, une augmentation de 17 pour cent et les projets nationaux, sous-régionaux et régionaux, qui ont obtenu les approbations, ainsi que les 11,7 millions USD de gains d'efficacité récurrente, convaincus que cela n'a pas affecté négativement les programmes techniques.

En terminant, nous notons les réalisations des résultats et des extras au titre des objectifs stratégiques fonctionnels mesurés par les indicateurs et les cibles, et soutenons la transmission du Rapport sur la mise en œuvre du programme 2018-2019 avec leurs observations et recommandations sur les réalisations, les performances opérationnelles et financières à la 42e session de la Conférence en 2021 pour approbation.

Ms Hmway Hmway KHYNE (Myanmar)

Myanmar has the privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Regional Group expresses its sincere appreciation to the staff in FAO for their ceaseless efforts with their various global food and agricultural agenda. 2018-2019 is a tough period, although it was even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the current index for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly SDG 2, is sliding backwards. We consider FAO's role and its mandate more crucial than ever. With this view, in general, the Asia Regional Group would like to deliver some comments as follows.

Firstly, we welcome the increase of total expenditure of USD 2.8 billion in 2018-2019, which is 7.2 percent higher than in 2016-2017. We also value mobilization of extrabudgetary resources for current and future work, which increased to USD 2.4 billion by 17 percent compared to the previous. Considering the current global situation, FAO's work needs to be continued with a sufficient width and depth. We sincerely look forward to seeing a subsequent achievement in resource mobilization

through the Investment Centre by close cooperation not only with other United Nations agencies and international financial institutions (IFIs), but also with private sectors.

Secondly, we are pleased to hear from FAO's Management that 41 out of 43 upward indicators fully met their targets. Since these indicators are components of the results chain, upward outcomes, Strategic Objectives, which are in line with SDGs, we acknowledge FAO's significant effort in achieving SDG 2030. However, we would like to recommend FAO to put additional efforts onto indicators, which did not fully meet the target. We emphasize these indicators' importance in respect to capacity building of public as well as private sector on the pathway of development.

With regard to the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) while we highly welcome the first release of the TCP report last year, it is to hear that the total amount was decreased from USD 151.9 million to USD 148.1 million. According to the document, Asia is the second largest region having TCP projects, and this really indicates our region still needs various and relevant TCP projects notwithstanding the serious impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

Our region requires urgent supports for areas such as African swine fever (ASF), desert locust, fall armyworm (FAW), etc., and continuous capacity building for sectors such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and social protection for managing risk. In this respect, we request FAO to always be reminded of the TCP's original purpose, as quoted "to purchase tangible and immediate results cost-effectively and catalysed development changes from the Report".

Last but not least, we acknowledge the Organization's Gender Parity and Regional Representation issues. In general, we are pleased to hear FAO's dedication towards United Nations system-wide strategy regarding gender parity, but it still seems FAO has a long way to go, particularly in terms of the percentage in Director and above level, which is currently at 25 percent. In addition, we acknowledge that we still have several underrepresented Asian countries, as well as countries which are addressed in meeting the minimum level of representation. Thus, we sincerely hope to see more improvement in this sector as well.

To conclude, with these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Council's approval of the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19*.

Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVİK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Delegation notes the quality of the Secretariat's preparation of *Programme Implementation Report (PIR)* for the past biennium. We welcome FAO's achievement at 95 percent of the output indicator targets and 79 percent of the output results at the country and regional levels.

We believe that it is important for FAO to focus its efforts on those areas where delays have been registered, in particular in providing assistance to countries in monitoring the implementation of the programmes to eradicate hunger, to promote food security and nutrition, and also in the introduction of mechanisms for the development of effective agricultural and food systems.

We consider that the 17 percent increase in the volume of voluntary contributions to FAO over the 2018-2019 biennium is a reflection of the growing quality of the activities delivered by the Organization and increasing confidence on the part of donors to FAO.

We also welcome the USD 11.7 million savings in budget resources achieved by the Secretariat without any negativity on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). We believe that FAO's Management, in the sphere of its delegated authority, is continuing to make the most effective use of its financial resources. We note FAO's full-fledge compliance with the principle of multilingualism and welcome the efforts made to support demanded balance, also with regards to the use of the Russian language.

Our belief is that it is necessary to distribute resources, so as to provide quality interpretation in all of the official languages for meetings of the Governing Bodies, as well as the translation of documentation and the most important thematic material. We consider that the Report may be transmitted to the 2021 FAO Conference for its endorsement.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

We note that while FAO has achieved almost all of its output targets for 2018 and 2019 and that the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR)* supports a positive trend in outcomes, global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 remains off track, and that was even before COVID-19. This outlines the need for FAO's new Strategic Framework to strengthen the impact of FAO's work for the SDGs, and we will come back to this and to FAO's work at country level when we get to Agenda Item 6.

However, I would like to focus this intervention on climate change and we welcome the Climate Change Strategy Results Framework – 2018-19 Progress Report in Annex 4 of the PIR. We really congratulate FAO on exceeding its target for mobilizing climate finance, having raised more than USD 1.2 billion at the end of 2019. As we have said before, we would like to see FAO using its expertise to support its Members to raise climate finance for agriculture and food security programmes, but we note that FAO released a seemingly low target for collaborative programmes in the agriculture sector. Please, can Management let us know what proportion of the USD 1.2 billion was for programmes that support the small-scale agriculture sector and what proportion was for programmes in the forestry sector?

Also, can Management say what plans it has to update in the Climate Change Strategy and its Results Framework for the current biennium and also for FAO's future Strategic Framework?

We strongly support FAO's ongoing work to support Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) implementation in the food and agriculture sectors, which is currently output 1.1 in the climate change strategy and we look forward to seeing that reflected in the NDCs, which will be brought to the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) next year. We would urge Council to endorse the extension of FAO's Climate Change Strategy into the current biennium.

Finally, looking ahead how can future Programme Implementation Reports also reflect lessons learned from FAO's evaluation work and other reviews such as the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network's (MOPAN) assessment?

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

We wish to inform you that Malaysia aligns itself with the statement read by Myanmar on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We welcome this detailed Report and we are pleased with the performance overall, in particular where 95 percent of the output targets were met, with 79 percent delivered at country or regional level.

We are also happy to hear that FAO has met or exceeded to implement system-wide action plans on gender equality indicators and that 99.6 percent of that appropriation was spent while achieving USD 11.7 million in savings, a clear lesson from the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR)* from 2018-19 is perhaps on the importance of coordination.

We support FAO in increasing coordination with broad-base of counterparts and stakeholders to meet the response to increasing complexity of issues implicating the food systems. FAO could also implement change at a country-level to policy tools in guidance on the importance of communication between different ministries for development and of committed policies, strategies and interventions.

At the same time, PIR 2018-2019 also stresses the importance of evidence data analysis and innovation. I am pleased to see these elements being emphasized and proposed for the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21*.

Finally, we call FAO upon the challenges in the areas where they fall behind in plan to improve our achievements of these indicators in the next PIR.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We welcome the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19* and the overall progress made by the Organization.

We express satisfaction that FAO accomplished 95 percent of the 2018-2019 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) outputs, delivering critical support from farm to policy level on a country, regional and global scale.

We acknowledge the achievement of USD 11.7 million in efficiency savings in the biennium and the increase of voluntary contributions mobilized for the implementation of FAO's programme of work. The biennium report demonstrates the capacity of FAO to reach and even sometimes surpass outcomes and outputs directly linked to its core mandate notably by enhancing connectivity, especially in agriculture. The global situation on food security, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, deforestation and fish stock management is still alarming and requires special attention. We expect FAO to support actions aiming at more sustainability to all sectors at all scales.

We welcome FAO's positive contribution to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition however considering the increase in the global number of hungry people in 2019 for the fourth consecutive year and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we call on FAO to make further progress in increasing the resilience of livelihoods and food systems to threats and crisis.

We also urge FAO to step up efforts to contribute more to poverty irrigation in close cooperation with other United Nations agencies. We encourage FAO to keep building strategically appropriate and transparent partnerships with all stakeholders involved in achieving the 2030 Agenda goals. FAO has an essential role to play in supporting its Members in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including through policy guidance, technical advice and the implementation of programmes and projects. Appropriate action is required from FAO to anchor its new Strategic Framework to the 2030 Agenda and to ensure effective monitoring in review of progress.

We emphasize that multilingualism is enshrined in the Basic Texts of the United Nations and FAO and constitutes a priority for the European Union and its Member States. To this context, we stress the importance of having quality translations in all United Nations' official languages, especially for the science- and evidence-based publications of FAO.

We note the underperformance in several key performance indicators under *Functional Objective 10, FAO governance, oversight and direction* and we request Management to take remedial action.

We wish to thank all FAO staff for their dedication in these difficult times. With these comments we commend transmitting the PIR 2018-19 to the Conference for its endorsement.

Sra. Liudmila KUZMICHEVA (República Dominicana)

Nuestra delegación acoge con satisfacción los progresos realizados en la ejecución del programa de trabajo en 2018 y 2019. Si bien la FAO había cumplido casi todas las metas relativas a sus delegaciones para el bienio, nos preocupa que los progresos mundiales hacia la consecución del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 2 (ODS 2) no sigan el ritmo. Por lo tanto, alentamos a la FAO a que siga aumentando los esfuerzos comunes con otras agencias del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para no dejar a nadie atrás.

Estamos complacidos con la función de liderazgo de la FAO en la transición hacia sistemas agrícolas y alimentarios sostenibles. En este sentido, reiteramos la importancia de las contribuciones voluntarias no condicionadas para lograr un programa de trabajo más equilibrado y eficaz.

Deseamos hacer hincapié en el programa de cooperación técnica que desempeña un papel clave siendo la espina dorsal de la Organización y parte fundamental de su labor sobre el terreno. Asimismo, para nosotros está claro que la FAO debe continuar desarrollando su papel catalítico para fomentar las acciones sobre el terreno.

Felicitamos a la FAO por la labor realizada en nuestra región mediante el apoyo para la redacción del Plan de Desarrollo Integral de Mesoamérica elaborado por la comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC), en el que se adopta un enfoque de desarrollo territorial y se ponen de relieve los vínculos existentes entre la pobreza, la seguridad alimentaria y el cambio climático.

Reconocemos los esfuerzos de la Organización para fortalecer las capacidades nacionales incluyendo en el marco de la Iniciativa Regional de América Latina y el Caribe Sin Hambre 2025 (IALCSH), el diseño del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para la agricultura familiar. Así como el apoyo a la elaboración de estrategias destinadas a abordar las pérdidas, el desperdicio de alimentos y otras cuestiones de relevancia para los países de nuestra región.

Con estos comentarios, alentamos a la FAO a que siga incorporando las cuestiones transversales en sus programas y fomentando la colaboración con los organismos con sede en Roma y otras agencias del sistema de Naciones Unidas, sobre todo, a nivel regional y nacional.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

Indonesia appreciates the Secretariat's preparation and presentation of this comprehensive and informative Report. Indonesia fully aligns itself with the statement made by Myanmar on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We note with appreciation the significant progress in taking forward FAO's results agenda over the past biennium by achieving 95 percent of its output and outcome indicators. We recognize FAO's support in assisting Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as effectively managing the resources put at its disposal to support the delivery of the programme of work.

On a special note, we thank FAO's support in response to the earthquake that struck Central Sulawesi in September 2018.

We encourage FAO to continue promoting new collaborative approaches and initiatives at the country level. In this regard, we are looking forward to doing more concrete actions regarding the joint programmes with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) in Jakarta.

Lastly, we express appreciation for the update on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and support FAO to continue its engagement.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La Argentina agradece el *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19* y se congratula de que la FAO haya cumplido el 95% de las realizaciones del Programa de Trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para este bienio. Antes de avanzar con algunos puntos que quisiera resaltar, debo reconocer que lo expresado por mi estimado colega de Cabo Verde, el Embajador Gonzalves, en nombre del grupo africano me interpreta perfectamente y evita que deba ser repetitivo. El aumento del hambre y la malnutrición en el mundo demuestran que, a pesar de estos notables esfuerzos, aún tenemos un largo camino por recorrer.

Además, corremos el riesgo de que los avances realizados en pos de sacar a miles de personas de la pobreza y el hambre se vean revertidos como consecuencia de la pandemia del COVID-19. Es por esto que, consideramos que aumentar la producción y la productividad de los sistemas alimentarios de manera sostenible es central para alcanzar el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 2 (ODS 2) de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible. En tal sentido, la Argentina realiza su contribución en su papel de exportador de alimentos de calidad al mundo.

La Organización ha puesto y pone gran atención en la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios. Al respecto y, considerando el impacto vertiginoso que tendrá la pandemia en el número de personas que padecen hambre en el mundo, la Argentina subraya la importancia de que dichos ajustes se realicen de manera apropiada y pertinente. Es importante entender que varios sistemas alimentarios no necesitarían atravesar una fase de transformación ya que son sostenibles en las tres dimensiones. Prueba de ello es la enorme contribución de dichos sistemas a la producción global de alimentos y a la seguridad alimentaria. Asimismo, es importante evaluar las consecuencias que en el corto plazo la introducción de cambios significativos en la forma de producción podría tener en la producción de alimentos en el contexto actual.

Por ello y en atención a lo afirmado por los Miembros en ocasión del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa, las eventuales transformaciones de los sistemas alimentarios deberán favorecerse: (a) de manera congruente, (b) según proceda y (c) en función de los contextos y capacidades locales. La Argentina considera que adoptar perspectivas y enfoques innovadores será la clave para encontrar soluciones y alternativas [XX] para salir de esta situación apoyando el desarrollo y el crecimiento sostenibles e inclusivos.

En otro orden, a partir del informe quisiera reconocer el papel fundamental de la labor normativa de la FAO. Y en este sentido, hacer un comentario sobre las publicaciones insignias de la Organización. La Argentina reitera la importancia que en dichos trabajos se utilice lenguaje multilateralmente acordado y se expongan hallazgos y vínculos basados en principios científicos y hechos comprobados.

Con estos comentarios, Argentina toma nota del *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19*.

Sr. Elias REYES BRAVO (México)

Tomamos nota con agrado de los progresos para cumplir el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2018 - 19 por alcanzar el 95% de las metas e indicadores de las realizaciones. No obstante, preocupa el desfase entre los progresos globales para el logro del Objetivo de Desarrollo 2 (ODS 2) y las metas e indicadores. Es decir, en varios casos los objetivos globales avanzan, pero hay fallas importantes en las metas e indicadores. En varios casos los resultados de logros muestran que no hubo cambios significativos. Eso tiene que mejorar. Tomamos nota con agrado del aumento del 17% de las contribuciones voluntarias durante el bienio 2016-17, símbolo de confianza de los donantes en la FAO. La mayor parte de los recursos totales de la FAO son contribuciones voluntarias, generalmente etiquetadas, por lo que habría que meditar sobre las consecuencias de esto para el trabajo de la FAO, para que no se convierta con el tiempo en una Organización dirigida por los donantes principales.

Respecto al programa de cooperación técnica, lo consideramos una valiosa herramienta para países de renta media en donde la FAO aplica de manera práctica sus conocimientos en países en desarrollo. Quedamos a la espera de los resultados de la evaluación del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) con miras a mejorarlo en beneficio de países en desarrollo.

CHAIRPERSON

We are trying to see whether something could be done technically from here. The technicians are looking into it. Perhaps I can give the floor to Nicaragua later on. We can go to the next speaker. Nicaragua, we will come back to you.

I give the floor to Guinea.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

La République de Guinée s’aligne sur les déclarations faites par Cabo Verde et l’Indonésie, respectivement au nom du Groupe régional Afrique et du groupe des 77 et la Chine sur le point de l’ordre du jour intitulé «Rapport sur l’exécution du Programme 2018-2019». Nous félicitons le Secrétariat pour l’élaboration du rapport C 2021/8 avec ses documents annexes.

Nous notons avec satisfaction les efforts déployés par la FAO afin que la lutte contre la faim, l’insécurité alimentaire et la malnutrition continuent d’être au centre des priorités de l’agenda international de développement.

Nous félicitons la FAO pour les progrès réalisés en vue de l’obtention des résultats escomptés, ce qui a permis d’atteindre dans leur totalité 95 pour cent des cibles relatives aux indicateurs associés aux produits, tandis que 16 des 22 indicateurs de résultats ont affiché une amélioration pour la majorité des pays entre 2015 et 2019. Des améliorations significatives ont été également constatées au niveau de l’exécution financière. Dans ce cadre, les dépenses totales se sont élevées à 2,8 milliards d’USD, soit une augmentation de 7,2 pour cent par rapport à la période 2016-2017 et 99,6 pour cent soit 1 002,6 millions d’USD du montant net des crédits ouverts ont été utilisés, et les dépenses extrabudgétaires ont atteint 1,8 milliards d’USD.

La République de Guinée salue l'augmentation de l'ordre de 17 pour cent en faveur des activités en cours, des ressources extrabudgétaires mobilisées, qui sont passées à 2,4 milliards et l'affectation de 79 pour cent des ressources à des projets nationaux, sous-régionaux et régionaux. Nous notons que l'exécution au titre du Programme de coopération technique a représenté 123,4 millions d'USD, soit une légère baisse par rapport à 2016-2017, due au fait que l'exécution au titre des crédits ouverts sur 2016-2017 a été plus importante en début de période, ce qui laisse moins de fonds de cet exercice à dépenser sur le Programme 2018-2019.

Ainsi le solde non dépensé de l'ouverture de crédits pour 2018-2019 de 85,9 millions d'USD est disponible pour les obligations au titre du Programme de coopération technique jusqu'au 31 décembre 2021, conformément à l'article 4.3 du règlement financier.

Nous nous félicitons que des gains d'efficacité récurrents pour un montant total de 11,7 milliards d'USD aient été réalisés principalement en ajustant à la baisse les dépenses du personnel et en réduisant les dépenses pour les consultants, les voyages et achats.

Nous encourageons l'étroite collaboration au niveau national et régional entre les trois organismes ayant leur siège à Rome, conformément à l'esprit du mémorandum d'entente tripartite signé en 2018, dans lequel ces organisations se sont engagées à mieux collaborer afin d'obtenir des résultats collectifs fondés sur les avantages comparatifs de chacune et sur le calendrier pluriannuel, ce en droite ligne du repositionnement actuel du système des Nations Unies pour le développement.

Dans le même sillage, nous encourageons la FAO à poursuivre sa participation active au processus de réforme en contribuant de manière décisive aux cinq principaux actes de changement définis dans la résolution 72/279. Nous soutenons la vision du Directeur général de la FAO depuis sa prise de fonction, y compris l'Initiative Main dans la main qui prend en compte les préoccupations et dangers de notre monde relatifs à la lutte contre la faim, l'insécurité alimentaire et les agendas internationaux, régionaux et nationaux.

En conclusion, Monsieur le Président, en dépit des efforts fournis par la FAO et d'autres institutions, la Guinée reste préoccupée par la situation de la faim qui continue de s'aggraver dans le monde, en particulier dans les pays en développement. C'est pourquoi, dans le cadre de la réalisation des ODD 1 et 2, qui reflètent notre vision commune, nous exhortons la FAO à poursuivre ses activités en accordant une priorité aux objectifs nationaux et régionaux dans les domaines ci-après: le Programme de coopération technique, la décentralisation, la réduction de la vulnérabilité aux menaces ayant une incidence sur la sécurité et les systèmes alimentaires, notamment la lutte contre les criquets pèlerins, et enfin la promotion des investissements dans les infrastructures, l'agriculture numérique, l'agroécologie, la résistance antimicrobienne.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la presentación del documento C 2021/8 *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19*. De manera muy breve quisiera externar los siguientes comentarios. Nuestro reconocimiento a la FAO por haber alcanzado el 95% de las metas de los indicadores de realizaciones del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2018-19, a pesar del difícil entorno mundial y de las crecientes y consistentes demandas de los Miembros.

Llama positivamente la atención cómo la dotación de contribuciones extrapresupuestarias casi duplicó el presupuesto ordinario. Este, como se sabe, ha mantenido un crecimiento nulo en los últimos años, por lo que saludamos los esfuerzos inteligentes y concertados en todas las esferas de la Organización por capturar recursos que permitan llevar adelante las tareas que los países le hemos encomendado.

Por otro lado, deseo indicar que mi delegación seguirá con gran interés la implementación del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2020-21, especialmente ahora que, vistas las conclusiones del tema 3 *Nuevos ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2020-21*, los programas estratégicos serán desmantelados.

Entendemos que el logro de los objetivos estratégicos no necesariamente tiene que estar aparejado a la permanencia de estos programas, pero consideramos que su existencia permitía consolidar la

información sobre el cumplimiento. Confiamos que la nueva estructura que el Director General ha propuesto esto será debidamente atendido por las oficinas, centros y divisiones correspondientes.

Con estos comentarios, Costa Rica aprueba el *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19*.

CHAIRPERSON

We will go back to Nicaragua. Let us try again.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la preparación y presentación del *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19*. Nicaragua expresa su reconocimiento a la FAO por los progresos realizados en la ejecución del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2018-19, el cual ha alcanzado hasta un 95% del cumplimiento de sus metas e indicadores de realizaciones (41 de las 43 metas).

El Programa de trabajo y presupuesto ha permitido a la Organización cumplir sus compromisos y alcanzar sus metas, no obstante, todavía debemos reflexionar sobre los progresos mundiales en el alcance del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 2 (ODS 2), ya que los mismos no reflejan avances significativos. Al contrario, el hambre sigue en aumento y la malnutrición continúa afectando a millones de seres humanos a nivel mundial.

Nos satisface que, durante el bienio, la FAO haya logrado mayor eficiencia, generando ahorros por 11,7 millones de USD, cuyo esfuerzo instamos a continuar, para lograr una Organización más eficaz, eficiente y productiva.

Nicaragua reconoce los esfuerzos realizados durante el bienio, principalmente en la colaboración con los Frentes Parlamentarios contra el Hambre, cuyo papel es esencial para promover marcos legales que faciliten la realización del derecho a la alimentación.

Asimismo, reconocemos el apoyo de la FAO a la Agenda Regional Intersectorial sobre Protección Social e Inclusión Productiva con Equidad 2018-2030 (ARIPSIP), del Sistema de Integración Centroamericana (SICA).

A su vez, FAO colaboró en la gestión de marcos jurídicos y procedimientos operacionales para fortalecer la Lucha contra la Pesca Ilegal, No Declarada y No Reglamentada (INDNR), incluida la aplicación del Acuerdo sobre medidas del Estado rector del puerto (MERP), esta última aprobada recientemente por nuestra Asamblea. Esperamos que estas colaboraciones continúen y se fortalezcan cada vez más.

Nicaragua es Miembro fundador de esta Organización, la cual cumple 75 años de existir. Durante todo este periodo, los Miembros hemos sido testigos de su crecimiento, de su fortalecimiento y de la ampliación de su campo de acción, abarcando mayores temáticas interrelacionadas con la alimentación y la agricultura, como podemos constatarlo en el número actual de áreas, departamentos, divisiones, entre otros.

En este sentido, es necesario continuar promoviendo procesos e innovaciones de cara a los avances técnicos y científicos, que permitan poner a disposición de las naciones de manera oportuna y eficaz, los productos generados por FAO.

El proceso de descentralización de la Organización ha sido, en estos últimos años, uno de los elementos más importantes de innovación: contar con Oficinas Regionales, Subregionales y nacionales fortalecidas y cercanas a los países en la ejecución de sus programas y estrategias representa un elemento de fortaleza en la relación de colaboración fructífera entre la FAO y los Miembros.

Alentamos a la FAO seguir facilitando soluciones innovadoras mismas que esperamos sean reflejadas en la elaboración del nuevo Marco estratégico, Plan a plazo medio (PPM) y Plan bianual de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP).

Con estas consideraciones, la delegación de Nicaragua aprueba el *Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2018-19*.

CHAIRPERSON

There is still a problem with the sound system and that is why the interpretation was not there, but I am told that now the interpreters have received your statement. What you have said, based on that statement will fall part of the verbatim records, but there was always a problem with the sound system and therefore the interpretation was not there.

I now give the floor to Kenya, an Observer, and the last speaker on my list.

Ms Teresa TUMWET (Kenya) (Observer)

We wish to sincerely apologize to you, Chairperson, and the Membership for the technical hitch we had yesterday while wanting to contribute to Item 3. We thank the Secretariat for acknowledging receipt of our region statement and assurance to put it in the Verbatim.

On Item 4, we align ourselves with the detailed statement delivered by Cabo Verde on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. We have a few additional points, especially on support to smallholders in the digital platforms for food and agriculture.

Kenya, like many other countries in East Africa, continues to experience a number of shocks to food security and livelihoods, including droughts, floods, desert locust's invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic. In such shocks, the most affected are the vulnerable and smallholder producers, yet this is the group that is actually feeding the world. In the setting up of digital platforms we call upon other stakeholders to work closely with the smallholders with the aim of building capacity and wedging the gap, especially in technology and innovations to enhance production and productivity in agriculture. We also wish to reiterate the importance of adapting local indigenous knowledge, technologies and innovations.

Finally, in support of many other delegations, including Cabo Verde, the issue of upgrading the FAO representatives in Africa, especially, is really key to achieve what we are planning for.

I present this on behalf of the Ambassador of Kenya.

CHAIRPERSON

I now would like to ask the Chair of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee, would you like to add any comments based on what the Members have said this morning? If not, I will go straight to the Secretary to answer some of the questions.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Creo que, para ganar tiempo, básicamente, lo mejor sería que fuera directamente a la Secretaría.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, the Secretary, please go ahead then.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

The *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19* is a document that is put together with input from the entire Organization, all locations, country, subregional, regional offices and Headquarters. The Strategic Programme Management teams and leaders are heavily involved, it is a big undertaking and I think there is a lot of valuable and interesting information in there.

It is, of course, a backward-looking document, but it also serves well for looking forward and I think many of you have given some examples of areas of focus moving forward, for example when we are looking at the new Strategic Framework.

Indeed, as many of you have commented, the Organization in 2018-19 achieved 95 percent of the output indicator targets and 79 percent of those were delivered at country, subregional or regional level.

Then, as many of you have also commented, the global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 remains off track. This is of course an important and worrying situation. It underscores the complexity of the issues that we face, and it also underscores the importance of working together. I think, as we move forward with the new Strategic Framework, this is one of the areas that we hope, together with you, to further elaborate. What is FAO's contribution to SDG 2, for example, and what are we counting on others to contribute so that we have a strong theory of change to be able to demonstrate FAO's contribution.

I notice that many distinguished delegates also commented on the importance of collaboration with other United Nations agencies, and I think this is a good example of how our new organizational structure that was discussed yesterday, how that supports this vision of stronger collaboration with other United Nations agencies. This was of course why we have highlighted the three centres in the new structure. They are the Investment Centre, which of course plays a catalytic role in supporting countries and enabling financing at scale, the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre, which includes the zoonotic aspects, and the Joint FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centre. We fully agree with the importance of moving forward and highlighting that in the way that we work and in the way our structure is designed.

I also wanted to recall that FAO is also working closely with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and we actually have three pilot programmes ongoing at country level in Colombia, Indonesia and Niger, where we are developing a joint RBA work plan within the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system. This is another example of how we are working together with RBAs to ensure that food security nutrition and sustainable agriculture remain at the forefront within the United Nations programmes at country level.

Several distinguished delegates also commented on the increase of 17 percent in mobilization of extrabudgetary resources. Indeed, we too are very appreciative and thank the Members for their generous voluntary contributions. Many also underlined the importance of unearmarked funding, and this is indeed something that we would also like to emphasize, in particular under the circumstances where we are currently, being this the sixth biennium of a zero growth budget under the Regular Programme net appropriation resources.

If we truly want to move towards a more programme-based approach and away from a project implementation approach, it is very important that, within the context of our Strategic Framework, we continue to receive more unearmarked voluntary contributions.

There were some specific comments, for example, on climate change, which I know Deputy Director-General (DDG) Ms Maria-Helena Semedo would like to answer. On the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and perhaps other items, DDG, Ms Beth Bechdol would like to answer. Regarding others on decentralization and key performance indicators, DDG, Mr Laurent Thomas would answer.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

Thank you for the comments and also for your idea that FAO should move forward and how we can deliver even better. I would like to refer to two or three comments and a particular question coming from United Kingdom Ambassador, Ms Marie-Therese Sarch.

The majority of the Members referred to the importance for FAO to keep working on animal diseases and there were specific mentions of African swine fever (ASF), plant health, fall armyworm (FAW), and also antimicrobial resistance (AMR). I would like to recall that, as was mentioned yesterday, FAO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) are working together on the global programme on ASF, which will be launched very soon. You know that on AMR, FAO works within the framework of FAO/OIE/World Health Organization (WHO) Tripartite Collaboration on AMR, and we also have FAO's Action Plan on AMR.

On fall armyworm, as the Director-General mentioned in his speech yesterday, we have the Global Programme on fall armyworm, which envisages to reduce the crop loss caused by fall armyworm by 3 percent and avoid expansion to new areas. Those are really the priorities, animal and plant health, how we should reduce what we have and how we should contain the expansion.

On the question or the comment from Germany, as to how we should work on more sustainability at all scale, I believe the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the Biodiversity Strategy and all the work that we as FAO have been doing is moving towards how we can bring more sustainability to the work we do, and I think this is also linked to the comment on how we should achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which is not only food security and hunger but how to sustainably manage natural resources, the trade-off among increasing food insecurity and hunger, and keeping the sustainable use of natural resources.

Now, moving to the questions from United Kingdom, in the *Programme Implementation Report* (PIR) there will be, for FAO supported countries in mobilizing, more than USD 1 billion for climate change and efficient mitigation in food and agriculture sector. Not all those resources were coming from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). They came from different sources and they are also in a bilateral way to forestry, fisheries and other sectors.

The portfolio mobilized for the Green Climate Fund was USD 571 million in support of agriculture, forestry and land use. It is difficult to make a distinction from these projects on what was for forestry and what was not for forestry. I would say that they were agro-ecosystem projects, as they go beyond forestry. Forestry and the sectors or the ecosystem were the entry points, but the end users and the end beneficiaries were the smallholder farmers. However, I tried to do an exercise and to see where among the USD 500 million, the ones which I can say there are forestry projects, and I would say maybe 20 percent, is a results-based payment project in Chile and a carbon sequestration project in Kyrgyzstan. The others, I would say they were, as I said, more than forestry, and they all benefited the smallholder farmers.

We have in the pipeline, I think, more than 20 projects, and there will be mainly, you could see, addressed to the smallholder farmers and will be having, for the first time, three projects for Africa and other countries and regions.

Regarding the Climate Change Strategy and the Results Framework, the Climate Change Strategy does not have a timeframe. We think it can be updated at any time when it shows it is necessary and, as you are aware, we have an ongoing evaluation on SDG 13 and this evaluation is also looking at the Climate Change Strategy. I believe we will have guidance from this evaluation on how and when we should update and improve the Climate Change Strategy. My understanding is that it will be presented to the forthcoming Programme Committee meeting, I hope it will be in November, and then we can say that probably we may need to update the Strategy.

Regarding the indicators, the action plan and Results Framework are linked to the FAO's results indicators. We have, let us say, two or three types of indicators linked to the FAO's outcomes and outputs. In addition, indicators that were called to adopt indicators because we could not link them directly to the FAO's Results Framework. My understanding is that when the Results Framework of FAO will be updated, those results will be also updated and reviewed.

In the context of the new FAO's Strategic Framework, I am sure that climate, environment and biodiversity will have a clearer role and be better integrated than in the past. Now we have a better knowledge, we have been working more in the climate and biodiversity areas. I believe new indicators for climate also will be coming from the new FAO's Strategic Framework and its results indicators and Results Framework.

Concerning the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), FAO has been supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement, ensuring that the agricultural sectors are covered through the NDCs, and also on how we link the climate agenda to the sustainable development agenda and how the NDCs should be updated so they can bring to reality the ambition to achieve the Paris Agreement. In this regard, FAO is directly supporting 21 countries as part of the Climate Action Enhancement Package and 20 countries together with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through what we call the NDC Partnership.

We think that this is very important work that FAO is doing. This revision of the NDCs, how we can enhance the Paris Agreement and how we can support countries to achieve the goals in the Paris

Agreement. However, I would see more than that is how to integrate food security, agriculture sectors and nutrition into the NDCs.

Indeed, this is the role FAO should play, because no one else can bring food security and agriculture into the NDCs and through the NDCs to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

I would like to offer a few reflections on the comments made by a number of Members around the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

It is clear that there is always more demand for TCP funding than what is available, and in the 2018-19 biennium, with the allocation of USD 148.1 million, I feel that it is important for us to reference that we were in fact in a position to reduce the level of our traditional over programming in that year from 10 to 8 percent, in order to be closer to actual expenditures. It is, I think, very clear to all of us that TCP allocations are often times a balance between the demand for project approvals and the needs in either an emergency or an original context, also making sure that we stay in line and stay in balance with overall expenditure constraints.

I do though want to emphasize that in just the last few weeks and few months, we have continued to take great steps to make sure that the administration and the approval process around TCP is as simple and streamlined as possible for our regional offices and for those governments seeking funding. We continue to simplify the proposal submission process and we have greatly reduced and streamlined the actual approval process and the time in which that takes, especially for those in our regional offices seeking the amount of funds.

We also have been in very close coordination with our regional offices around TCP specifically as it relates to COVID-19 projects. We have been making sure that we are monitoring constantly the pipeline of projects by region to ensure that should we be required to provide some early over programming to fit the needs of our regions related to COVID-19 projects, we are in a position to be able to do that.

We very much agree with all of you that there is an important catalytic benefit of this programme, and we commit to you that we will continue to not only improve on and streamline the reporting of TCP activity, but that we are also taking steps to work with you and our regional partners to make sure that the TCP going forward is more flexible and more judicious. We look forward to the opportunity to have a stand-alone presentation on the TCP at the November Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

Finally, the evaluation of the TCP, which is currently underway, I believe affords us the opportunity to address not only these operational challenges but probably more importantly the foundational and systemic features of the TCP that may no longer fit the needs that all of you have identified.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur général adjoint)

Je voudrais commenter sur deux points. Le premier en réponse aux commentaires et nombreuses préoccupations des membres du Conseil sur la nécessité de continuer à renforcer les capacités dans les bureaux décentralisés, en particulier dans les bureaux de pays pour s'assurer que l'intervention de la FAO ait un impact. Dans ce cadre, le représentant de Cabo Verde, au nom du Groupe Afrique, a demandé à être informé sur les progrès réalisés par l'Organisation en réponse à la recommandation de la Conférence en juin 2019 concernant la classe des représentants de la FAO dans les pays.

En juin 2019, la Conférence a demandé que la direction prenne action pour que la classe des représentants de la FAO dans les pays soit établie à un niveau adéquat pour leur permettre de dialoguer avec les hauts fonctionnaires et responsables du gouvernement, c'est-à-dire à un niveau qui ne soit pas inférieur à la classe P5.

À ce moment-là, en juin 2019, 23 représentants de la FAO se trouvaient à la classe P4, dont 11 en Afrique. Je suis heureux de communiquer qu'il ne reste plus aujourd'hui que quatre représentants de la FAO à la classe P4, à Cabo Verde, en Guinée équatoriale, en Mauritanie et au Tadjikistan. Ces

représentants doivent suivre un processus d'évaluation pour assurer que cette recommandation de la Conférence soit mise en œuvre de façon ordonnée.

J'aimerais aussi informer les membres du Conseil que les coordonnateurs sous-régionaux en Afrique, qui sont à la fois sous-coordonnateurs régionaux et représentants de la FAO dans le pays sont généralement nommés à la classe D1.

Dans certaines situations les coordonnateurs sous-régionaux peuvent être nommés à la classe D2, lorsqu'ils assument des responsabilités supplémentaires. Par exemple, le cas du Coordonnateur sous-régional à Addis-Abeba qui doit assumer également la responsabilité du Bureau de liaison avec l'Union africaine et la Commission économique des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique.

Nous continuons à renforcer le niveau et la classe des représentants de la FAO, car c'est bien la volonté du Directeur général, en conformité avec les recommandations de la Conférence.

En fait, dans les prochaines semaines nous allons renforcer encore le niveau des représentations de la FAO en Afrique, où à la fin du mois à peu près huit représentants de l'Organisation seront nommés au niveau D1, y compris un relèvement de la classe des représentants de la FAO au Kenya, en Afrique du Sud, à Madagascar et au Nigéria pour donner quelques exemples.

Nous travaillons aussi au renforcement des capacités des assistants des représentants de la FAO, une catégorie de fonctionnaires qui n'a pas reçu suffisamment d'attention dans le passé. Nous pilotons maintenant un programme leur permettant d'être formés dans d'autres pays et leur offrant la possibilité de devenir représentant de la FAO. Un certain nombre d'assistants du représentant sont devenus représentant de la FAO avec des résultats remarquables.

Voilà ce que je peux dire sur les bureaux décentralisés.

Quant à la question soulevée par Cabo Verde sur l'importance, après le démantèlement du Bureau de l'appui aux bureaux décentralisés, de maintenir une coordination stratégique forte au Siège pour appuyer tous les bureaux décentralisés (bureaux de liaison, bureaux régionaux, bureaux sous-régionaux et bureaux dans les pays), je peux vous rassurer, c'est prévu: le Directeur général adjoint chargé des bureaux décentralisés, en l'occurrence, moi-même actuellement, verra son bureau renforcé par une petite unité pour assurer la coordination stratégique de l'appui en particulier régional.

Continues in English

I wish to switch to English just to comment on the comment made by Germany on the behalf of the European Union whereby Germany noted that with regard to *Functional Objective 10, FAO governance, oversight and direction*, there were a number of targets of key performance indicators (KPIs) that were not met, and Germany urged or encouraged Management to make progress in this regard. We, of course, will make sure that we make a good progress and we hope that in the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2020-21* they will be all met.

Just for your information, the PIR 2018-19 shows that 63 percent of KPI targets were fully met under *Functional Objective 10*. This compares to 50 percent in 2016-17. Therefore, there has been progress, but the progress is insufficient. This improvement occurred despite an increase in the number of indicators and also higher standards of delivery. I will take two examples that are particularly telling.

The case that was highlighted by many Members, the importance of ensuring that Governing Body documents are delivered according to deadlines and language requirements, many references to multilingualism and, yes, we are not yet there. The target is 100 percent, we are at 82 percent. We are aiming at improving. We have seen that, with COVID-19, we made some progress on multilingualism in the digital environment. We made progress. Since April 2019, reports to the Council and Conference are published in all languages on the same day as they are adopted by Governing Bodies. This would have been unthinkable in the past when the average time was 27 days. Therefore, there is progress but it is insufficient and we will make sure that we further progress.

This has to be seen also in the context whereby you all applauded the efficiency savings made of around USD 11 million. You will recall that approximately USD 6 million were drawn from the

Conference, Council and Protocol Affairs Division (CPA), with a 35 percent reduction in its post count. Therefore, efficiency saving, major efficiencies in CPA, but this also, probably, will have a slight impact on our capacity to meet the performance indicators. That will recover and we will make sure that it will recover for the next PIR.

The other KPIs for which we have shown insufficient progress is the question of the follow-up and the closure of recommendations from the Inspector-General. In 2019, we accelerated progress in closing outstanding recommendations, reducing the number of outstanding recommendations from 45 to nine. There were massive numbers of recommendations closed.

In fact, speaking of the high-risk audit recommendations, the target in the KPI was 80 percent. We reached 87 percent closed. We exploded the target, which is very good but we were not good enough on the long outstanding audit recommendations. It was supposed to be less than 10 percent and we are currently at 12 percent. I can tell you that we will meet the 10 percent with no doubt.

If I benchmark with other United Nations entities and Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) in Rome, and I followed the discussion last week of the Governing Body of WFP, we are, let us say, quite advanced. We have set ambitious targets, and we will meet them, but we are almost there.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Laurent Thomas. I think that brings to a close the discussion on this Item.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Chairperson, may I say a few words.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes Director-General, go ahead.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I listened to all the questions and suggestions but I wanted to emphasize three things.

First, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They will be the number one driving force to push all FAO's mandates and the resources. We have no time to waste. That is why I wanted to look at it myself, not only within FAO, with my Deputy Director-General (DDG), Chief Economist, but also with relevant Director's at Level 2 (D2s). Not only on agriculture, traditional agriculture, but also modern and sustainable agriculture, forestry, fisheries and others, you name it.

Through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative we can also cooperate with other United Nations agencies, with donors, with the private sector, and academics. That is why I invited 15 people from different sectors, academia, civil society, government officials, United Nations ambassadors or presidents, to be part of my advisory group, the FAO Director-General Advisory Group. We wanted to establish an outreach to not only mobilize more resources, but also all the knowledge and the experience.

Second, as Mr Laurent Thomas already mentioned, for years and years, as a UN Organization, we have a most preferred working language, in my case, now I am speaking in English. But, for Mr Laurent Thomas, sometimes he speaks French, but we mostly speak in English. That is a reality. But we have to respect the basic requirement, we are a UN Organization. I will look more at the other UN languages, which should have more presence and be more accessible. Because we offer services to the regional areas, to the farmers and countries who speak Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, and Russian. I think it is not only for the officials, for the ambassadors, for the representatives. I think that most of the ambassadors, representatives or councillors here speak English, but that is why we said, we deliver to the ground.

As I said, from the people and for the people. The people are not only the ambassadors represented here. We have to look at the farmers. Farmers in small islands, in landlocked countries and even the agricultural bureau leaders or vice governors who are responsible for agriculture in their countries.

They could not speak English. They only speak their language. Even Kiswahili is not a UN language but we have to offer a real tangible version.

First we started with the website, through the Information Technology Division (CIO) and Office for Corporate Communication (OCC) together with Conference, Council, and Protocol Affairs Division (CPA). I will have a special meeting, Mr Laurent Thomas, they are now all under your supervision. You now have no excuse, you have to cut off the silos among these three, this is a holistic design. Believe me, Members, I will try to count on one person. You have no excuse to me because if your Director-General is in a separate and different location than the Deputy Director-General (DDG), then they create their own silos. Now, if they do not have coherence or coordination, I will just ask them, what are your accountabilities, Mr Laurent Thomas, my friend.

For language, I will increase the resources to include all UN languages. Especially at FAO. FAO is for farmers, for rural areas. Some other agencies are different, for example International Telecommunication Union (ITU), they work mainly with the companies who can speak and read in English, whereas for us, our majority, 99 percent, only speak their own language. That is the reality. Therefore, in regard to communication and services, tangible services, we should look at them in a different way, not only for the requirements for statements and the UN Charter requirements.

Third, the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). I have already had a talk with DDG Ms Beth Bechdol on the TCP. We have to have a holistic design, different regions, not geopolitically. We should look at the smallholder farmers in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and even here in South Europe. What are small farmers requesting as TCP is not only a single technology, we need package solutions, not only for crops, but also for animals, fishery and for others, even agro-tourism. They need labour-intensive techniques that assist labour-intensive tourism. If we go to the Nappa Valley, they need the technology from the Middle East.

These are three issues that I am considering, so far.

For the others, we can ask you, DDG or Chief Economist, to look at them in more details. For my agenda, after this Council meeting, we will have one-for-one working plans. Then, especially the SDGs I am back to say again. I asked Mr Daniel Gustafson; we have 39 indicators, but who is the goalkeeper? We have to establish a responsive system. I am the number one goalkeeper but, Mr Laurent Thomas, how many goals are you keeping? Then, your D2s, how many goals are they keeping, including yours, Ms Beth Bechdol, Ms Maria Helena Semedo and the Chief Economist. Then we will establish a real response system in FAO and I will look at your goalkeepers.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director General for your additional comments and clarifications, particularly on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the local language issues. I may inform you that this question of local languages was discussed many years ago in the Programme Committee and nothing was done, probably because of the lack of resources. Therefore, it is good to hear that you will be paying particular attention to this question.

I think I have got no other speakers on my list, so colleagues allow me to conclude on this Item as follows. We will put my conclusions on the screen.

Item 4: Programme Implementation Report 2018-19.

1. The Council endorsed the findings of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee on the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19* and in particular:
 - a) welcomed the progress made in implementing the Programme of Work in 2018-19 and 95 percent results achieved for output indicator targets while noting with concern that global progress towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, remained off track.
 - b) noted with appreciation the 7.2 percent increase in total expenditure of the biennial budgetary appropriation compared to the preceding biennium.

- c) expressed its appreciation for the efficiency savings of USD 11.7 million achieved in 2018-19.
 - d) appreciated the increase of 17 percent of voluntary contributions mobilized from resource partners in support of FAO's Programme of Work compared to the previous biennium. Emphasized the importance of unearmarked voluntary contributions and looked forward to continued such trend *inter alia* through the Investment Centre by close cooperation with a broad range of partners including in the private sector.
 - e) noted the reporting on the use of the 2016-17 carry over.
 - f) stressed the importance of multilingualism at FAO and the associated language service capacity within the Organization.
 - g) appreciated FAO's work and activities in relation to climate change.
 - h) noted with satisfaction the priority given by the Organization for the use of partnerships to enable it to leverage its comparative advantages including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
 - i) welcomed progress in achieving the equitable geographic representation of staff.
 - j) appreciated the extensive presentation of lessons learnt throughout the document as a valuable instrument in defining and announcing the impact of the Organization's work.
2. The Council endorsed the *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2018-19* and recommended that it be submitted to the Conference in July 2021 for approval.

That ends my conclusions. I open the floor in case there are comments by Members. The floor is open.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I would like to suggest two additions, two additional subparagraphs. I think we should, under subparagraph (e) include a new subparagraph referring to also what the Deputy Director-General, Mr Laurent Thomas said. The subparagraph would read "noted the under-performance in several key performance indicators under *Functional Objective 10* and requested Management to take remedial action".

I would suggest another subparagraph under (g), after subparagraph (h) another subparagraph "called for action from Food and Agriculture (FAO) to anchor its new strategic framework to the 2030 Agenda and to provide guidance to Members".

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I would like to propose an addition to subparagraph (h). At the end of that paragraph I would like it to read "and encouraged FAO to continue its support to Members to integrate food security, nutrition and agriculture into their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Climate Change Agreement".

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comment? I see none so we can conclude this Item. Item 4 is now concluded.

Sorry, I see Argentina, you have asked for the floor at the last moment.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Debajo del párrafo relativo a la labor de la FAO en materia de cambio climático, propongo agregar un párrafo que lea: "valoró la atención de la FAO con relación a alcanzar sistemas alimentarios sostenibles." Y en ese sentido recordó que: "la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios deberán favorecerse de manera congruente." "*Coherent or congruent, but not consistent.*" Y después sigue: "según proceda y en función de los contextos y capacidades nacionales." No es "*accordingly.*" En realidad, sería más correcto de acuerdo con nuestra visión, "*appropriate and according to national*

contexts and capacities.” Y la palabra “*record*” en realidad es “*recalled*” en la segunda línea: en el subpárrafo (i) es “*recalled,*” no “*record*”.

Perfecto. Ahora, tengo otra palabra para agregar al final: “*As appropriate*”. Y, por último, arriba del párrafo relativo al multilingüismo, al subpárrafo (f) que ahora es (g), yo pido agregar un subpárrafo aparte: “reconoció el papel fundamental de la labor normativa de la FAO y reiteró la importancia de que las publicaciones insignias de la Organización utilicen exclusivamente lenguaje multilateralmente acordado y expongan hallazgos y vínculos basados en principios científicos y hechos comprobados”.

En ese mismo párrafo, en lugar de: “*for publication by the Organization*” is “*for flagship publications.*” Perfecto, Presidente. Gracias por su paciencia.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China recognizes the comments made by Argentina and, to confirm the importance of multilingualism, China would like to make some amendments. We hope that we can adopt the language used in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, therefore, “stress the importance of quality of improving balance of translation of FAO languages in accordance with principles of multilingualism.”

Can we change the first half of the phrase to express that we use the language of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee?

CHAIRPERSON

Could you please repeat what you said and at what particular spot or paragraph would you like to insert this?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

Let me repeat. After the amendments made by Argentina, I would like to change just the first half of the subparagraph, so “Stress the...”

CHAIRPERSON

Where are you proposing this amendment? Is it subparagraph (h)?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

Subparagraph (h), please. Can you find subparagraph (h)?

CHAIRPERSON

Could you kindly repeat your suggestion?

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

Let me repeat the language used in the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee:

“Stress the importance of the quality in accordance with the principles of multilingualism.”

You can find the language in the Programme Committee Report 11(g).

“Stress the importance of quality while improving balance in translations in FAO languages, in accordance with the principle of multilingualism.” Is that all right?

Mr Shoaib SARWAR SANDHU (Pakistan)

I would like to go on subparagraph (f) please, did by the distinguished delegate of Germany.

After “noted,” with concern, and it has to be KPIs, an “s” after the “I,” please. If the distinguished delegate of the United Kingdom is flexible, I think the word climate change is a bit redundant here, because we know what Paris Agreement is and it is usually used as kind of a noun, so with a capital “A”.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

I would like to go also to subparagraph (h), regarding the balance of translation in FAO and add, at the end of the subparagraph: “and request FAO to provide a plan of action to be presented to Members prior to the next Council Session”.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

I am not sure whether we should introduce this, but it is the regular reporting on the progress made by Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

CHAIRPERSON

Perhaps that work is your amendment and should be under another Item, perhaps the Programme Committees Report. This is because this *Programme Implementation Report (PIR)* is referring to a biennium and the Hand-in-Hand Initiative was not there, as it was before.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

The other one would be under subparagraph (g). We would like something like “commending the mainstreaming of biodiversity and the use of agroecology and other innovation technology to promote sustainable agriculture, production and consumption.”

CHAIRPERSON

If you could repeat your suggestion a little slowly.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

“Commend the mainstreaming of biodiversity and the use of agroecology and other innovation technologies to promote sustainable agriculture, production and consumption.”

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Let us also participate in the preparation of conclusions of our discussion.

Our first remark will be on the subparagraph (g). This is a proposal of the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina. We fully support the idea to use multilaterally agreed language in FAO’s publications. In accordance to this practice, we would like to have a slight modification in the second part of this subparagraph, saying: “and set out scientific- and evidence-based findings.” We are not changing the meaning of this subparagraph. We are trying to make it as short as possible and as clear as possible.

Another issue that we would like to raise is to get more clarity on the proposal made by Kuwait, in the subparagraph (i), about the Plan of Action to be presented to Members prior to the next Council Session. Probably the Joint Committee of the Programme and Finance Committee discussed this issue, but we are not aware. Could you kindly ask for some clarifications? What kind of Plan of Action should be presented to the Members, which topic, etc.?

CHAIRPERSON

I will come to Kuwait after the next three speakers.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

My distinguished Russian colleague actually touched upon the same issues that I also wanted to raise. Perhaps we start with the Plan of Action that was introduced by the distinguished colleague from Kuwait. As a matter of principle, we should only introduce this language on conclusions issues that we have discussed in this meeting. I do not recall that we mentioned this in our discussion. Therefore, as a matter of principle, I was wondering whether this is now really the time to introduce a new topic that we have not discussed in this meeting.

Subparagraph (i) and the last part of the subparagraph which was introduced by the distinguished colleague from Kuwait, going down to the other subparagraph that was introduced by the distinguished colleague from Argentina. I do not know, which one was it?

Could you go up a little bit? I think it was about the multilingualism. No, it was not subparagraph (i), here, it was subparagraph (g).

Also, in the same vein as my Russian colleague said, just to make it perhaps it better understandable, what does Argentina mean if they speak of “multilaterally agreed, exclusively, multilaterally agreed language”? I assume that what is meant is perhaps the official United Nations languages, the six official United Nations languages. If that is the case, then we should perhaps use this term. I think it is more appropriate and an internally accepted one.

Then, last but not least, once we have finished this discussion on the language, could we again go through just slowly, para by para, so that we can note what has been changed?

Ms Renata NEGRELLY NOGUEIRA (Brazil)

I would like to make a small amendment to the current subparagraph (j). If you could please scroll down. We would like to propose that after the word “Members,” we insert the following: “At the request”.

Maybe the end part, which says: “As appropriate” could go together, just to read better, “at the request and as appropriate.” We believe it is important on this call that this must be at the request of the Members.

Mr Moungui MEDI (Cameroon)

Can we go back to subparagraph (g), please? This is too specific for normative work and we would like to propose that we add: “recognize the crucial role of FAO’s normative and technical work and the related process of flagship publications by the Organization to use.”

We are a little bit uncomfortable with the word “exclusively” in as much as possible, because, you know, sometimes those flagship publications are published by technicians who are not absolutely used to the multilateral language. Therefore, to the extent possible, yes, multilateral agreed language. We suppress the word “exclusively”.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Regards to subparagraph (i), on the Plan of Action. I think that when we request something of the Organization, there is no harm in providing an action plan, because we always hear that FAO will carry out these changes that we have requested, but we would like, as Members, to take a look at these changes prior to the next Council. This is always the case and we would like to see what actions are to be taken. Not only to indicate that these changes will take effect only as a paragraph, but we would like to see a plan that is taken out or implemented by the Organization.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just a suggestion on the subparagraph on multilaterally agreed language. I have forgotten which number paragraph that is, the one that Argentina proposed. I wonder if it would be helpful, or easier, to use a very similar paragraph that we agreed in the Report of the Programme Committee under Item 20(b). Where we agreed in our conclusions at the Programme Committee, the language read: “Requested FAO to use multilaterally agreed concepts and science- and evidence-based linkages in flagship publications.” That would be my proposal, as we have already agreed to that language in the Programme Committee.

Ms Jennifer HARRHIGH (United States of America)

In subparagraph (h), may we change “commended” to “recognized”?

Then following “agroecology,” adding in “sustainable intensification, and other innovations.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Un primer punto para responderle a mi estimado colega de Alemania. No me refería al lenguaje, en términos de lenguaje, sino me refería en términos de conceptos, por lo cual con el objetivo de lograr un consenso, y quizá podamos con esto terminar este tema, quiero adherir a la sugerencia de mi estimada colega del Reino Unido, en dejar el párrafo tal cual como había sido en su momento acordado.

En cuanto a la sugerencia originada por Cabo Verde en el subpárrafo (h), en la cual estamos de acuerdo con la sugerencia de Estados Unidos de América sobre colocar “*recognize*” pero nosotros tenemos la idea de agregar aparte, luego de “*biodiversity*” y hablo en inglés, Presidente.

“Across agricultural sectors...” Sí, después de “biodiversity,” en el subpárrafo (h). Correcto. “*Across agricultural sectors as well the use...*” Bueno eso ya está. Después de *agroecology*. Perdón, no incluyó lo que pedí. Luego de la palabra *biodevirsity* quisiera agregar: “*Across agricultural sectors, comma.*” Y después de la palabra *agroecology*, “*sustainable intensification, comma, no till farming, comma, biotechnology and other innovations,*” is okay.

Después de la palabra *innovations*, en lugar de una coma, la palabra *and*. Y después de la palabra *promote*, “*sustainable food systems.*” No, allí terminó el párrafo para mí. Terminó el párrafo en *systems*.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

In regards to subparagraph (g), thank you for this clarification by Argentina and in particular thanks to the United Kingdom for its suggestion. I believe that the formulation as it is now, thanks to the suggestion of the United Kingdom and in correspondence with paragraph 20(b) of the Report of the Programme Committee, this is a language that is agreeable and understandable now.

The suggestion that the Argentinian Ambassador asked for, has already been presented by Ambassador Marie-Therese Sarch, United Kingdom. Going please to subparagraph (i), the last part. For the reasons I explained before, this has not been a matter of discussion under this Item and, therefore, Germany, on behalf of the European Union, requests to delete this last part, starting with “and requested FAO to provide a Plan of Action” until Session.

We request that once we are finished with this work here, under this Item, please show the full text from the top, so that we can look at it in total.

CHAIRPERSON

The interpreters are switching over, so we have a couple of minutes. The next speaker is the Russian Federation.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Our reaction will be on the new proposals of this distinguished Ambassador of Argentina and we are grateful for his several suggestions. Speaking about subparagraph (h), we think that we are reluctant to stipulate here “biotechnology.” We think that biotechnology could be captured by the phrase “and other innovations and technologies”. Our suggestion is to delete “biotechnology” from the context of the current subparagraph (h).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo no tengo oposición a la sugerencia planteada por la Federación Rusa respecto a esa modificación, pero quisiera, entonces, agregar “and all other innovations and technologies.” Es decir, “and all” la palabra “all” luego de la palabra “and”.

CHAIRPERSON

As requested by Germany, we will go through the whole Item 4 paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1.

I have a request from Pakistan. Pakistan, you have the floor.

Mr Shoaib SARWAR SANDHU (Pakistan)

I do not have a substantial input for the language right now. I wanted to propose something to the Secretary.

Many delegates are asking for additions and deletions in the text. May we propose that, rather than the Secretary directly deleting the text, just strike through that part that the distinguished delegate wants to be deleted, so that we can keep track of what is being deleted from the text? Then, finally conclude if we agree, and then take out that part that has been striking through.

CHAIRPERSON

We will go through this time, like I said, paragraph by paragraph, because going back, introducing track changes may not be possible now.

Item 4, paragraph 1.

Subparagraph (a) - (b) - (c) - (d) - (e) - (f) - (g) - (h) - (i).

Germany.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I had requested to delete the last part of subparagraph (i) and requested FAO to provide that deletion.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (j)?

Kuwait.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

With due respect to our colleagues from Germany, it is only a request for a plan. A plan from the Organization to provide us with the steps in order to see their action. We are not asking for extra budget, or extra dollars, or extra euros for this plan. We would like only to see what actions, or what steps, to be taken by the Organization regarding that point.

I understand completely there are so many things that have not been exactly mentioned, even some points now we have added in the subparagraphs, they were not discussed word-by-word during the meetings. We understand that if we request a change from the Organization or any modifications to any plan, to be presented to us for review, our needs are presented. I would like to thank the European Union and Germany.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, would you live with this amendment in view of what Kuwait has just explained?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

It is really no objection to the substance of your proposal, it is a matter of principle. This is a substantial point and it has not been discussed under this Item. Therefore we do not want to have an addition of such a substantial point, Plan of Action, in the Council conclusions when we have not discussed them.

I would suggest, in the interest of perhaps compromise, that you speak of information, "requested FAO for information to be presented to Members prior to the next Council Session." I think this could be acceptable to us. A Plan of Action is a substantial matter and therefore, for the reasons explained, we would have to stick to the deletion of this part, because we cannot include a substantial point that we did not discuss in the meeting.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We share the views expressed by our distinguished colleagues, the distinguished Ambassador of Germany. Probably in the attempt to find a compromise solution, we can say something like “and request FAO to provide information on how to further secure the principle of multilingualism in the Organization”.

It could satisfy the request from the distinguished representative of Kuwait and our German colleague too.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany and Kuwait, is this compromise language acceptable?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

For us, it would be acceptable.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Yes, that would be fine.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us move on to subparagraph (j) – (k) – (l) – (m) – (n) – (o).

Then there is the final paragraph, paragraph 2.

I think this Item can be concluded now.

We have quarter of an hour left before we break for lunch. I think we can start Item 5 and then we will break for lunch and carry on the discussion after lunch.

Item 5. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (8, 12, 16 and 17 June 2020)**Point 5. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent vingt-huitième session) et du Comité financier (cent quatre-vingtième session) (8, 12, 16 et 17 juin 2020)****Tema 5 Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones (8, 12, 16 y 17 de junio de 2020)**

(CL 164/5; CL 164/5 Sup.1)

CHAIRPERSON

The next Item is *Item 5: Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and 180th Session of the Finance Committee*. The documents before Council are CL 164/5 and CL 164/5 Sup.1.

The Joint Meeting requested Management to identify alternative uses of the USD 1.3 million of the unspent balance of the 2018-19 biennial appropriation. Management has provided this update, which can be found in document CL 164/5 Sup.1.

The introduction to this Item has been provided by Ms Imelda Smolcic, Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

Item 5: Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and 180th Session of the Finance Committee

Ms Imelda Smolcic, Chairperson of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and 180th Session of the Finance Committee*, submitted to the Council in document CL 164/5.

I shall now present to you salient highlights of the Report of the Joint Meeting except for those matters which are covered under separate Agenda items of this Session of the Council.

On the *Use of the Unspent Balance of the 2018-19 Biennial Appropriation*, the Joint Meeting generally supported four of the proposals presented: i. Digitalization improvements; ii. Information security and geospatial data; iii. Emergency Operations Centre; and iv. Security and crisis management control facilities.

The Joint Meeting requested Management to identify appropriate alternative uses of USD 1.3 million proposed for the kitchen facilities upgrade and of USD 0.7 million for “Short-term increase in human resources to meet country- and territory-specific data, analysis and policy support needs,” while prioritizing COVID-19 response, and submit these alternative uses prior to the 164th Session of the Council for review and endorsement.

Management has identified alternative uses since the Joint Meeting, and these are contained in an overall, updated proposal on the *Use of Unspent Balance of the 2018-19 Biennial Appropriation*, and it may be found in document CL 164/5 Sup.1.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our report.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite her to provide some additional comments. Ms Imelda Smolcic, you have the floor.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Me complace presentar el *Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones (8, 12, 16 y 17 de junio de 2020)* que se presenta en el documento CL 164/5. Les presento los aspectos más destacados del Informe de la reunión conjunta, excluidos los asuntos que se tratan en relación con otros temas del programa en este 164.º período de sesiones del Consejo. Con respecto al uso del saldo no utilizado de la consignación para el bienio 2018-19, la reunión conjunta apoyó en general cuatro de las propuestas presentadas. Mejoras en materia de digitalización, seguridad de la información y datos geoespaciales, centro de operaciones de emergencia e instalaciones de control de seguridad y gestión de crisis.

La reunión conjunta solicitó a la Administración que determinara usos alternativos adecuados de las sumas que había propuesto destinar a la mejora de las instalaciones de cocina y al aumento de los recursos humanos mediante contratos de corta duración para satisfacer las necesidades de apoyo en relación con datos, análisis y políticas específicas de cada país y territorio, con prioridad a la respuesta a la pandemia por coronavirus, COVID-19, y presentara estos usos alternativos antes del 164.º período de sesiones del Consejo para su examen y aprobación.

Tras la reunión conjunta, la Administración ha determinado usos alternativos y los ha agrupado en una propuesta general actualizada para el uso del saldo no utilizado de la consignación para el bienio 2018-19 que se presenta en el documento CL 164/5 Sup.1, *Uso del saldo no utilizado de la consignación para el bienio 2018-19*. Quedó a disposición para proporcionar otras explicaciones o comentarios que pudieran necesitar.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to invite the Chair of the Programme Committee, but I believe he has an urgent commitment with his Minister, so he would not be available.

I suggest we adjourn the meeting and carry on after lunch, when he will be with us again.

Would you agree to that? I see “Yes’s” so I would adjourn the meeting and carry on this discussion after lunch.

The meeting rose at 12:20 hours
La séance est levée à 12 h 20
Se levanta la sesión a las 12.20

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session Cent soixante-quatrième session 164.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020 Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020 Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio 2020
FOURTH PLENARY MEETING QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
7 July 2020

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:31 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 31
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 14.31
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 5. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (8, 12, 16 and 17 June 2020) (*continued*)

Point 5. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent vingt-huitième session) et du Comité financier (cent quatre-vingtième session) (8, 12, 16 et 17 juin 2020) (*suite*)

Tema 5. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones (8, 12, 16 y 17 de junio de 2020) (*continuación*)

(*CL 164/5; CL 164/5 Supplement 1*)

CHAIRPERSON

We can recommence our discussion of Item 5. I would like to give the floor to Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, to make any additional comments on the Report.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

Chairperson, I apologize to you and to the Members of the Council that I was not able to participate in the last half of this morning's session. Of course, you are the boss in the Council, but I also have bosses in the Netherlands, and I had to be present with my Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation here in Rome for a meeting.

I would like to concur with Ms Imelda Smolicic, the Chair of the Finance Committee, on the presentation of the outcome of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee on the use of the outstanding balance for the 2018-2019 biennial appropriation. Especially the Joint Meeting's need for the Organization to address new priorities. In particular, to strengthen the resilience of global food security and food systems.

I am pleased to see that, following the guidance of the Joint Meeting, Management has provided a new proposal in document *CL164/5 Supp. 1*, which includes that USD 2 million is proposed to be used in support of FAO's comprehensive response to COVID-19, designed under the newly established and better programme for COVID-19. It is crucial that, in these times and unprecedented time of crisis, we support those who need the most.

CHAIRPERSON

I open the floor for Members to join the debate and give their comments.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

L'Angola, avec l'Éthiopie et la Zambie, sont heureux de présenter cette déclaration conjointe au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier.

Nous tenons d'abord à féliciter la présence active du Directeur général de la FAO lors de la session conjointe et pour avoir accompli un an d'activité à la tête de notre Organisation. Nous remercions également la Présidente de la Réunion conjointe pour son leadership ainsi que le Secrétariat pour la préparation des documents.

La Réunion conjointe entre les Comités du Programme et financier a produit une série d'informations importantes, que nous voudrions commenter, non sans avoir salué auparavant l'intention du Directeur Général de transformer la FAO en une Organisation plus active et dynamique, transparente, innovatrice et collaborative.

Le Groupe régional Afrique estime que l'inclusion sera efficace si elle intervient pour tous les agriculteurs des zones rurales les plus reculées avec la garantie que personne ne sera laissé pour compte. En ce qui concerne l'ajustement supplémentaire apporté au Programme de travail et budget pour l'exercice 2020-2021, nous avons déjà eu l'occasion hier d'analyser cette question.

En ce qui concerne le processus de décentralisation lancé par la FAO, certainement l'un des moyens principaux pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable, nous encourageons la FAO à continuer d'appuyer les bureaux décentralisés avec des ressources humaines et financières pour garantir l'impact du travail au niveau des pays.

Le Groupe régional Afrique se dit satisfait de l'augmentation des contributions volontaires d'environ 17 pour cent par rapport à l'exercice biennal précédent et encourage les pays à continuer de maintenir cet esprit d'autoresponsabilité pour l'exécution du programme d'action. Il sera important de destiner ces contributions à des dépenses spécifiques afin de faciliter le travail de gestion de l'Organisation.

En ce qui concerne les publications scientifiques, celles-ci doivent être fondées sur des preuves et, conformément au principe de multilinguisme, il faut en garantir la publication dans toutes les langues de travail de la FAO, ainsi que dans les langues locales pour une meilleure compréhension et diffusion. Cette question a été considérée ce matin par le Directeur général et vous-même. Nous nous sommes prononcés à cet sujet et j'espère qu'à l'avenir, au niveau des pays, les principaux documents et projets seront traduits en langue nationale.

Au sujet de l'utilisation des ressources non utilisées de l'exercice budgétaire biennal précédent, nous soutenons la proposition de redistribution en quatre points, à savoir: l'amélioration de la numérisation; la sécurité informatique et les données géospatiales; le centre des opérations d'urgence; une station de contrôle pour la gestion des crises.

Le solde qui avait été alloué pour accroître les ressources humaines à court terme pourrait être utilisé pour renforcer la résilience, pour l'adaptation à la COVID-19, pour répondre aux fléaux tels les criquets pèlerins, la sécheresse, les inondations ainsi que d'autres catastrophes naturelles imprévisibles.

Nous soutenons la création d'un conseil digital international pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, car il est particulièrement justifié dans le contexte actuel de pandémie de COVID-19, qui exige l'application de technologies numériques dans l'alimentation et l'agriculture.

Le Groupe régional Afrique exprime sa reconnaissance à la FAO pour ses mises à jour constantes sur la pandémie de COVID-19 et ses conséquences sur la sécurité alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires. Dans cette perspective, nous encourageons un esprit de solidarité et de renforcement des synergies entre les organisations des Nations Unies et toutes les parties intéressées.

Avec ces commentaires, le Groupe régional Afrique soutient l'adoption du rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier.

Avant de terminer permettez-moi de rendre hommage à un grand compositeur, le maestro italien, Ennio Morricone, qui vient de disparaître.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We concentrate our statement on the use of the unspent balance of the 2018-2019 biennial appropriations because the other items discussed at the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee are being considered under separate items of the Council Agenda.

As we have underlined several times on the issue of carrying forward any unspent balance from one biennium to the next, a consistent application of Financial Regulation 4.2 is essential. We, therefore, emphasize the importance of a broad and fundamental discussion of this topic at the next Council Session and its preparatory Technical Committees, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), Finance Committee and Programme Committee.

Regarding the proposed uses of the unspent balance of the 2018-2019 appropriations, we take note of the four proposals that received the support of the Joint Meeting. Furthermore, we welcome the additional proposal, which was submitted in accordance with the guidance from the Joint Meeting, to use USD 2 million of the unspent balance for FAO's comprehensive response to COVID-19 under a

newly established umbrella programme for COVID-19 for the six crosscutting priorities listed in the proposal.

In this respect, we would like to request a detailed reporting to the Council on how these funds were spent.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to express its appreciation for the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee. Indonesia notes the importance of the Joint Meeting as a means to consolidate views, recommendations, and suggestions of Member States for the Council consideration.

Indonesia stresses the need to strengthen the resilience of global food security and food systems in light of the COVID-19 global crisis. Therefore, in light of this unprecedented time, Indonesia supports the request for the unspent balance for FAO's comprehensive response to COVID-19 while also allocating it for digitalization, improvements, information security, use special data, emergency operations centre, security and crisis management control facilities.

Indonesia looks forward to the update of FAO's action plan to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse, in response to the findings of the 2019-2020 staff satisfaction survey.

Indonesia fully supports recommendations made by the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and Finance Committee.

Sra. Patricia RODRIGUEZ (República Dominicana)

Agradecemos la elaboración del documento relativo al *Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones (8, 12, 16 y 17 de junio de 2020)*. Acogemos favorablemente las deliberaciones de ambos Comités sobre el uso del saldo no utilizados y aprobamos la nueva propuesta presentada por la Administración sobre el uso de 2,0 millones de USD provenientes del saldo no utilizado del bienio 2018-19 para *Sistemas alimentarios y seguridad alimentaria mundiales: Respuesta integral de la FAO a la COVID-19*, lo cual constituye una muestra más del compromiso de la Organización con atender a las prioridades de los Miembros.

Con estas consideraciones, la República Dominicana aprueba los documentos en cuestión.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico)

Apoyamos que el saldo no utilizado de la consignación para el bienio 2018-19 se utilice para la respuesta de la FAO a la COVID-19 como recomendó la reunión conjunta del Comité de Programa y Comité de Finanzas en las cuatro áreas recomendadas por esa reunión.

En cuanto a la propuesta mencionada en el punto 1 del Cuadro 1 del documento CL 164/5 Sup.1, *Sistemas alimentarios y seguridad alimentaria mundiales: Respuesta integral de la FAO a la COVID-19*, afirmamos que es mejor posicionada con respecto a nuestros requerimientos, en comparación con las propuestas presentadas anteriormente a la reunión conjunta.

En el párrafo 8(i) se menciona que esta propuesta se proyecta en el marco de un nuevo programa general sobre la COVID-19 en relación con seis prioridades transversales, y estas son todas propuestas muy válidas, pero quizás los recursos asignados serán insuficientes para cubrirlas. Agradeceremos tener más información sobre el programa general sobre la COVID-19 y en el futuro contar con el informe del uso del saldo no utilizado.

Finalmente, apoyamos las propuestas presentadas para el uso del saldo no utilizado que cumplen nuestras expectativas.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We want to express our thanks to FAO for the new proposal for the use of the unspent balance, as outlined in the document *CL164/5 Supplement 1*. We believe that using these funds for the comprehensive response to COVID-19 is a much better use of the funds. We join our German and Mexican colleagues in requesting reporting to Council on how these funds are ultimately disbursed.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom supports the findings and recommendations of the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee. In particular, we would like to endorse the Joint Meeting's request that FAO updates its action plans to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse in response to the findings of the recent staff survey, and we would like to reiterate our request that we consider that at our next Council.

We would also like to highlight the Joint Meeting's conclusions on FAO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterate our support for FAO's advocacy to ensure that trade corridors be kept open.

We note that Management agreed to provide further information on FAO's plans to manage the risks to its own operations posed by COVID-19, and we would like to request that FAO briefs Members on this, perhaps when we come to Item 10 on our current Agenda.

We would also support the European, Mexican and United States of America's requests for specific reporting on how the unspent balance will be spent on FAO's COVID-19 response.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

This issue has to do with the unspent balance. We are making this statement regarding the comments made by the distinguished representative of Germany on this Item of the Agenda. We feel it is necessary to examine this question in the framework of the examination of the Report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We feel it is necessary to make the following comment.

We are convinced that, in the framework of the current financial situation and the use of the unspent balance, it is necessary to closely follow Financial Regulation 4.2, so we fully support what was said by our German colleagues. We feel that the practice used in the budget cycle of 2018-2019 regarding the unspent balance for that particular biennium counters that point. We feel that this could undermine the financial situation of the Organization. In addition, this practice is not in accordance with the approach adopted by the majority of Members, and it is counter to budgetary discipline of Members, including the Russian Federation.

In addition, the Russian Federation is not against the use of the unspent balance of 2018-2019 in the budget of the current biennium. In adopting such a decision, we are led by the rationality principle. We feel that these financial resources are necessary for the Organization and its organizational structure, in order to make sure we can launch the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) and react to the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition, we see this decision as a one-time measure, which will not set a precedent for the future, when it comes to taking a position regarding unspent balances in a given budgetary cycle.

Separately, we feel it would be useful to have an additional analysis of the practice of allocation of unspent balances in FAO, in particular to examine why they are being used this way. We are convinced that this will help us to avoid any possible gaps in the planning of the allocation of unspent balances.

I would also note that the principle of the zero-nominal growth, which so far has been the foundation of our budgetary planning, is also something that is impacted by this practice regarding the unspent balance. We also plan to make this statement in the context examining the 109th Session of the CCLM.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to support the recommendation made by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee to request an update on FAO's action plans to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse, and the point made by the United Kingdom in this regard, for next Council.

On the use of unspent balance, we would also like to echo the request made by many colleagues about receiving reporting information about how the funds are spent to respond in particular to COVID-19.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end the list of Members. I now will invite the Chair of the Finance Committee and then the Chair of the Programme Committee, followed by the Secretariat, to offer any comment based on the interventions of Members.

Ms Imelda Smolcic, you have the floor.

Imelda SMOLCIC (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Básicamente he dicho lo que tenía que decir al comienzo de mi intervención anterior, creo que en este momento no tengo nada más para agregar. Así que le agradezco a usted su gentileza, creo que podemos seguir adelante.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

It is great to see that there is a broad support, and we should conclude as soon as possible.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretariat because there were one or two questions which need to be responded to.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Thank you, distinguished delegates for your remarks, and we appreciate your comments on the updated proposal for the unspent balance.

As you recall, Council in December requested a broader discussion on the systematic use of the unspent balances, and that discussion is indeed under way. The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) at its Session in May 2020 reviewed the matter and their conclusions, and the document will be submitted to the next session of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee. This is to confirm that discussion is indeed ongoing.

Several distinguished delegates requested that we report back on the use of these funds, and while certainly we will also do so, we will do it in the context of the annual reports on budgetary performance, which go to the Finance Committee, as well as in the *Mid-term Review* and in the *Programme Implementation Report*. Reporting will take place in various manners.

There was also a request for more of an overview on the umbrella programme, and I know that Ms Beth Bechdol would like to update on that.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

Thank you distinguished delegates for recognizing the importance of continuing our comprehensive response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I will provide a little more detail and respond to some of the specific requests that came from a number of Members in relation to follow-up, the comprehensive plan, and the umbrella programme.

We can all acknowledge that FAO responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic by doing what we do best, providing information on food availability, advocating for free mobility of food across borders, and providing evidence-based policy advice, as it was warranted.

We quickly realized that, in some parts of the world, we were moving from an emergency and humanitarian need to one that needed to be more focused on the medium- and longer-term response, and development activities that would be required.

As that recognition came together, acting as one FAO, we began our efforts to develop this comprehensive response plan, already identifying the need to work in a number of areas. The six areas, in addition to our ongoing emergency and response efforts, come together in a six plus one response plan. This plan will be unveiled more publicly next week, at an event with Members, donors, and other stakeholders that the Director-General will kick-off for us as well.

In terms of putting together the umbrella programme, it was incredibly important for us to make sure that we structured this programme, first and importantly, with the interest of the country office and the country needs in mind, and so we worked incredibly hard in coordination with our FAORs, subregional and regional offices to truly assess the resilience and development needs in each of those locations, taking into account the unique food system, other agronomic, and other system-wide differences between and among those places.

Following that, we have organized multi-disciplinary internal working groups around each of the six plus one cross-cutting priority areas. This ensures that, internally in FAO, we are assessing each one of these thematic areas in an analytical, geographically, unique, and prioritized way.

We also are launching the umbrella programme, an internal tool and mechanism that allows us to more effectively monitor each one of these resource mobilizations needs as they are identified by the Working Groups. Each one of the Working Groups is currently working with our Chief Economist's Office and also our regional, subregional, and country offices to put individual project action sheets together. This enables us to identify, at the most granular level, the needs identified for various projects and other required technical assistance.

This will culminate and be made available publicly to Members and other partners, where we can call upon you and others to support not only additional technical expertise and advice for us, in terms of these projects and extra-budgetary support as well, which will be critical to supplementing the USD 2 million funding that is a part of the unspent balance, and that will be catalytic in many ways to getting a number of these project-specific opportunities up and going.

As was requested by the delegates from Germany, Mexico, the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada and others, it will be our intent to ensure that we provide a complete accounting of how this USD 2 million are spent, and we will ensure that other accounting of the umbrella programme will be well communicated to Members, through different *fora* as well.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor.

United Kingdom, you have the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I did ask a question or rather confirmation that we will hear more from Management about how they are managing the risks posed by COVID-19 to operations under Item 10. I would be grateful for confirmation that we will hear from them under that point.

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Laurent Thomas, would you like to take the floor?

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

As a straight answer to the question posed by the United Kingdom, we are ready to make a presentation on the risk management in the context of COVID-19, and there is a relevant Agenda Item, but if you wish, we can even do it now.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us discuss it under Item 10.

I will conclude on this Item and the text of my conclusions will be projected on the screen.

Item 5: Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee.

1. The Council endorsed the Report of the Joint Meeting and;

- a) recalled the guidance of the 41st Session of the Conference on the use of the unspent balance of the 2018-2019 biennial appropriation. Appreciated the additional information received on the alternative uses and approved the proposal on one-time uses of the unspent balance of the 2018-2019 appropriations of USD 3.6 million contained in appendix of this Report.
- b) looked forward to receiving expenditure information relating to the unspent balance from 2018-2019 towards FAO's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) noted that the systematic discussion on the use of unspent balances was ongoing and looked forward to reviewing this matter at a future session following review by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Joint Meeting.
- d) requested FAO to update its action plan to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse in response to the finding of the 2019-2020 Employee Satisfaction Survey.

I open the floor for Members.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

A short addition to the last bullet point: could that read, "and looked forward to reviewing progress with this at its next session in December."

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Subparagraph (c), I would suggest, instead of, "at a future session," to "reviewing this matter at its 165th Session, following review by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other Members wishing to take the floor. I see none. Item 5 is now concluded.

Sorry, Russian Federation?

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

Thank you to the representative of Germany for the proposal giving the number of the Session. My proposal, in this context it would be correct to have a temporary link to 2020. The year 2020 is not just the number of the Session, but also the number of the Session of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee.

Maybe to improve the text and make the construction simpler we could indicate the year 2020, the idea that the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee will examine this question in 2020 and then we remove the link to the 165th row of "its 165th Session," and the phrase "with a link to the year in 2020" after Joint Meeting.

Or autumn, so that it can be more concrete. I had in mind that we do not need to have the number of the Session of the Committee. We could simply refer to the time when it will be held, so autumn of 2020.

CHAIRPERSON

May I suggest one thing to the Members, making such routine amendments is taking over the function of the Drafting Committee. Here we should be dealing with concepts, etc. Members, quite correctly, in the past used to say if there is any negotiation it should be done in this group, which is a broader group, and not the Drafting Committee.

Putting a number on the session or saying “autumn” is not a matter of negotiation. Surely, we can leave that to the Drafting Committee instead of taking it up in the preliminary Session.

Could you please bear this in mind? We are already behind our schedule. We need to move forward, and we do not need to deal with such routine matters. If it is a question of negotiating an issue or a concept, that I can understand, but definitely not substituting the number of the Session to the timing of the Session. Could you bear this in mind?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Duly noted. It is a matter of substance whether we refer to a future Session or to a specific Session in the next future, the next Session actually. I think it is also a matter of substance, and I would like to make this further suggestion to add in subparagraph (b), after “to receiving” and before “expenditure”, the word “detailed.”

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests for the floor?

I see none, so I thank you all, Item five is now concluded.

- Item 6. Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (8-18 June 2020)**
Point 6. Rapport de la cent vingt-huitième session du Comité du Programme (8-18 juin 2020)
Tema 6. Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020)

(CL 164/6, REV 1)

CHAIRPERSON

We move on to Item 6, *Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee*. The document before Council is *CL 164/6, REV 1*.

The relevant introduction by Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, has been circulated to you.

Item 6: Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee
Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee

The Programme Committee was held from 8 to 18 June 2020. The *Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee* is submitted to the Council in document *CL 164/6 Rev.1*. The Programme Committee had 16 items on its Agenda. It had excellent substantive discussion in a positive and constructive way. The meeting was, for the first time in history, conducted in a virtual way.

The Programme Committee reviewed crucial issues such as the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021* and the *Provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework*.

The Programme Committee reviewed and discussed four items in relation to evaluations on: FAO’s support to Zero Hunger (Sustainable Development Goal 2); FAO’s contribution to the Eradication of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition (Strategic Objective (SO) 1); FAO’s statistical work; and a proposal for strengthening evaluation in Decentralized Offices. In this session, we also discussed work in technical areas, such as biodiversity, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR), desert locusts, and forestry. We will continue working closely with the Technical Committees on these items to ensure a bottom-up approach is applied, and the Committee requested informal consultation, regular updates be conducted to further enhance Members’ involvement and ownership.

On the UN Food System Summit, the Committee welcomed the creation of the “Group of Friends”, to enable Members to have a stronger input in the formal governance structure and to feed into the preparations for the Summit.

Regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), the Committee welcomed the HIHI as an innovative and efficient way to support Members’ national planning priorities for the 2030 Agenda, and commended Management’s agreement to train Members to access and use the HIHI Geospatial Platform.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen to make some additional comments on the report. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I am pleased to present the outcome of the discussions of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee, and it was [XX] also in terms of discussions. The session uncovered many items and in the spirit of cooperation, which succeeded in concluding all of them through the virtual meeting with consensus.

I now briefly highlight some outcomes of the Session of the Programme Committee.

It is the progress on development of the outline for the Strategic Framework. The Programme Committee highlighted the crucial input of Regional Conferences for developing the Strategic Framework. It also stressed the importance to have an inclusive and transparent process, involving all Members but also other stakeholders. It also stressed the importance to align the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)’s Strategic Framework with the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to measure results through the SDG indicators.

The Programme Committee also reviewed and discussed four evaluations on FAO’s support to SDG2, FAO’s contribution to Strategic Objective (SO) 1, FAO’s statistical work, and for assessing evaluations in decentralized offices. These evaluations and Management response are very timely and provide us with thorough analysis and views for us to understand what FAO has achieved and what has to be improved and certainly at regional and country level. We are hopeful that these findings can help develop the new Strategic Framework.

In this session we also discussed the work in technical areas, such as biodiversity, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR), the importance of continuing combating desert locust, and trying to achieve sustainable forest management. The Programme Committee will continue to work closely together with Technical Committees on these items to ensure a bottom up approach will be applied, and that the Committee requested informal consultations, regular updates to be conducted to further enhance Members’ involvement and ownership of process and substance.

On the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS), the Committee welcomed the newly established Rome-based Membership Informal Group of Friends for the Food Systems Summit 2021. This is an important step forward towards inclusive and substantial participation of all Members in preparation for the Summit and especially also in a successful outcome, focused on actions.

In particular, it is an important entry point for the Rome-based Agency (RBA) Members in the preparatory process of the Summit, supporting, I would say, the Special Envoy and the Advisory Committee.

Regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), the Committee welcomed the Initiative as an innovative and efficient way to support Members’ national planning priorities for 2030, their agendas, the 2030 Agenda, and Management to train Members to access and to use the Geospatial Platform because, based on this platform and the science behind it, we can be more effective on the ground. The Committee stressed the importance of the clear and objective criteria for country selection, taking into account the COVID-19 impact.

The Programme Committee had a very productive and intensive session. We have succeeded in discussing a large number of substantial matters, crucial for FAO’s future, but also current work.

Many thanks to the Members of the Programme Committee for your excellent input and your flexibility; to the Management for your hard work, openness and transparency; to all participants, and we had many participants up to more than two hundred, for your patience; and all supporting staff, the Secretariat, the interpreters and the information technology specialists.

I would like to thank the Secretary and her team for her hard work in very difficult circumstances. We had to re-plan and re-plan meetings, but she always did it with a smile, and when we had to pause, with beautiful music.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for Members to make their interventions. The floor is open.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)

Le Burkina Faso et la République du Mali interviennent au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le point de l'ordre du jour du Conseil relatif au rapport de la cent vingt-huitième session du Comité du Programme, qui vient de nous être livré. Les deux délégations, c'est-à-dire les deux pays au nom du Groupe régional Afrique, félicitent le Secrétariat du Conseil pour son travail exceptionnel, qui permet la tenue en mode virtuel de la présente session dans un contexte sans précédent imposé par la pandémie de COVID-19.

Nous voulons également féliciter le Comité du Programme pour l'énorme travail qui a été abattu à travers l'examen exhaustif de 16 questions inscrites à son ordre du jour. Ces questions étaient aussi multiples que diversifiées, ayant trait à la planification et à l'évaluation des programmes, ainsi qu'à des thèmes d'actualité tels que les impacts multiformes et complexes de la COVID-19 sur les États Membres, les ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2020-2021, ainsi que l'organisation du futur Sommet des Nations Unies sur les systèmes alimentaires en 2021.

Le Groupe régional Afrique se félicite du fait que sous la houlette de son Directeur général, Monsieur Qu Dongyu, la FAO est en train de prendre un tournant décisif visant à la rendre inclusive, transparente, efficace, plus agile et mieux adaptée à ses missions. Tout en saluant l'engagement du Directeur général de la FAO à transformer l'Organisation pour répondre au mieux aux exigences des nouveaux défis auxquels le monde entier se trouve confronté et qui risquent de compromettre la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable (ODD) à l'horizon 2030, le Groupe régional Afrique souligne l'urgence d'apporter les ajustements nécessaires au Cadre stratégique actuellement en vigueur. La réforme organisationnelle proposée trouvera pleinement sa justification en tant que support institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre d'un nouveau Cadre stratégique. Le Groupe régional Afrique recommande donc que la direction de la FAO engage un processus de consultation participatif et inclusif des États Membres en vue de l'élaboration du nouveau Cadre stratégique tout en procédant à des consultations ouvertes avec des partenaires externes et des spécialistes.

Le processus d'élaboration du Cadre stratégique de la FAO doit porter une attention particulière à l'endroit des pays à faible revenu déjà confrontés à des chocs complexes et autres situations, telles que les attaques de chenilles légionnaires d'automne, celles des criquets pèlerins, la hausse de l'insécurité alimentaire, la malnutrition et l'obésité. Notre Groupe régional Afrique félicite la FAO pour les progrès déjà accomplis dans sa contribution à la réalisation de l'objectif faim «zéro», ainsi que les résultats de la première phase de son évaluation.

Nous encourageons la FAO à faire sien l'ODD 17 et à nouer des partenariats avec d'autres organismes du système des Nations Unies afin de tirer profit de tout avantage comparatif dans le but de maximiser les revenus des femmes et des jeunes agriculteurs. Ce faisant, nous recommandons à la FAO d'accorder la plus grande attention à la mise en place de systèmes alimentaires durables pour une alimentation saine et suffisante pour tous.

Notre Groupe régional salue les efforts consentis par la FAO afin de créer des synergies d'actions avec les équipes pays des autres organisations des Nations Unies, afin d'optimiser la collaboration avec les États dans le cadre de la réforme du système des Nations Unies. Nous apprécions les propositions visant à renforcer les capacités des bureaux décentralisés en matière d'évaluation par le déploiement en leur sein du personnel chargé de superviser les activités d'évaluation.

En ce qui concerne l'initiative du Secrétaire général d'organiser un Sommet des Nations Unies sur les systèmes alimentaires en 2021, nous insistons sur le rôle que doit jouer la FAO en tant que chef de file des contributions au processus préparatoire. Nous voulons que ce processus préparatoire soit inclusif de toutes les parties prenantes, à savoir: les gouvernements, le secteur privé, la société civile, les organisations de producteurs et tous les groupes d'acteurs qui interviennent dans la diversité des chaînes des systèmes alimentaires. Nous saluons la mise en place du «Groupe des amis» du Sommet, ainsi que la création, par le Secrétaire général, d'un comité conseil et d'un groupe scientifique. L'Afrique, à travers ces divers acteurs et ces agendas politiques et stratégiques, veut et doit trouver une place importante dans l'ensemble des mécanismes et des processus du Sommet. Le Groupe régional Afrique suggère que le Sommet se tienne à Rome, bien sûr dans la perspective d'une ouverture des frontières et des vols internationaux.

Nous fondons beaucoup d'espoir sur l'Initiative Main dans la main et souhaitons son extension à tous les pays africains qui en feront la demande pour la concrétisation d'une agriculture africaine émergente et compétitive basée sur une bonne exploitation de toutes les formes d'application des informations à travers cette plateforme géospatiale.

Cependant, nous nous préoccupons, de concert avec le Comité du Programme, au sujet de la protection des données et attendons avec intérêt l'examen du protocole de la FAO sur la question. Nous nous alignons sur la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de la FAO relative à l'intégration de la biodiversité dans tous les secteurs de l'agriculture en vue de préserver sa richesse bien établie en Afrique, dont les organismes vivants représentent près d'un quart de la biodiversité mondiale. Nous soutenons fermement le processus de création d'une plateforme numérique internationale pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture.

Cependant, nous demandons à la FAO de soutenir les efforts de nos pays en vue de réduire la fracture numérique qui est un frein à l'utilisation efficace de la numérisation dans la gestion des politiques nationales d'alimentation et d'agriculture.

En dépit des nombreux efforts fournis par la FAO et d'autres partenaires, nous estimons que certains thèmes traités par le Comité du Programme méritent une attention particulière. Il s'agit notamment des informations actualisées sur le plan de travail du protocole d'accord tripartite sur la résistance aux antimicrobiens, des progrès accomplis dans l'éradication de la peste des petits ruminants. En outre, l'élevage constitue avec l'agriculture et la pêche, les grands piliers des activités économiques pour plus de 80 pour cent des populations africaines. Le petit élevage notamment, et ses activités dérivées, constituent un secteur de survie pour les populations rurales, notamment les femmes. C'est pourquoi le Groupe Afrique soutient la recommandation du Comité du Programme visant la création d'un sous-comité de l'élevage à la prochaine session du Comité de l'agriculture. Compte tenu notamment de la récente résurgence des zoonoses, de la nécessité d'adopter des approches innovantes et d'utiliser des outils technologiques pour parvenir au développement durable, dans le cadre de l'approche «Un monde, une santé».

Enfin, nous estimons qu'il est important de mobiliser d'avantage de financement en faveur de la mise en œuvre effective du Programme de travail et budget 2020-2021 et l'ébauche des grandes lignes du nouveau Cadre stratégique. Aussi, au nom du Groupe régional Afrique, le Burkina Faso et la République du Mali donnent un avis favorable au rapport du Comité du Programme et recommandons son approbation en tenant compte de nos commentaires et de nos observations.

CHAIRPERSON

I just want to inform the Members that there is going to be a switch in interpretation teams. I would like to take this opportunity to say that we are behind schedule of our timetable and I would like to appeal to the Members to keep their interventions concise and more focused. If there are aspects in the Programme Committee's Report, it would be appropriate to repeat them if there is something additional to add. Otherwise, in my conclusions, I will take aspects from the Programme Committee's Report.

Please keep your interventions concise and not to repeat aspects which are already covered in the Programme Committee's Report. If there are some additions which you feel the Council needs to declare itself on, fine, but just pure repetition should be avoided.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I would like to ask the colleagues from the Philippines to speak on behalf of the Asia Group.

Mr Rodolfo VICERRA (Philippines) (Observer)

The Philippines has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Group.

The Asia Group would like to commend the extraordinary work done by the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen of the Netherlands, and the Members of the Programme Committee in discussing a long list of Agenda items to provide useful guidance to the Council.

The Asia Group supports the views and recommendations in the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and would like to highlight the following points.

Regarding the provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework, the Asia Group appreciates the efforts on aligning FAO Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030 and measuring results through the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. We encourage FAO to conduct regular inclusive consultations with Member Countries, including through the Regional Conferences, to develop a substantive Member-owned Strategic Framework. We also stress the importance to involve a broader range of relevant stakeholders in developing the Strategic Framework.

Regarding the evaluation of FAO's support to Zero Hunger and follow-up Report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, the Asia Group welcomes the significant progress and appreciates FAO's role and contribution to achieving the SDGs. We support allocating more core resources to FAO's statistical work and hope FAO could increase the coverage of statistical capacity development initiatives to developing countries.

We acknowledge the importance of the United Nations Secretary-General's World Food Systems Summit (FSS) and encourage FAO to play a leading role in the preparatory process. We request the preparation process to be more transparent and inclusive, and stress the need for involvement of all stakeholders, especially the Member Countries.

The Asia Group supports the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and encourages FAO to leverage more resources to support the implementation of the projects under the initiative for Member Countries. We hope FAO could further expand the initiatives scale to empower more developing countries in the post COVID-19 period.

The Asia Group is highly concerned with the upsurges of desert locusts. We acknowledge FAO's essential role in addressing the desert locusts concern and encourage FAO to mobilize more resources to scale up the operations in South-West Asia, the Great Horn of Africa and other affected areas.

We welcome FAO's updates in mainstreaming biodiversity and progress on Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding for antimicrobial resistance (AMR), eradication of the Peste de Petits Ruminants (PPR), as well as on sustainable forest management. We encourage FAO to continue its work in these areas.

With these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee.

Sr. Jose Luis DELGADO CRESPO (México)

México agradece el Informe presentado por el Comité del Programa cuyo trabajo es fundamental para orientar el trabajo sustantivo de la Organización. En particular, recibimos con agrado los avances registrados en el desarrollo del plan de acción al instrumentar la estrategia de la FAO con el fin de incorporar la biodiversidad en los distintos sectores agrícolas, así como el trabajo realizado hasta este momento. Animamos a que la FAO continúe avanzando en este proceso con la urgencia que nos plantea el informe sobre el *Estado de la biodiversidad para la alimentación y la agricultura en el mundo*. El rumbo para ello lo tenemos ya definido y lo marca la estrategia que fue aprobada por el Consejo.

Confiamos, también, en que la nueva estructura propuesta para la FAO facilitará la instrumentación de la estrategia y del plan de acción sobre biodiversidad. De igual manera, celebramos que el Comité del Programa continúe prestando atención a la resistencia a los antimicrobianos. Subrayamos la importancia que tendrá el plan de trabajo de la asociación tripartita posterior a 2020 y la necesidad de que su formulación sea resultado de un proceso de consultas con los Miembros de las tres agencias relacionadas. Coincidimos, también, en la necesidad de una mayor sensibilización del público y de los responsables de la formulación de políticas sobre los riesgos que la resistencia a los antimicrobianos genera y de los riesgos de no actuar con oportunidad.

Tomamos nota de las deliberaciones sobre el importante trabajo de la FAO en temas como la peste de los pequeños rumiantes (PPR), la langosta del desierto y la actividad forestal.

Finalmente, en cuanto al Informe sobre el avance de la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano, reconocemos la disposición de la Organización para escuchar los comentarios de la membresía y para enriquecerla a partir de los mismos.

Con estos comentarios, México respalda las conclusiones del *Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020)*.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

Both Malaysia and Canada would now be reading the cross-FAO Regional Group statement on the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) 2021 on behalf of the following regions, Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle-East, North America and South-West Pacific. Other regions will then follow suit with their own statements.

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of FAO Council. FAO Council welcomes the Secretary-General's convening of the Food Systems Summit in 2021 and its establishment of the Advisory Committee and Scientific Group as a part of the participatory governance structure for the preparatory process for the Food Systems Summit 2021.

We appreciate the information notes and concepts received and particularly thank the Special Envoy and her team for the agreement to a continued exchange with the Membership. We look forward to further constructive dialogues, including finalization of a revised concept note.

We look forward to the establishment of the Champion's Network to complete the Summit governance structures, ensuring the representation of all continents. We look forward to receiving clarification on the operating schemes of the Advisory Committee, Friends Group and Champion's Network as soon as possible.

The interaction between all of these groups, including the newly established Rome-based Membership Informal Group of Friends of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 shall be officially and effectively, complementary to each other, inclusive and mutually supportive.

In 2019 the Governing Bodies of FAO, IFAD and WFP jointly emphasized the need for Members to be fully involved in the preparatory process from the beginning. The formation of a Rome-based Membership Informal Group of Friends for the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 is an important step forward towards inclusive and substantial participation of all Members in the preparation of the Summit.

The meeting on 18 June was an excellent start of inclusive, regular and informal exchange of views on the Summit, its objectives and desired outcomes among Members, focal points of the Rome-based Agencies (RBA), the Secretary of the Special Envoy and for the future periodical high-level meetings with the Special Envoy herself and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General. This Group of Friends complements the foreseen governance structures and is an important entry point for the RBA [XX] into the preparatory process of the Summit.

It is paramount that we avoid any duplication in our work. The conversation with the Group of Friends, including the Rome-based Agencies focal points and the representatives of the Summit Secretary in Rome, Nairobi and New York, will help to ensure effective channels of communication and coordination with the Summit Secretariat and the governance structures of the Summit preparation.

We ask FAO to support effective and coherent United Nations communication and coordination at all times of the preparation. Furthermore, we await information on the date, location and cost for the pre-Summit and the Summit itself and possible scenarios, participation of Member Nations and all stakeholders, private and public.

In this context of a major worldwide economic slowdown due to COVID-19 crisis and its possible impact on government spending, we encourage the Summit Secretariat to plan accordingly. Also, we look forward to receiving information on the terms, including objectives, the structure and of the multi-donor trust fund.

Ms Alex BUGAILISKIS (Canada)

We emphasize the need for an action oriented outcome at the Summit, which provides a political impetus and supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at country level. For that, we need to clearly define the action tracks and outcomes as soon as possible.

We are convinced that in order to have a successful Summit we need to take a bottom-up approach, ensuring inclusivity and country level implementation. We believe it is indispensable to ensure the active engagement of the wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in some of the preparations and outcomes.

The private sector can provide innovative solutions to more sustainable food systems and civil society can help to ensure ownership and sharing of best practices at national and local levels. Shifting to more sustainable production and consumption patterns requires collective action, including the engagement of farmers' associations and consumer organizations.

Transition to more sustainable food should be based on a scientific and evidence-based approach. Therefore, we consider it necessary and appropriate to involve scientific networks as well. We look forward to discussing how all the stakeholders can help champion solutions.

We support the vision of the Special Envoy for feeding the hungry and for healthy people and a healthy planet, and we agree that food systems present a key opportunity for promoting all three dimensions, environment, social and economic, of sustainable development. We cannot work in siloes but must seek comprehensive solutions. We are confronted with the paradox of massive food loss and waste coexisting with increasing food insecurity and malnutrition globally.

With close to 1 billion hungry people in the world and the negative trends regarding the achievement of Zero Hunger and other related SDGs, we have to act urgently and decisively. We need to build resilient food systems that deliver safe, nutritious and sufficient food, and in-line with the One Health approach. We need to strengthen global, regional, national and local markets, taking into account the negative impact of COVID-19 on food systems and the important role of international trade in order to ensure food security, nutrition and healthy diets.

Our collective action has to be integrated and multi-sectoral to prevent food crises. We recognize the sustainable use of natural resources is a basis for our food security and that the interlinkages of our food system with the planet's biodiversity, environment and climate are of essence.

Moreover, we must build upon ongoing processes within the United Nations and related inter-governmental processes, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP), the COP 26, The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, the efforts under the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2020-28, the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, regional and inter-regional dialogues. Also, it is important to take into account further sources of debate, such as the food systems dialogues, taking into account country specific challenges and making food systems more sustainable.

FAO has valuable experiences to contribute to this Food Systems Summit. FAO's work on protective livelihoods, providing policy and technical support, while taking into account environmental impact, can have a systemic effect. We encourage FAO, working in partnership with IFAD, WFP and others, to deploy the Organization's comparative advantages, capacities, knowledge and partnerships in support of efforts to enhance the performance and sustainability of food systems in different contexts with the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

The Members stand ready to further support a successful Summit with tangible outcomes and impact.

Ms Hmway Hmway KHYNE (Myanmar)

First of all, I would like to thank the distinguished representatives of Malaysia and Canada for the comprehensive cross-FAO Regional Group statement on the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) 2021.

Myanmar aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We are pleased to take note of the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee, and Myanmar appreciates the hard work of the Committee. Myanmar is encouraged by the efforts of FAO to align its new Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030, and we are looking forward to comprehensive consultations with the Members in formulating the Strategic Framework.

With regard to the evaluation of FAO's support to Zero Hunger and follow-up *Report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition*, Myanmar highly values the ongoing efforts of FAO and the significant progress that has been achieved.

In this connection, we wish to encourage FAO to better strengthen its capacity in support of healthy diets by means of educating, awareness raising, and dissemination of information accessible to the grass roots at the country level.

Myanmar welcomes the initiatives of the Secretary-General to convene a Food Systems Summit in 2021 and we find it very timely, as we all would be facing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the existing challenges in our food systems. We note with appreciation for the governance structure for the preparatory process of the Summit and we are confident that the expertise and knowledge of the Rome-based Agencies, particularly FAO, would be essential for the success of the Summit.

My delegation is pleased to note the generous offer made by the Government of Italy to host the Summit in Rome and we are very much looking forward to receiving more information on dates and venue of the Summit.

My delegation shares the concerns of the upsurges of the desert locust in some areas, including our region. While appreciating FAO's efforts in tackling the desert locust, we wish to see a more active role of FAO in addressing the issue in a timely fashion.

In light of the views expressed above, Myanmar endorses the Council's approval of the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Brazil would like to comment on the following subjects addressed by the 128th Session of the Programme Committee.

On the provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework, we endorse the recommendations of the Programme Committee, but would like to express our concern on the fact that the technical cooperation component of FAO work was not considered on level J regarding the importance of balancing normative work, risk enterprise measurement and investments within the Organization. Therefore, we request to incorporate this fundamental area of work of FAO for developing countries on the Council decision of this Agenda Item.

On the proposal for strengthening evaluation in the decentralized office, we would like to request clarification from the Programme Committee's request to consider how to strengthen governance and oversight FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF). Each CPF is a result of consultations between national targets and FAO, and we consider this process should be maintained in order to ensure ownership.

Regarding the evaluation of FAO's statistical work, we share the concern of the Programme Committee that resources available for FAO's statistical work were not commensurate with its capacity valve objectives, particularly to support the implementations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators at national level.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat and partners for the recent series of events on statistics and the indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

We support the Programme Committee's recommendation to have regular dialogues on FAO's distinct statistical works, with representations in Rome.

Against this background and in view of the growing requests for new indicators linked to the impact of FAO's work at country level in different Governing Bodies, we invite the Council to take into consideration the excessive report by the new indicators and methodology may cause not only to FAO but too many developing countries, the ultimate source of data.

We suggest focusing FAO's Results Framework as much as possible on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. We reiterate that it is paramount to support countries in actually understanding, using and monitoring SDG indicators. Thus, we strongly support the recommendation on increasing resource for the statistical capacity development work, especially at regional and country level.

With regard to FAO's Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across the Agricultural Sectors, Brazil has participated actively in its design and is looking forward to contributing to the elaboration of a plan of action for its implementation, which will be reviewed by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI). We take note of these initial reports from the Programme Committee on the matter.

Regarding the different recommendations made on antimicrobial resistance, Brazil understands the reasoning for requesting a consultative process with the Membership of the Tripartite Organizations to develop the forthcoming work plan on the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We would like to highlight that this MoU was negotiated and signed among FAO, WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Secretariats without informing their corresponding Membership.

We caution against the uncritical adherence of this document when endorsing the recommendation and would like to ensure that involvement of the Membership in the development of the forthcoming work plan does not mean Member Countries agree to the content of the MoU.

We also would like to avoid making decisions that involve the Governing Bodies and memberships of other international organizations.

We support the recommendation to review the proposals for the new Strategic Results Framework indicators for AMR, to make them more aligned to the Council's request at the 163rd Session. We especially appreciate the new indicators being discussed in the Technical Committees. We also appreciate the clarification regarding the decision to elaborate a new action plan on AMR and not a strategy, as included in the next COAG Agenda.

Concerning the update on sustainable forest management, we believe the Programme Committee has pointed out some crucial issues, such as the need for multilaterally agreed concepts and science, and evidence-based linkage in the flagship publications, such as the *State of the World's Forests*.

Regarding the suggestion made in paragraph 20. (r), of the Report of the Programme Committee, an assessment of global forest resources is made every two years instead of every five years. We propose FAO prepares a technical note on the implication of such a change for the appreciation of the COFO, which is the most suitable body that shares in design on such issues.

Regarding the *Report on the Implementation of Programme Committee Recommendations*, we would like to receive some clarification on these new reports, taking into consideration that it could be outside of the mandate of the Programme Committee to measure progress of implementation on its own recommendations that are all subject to Council approval or not. Furthermore, we consider it could be a duplication of work already done by the Council Secretariat on the Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council (2-6 December 2019).

Finally, we regret to see that some discussions were supposed to take place in the Technical Committees were already included in the debate and the Report of the Programme Committee. This happened with the debate on the proposed new Sub-Committee on Livestock, which will take place at

COAG, even though, in this particular case, we are favourable to the creation of a new body, we strongly caution against discussions that go beyond the Programme Committee's mandate.

It not only runs counter to a bottom-up approach, but they also jeopardize debates that are expected to take place in appropriate technical and more representative *fora*, which will fulfill an essential role within this Organization.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

At the outset, let me thank the distinguished delegates of Malaysia and Canada for having delivered the statement on behalf of six regional groups on the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) 2021.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We welcome the new focus on innovative approaches and we also recall the importance of continuing to support FAO's vision of achieving Zero Hunger, eliminating rural poverty, working towards more sustainable food systems, better managing natural resources, addressing climate change, and improving the livelihoods of all people.

We request a further refinement of the roadmap for consultation on FAO's Strategic Framework, including Regional Conferences and with more regular consultations with the Members.

We commend the United Nations Secretary-General's initiative to convene the Food Systems Summit in 2021 and support an ambitious outcome. We welcome the newly established Rome-based Membership Informal Group of Friends for the Food Systems Summit 2021.

The global pandemic the world is facing, along with its humanitarian and socio-economic consequences has clearly highlighted the relevance and urgency of such an event. We call upon FAO to provide all necessary support to the Special Envoy and to her team, stretching over FAO's broad mandate in relation to food systems, to contribute to the inclusiveness of the process.

We also call upon FAO to coordinate its contribution tightly with WFP, IFAD and other United Nations Organizations, as well as with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Both the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and the policy recommendations on agro-ecology and other innovative approaches are essential building blocks for the World Food Systems Summit. All efforts must be made to ensure that both texts, after their adoption by the CFS, will feed into the Summit discussions and the follow-up process.

We appreciate the essential role played by the Organization in the fight to control locust upsurges and welcome the regular updates provided by the Management. We recognize the need to increase this effort as the pest keeps spreading to new regions and countries and count on results in severe food insecurity in effected areas.

The European Union and several of its Member States have contributed significantly to the desert locust crisis appeal for rapid response and anticipatory action in order to control the outbreaks and mitigate the negative effects on food security. We call on FAO to continue its work on monitoring, early warning, control and coordination, and resource mobilization, in close cooperation with relevant partners and additional contributors. We also call on all Members to further contribute to control this plague.

Lastly, we stress the crucial importance of addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and biodiversity for sustainable food systems, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations. We, therefore, support FAO's increased focus on One Health and welcome the joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre to strengthen FAO's work on AMR and on zoonosis in coordination with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

We underline the relevance of FAO's bringing biodiversity across sectors. We reiterate the call by the Council that the action plan needs to be reviewed by FAO's Technical Committees, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), Committee on Forestry (COFO) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI), before consideration in the Programme Committee. We also support the proposal for the action plan to cover the three-year period.

Sra. Maria Christina LAUREANO (República Dominicana)

Deseamos felicitar al Presidente Hans Hoogeveen por su excelente labor en la conducción del Comité del Programa. Ha sido una tarea ardua que logró finalizar con gran éxito. Agradecemos la presentación del Informe y acogemos con satisfacción sus conclusiones y recomendaciones con los siguientes comentarios.

Respecto al nuevo Marco estratégico, nos complace que se haya recalcado la importancia de fortalecer las oficinas regionales y nacionales, en particular, con respecto a la puesta en práctica del nuevo posicionamiento del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para el desarrollo. En relación a la evaluación del apoyo de la FAO al logro del Hambre Cero, acogemos con satisfacción que el Comité haya subrayado las recomendaciones para prestar apoyo a los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID), los países menos adelantados (PMA) y los países en desarrollo sin litoral (PDSL). Dado el grado de vulnerabilidad al que se enfrentan, producto de factores externos, como el cambio climático y situaciones de crisis y emergencias como la COVID-19, pueden exacerbar las condiciones de dichos países en la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

Nos complace, además, que se haya reconocido que las contribuciones voluntarias no reservadas pueden promover un enfoque programático, eficaz y equilibrado y potenciar las ventajas comparativas de la FAO con miras al logro del Hambre Cero.

En cuanto concierne a la evaluación de la contribución de la FAO a la erradicación del hambre y la inseguridad alimentaria, en vista de los grandes desafíos que se han multiplicado con la COVID-19, apoyamos las iniciativas de la FAO para dar respuesta especialmente en lo que concierne a la Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios y la puesta en marcha de las directrices voluntarias del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) que aportarán una contribución valiosa para la Cumbre, así como la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano.

En cuanto a la Cumbre sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios, destacamos la necesidad de contar con un proceso transparente e inclusivo en el que puedan participar todas las partes interesadas y la utilidad de una coordinación eficiente entre la estructura de gobernanza formal de la Cumbre, el Grupo de amigos y los organismos con sede en Roma (OSR), que permita realizar mayores aportaciones de manera inclusiva evitando duplicaciones para orientar los preparativos de la misma. Asimismo, aguardamos actualizaciones sobre la fecha, lugar de la pre-Cumbre y la Cumbre misma, teniendo en cuenta, en particular, el contexto en los que se desarrollan los preparativos debido a la crisis causada por la actual pandemia de la COVID-19 y que ameritan de su atención.

Consideramos que la Cumbre debe tener resultados orientados hacia la acción que produzcan impactos tangibles en la consecución de los ODS, con un enfoque de abajo hacia arriba, que tenga en cuenta el aspecto regional y que garantice la plena integración de todos los sectores y partes interesadas y la apropiación a nivel nacional de dichos resultados.

Por último, acogemos que se reconociera el papel fundamental de los parlamentarios en el logro de los poderes, en particular, el ODS 2 y la necesidad de aumentar dichas alianzas que, en el caso específico de nuestra región, están revistiendo un importante desarrollo.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

We thank the Members of the Programme Committee. We thank the Chair of the Committee, the Members, and the Secretariat for the amount of work accomplished. We note the high quality of the recommendations on 19 substantive issues related to FAO's future work.

The consideration of such a large number of substantive issues under one Agenda Item is not an easy task. We believe that when the Committee's Agenda is so heavy, the Programme Committee (PC) needs to give Council Members more time both to study the recommendations and also for them to be deliberated directly in Council Sessions. We call on Members of the Committee and FAO Secretariat to take this into consideration in future.

Chair, one of the main issues for us is the preparation of FAO's Strategic Framework, which will guide the work of the Organization over the coming 10 to 15 years. We closely studied the main elements of this document and we would like to share the following.

We agree with the Programme Committee's conclusions that the document lacks substance and the process to agree on it needs to be clear, transparent and inclusive, involving all interested Member Nations. We support the holding of informal consultations for Member Nations planned for December 2020 to March 2021.

The starting point in working to develop the new Strategic Framework lies in the fact that the conceptual rationale of the Strategic Framework remains valid. We believe that a concise format needs to be adopted for setting out FAO's Strategic Objectives. We support the proposal on the need to reflect in the future Strategic Framework current trends and challenges, including those related to COVID-19 and the spread of the desert locust in Africa. At the same time, it is important to, as much as possible, align the document with the spirit and the letter of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and update it, keeping in mind the United Nations Development System repositioning process.

We support the inclusion in the new Strategic Framework of FAO the Director-General's flagship Hand-in-Hand Initiative and its goals. We agree with the proposal to monitor the results of FAO's work on the SDG indicators. This process needs to focus on those SDG indicators which are directly linked to FAO's mandate. In this connection, we would like to ask for clarification on which non-SDG indicators are being referred to in paragraph 27 of document *PC128/2*.

On the priorities of the future Strategic Framework, we suggest the following to be taken into account. One, FAO's role in eradicating hunger and malnutrition. Two, reducing rural poverty. Three, sustainable food production. Four, strengthening food systems and nutrition, including through ensuring food safety.

We would also like to propose including in a separate paragraph in the new version of the Strategic Framework the fact that SDG2, ending hunger, and its indicators are the main areas of expertise for FAO and they must remain the focus. We hope that the document will also reflect the priorities of the regions, based on the outcomes of FAO Regional Conferences, which have been postponed for the time being due to the pandemic.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The European Union (EU) countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the EU statement.

First, we would like to express our appreciation for the fact that so many Regional Groups joined the common statement on the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) 2021, delivered by Malaysia and Canada. We believe that this sends a strong signal of our shared commitment and willingness to make the Summit a success.

The Nordic countries would like to highlight the important role that FAO plays within the tripartite work of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). FAO is uniquely positioned to contribute to the global efforts to curb AMR by providing support for governments, producers, traders, and all the other stakeholders.

We welcome the proposal for an indicator FAO Strategic Results Framework for the 2020-2021 period and ask Management, under the Item 3, we very much welcome that FAO's work on AMR will be coordinated in the new joint Centre with World Health Organization (WHO) and with the full involvement of World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), as we were assured yesterday.

We have to remind that time is running short on how to fight AMR where the most vulnerable groups and countries are the ones most at risk. We now expect FAO, within the Tripartite, to support countries to be able to take the relevant and efficient decision on policies and measures to fight AMR, recalling also that limited access to antibiotics in many parts of the world is still an overlooked problem.

The Nordic countries welcome the Draft Action Plan that FAO has elaborated as follow-up of its Biodiversity Strategy. We appreciate the process where the Membership, through the Technical Committees, get involved in the improvement of the document. However, knowing that at least the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) is postponed to February 2021 raises questions about timelines. We would like to ask for clarification on how this consultative process is planned to take place in order for

the Action Plan to be approved at the December Council. Is there any concern that the Action Plan will be delayed relative to FAO's input to the global post-2020 process?

We would also like to highlight that FAO's work on Sustainable Forest Management preventing deforestation and restoring degraded forests contributes to climate change mitigation and livelihoods. The interlinkage between food security and forestry is evident on the field level. We stress the need for sustainable funding, including from the regular budget of FAO's work on forests.

Mr Yasuko FUNAKI (Japan)

Japan welcomes Management's confirmation that the additional resources provided for FAO's work on the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), and on the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme.

Regarding the establishment of the Joint FAO/WHO Centre for Codex Alimentarius and zoonotic diseases, we would like to request FAO to provide detailed explanation to the Member Countries about the scope of the new Centre, sharing of the responsibilities between relevant existing sections such as Animal Production and Health Division, and the impact on the ongoing activities.

The proposal of a reorganization includes the establishment of the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which will be in charge of the SDG matters. Currently, the Office of Chief Statistician (OCS) is in charge of the SDG indicators, while Statistics Division (ESS) and other responsible Divisions, conduct actual preparation of the indicators. We would like to request the clarification of roles, relationship and reporting lines among OCS, ESS and OSG on the statistical services.

Furthermore, regarding the global strategy to improve agriculture and rural statistics, the Action Plan for second phase was published in December 2018. Since then, there is no announcement for any concrete activities. Please let us know what the current stage and progress is.

Japan welcomes FAO's active involvement in the Food Systems Summit (FSS) and looks forward that FAO will utilize its expertise to contribute to the transformation of the global food system. In particular, Japan believes that the SDGs cannot be achieved without addressing COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, to discuss and identify the solution to the impacts of COVID-19 will be crucial in the Food Systems Summit.

Japan hopes that the preparation of the Food Systems Summit, as stated by China on behalf of the Asia Group, is undertaken in an inclusive and transparent manner so that Member Countries can equally participate in the discussion.

With regard to Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), Japan expects that transparency to Member Countries is important and that the status of the implementation of the initiative continues to be reported. In particular, we would like to know whether the HIHI has identified the needs of the target countries and/or regions and whether there has been any improvement as a result of the support.

Regarding implementation of *FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors*, resource mobilization is not for the mainstreaming. Alternatively, through such mainstreaming, it is important to accelerate appropriate resource mobilization and utilization. We wonder if FAO could note this point.

Regarding the suggestion on the cycle of the Global Threat Risk Assessment, we call for a careful discussion with Member States at the coming Committee on Forestry (COFO) and the other forestry related meetings, fully taking into account positive and negative aspects of the two-year and the five-year cycle. With the climate change expanding, we are concerned that mountain disasters are becoming more intense in the areas. It is also pointed out that poor people are more vulnerable to the effects of disasters. We expect FAO to further promote the efforts on disaster prevention and mitigation through using forestry eco-systems.

In relation to subparagraph (h) of paragraph 20, we would like to highlight the red plus as well, as a result of efforts done by countries. We recognize that many countries transit from readiness and implementation to the final phase of a Results Based Payment where the credit will be claimed. We look forward to FAO providing opportunities for developing countries to discuss methodologies for the appropriate allocation of their outcomes in a manner of avoiding double counting.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quisiera hacer un reconocimiento especial al trabajo realizado por mi amigo Hans Hoogeveen en su carácter de Presidente del Comité del Programa y también a Jiani Tian, Secretaria de dicho Comité. Fue una gran tarea.

Quisiera agregar a lo ya expresado por Malasia y Canadá lo siguiente con relación a la Organización de la Cumbre Mundial de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios. Argentina agradece la actualización brindada en ocasión del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa respecto de los avances en la preparación de la Cumbre. Especialmente, Argentina valora que el Comité haya reconocido la contribución de la FAO a la facilitación del diálogo científico y al desarrollo de capacidades de las partes interesadas para evaluar eventuales iniciativas que favorezcan transformaciones congruentes de los sistemas alimentarios, según proceda, y en función de los contextos y capacidades locales.

La organización de esta Cumbre reviste gran importancia para nuestro país y, por ello, hemos decidido involucrarnos en las tareas del Comité Asesor de la Cumbre en representación de nuestra región. Agradecemos los esfuerzos realizados porque la preparación del evento sea transparente e inclusiva, tomando en cuenta las dificultades que el actual contexto plantea a las actividades de organización y coordinación.

Argentina resalta la importancia de que los contenidos que se generen de cara a la Cumbre se basen en sólida evidencia científica ya que solo a través de este tipo de información los países estarán preparados para adoptar las decisiones más acertadas que contribuyan a la sostenibilidad de los sistemas agrícolas, el incremento de la producción y, por ende, a avances sustantivos en la erradicación del hambre.

En esta misma línea, Argentina recuerda la relevancia de considerar las potencialidades que diversos enfoques y herramientas tienen para el logro de una agricultura sostenible. Es importante, tomar en cuenta esta variedad de posibilidades que se ajustan a las condiciones productivas, sociales, económicas y ambientales de los diferentes espacios en que la actividad agrícola-ganadera se desarrolla. Por lo tanto, se espera que la Cumbre sea un espacio que permita reconocer la diversidad de herramientas existentes ponderando estas diferencias como elementos clave para explicar el desarrollo exitoso de algunos sistemas alimentarios en su particular contexto.

En otro orden, con relación a las cuestiones señaladas como prioritarias por el Comité del Programa, deseo subrayar la importancia de que se aplique un enfoque ascendente, *bottom-up approach*, en la programación de las actividades de la FAO. Esto es fundamental para garantizar que se tengan en consideración las prioridades a nivel nacional, subregional y regional.

En el mismo sentido, los temas técnicos también deben ser examinados, primero en los Comités Técnicos, antes de ser abordados para decisión en otras instancias. Ello permitirá que las cuestiones de sustancia puedan ser discutidas por la membresía en una instancia política, pero sin perder de vista las cuestiones técnicas y científicas subyacentes.

Los procedimientos deben ser observados sin excepción para la elaboración de todos los documentos, planes y estrategias impulsadas por la Conferencia o el Consejo, más allá del contexto que impone la COVID-19, no podemos dejar de cumplir todas las etapas de consulta.

Con estos comentarios, Argentina toma nota y respalda el *Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020)*.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the statements on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We took note of the pertinent issues discussed in the Programme Committee. We would like to comment on some issues.

First, we stress the importance of aligning FAO's Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030. We underscore that FAO's effort on this issue should be [XX] approaches and optimizing the existing resources to address current and emerging challenges, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We support the efforts to create a formal, inclusive, transparent process for the development of a substantive Member owned Strategy Framework.

Second, we support focus on a food system approach to achieve food security and to address malnutrition in all its forms by supporting healthy diets for all and making affordable food available for all, as well as strengthening efforts to make food production and consumption more aligned to sustainable development. In this regard, we are of the view that FAO should redesign its Governance at country level, in coordination with the United Nations country team to support the Government's effort to achieve food security and sustainable food systems.

Third, we note that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HHI) is an innovative way to support Members' national priorities for the 2030 Agenda. We stress the need for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to adapt to local dynamics, local practices and national ownership.

Fourth, with regard to the Food Systems Summit, Indonesia places the importance of the Summit as the key event in catalyzing a more coordinated effort for food systems transformation in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Let me, first of all, echo the thanks to others for the leadership of Mr Hans Hoogeveen and the fantastic support from Ms Jiani Tian and her team in the Programme Committee Secretariat for steering us through such a huge Agenda. I would like to align the United Kingdom with the cross-List statement on the Food Systems Summit (FSS) that was delivered by Malaysia and Canada and thank you very much, to them for delivering the statement so eloquently.

Turning to other matters discussed by the Programme Committee, I would like to reiterate our support for the emphasis in the new organizational structure on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in emergencies and resilience, on climate change and biodiversity and on One Health in the Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre. Like others, we reiterate the importance of aligning FAO's Strategic Framework and Results Framework with the SDGs and the normative work that FAO has a global responsibility for.

As we agreed yesterday, reorienting FAO's Strategic Framework is likely to require further organizational reform and we suggest that Council includes in our conclusions the Programme Committee request for further information on FAO's change management strategy, for that to be provided in September. We would also support the African request, delivered by Burkina Faso and echoed by others, for an inclusive consultation process on the Strategic Framework.

The escalating desert locust crisis underlines the essential role that FAO plays in supporting its Members to monitor, advise on, and respond to trans-boundary pests and diseases and, as we have heard, the desert locust is just the latest in a series of these pests and diseases that have been challenging countries around the world.

This work is a global responsibility, which only FAO can fulfill. The United Kingdom is concerned, as others are, about the potentially severe impact of the desert locust on food insecurity and we welcome the anticipatory action that FAO has taken. We would like to underline the importance of locust surveillance across an increasingly wide area and we would encourage FAO to use computer modelling to support predictions of where the locusts will move next.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is another trans-boundary pest, and FAO's work to combat AMR is a public good that the whole world relies on and that is reflected in the statements of the Africa Regional Group, the Asia Regional Group, as well as the European Union. We welcome Management's proposal for an indicator in FAO's Strategic Results Framework for the 2020-21 period and, in particular, we welcome confirmation that FAO's work on AMR will be coordinated in the new Joint Centre with the World Health Organization (WHO).

As mentioned under Item 3, we look forward to a progress report on the Centre at our next session of Council, and I would like to ask when Management anticipates that the Centre will start its work.

I would like to turn to the *Evaluation of FAO's Statistical* work. The evaluation is very timely and we support the Programme Committee (PC) conclusion that, as a core function of FAO and another global public good, more regular programme resources should be made available for FAO's statistics work and we suggest that Council conclusions also include this request.

We welcome Management's assurance that the governance of FAO's statistical activities will be improved, and we look forward to seeing a proposal for this and a revised strategy for FAO's statistics work.

With the SDGs incorporated into FAO's Strategic Framework, as many have asked for this week and previously, FAO's work to monitor and collate SDG indicators should be a core function across FAO and a priority for FAO country offices. FAO representatives should have support to this work in their job descriptions and I would like to ask Management whether that is the case.

Finally, turning to FAO's work on the ground, we very much welcome the Director-General's commitment to FAO's work at country level and we endorse the Programme Committee plan to consider how to strengthen the governance and oversight of FAO's Country Programming Framework (CPF) at its 129th and 130th Sessions and we note that several evaluations have suggested improvements to the oversight of FAO's work at country level.

We welcome the focus of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative on FAO's work at country level and we encourage FAO to use the Geospatial Data Platform to support FAO's work to monitor and advise on trans-boundary pests, diseases, and the other risks to food systems that are threatening FAO's Members.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

In addition to thanking our esteemed colleagues from Malaysia and Canada for their comprehensive statement on the Food Systems Summit (FSS), there are two areas of the Programme Committee Report which we would like to emphasize today.

The evaluation of FAO's statistical work and [XX] South-West Pacific did in the Programme Committee, we would again like to highlight the very important role of FAO's statistical work, particularly in light of initiatives such as the Hand-in-Hand, and express our appreciation of the focused discussion had by the Committee on this issue. We support the recommendations made by the Programme Committee, in particular the importance of resourcing FAO's statistical work and update of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators under FAO's custodianship.

We welcome the proposal for an outcome and output level indicator for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and we look forward to further consultations with Members on the indicator ahead of its finalization. At this point, we would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of the tripartite relationship, including in tackling AMR, and note the importance of FAO maximizing this collaborative partnership and working together to avoid duplication of valuable effort across multiple United Nations Organizations.

Mme Delphine BABIN-PELLIARD (France)

La délégation française soutient la déclaration de l'Union européenne, lue par l'Ambassadeur de l'Allemagne.

La France souhaite insister plus particulièrement sur quatre points. Tout d'abord, concernant l'élaboration du nouveau Cadre stratégique, il est important de préserver un dialogue constructif entre la FAO et ses États Membres. Le respect de la transparence et de la consultation est essentiel dans la définition commune du nouveau cadre en particulier à travers les consultations régionales.

Deuxièmement, dans la continuité de la position européenne et pour valoriser notamment l'initiative du «Green Deal», la France estime que la conservation des ressources naturelles et de l'équilibre des écosystèmes jouent un rôle prépondérant dans l'atteinte des objectifs de développement durable (ODD), notamment l'ODD 2. La France souhaite particulièrement insister sur les enjeux liés à la biodiversité, la lutte contre la déforestation et la santé des sols. À ce titre, nous saluons la proposition de plan d'action sur la biodiversité élaboré par la FAO et appelons à plus de ressources afin d'intégrer la biodiversité dans tous les secteurs à l'exemple de ce que la FAO fait déjà pour le climat.

Troisièmement, l'actualité nous rappelle à quel point le secteur de la santé animale est primordial dans le maintien de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition. La France réitère son soutien à l'action conjointe de la FAO et de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OIE) dans le cadre de la lutte contre la peste des petits ruminants, tout en les invitant à accroître leur collaboration sur le sujet. La

France invite également la FAO à renforcer sa collaboration avec l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS) et l'OIE ainsi qu'avec le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE), dans le cadre d'une approche «Un monde, une santé» (One Health). Aux côtés du Groupe Afrique, la France est également heureuse que le prochain Comité de l'agriculture (COAG) puisse se saisir du sujet de l'élevage durable, important pour une alimentation équilibrée et les revenus des nombreux pays pastoraux.

Enfin, sur le Sommet des systèmes alimentaires et face à l'urgence d'une transition vers des systèmes alimentaires plus durables, résilients et inclusifs, la France soutient l'organisation par le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies du Sommet mondial pour les systèmes alimentaires en 2021. Afin d'aboutir à une déclaration politique ambitieuse et reconnue par tous, il est important que soit garantie la transparence des échanges et la participation de tous les acteurs concernés, notamment ceux de la société civile.

Par ailleurs, la prise en compte des deux documents élaborés par le Comité de la sécurité alimentaire, en particulier les lignes directrices volontaires sur les systèmes alimentaires et la nutrition, ainsi que la participation du Président du Groupe d'experts de haut niveau sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition (HLPE) dans le groupe scientifique, seront importantes afin de guider les discussions et la formulation d'objectifs concrets.

Enfin, la France salue la constitution du «Groupe des amis» de l'Envoyée spéciale pour la préparation du Sommet qui marque une meilleure intégration des États Membres dans la préparation de celui-ci.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je voudrais d'abord vous saluer et remercier le Président du Comité du Programme et la Secrétaire du Comité pour leur travail sur le rapport, ainsi que tous les Membres du Comité du Programme.

Je salue la déclaration faite par le Burkina Faso et le Mali, pour le compte du Groupe Afrique. J'ai trois points sur lesquels je voudrais rapidement revenir, car ils me paraissent importants.

Le premier point, j'appuie pleinement ce que les collègues ont dit sur la question de l'alignement du Cadre stratégique de la FAO sur les objectifs de développement durable (ODD). Nous en soulignons l'importance, car, comme l'a dit le Burkina Faso, il faudra des consultations inclusives dans l'élaboration de ce Cadre. Les Conférences régionales sont des moments importants au cours desquels nous pouvons dégager ce que j'appelle des priorités, qui pourront être déterminées pour chaque région, et notamment les nouvelles tendances sur lesquelles la FAO pourra travailler.

Le deuxième point, alors que nous sommes dans l'esprit «Un monde, une santé», nous saluons les conclusions du Comité du Programme qui a abordé une question, et celle-ci le sera à nouveau lors du Comité de l'agriculture, celle de la création d'un sous-comité de l'élevage. Elle est importante à un moment où va se créer un centre FAO-Organisation mondiale de la Santé (OMS), qui va gérer la question des zoonoses, et au vu de la pandémie que nous sommes en train de vivre. Nous pensons que cela pourrait être déjà un grand apport pour arriver à discuter de cette question au niveau du Comité de l'agriculture. Le Congo attend avec intérêt cette discussion et nous saluons déjà la conclusion à laquelle le Comité du Programme est parvenu sur ce point.

Troisième et dernier point, nous saluons la demande du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies sur l'organisation du Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires en 2021. Compte tenu de l'importance de cette activité, avec les conclusions que nous allons prendre, je pense qu'un bon atterrissage commence par un bon décollage, ce qui veut dire qu'il faut bien préparer ce Sommet. Cela demande une préparation de toutes les parties, une préparation inclusive de toutes les parties prenantes.

CHAIRPERSON

That ends the list of Members and now I give the floor to the Observers.

M. Aly COULIBALY (Mali) (Observateur)

Je voudrais vous remercier de m'avoir donné la parole et profiter de l'occasion pour remercier le Président du Comité du Programme pour l'excellent travail accompli. Je voudrais signaler qu'à la lumière de la déclaration faite par le Burkina Faso, et appuyée en partie dans certaines propositions par

le Royaume-Uni et la France, mon pays le Mali soutient le point du Comité du Programme soulignant l'importance de la discussion à mener à la prochaine session du Comité de l'agriculture, relativement à la proposition de création d'un sous-comité de l'élevage, compte tenu notamment de la récente résurgence des zoonoses et de la nécessité d'adopter des approches innovantes et d'utiliser des outils technologiques pour parvenir au développement durable dans le cadre de l'approche «Un monde, une santé».

Cette approche a été plusieurs fois évoquée au cours du Conseil, et force est d'admettre que plusieurs problèmes de santé publique trouvent leur fondement dans le règne animal et végétal. C'est pourquoi mon pays le Mali appuie ce concept et pense que la FAO a un rôle déterminant à jouer avec ses partenaires comme l'Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OIE), l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) et autres.

L'Afrique est actuellement à la croisée des chemins de plusieurs défis, notamment l'invasion des criquets pèlerins, la peste des petits ruminants, le changement climatique, l'insécurité alimentaire, l'insécurité tout court et enfin la COVID-19.

Mon pays le Mali salue les efforts et le rôle essentiel joué par l'Organisation dans la lutte contre la recrudescence acridienne. Nous félicitons et saluons la FAO d'avoir réagi rapidement et pris les mesures préventives en mobilisant des ressources internes, afin de donner plus de moyens aux gouvernements touchés pour leur permettre de développer des opérations de prospection et de lutte destinées à maîtriser la recrudescence des ravageurs.

Le Mali encourage la FAO à continuer d'agir contre les criquets pèlerins, à poursuivre les activités de lutte dans la corne de l'Afrique, à intensifier les opérations en Asie du Sud-Est et à se préparer à une éventuelle recrudescence en Afrique de l'Ouest, particulièrement dans le Sahel, tout en protégeant les moyens d'existence, en amorçant rapidement des activités de redressement et en continuant de mettre l'accent sur le renforcement des capacités de surveillance et de lutte au niveau national. Le Mali encourage la FAO et l'OIE à redoubler d'efforts pour l'éradication de la peste des petits ruminants (PPR), car des vaccins de qualité sont disponibles pour ce faire.

Nous sommes plus que jamais proches de l'issue pour relever ce défi, car cette éradication est bien possible et à notre portée d'ici à l'horizon 2030.

Enfin, dans le cadre du nouvel ajustement, nous soutenons la mise à disposition du Centre des investissements d'une enveloppe de huit millions de dollars afin de lui permettre de jouer pleinement son rôle catalyseur et d'assistance aux pays.

Toute chose qui permettra au Centre de réaliser les résultats estimés à plus de 800 millions au moment de l'évaluation préconisée. Sur ce, je voudrais, avec tous ceux qui m'ont précédé, donner notre appui pour l'adoption des conclusions du Comité du Programme.

Niger (Observer)

Le Niger se solidarise avec le Burkina Faso, le Mali, la France, le Congo pour soutenir la création d'un sous-comité de l'élevage, vu le rôle socio-économique que joue ce secteur dans nos pays et dans tous les pays du Sahel, comme l'ont si bien dit mes prédécesseurs.

Ms Kim VAN SEETERS (the Netherlands) (Observer)

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and, in addition, we would like to highlight the following.

By 2050, the United Nations projects that an estimated 9.7 billion people will populate the planet, indicating that global agricultural production must grow significantly to meet demand. Concerns over how to manage forests sustainably amid increasing food demands remain of paramount concern. The main challenge is how we can increase global food production, ensure food security and, at the same time, maintain or even expand the world's forests. FAO has the knowledge on both issues.

The current situation demands for an integrated approach to these issues. Therefore, we would like reiterate what was requested by the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in its 24th Session Report in 2018, ensure more effective cooperation between COFO, the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the

Committee on Fisheries (COFI), the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and consider organizing intersessional joint activities.

Ms Supajit SRIARIYAWAT (Thailand) (Observer)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement made by the Asia Regional Group delivered by the Philippines. Thailand appreciates FAO's engaged work on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. However, we note with concern that we still remain off track to achieve the food security and nutrition targets of the Agenda 2030.

We stress the importance to align FAO's new Strategic Framework to the Agenda 2030 and measure results through the SDG indicators. We underline the need for FAO to enhance its visibility by bringing its core competence as knowledge Organization in support of Member Countries in achieving the SDGs.

Since FAO is a custodian agency for 21 SDG indicators and a contributing agency to another five SDG indicators, we recommend to strengthen statistical capacity development work and methodological work on the SDGs, particularly at the national level, in order to collect, produce and disseminate accurate, reliable, and timely statistics that can provide evidence-based policy support to the governments.

Finally, we welcome the progress report on the preparation for World Food Systems Summit and echo our voice on the importance of involvement of the Member Countries and related stakeholders to ensure that the transparency and inclusiveness of the preparation process will lead to a solution-oriented approach and impact outcome of the Summit.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings to an end our list of speakers. I invite Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen and then the Secretariat to comment on the issues that have emerged during the debate. Ambassador Hoogeveen, would you have anything to comment on?

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I would like to thank all the Members of the Council for the broad support for the conclusions of the Programme Committee, and I recognize what many have said, how important the new Strategic Framework will be for the future work of FAO.

In that sense, it is great to see that with Board support that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be the heart of the new Strategic Framework. However, we have to work now on the substance of the framework, and I think the support for an inclusive and transparent process leading up to a Membership-owned Strategic Framework is crucial. I will sit together with Ms Beth Crawford to see how we can start and find momentum in the agenda of everybody to create that inclusive process.

For that inclusive process, as was said by the Ambassador of Argentina, my dear friend, and by others, is that we have a bottom-up approach. It was very much recognized by the Programme Committee and, therefore, the Regional Conferences are so crucial because they have to set the regional and national priorities which can fit into the Strategic Framework.

I do agree with what was said by my dear friend from Brazil. We have to find a balance between normative work of the Organization as well as the technical cooperation work of the Organization in the Strategic Framework. I think it is important that we give emphasis to the statistical work of the Organization because this will form the basis of everything we do and the results we can get on the country and regional level.

It is good to see broad support for the issues like mainstreaming biodiversity, the One Health issues, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), peste de petits ruminants (PPR) and the crisis response of FAO, not only to the COVID-19 crisis, but also desert locust because that is what we need the most support for our Organization.

Coming to the remark of the distinguished Member of Brazil, I do agree that when it comes to the agenda setting of the Programme Committee, the follow-up on recommendations, we should not

duplicate any work. However, it is good that the Programme Committee keeps track of whether or not we implement what we have set to do as the Programme Committee.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my Russian colleague with his remark that several items on our Agenda, the 16 items that we had during this intense Programme Committee, some of them, or perhaps many of them, deserve discussion within the Council.

I leave that up to the Independent Chairperson of the Council and his informal consultations with the Regional Chairs how to do it because issues like mainstreaming biodiversity and others are now fitting to one agenda but deserve separate attention in the Council, and perhaps even in the Conference. When we agree to action plans and the Strategic Framework, we will get that attention, which is necessary by all Members, not only the Council Members, but all the Members of FAO.

With that, again, I would like to thank the Council Members for their support to our conclusions, and again I thank the Members of the Programme Committee for their excellent work.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

Maybe Ms Maria Helena Semedo would like to go first.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, this is what I want to know because there are certain questions and issues on which clarification was requested. Who would be representing the Secretariat to answer those? I suppose it will start with you and then we pass on to someone else.

Ms Maria Helena Semedo, go ahead.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

Let me start by thanking the Chair of the Programme Committee, Ambassador Hoogeveen, for his leadership and his energy in guiding the work of the Programme Committee with such a heavy agenda. It was not so heavy in terms of subjects as much as requiring substantive discussion, due to the nature of the items discussed: strategies, work plans, and the Strategic Framework that really needed an in-depth discussion.

Let me also thank and congratulate Ms Jiani Tian and her team for the excellent work. They worked extra miles, late nights, sending the Report to us and to the Members of the Programme Committee for their guidance. If you have a successful outcome of the meeting, it is mainly due to the guidance and the contribution received from the Members of the Programme Committee.

Not many questions were raised, but mostly comments supporting the work we are doing in some very important areas. Firstly, I will address the One Health approach and stress the importance, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, in having a One Health approach in order to respond to zoonotic diseases, however, more than responding to zoonotic diseases, to avoid that new diseases and pandemics occur. I stress the importance of working in the framework of One Health, by working together with the three Organizations, and this is the big call, and the recommendations we receive from Members to strengthen FAO's collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is only one part of the Tripartite collaboration, it goes beyond this, given that the subject at stake is AMR, I would say that we work on the framework of the Tripartite and we have our Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It is important that, through AMR, which the Ambassador of the United Kingdom considered the new transboundary pest being a public good, FAO works on developing best practices in order to reduce the use of antimicrobials, assist countries to develop coherent legislation and also to promote good governance on the use of antimicrobial, finding ways to work at global, regional and country level, and to raise awareness on the importance of tackling AMR.

In this regard, partnerships are important, we have partnerships with the three United Nations Agencies, in addition to partnerships with laboratories, the scientific community, with the CGIAR and this is the way forward. Next we have the forthcoming new work plan of the Tripartite, which I reinforce again that we will be consulting Members on the development of the work plan, however, in

reply to the comment from Brazil, it does not mean that through the approval of the consultative process in the work plan, Members endorse the MoU. That has already been discussed.

The FAO work plan will be presented to the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) as a strategy, as FAO does not have a strategy on AMR, it rather has an action plan. This is the reason for wanting a more strategic presentation and not only an action plan. However, we agreed that the Council recommendation was to present and to review the action plan and the risk taking at the recommendations coming and the guidance coming from the Council.

The action plan will be presented to the COAG and the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) for guidance, and we hope that after COFI, which is planned for next year, we will be having the action plan endorsed and presented to the spring Session of the Programme Committee.

Thank you for the support on the Sub-Committee on Livestock, however, as previously said, it is for COAG decision. It was only mentioned during the Programme Committee due to the importance of livestock, animal health and animal production, and its linkage and contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals to food security, livelihoods, economic development, and also to natural resources, climate change and environment. It is important that we have an Advisory Group or a Sub-Committee, which will be an advisory group or advisory committee to COAG on policy matters relating to livestock.

In this regard, I consider very positive the proposal of the Africa Group to development, if I understood well, Madam Ambassador, an initiative on sustainable livestock to be integrated in the Food Systems Summit. This was my understanding from your proposal, which, considering the importance of livestock for African economy, for African livelihoods and wellbeing, is a very interesting proposal and, if agreed, we will be very happy to work on and contribute to.

As mentioned yesterday, FAO's work on AMR will be integrated into the FAO/WHO Centre and will be reporting to the forthcoming Council on progress made. I do not want to commit Ambassador Sarch on an exact starting date. We will be starting the negotiation with WHO and OIE, and as soon as possible, we will be starting the implementation of the Centre. I can commit to that, in the Session in December, we will be reporting on progress made.

Following the recommendations of the Programme Committee, the biodiversity strategy will be presented to COAG, COFI and the Committee on Forestry (COFO) for guidance. Then, it will go to the Programme Committee and the Council at its spring Session, not in December. This was agreed during the Programme Committee.

With regard to the comments from the Netherlands on better ways of working between COFO, COFI, COAG and the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP), several joint consultations are taking place to find ways to have joint items and discussions, and we have made progress towards a common agenda for the three or four Committees. We will be discussing the Sustainable Development Goals, and we have agreed that all Committees will take note of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the use of ecosystem restoration for food production.

I believe those are the comments I had from my notes. If not, I can reply to any questions I could have missed.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

A brief update on the locust operation. Thank you very much, Members of the Programme Committee and Members of the Council for the encouraging comments on FAO operations. The truth of the matter is that, despite large-scale control operations since the beginning of the year, the desert locust upsurge continues to threaten food security in the Great Horn of Africa, Yemen and also some regions of Western Asia.

Since January 2020, FAO and government partners have scored good successes in locust control campaigns. It has reduced the scale of infestation in many areas, and this despite the COVID-19 challenges. Governments had already given priority to this, and we can see the results.

Initial estimates suggest that control conducted in East Africa and Yemen, for example, have saved close to 1 million tons of cereal from locust damage. This is enough cereal to feed nearly 17 million people for one year.

However, if we do not sustain ongoing operations, scale up to meet emerging needs and prepare for new desert locust threats, the impact of the pest, combined with COVID-19 impact, could have catastrophic consequences for livelihood and food security.

It was mentioned that FAO issued a revised appeal seeking USD 311 million in May. I would like to thank the resource partners, meaning Members of the Council and the Programme Committee, who responded very generously, providing USD 180 million of financing that has been received or committed. Unfortunately, this is nowhere near enough.

At the current level of funding, we estimate that the operation in the Great Horn of Africa and Yemen will run out of funding in September. Continued donor support is vital to ensure adequate funding is received to sustain the operation through the end of 2020 and, unfortunately, potentially beyond. If we receive the money we need in time, we estimate that in the Great Horn of Africa and Yemen alone we could save 3.4 million tons of cereal, enough to feed 22 million people for over a year. Just think about if we have to ask WFP to provide additional food to feed 22 million people and add this to the governments.

Total eradication is neither desirable nor possible, but continued control operation will help limit the damage. We hope to continue to benefit from necessary financial support. We are doing a great job with the governments concerned. In fact, we see that in the many regions, the results are there: India, Iran, Pakistan we see massive progress thanks to the determination of the governments, but locusts are not yet under control. Likewise, we see good progress in Kenya. However, we need to support and do much more in Somalia and Yemen. We count on the support of the Membership to continue this important work.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

I will group my answers in four areas. First, the Food Systems Summit (FSS): the Advisory Committee of the Food Systems Summit finished one minute ago and there is no location yet. They are coordinating with the Scientific Group, the Advisory Group, the Group of Friends, and the Group of Champions.

The Food Systems Summit (FSS) is a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) initiative. However, FAO, as mentioned by several Members, is supporting the Summit in several dimensions. On the technical side, we are directly supporting the Scientific Committee. I am an ex-official Member of the Scientific Committee by the request of the Scientific Chair, Mr Joachim von Braun, who is serving as a bridge for the work that we have been doing at FAO to support all the activities of the Summit. This includes modelling, assessment of scenarios, drafting background documents for the five tracks that have been identified, and technically supporting, as much as possible, the Scientific Committee.

Second, we also host the subsidiary of the Secretary in Rome, which is basically hosting the Deputy of the Food Systems Summit, Mr Martin Fleck, and is hosting a team of staff of FAO, plus WFP, and potentially a representative from IFAD that will be seconded to FAO, and also with the technical support of Mr Dan Gustafson to support the process of the Summit.

We have a complete dialogue and meetings every week, including coordination meetings with all the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), together with all the Members of the Secretariat, of the Nairobi Secretariat, in which we coordinate, every week, all the activities carried out so that we have full coordination and no duplication in the activities carried out by the Rome-based Agencies.

In addition, the Director-General has been very clear to the Advisory Board that the Regional Conferences are a mechanism that we have in place to have a bottom-up approach in the dialogue of the Summit, and FAO is fully supportive to work in that sense. We are also supporting and involving all the scientific networks. We have been coordinating with all the scientific initiatives that are taking place. There are many initiatives at present, and we are fully coordinating with them in order to avoid duplication and to build up the Scientific Committee work.

We are coordinating so that all the documents and all the papers that are produced as part of the Scientific Committee are peer reviewed and are part of the special issues of top journals like Nature, so that we have the scientific backup of all the activities being done in the Scientific Committee.

That is essentially all the set of activities we have, and FAO has a significant amount of support staff working on this. Mr Jamie Morrison, who is leading the proposed Food System Division, to be approved by the Council, is seconded 45 percent of his time to the Rome Secretariat to support the day-to-day activities, in addition to two other staff members seconded to these activities.

I am coordinating all the scientific work on the side of FAO, and I am coordinating the activities on this topic.

Regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HHI), thank you very much for all the support by all the Members, including of the Programme Committee, and for all the comments on the Hand-in-Hand bottom-up approach. It is a country driven approach that reflects the way we are working. As an example: two weeks ago, we were discussing activities we were doing with the Minister of Agriculture of Ethiopia and he suggested some adjustments, some changes that will fit the needs that he had in that point in time, and automatically HHI adjusts and adapts to respond to the demands country by country. As mentioned by the Director-General, there are 18 countries right now. Our hope is to be able to reach, by the end of the year, all the countries that are in the priority list of HHI.

The Geospatial Platform, which will be launched officially on 20 July, for which all Members will receive an invitation, will be a broad launch, and the HHI Geospatial Platform will have capacity building to Member Countries. We will be starting a process of invitations to all Members to take part in this, as well as to all FAO staff and to other Agencies.

This is clearly an initiative that brings all of FAO together, but also brings all our partnerships together. We were able to reach an agreement to bring bigger platforms together with Google, for example, that will help us to keep empowering the HHI Geospatial Platform. The launch will be on 20 July.

The Geospatial Platform has been designed within the data protection protocols of FAO and the privacy of data. The Platform has all the capacities to protect data and maintain privacy so that any country that wants to keep the data private can have absolute privacy. Their environments are created so that full privacy is respected. In addition, the Geospatial Platform will only publish data which is authorized and public, if there is a new data generation processes that come, for example, from the data lab, it will go through all the protocols, through the Chief Statistician's office to be able to comply with the requirements of the quality standards that we need.

The same applies if we bring data from our part. We are trying, in the HHI, to leverage more resources. In these days it is difficult due to COVID-19; however, we are making enormous efforts to be able to increase the extra-budgetary support that we have to date, that has allowed us to progress substantially, especially in the data lab and the Geospatial Platform Initiatives so that we can move at the velocity we are moving at present.

Regarding the statistical group and the second review, we have been able to secure the resources for the global strategy, and the global strategy allows us to train at a country level. We have also linked it to the 50 by 2030 Initiative, which allow us to build capacities and respond to the demands of the statistical agencies at country level.

We have been able to raise USD 9 million for this Initiative, for the second phase of the Global Strategy, and that will allow us to strengthen our capacity building at country level, which is where we are aiming. This includes, for example, the 50 by 2030 Initiative, rural household surveys that link agriculture with a typical household service of expenditures, including, for example, to the collection of data for the indicator of food losses, for which FAO is also custodian.

We focus on the SDG indicators. I know we have a tracking system; that is a core function across FAO. There is a factsheet that you have received that has been shared with all Members on the 21 indicators under FAO custodianship, and it has been distributed to all of you. In that factsheet, you will see that today we only have very few indicators that are decreasing in terms of reporting.

Although, there still is a significant increase on the reporting of all the indicators, but relative to previous, for example, one case is an acknowledgement indicator because there are two countries where the data is not of quality enough to be able to calculate undernourishment and that is why it shows a little decline. Again, this is being tracked permanently so that we can monitor the performance on the indicators of FAO.

In terms of the reporting line of the statistical service and the Chief Statistician's Office, as you are aware, if the Council approves all the requested changes, the Chief Statistician will be under myself, as well as the Statistics Division and where we want to empower the Office of Chief Statistician is so that they can play a regulatory role and a standard role across all the units of data collection of FAO, including the Statistics Division, but also all the units of data collection and to keep the highest standards in terms of the statistical quality data they would have at FAO.

Given that this is a core function of FAO, it is a normative function that we need to support and strengthen as much as possible. For sure, it is true that we need more resources and this has to be to ensure sustainability, not only through budgetary resources, but all the statistical functions need support to be able to continue increasing and improving, especially because of the increase in demands that we will have of building capacities at country level.

We also take note of the importance of the revised strategy for the statistical group, and that will be happening according to programmes, so that we can have a revised strategy of activities.

Finally, there was a comment on the evidence-based flagship allocations. All the flagship allocations of FAO have to go through a process of review that goes through all the different technical units of FAO and for all the Departments. For example, the publication of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI), that will be launched next Monday, has gone through all the technical reviews, internally and externally. This year, SOFI had four external peer reviews, due to the updates on information that we had in place.

This gives increased validity to what we do and ensures that we have top quality, and all those reviews will be published. On Friday, there will be a technical workshop to explain all the methodologies put in place, so that the information is shared transparently before the launch scheduled for Monday, where more explanations will be provided.

To reiterate, our maximum effort goes into ensuring that all of our work is science- and evidence-based with strong protocols. Our aim is to be able to have a single quality standard across all of FAO that means that the reports of country, subregional, regional offices, and Headquarters should be the same quality, notwithstanding the different levels of development in countries. FAO cannot produce uniformed standards. We have to build the standards, and this requires great efforts.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I just wanted to thank all the distinguished delegates for their comments and feedback on the Strategic Framework. We indeed look very forward to developing that together with you to have an inclusive and transparent process for the substantive development of that Strategic Framework, both through the formal processes, which will be the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees, and through informal consultations. I look forward to discussing that further with the Chair of the Programme Committee to find appropriate dates, as he just mentioned.

The new Strategic Framework will be fully anchored in the Agenda 2030. Similar to what Mr Máximo Torero Cullen was just describing for the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), we foresee that we would include the 26 indicators for which FAO is either custodian or contributing United Nations Agency, as well as other highly relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. For example, those in the areas of climate change, which have also been raised by the Members.

We will also be giving attention to ensuring that FAO's global normative work is fully visible in the Framework because that is some of the feedback that we have been getting on the current Framework, and that is where we would likely also be introducing non-SDG indicators. These are not developed yet at this point, in response to one of the questions, but we would foresee that it may be necessary to introduce non-SDG indicators for that work.

Of course, we will be taking fully into consideration both the opportunities and the modalities offered at the country level by the new approaches at the country level, with the repositioning of the United Nations Development System and to make sure that we really take full advantage of putting the countries at the Centre of this Framework when developing it, as we move forward.

We will indeed be updating the roadmap for consultations and share that with you as soon as it is available.

Mr Mashiro IGARASHI (Director, Office of Evaluation)

Responding to the request of clarification by the representative of Brazil. The lack of governance of country programmes refers to the fact that, in many countries, once a Country Programming Framework (CPF) is signed off, a formal mechanism involving the national government seems to exist to monitor the progress made, to make decisions on course corrections, to receive and discuss evaluation reports and follow up on it.

Therefore, we have pointed this out in previous evaluations that led to this wording as Ms Beth Crawford stated, in the context of repositioning all the United Nations Development System in which the new governance mechanism at the country level could be discussed.

CHAIRPERSON

Any requests for the floor to comment on the replies given by the Secretariat? Yes, go ahead Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

I did make a mistake, the launch of the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform is on 21 July at 2 p.m. Rome time.

Ms Teresa TUMWET (Kenya) (Observer)

On the issue of the desert locusts, we appreciate the efforts that FAO has made so far in collaboration with the Government. While they are addressing the immediate actions against the desert locusts, we would request for long-term structures in terms of the institutional and capacity, maybe surveillance for the future, because we are doing very well in terms of doing the immediate actions now, but for the long-term we need to look at that.

The other comment is on the Food Systems Summit. There are so many initiatives under the Director. Mr Máximo Torero Cullen mentioned, the problem is coordinating all the initiatives and activities with the Secretariat in Nairobi. We would request an increased effort in also involving the Members in the activities because there are so many initiatives and so many groups, of course, we are also part of the Food Systems Summit Group of Friends and others. There is need for increased coordination and that coordination between FAO and the Secretariat is good, but there is need to bring in the Membership, also aggressively, as we go towards 2021.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)

Je voulais remercier Madame Semedo, la Directrice générale adjointe, pour avoir noté qu'effectivement la question de l'élevage est absolument cruciale pour le continent africain et qu'en réalité élevage et agriculture sont les deux faces d'une même médaille. Donc, tout ce qui va être abordé à travers la préparation du Sommet lié à l'agriculture dans ses rôles, dans ses composantes pour les systèmes alimentaires ne peut pas, évidemment, laisser l'élevage de côté. Jusque-là, nous n'avons pas eu suffisamment d'attention sur ces questions d'élevage, à notre avis, depuis quelques années et nous pensons que c'est vraiment le moment, l'occasion avec le Sommet sur les systèmes alimentaires de remettre ce volet au cœur même des préoccupations et évidemment la création du sous-comité de l'élevage va y contribuer.

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Laurent Thomas did you want the floor?

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

We appreciate the comments and the guidance provided by Kenya, regarding the need to support preparedness, early warning, and preventive action. In fact, this is often overlooked although we know that investing in preparedness can save billions of dollars of operation.

In this regard, we want to call the attention on the need for funding preventive action and preparedness and early warning for West Africa, where the locusts have not yet reached. However, by being well prepared, we will reduce the needs and definitely for the Horn of Africa it is extremely important to rebuild the capacities that had been weakened after decades of absence of major locust infestation. We are looking forward to working with the Government of Kenya and the governments affected.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of discussions, and we have to adjourn at 5.30 p.m.

It is 5.30 p.m. now, so I suggest to conclude on this item first thing tomorrow morning and we proceed from there.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 17:32 hours

La séance est levée à 17 h 32

Se levanta la sesión a las 17.32

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatrième session
164.º período de sesiones**

**Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020
Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020
Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020**

**FIFTH PLENARY MEETING
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

8 July 2020

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:32 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 32
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 09.32
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 6. Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (8-18 June 2020) (*continued*)**
Point 6. Rapport de la cent vingt-huitième session du Comité du Programme (8-18 juin 2020) (*suite*)
Tema 6. Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020) (*continuación*)
 (CL 164/6, REV 1)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning, we will continue with Item 6, *Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee*.

Before I read out my conclusions and put the text on the screen, I would like to say that my conclusions on this Item are a bit long, because the Report of the Programme Committee is long – as quite a few Members mentioned yesterday, they referred to the Programme Committee’s Report.

My plea would be that, when you come to amend the text, please concentrate on concepts and not words, because the words can be refined by the Drafting Committee. If talking about concepts, you may preferably negotiate them in this forum because everyone is present, contrary to smaller committees as the Drafting Committee.

I will read out my conclusions for Item 6 and put them on the screen:

Item 6, Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee.

1. The Council endorsed the Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and in particular:
 - a) concurred with the recommendations of the provisional outline of the new Strategic Framework and looked forward to inputs from Regional Conferences as well as an inclusive process of consultation for its development.
 - b) welcomed the recommendations of the evaluation of FAO’s support to Zero Hunger Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 and the significant progress made by FAO in aligning its Country Programming Framework (CPF) guidelines within the United Nations Development System,
 - c) encouraged the FAO to transform its Strategic Framework structures, delivery mechanisms, partnership approaches and programmes in order to support better countries to achieve SDG2 and stress the importance of supporting countries to manage risks and attract investment in implementing the SDGs including through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI).
 - c) welcomed the significant progress made by the Organization in implementing the four recommendations of the evaluation of FAO’s contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, Strategic Objective 1 (SO1), and emphasized the focus on a food systems approach to achieve food security and nutrition.
 - d) welcomed the timely and thorough evaluation of FAO’s statistical work, highlighted the importance of FAO’s statistical work at the country level and stress the need to regularly update Members on this work.
 - e) welcomed the proposal for strengthening the evaluation in decentralized offices and concurred with the importance of strengthening the evaluation capacity at regional and country offices and ownership at national level.
 - f) welcomed the update on the work plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and the One Health approach as its key principles; and acknowledged the guidance from corresponding technical committees be provided to further improve the proposed indicators on AMR in consultation with Members and emphasize that the forthcoming work plan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding be developed following the consultative process with the membership of the Tripartite organizations and that its lifespan be defined in accordance with the complexity and broadness of the areas covered.

- g) welcomed the progress on issues to eradicate Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) within FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) partnership recognizing the potential funding of that resulting from the COVID-19 crisis and encouraged FAO to pursue more affordable solutions to mobilizing resources including through partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders.
- h) appreciated the progress made in the implementation of the FAO strategy on mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural sectors. Noted that the draft action plan would be reviewed by the technical Committees, recognized the need for further inclusive informal consultations with Members in support of the formal process to develop the action plan and recommended that the implementation period of the action plan be extended to three years.
- i) appreciated the cross FAO Regional Group statement on the 2021 Food Systems Summit stress the importance that preparation for the Summit be transparent and inclusive involving Members as well as other relevant stakeholders and welcome the creation of the “Group of Friends”, which increased Member’s contribution to the formally government structure and the preparations for the Summit.
- j) welcomed the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) as an innovative and efficient way to support Member’s national planning priorities for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, noted that full implementation with 15 countries was underway. Commended Management’s agreement to provide capacity development to Members in order to access and use the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform and appreciated that Members would benefit from the access to the platform.
- k) expressed appreciation for the Organization’s essential role in the fight to prevent and control desert locust upsurges and emphasize the need to increase international cooperation and coordination in joint efforts in funding the fight the desert locust crisis and avert its reappearance.
- l) acknowledge that Members be consulted in the development of the initiative, transforming food systems to feed the planet without deforestation, agreed that the Committee on Forestry (COFO) reviewed the drivers of the expansion of agricultural land in light of sustainable forest management and look forward to further consultations with Members on the Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2020 and the State of the World’s Forests (SOFO) 2020 at the 25th Session of COFO.
- m) noting the exceptionally large number of Agenda items considered by the 128th Session of the Programme Committee the request to a more streamlined approach to Agenda construction in future for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the working methods of the Committee.

That is the summary of the conclusions. I open the floor to Members for their comments and interventions.

Ms Gianina MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

I have some comments to add. I will start with subparagraph (a). We mentioned in our intervention, the importance of balancing normative work and technical cooperation. We would like to see it in the decisions. At the end of subparagraph (a), we stress the importance of balancing normative work, technical cooperation, risk and crisis management, and investments within the Organization. We also mentioned in our deliberations, our concern with the creation of new indicators in spite of the Results Framework and also the evaluation of statistical work.

We would like to see an acknowledgement that the multiplication of metrics jeopardizes the capacity of countries. I do not know exactly where we can put it, together with the language about the Strategic Framework or the evaluation of all statistical work – I will leave it to the Drafting Committee to work on this. The language is “acknowledging that the multiplication of metrics jeopardizes the capacity of countries, especially the progress to provide data, and create some necessary difficulties on the ground. We requested that FAO’s Results Framework focus as much as possible on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators”.

On the subparagraph on the decision on the update of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). We also mentioned that this uptake and the Board Members agree with the MoU. Therefore,

after subparagraph (g), “acknowledging the importance of updating the Membership of FAO on the workplan of the Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding, emphasizing that it was signed by FAO, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) managements, and that future involvement of Members in the development of its forthcoming workplan, those might encompass their agreement with the MoUs on that, and after the update of sustainable forest management.”

I do not know, maybe after this paragraph I would like the following, “Requests that FAO prepare technical notes on the financial and technical implications of elaborating on assessments of real-world forest resources every two years instead of every five years, for preservation of comfort”.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Under subparagraph (a) I think I had made this point and it was also something that the Programme Committee agreed on, which I hope we can include at the end of subparagraph (a). Perhaps we could add a sort of “comma” and something that says, “supported the Programme Committee’s request for further information on the theory obtained under change management strategy to be provided for consultation with Members in September 2020”. I am happy for that to be part of subparagraph (a) or a new subparagraph. I will leave that up to the Drafting Committee.

Going in order, on the new subparagraphs that have been proposed by Brazil. I think there is an assumption in there that the FAO’s Results Framework focuses entirely on what happens at country level. While I would agree that too many things to report back at country level jeopardizes capacity, what we are looking for in FAO’s Results Framework is something that not just reports on what FAO does at country level but is also reporting on what FAO does at Headquarters. In particular, some of the normative work. Indeed, I think Brazil, itself, has recognized the importance of balancing FAO’s normative work with its other work.

I think we need to recognize that because we do not just want the Results Framework to focus on work at country level. We also want it to focus on FAO’s normative work. Indeed, I think we have had agreement that that is right. I do not have any particular language suggestions at this point. I might come to it when I have had a chance to think about it, but I just wanted to mention that point here.

If we could move down to the new subparagraph (c). Here I do not think we have actually the new guidance that has been issued for Country Programming Framework’s in the Programme Committee, and how they should align with reforms to the United Nations Development System (UNDS). Therefore, we have definitely noted that Management has said that this has been done, but we have not actually looked at that ourselves.

I am not sure whether we should include the words “the significant progress made by FAO in aligning its Country Programming Framework (CPF) with the guidelines for the United Nations Development System”, because I do not know whether we have actually seen that. I think we should delete that phrase and certainly when we come back to looking at the governance of FAO’s work at country level, I certainly hope we will have an opportunity to look at that guidance.

I am just moving through my notes. If we could move down to subparagraph (e) on the evaluation of FAO’s statistical work. Here certainly the United Kingdom and a number of other Council Members supported the Programme Committee’s recommendation that more core resources should be allocated to FAO’s statistical work. Indeed, I think, that there was also support for the request for an updated strategy on FAO’s statistical work.

I would certainly like that to be reflected in this conclusion, and perhaps we could use the language of the Programme Committee here. I think we could add something like “supported the Programme Committee request that more core resources should be allocated to FAO’s statistical work in the 2022-2023 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and looked forward to the updated strategy for FAO’s statistical work”. Certainly, I am happy for the Drafting Committee to go back to the Programme Committee language and use that rather than spending too much time crafting it now.

I think I would now like to move down to new subparagraph (g). Sorry I know I am going a bit quickly, so on the former subparagraph just to include the point on welcoming the new strategy for FAO's statistical work. We keep at the end of that subparagraph, which is now subparagraph (d) we would also add, "and looked forward to the updated strategy for FAO's statistical work."

If we could now move down to the subparagraph on antimicrobial resistance I think I wanted to add to this at the end of this subparagraph, "looked forward to the progress report on the creation of the new Joint FAO/WHO Centre."

Moving to the additional subparagraph that Brazil requested. I am not entirely sure that it is right to say that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) content, my understanding, and I am sure FAO Management will be able to explain this in more detail, but my understanding is that the workplan of the Tripartite MoU is based on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Group or Inter-Agency Committee that its recommendations that have been approved by the United Nations in New York. I would certainly be grateful for Management clarification on that point. I do not think it is right to say that it is being devised with no reference to Membership agreement at all. Therefore, it will be good to have some clarification from Management on that.

If we could move down to the subparagraph on locusts, I think it was (k), it might be (l) now. I would just like to add where it says "funding to fight the desert locust crisis and avert its reappearance", could we include the words "joint effort funding to monitor, track and fight", or perhaps just "monitor and fight".

Finally, if we could come back to the last subparagraph, which was (m). Here I am not entirely sure I agree with that last bit, "requested a more streamlined approach to agenda construction". I thought that the point that had been raised was to ensure that the Programme Committee's work was properly coordinated with the work of the Technical Committees.

I certainly do not think we should try and limit what the Programme Committee does and I do not have any particular language at this point, but certainly, I would welcome a comment from the Chair of the Programme Committee on this conclusion and then perhaps come back to it later.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Could you please go up to the start of the conclusions? I would suggest that we include a new subparagraph (a) saying, "support FAO's vision of achieving Zero Hunger, eliminating rural poverty, conserving natural resources and addressing climate change". Sorry, "and" can be deleted, "addressing climate change" without "and", and "improving the livelihoods of all people".

Then in subparagraph (b), if we could include after Regional Conferences "and a further refinement of the roadmap for the need for consultation, as well as an inclusive process for its development".

If we could go to the subparagraph on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), it was (f) and I have lost track of what it is now. Could we perhaps start with, "stress the crucial importance" or, "stress the crucial importance of addressing AMR and biodiversity for sustainable food systems". Then at the end, "and look forward to the progress report on the creation of the new Joint FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre". That will be continued with, "to strengthen FAO's work on AMR and on zoonosis, in coordination with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)."

Then could we please go to the subparagraph on the Food Systems Summit – respectively the Group of Friends – that was appreciated. In subparagraph (l), we would like to suggest the inclusion of a new subparagraph, "supported an ambitious outcome of the Food Systems Summit in 2021; requested FAO to provide all necessary support to the special envoy and her team; underlined the need to ensure that the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition" and the "policy recommendations of agroecology and other innovative approaches will feed into the Summit discussions and the follow-up process."

Could we then please go to the subparagraph on the desert locust upsurge? Let me just have a look at it, please, “called on FAO to continue its work on monitoring, early warning, control and coordination and resource mobilization and called on all Members to further contribute to control this plague.”

Sr. Guillermo Valentin RODOLICO (Argentina)

Buen día a todos los colegas. Voy a tratar de ser lo más esquemático sobre el texto [XX] así que agradecemos al Presidente por poner en pantalla este proyecto de Informe. Agradecemos también a las delegaciones que nos precedieron, que creo que están mejorando el texto. Como dije, voy a tratar de ser lo más esquemático.

Así que, empiezo, por una propuesta de párrafo nuevo. Luego del párrafo (c). Sería un nuevo párrafo, luego del párrafo (c), que diga, a velocidad de dictado en español. Un nuevo párrafo después del (c), perfecto. “Resaltó la necesidad de que las cuestiones de naturaleza técnica sean abordados en los Comités Técnicos pertinentes de la FAO antes de su discusión en los Órganos Rectores” -- Governing Bodies -- coma, “más allá de las consultas informales que puedan desarrollarse en el proceso de discusión.”

El rationale detrás de esta propuesta es algo que nosotros, como miembros del Comité del Programa, hicimos hincapié a lo largo de todos los puntos de agenda en la Reunión del Comité de Programa. Y lo hemos refrendado en este Consejo, teniendo en cuenta que hemos encontrado en las discusiones que había algunos temas en los que se ponía en discusión en los Órganos Rectores, como el Comité de Programa. Se avanzaba en cuestión sin la debida discusión en los comités técnicos en diferentes temáticas. Pero, digamos, ese es el rationale detrás de esta propuesta que espero que los demás miembros del Consejo puedan acompañar.

Ahora vamos a hacer unos comentarios y modificaciones a párrafos existente o propuestos recientemente. Quisiera ir al párrafo (a), por favor, al comienzo de este texto. Ahí lo que nos gustaría a nosotros incorporar es, estamos de acuerdo en el texto hasta “rural poverty”, estamos hablando del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) 1 y ODS 2.

Luego, nos gustaría agregar “Conserving and using sustainably natural resources, comma, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development for improving the livelihoods of all people” y borramos “addressing climate change”.

El rationale de esta modificación, la hemos realizado en el Comité del Programa, se trata de que el desarrollo sostenible solo se alcanza si las tres dimensiones que comprende este concepto son alcanzadas, no solamente uno de los componentes.

“Addressing climate change” lo borraríamos.

Párrafo (b), hemos tomado nota de la sugerencia del Embajador de Alemania de borrar “the process of consultation”. No es un nuevo párrafo, es una modificación al párrafo existente. Hemos tomado nota de la propuesta de modificación del Embajador de Alemania, nosotros, en todo caso, sí preferiríamos que en vez de tachar “of consultation” diríamos: “as well as a formal inclusive process, no “consultative”, formal “inclusive process”.

Luego, quisiera pasar a lo que entiendo que es el párrafo (h). Exactamente, sobre resistencia a los antimicrobianos, (AMR). Nosotros entendemos que este párrafo se especifica, y todos los diálogos en el Comité del Programa, inclusive aquí en el Consejo hablaban de AMR. Me parece que este párrafo está específicamente sobre AMR. No obstante, no tenemos grandes problemas con la sugerencia de incorporar la biodiversidad pero también nos gustaría que, ya que este párrafo es muy largo, y para facilitar la comprensión al público que accede a estos informes, no mezclar demasiados temas sobre cuestiones que han sido debatidas durante el Consejo. Entonces, nosotros preferiríamos que no esté “biodiversity” incluido en este párrafo cuando solamente estamos hablando de resistencia antimicrobiana.

Digamos que es una propuesta que creemos es hacia la mejora del texto. No es porque nosotros estemos en contra de la biodiversidad, pero me parece que este párrafo específicamente está hablando

sobre resistencia antimicrobiana, así que pediríamos, en todo caso, la flexibilidad del Embajador de Alemania, o incorporar el tema de la biodiversidad en un nuevo párrafo, que quede claro que estamos hablando de biodiversidad, pero no mezclado en este párrafo que estamos hablando directamente sobre resistencia antimicrobiana.

Además, sobre este párrafo, quisiéramos proponer un cambio al segundo verbo de acción contenido. En vez de “acknowledged” me parece que sería justo en función de la discusión que mantuvo lugar en el Comité del Programa y el espíritu de este “wording” y de la discusión, también, de lo que se entendió en el Comité del Programa y creo que, de parte de la Membresía, es cambiar “acknowledged” por “requested”.

Y nosotros antes hicimos la propuesta de eliminar “biodiversity” de este párrafo, proponiéndole al Embajador de Alemania si quisiera agregar biodiversidad en el informe del Consejo, si lo podría hacer en un párrafo aparte porque si no estaríamos mezclando aquí temáticas.

Después, por último, quisiera, si puede bajar el texto. Dos últimas cuestiones. Si podemos bajar el texto. Tiene que ver con el comentario del Reino Unido. Efectivamente, nuestro entendimiento de este párrafo no era justamente que había que mejorar el “approach” o el enfoque que se daba en las discusiones en el Comité del Programa, sino que creo que nosotros entendemos que es un planteo de la Representación de la Federación de Rusia donde decía que la vastedad de los temas que se incorporaron, que se discutieron en el Comité del Programa, a veces no podían ser abordados de manera completa en el Consejo, cuando solamente se trataba de un solo punto en el Consejo, al Informe de Comité del Programa.

Yo entendí que, lo que la propuesta de la Representación de la Federación de Rusia es que había que dividir un poco más los temas del Comité del Programa para su discusión un poco más completa en el Consejo. Así que, en todo caso, yo creo que no es de que está hablando de “streamline” el “approach” o el enfoque del Programa Provisional del Comité del Programa sino del Consejo. Pero, evidentemente, me parece que hay diferentes interpretaciones de lo que se quiso decir, dejaría en todo caso al colega de la Federación de Rusia que explique un poco si es efectivamente esta comprensión que tuvimos aquí en la delegación argentina si es que es así.

Y, por último, y disculpe por haber sido poco esquemático, si podemos subir al párrafo sobre la Cumbre de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios donde dice “outcome”, en el párrafo (n) “Supported an ambitious science- and evidenced-based outcome.” Creo que fue algo que estuvo mencionado en la declaración de casi todas las listas regionales en el Consejo.

Y vamos a proponer otra sugerencia esperando la aceptación de los colegas. Se hace referencia a las “Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition”, esas directrices todavía están en proceso de discusión. Entonces, me parece que al hacer honor a la justicia, deberíamos hacer una referencia de que, digamos “envision, or foresee, voluntary guidelines on food systems and Nutrition” para no, de alguna manera intervenir o interferir con el debate que se está dando en el marco del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA).

Esas son todas nuestras sugerencias por el momento.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Burkina Faso and there I appeal again to please deal with only central themes. There are aspects which can be left to the Drafting Committee. After all, each region is represented in the Drafting Committee. If we proceed at this rate it will be a long time before we finish.

Mme Joséphine OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)

Je voulais proposer deux points qui semblent avoir été oubliés. Le premier concerne le point où l'on parle de la peste des petits ruminants (PPR). Je pense qu'immédiatement après ce paragraphe, on devrait ajouter que nous apprécions l'attention particulière accordée aux questions d'élevage par le Comité du Programme et soutenons la création d'un sous-comité de l'élevage au cours de la prochaine

session du Comité de l'agriculture (COAG). Le Groupe Afrique voudrait ajouter, la prochaine session du COAG élargie aux ministres chargés de l'élevage.

Je voudrais également ajouter un tout petit point au paragraphe où l'on parle de l'Initiative Main dans la main. À la fin, on pourrait ajouter qu'on bénéficie de l'accès à cette plateforme dans le cadre du protocole de la FAO relatif à la protection des données.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

It is also in the same subparagraph on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, which suggests to continue and say that we look forward to the reporting on the progress made.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

It is quite a complicated issue to commence on the number of reactions.

Let me begin with the subparagraph (a). We think that FAO's vision is not something abstract. FAO's vision is in the programme of work, and the text is absolutely different. Probably the content is very similar, but the text is different. Therefore, we would be pleased to get clarifications from the Secretariat on their real FAO vision, which we are going to support.

I can quote that the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) vision is about a world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture continue to improve in the wide industries of food in economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. I found this kind of FAO's vision.

Secondly, is about the subparagraph (b), in the third line there is a reference to "formal" process, but we all know that there is also informal consultations that are going to be held in March 2020, December 2021 according to the documents from CFS. So probably we could say "as well as formal and informal inclusive processes".

Thirdly, I would be pleased to comment on the subparagraph about the Food System Summit, subparagraph (m), "We welcome the creation of the informal Group of Friends according to the cross FAO Regional Group statement and according to the notion of this group, it is formed as on the informal basis, which increased Members' contributions without duplication and overlaps", this is our proposal to add, "without duplication and overlaps to the formal governance structure and the preparation of the site."

On the subparagraph (n) we support the proposal of Argentina to underline that these two documents are still under consideration, under discussion. At the same time in the beginning of this subparagraph we are referring to the outcomes of the Food Systems Summit (FSS) in 2021 and we would like to warn colleagues that we still do not know what kind of outcomes we are going to have, we do not know the date of the Food System Summit and we still do not have the biennium. Therefore, instead of supporting outcome of the Food Systems Summit, we could say that "we look forward to receiving the information about dates, venue and outcomes of the Food Systems Summit in 2021" and then we can continue with, "request FAO to provide all necessary support" and to delete "ambitions".

On the subparagraph proposed by Argentina on Sustainable Development Indicators, it was a new (c), we would like to propose in the end to say "focus as much as possible on relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators". I would just like to add "relevant" or "custodian SDG indicators".

On the subparagraph about the CFS. The new text proposed is fine. In the end, we would be pleased to react on the last subparagraph (r), the new (r). In our statement we draw attention of Members of the Council as well as the Secretariat and the Members of the Programme Committee that the agenda of the Programme Committee is very large and that is why we have so many conclusions today on this agenda and sometimes it is quite difficult to follow this process.

We would be pleased to discuss statistical issue, we would be pleased to discuss more closely on the Food Systems Summit, but the agenda was very huge and the time for national statement is very limited that is why we just draw the attention of the colleagues from the Programme Committee to

think about it and to take into account that the Members of the Council should have enough time to closely look at the recommendations of the Programme Committee and to have enough time to react at the Council Meetings. This was our intention about this Agenda Item.

Mr Yasuro Funaki (Japan)

I would like to have a suggestion regarding the sustainable forest management issues. There was a suggestion about assessment of global forest resources every two-years instead of a five-years, and this issue would be further validated in the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and other related meetings in the future. For that reason, we share the Brazilian concern about the issue of the preparation.

Preparation for the next meeting would be very important, as the important issue is the comparison between the current five-year cycle and a two-year cycle instead. Our suggestion is that in the Brazilian comment in the second sentence about global forest resources, between “resource” and “every two years” we suggest, “after global forest resources comparing the positive and negative aspects of a two-year and five-year cycle.”, and then delete after that. After five-year cycle could you insert “for the upcoming COFO”.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China would like to make some comments on the Food Systems Summit. Could we please see subparagraph (n)? China supports the views expressed by Germany, Argentina and the Russian Federation. In the second sentence, we would like to add some text. “FAO to provide all necessary support”, we would like to add after FAO “and all other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs)”.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Regarding subparagraph (n), we are fine with the proposal by Russia for the first sentence. I think that one of the functions of the Council is also to provide some guidance and we can request information being received, but we are part of the process. I think that there were many calls for the outcomes even if it is not yet defined to be one that we find in evidence-based. We are fine with keeping the initial idea of what was expressed in the first line of this subparagraph. For the second line, we are fine with the proposal of China, but I would just ask whether the Council can request other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to do the same, given that its mandate is really directed to FAO, but we do believe that we need to stress the RBAs collaboration on engaging with the Special Envoy.

The last part of the subparagraph regarding the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) we would agree with what Argentina and Russia said. We would also wonder whether it is limitative to restrict the CFS contribution to the Food Systems Summit discussion in preparation to these two products. We just had the launch of the CFS/[XX] Report about two weeks ago about the global narrative that presented very interesting elements for foods systems change or sustainable food systems and there are also the workstreams that are going on that could be of interest to the Food Systems Summit.

Given that these two products are still under negotiation it is hard to know that we need to ensure that they feed into the discussions and the follow-up process from a procedure perspective. Therefore, we would propose to instead of referring specifically to products to underline the need or the importance of the contribution of CFS work to the Summit discussions and for process.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I have a few slight modifications to propose.

I will start with subparagraph (n). First, I would like to support what my Canadian colleague just said of the addition earlier by Argentina on the science and evidence-based outcome for the Food Systems Summit. I agree with our Canadian colleague and the Argentine Ambassador, it is important to have guidance provided for this. Therefore, we would like to keep that in “science and evidence-based outcome for the Food Systems Summit”.

Secondly, I do agree with our Canadian colleague since those Committee on World Food Security (CFS) products are still under discussion that it is prejudging the outcome and it is better to keep this

reference general as it is right now. Actually, I would request changing “need” for “the importance”, “underline the importance” rather than “need”.

Moving to subparagraph (o), regarding the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), I have a few slight modifications to propose here. In the portion on framework I would like to propose putting in, “the framework of a Member reviewed FAO protocol on data control, use, and protection”. On this Hand-in-Hand subparagraph, we are calling the discussion of the objective criteria for country selection we would like to propose the addition of the following; “reiterated that the Hand-in-Hand Initiative had clear and objective criteria for country selection and noted that the list of selected countries would be expanded according to the defined criteria.”

We have one final slight modification and that is to subparagraph (c), the subparagraph regarding the statistical work and it is a one-word change we are requesting. Instead of the word “core resources” we propose to change that to “existing resources”.

Ms Agnes Rosari DEWI (Indonesia)

We have two proposals, the first one is regarding the Strategic Framework, if we can move to subparagraph (b), after “formal and informal and inclusive” we would like to add the words “transparent, and Member-led process”.

Our next proposal is to the subparagraph about contribution to the Strategic Objective (SO) 1, subparagraph (e). We would like to add on the last part “and encourage FAO to pre-design its Governance at country level in coordination with the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) to support the Government’s effort to achieve food security and sustainable food system”.

Our last proposal is on subparagraph (o). I read it on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) on the last part maybe after the suggestion by our colleague from the United States of America, we want to add “and stress the need for Hand-in-Hand Initiative to adapt to local dynamics, local practices, and national ownership.”

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

Australia would like to make some comments on four subparagraphs and we would like to start at subparagraph (i), which I think is the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) subparagraph. Australia would simply like to support the calls by Argentina to keep this subparagraph focussed on AMR and would like to echo the request to remove the comment about biodiversity to elsewhere.

Moving down now to subparagraph (j), we would like to support the calls of the United Kingdom and request some clarification on the management of this arrangement.

Moving now to subparagraph (k), Australia would be reluctant to see Council’s endorsement to the Livestock Sub-Committee referenced in the Report. Recognizing that the Sub-Committee was not discussed in any details of solution in the Programme Committee as the establishment of this is a decision for Committee on Agriculture (COAG). Noting that, we would propose that the last part of the last sentence starting from, “and supported”, be deleted.

Moving to subparagraph (n) on the Food Systems Summit we would just like to add our support to the subparagraph as written appreciating the valuable edits that have been put forward by my colleagues leading up to this.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I think there were some speakers before me, but you tell me what to do. Shall I come after them or?

CHAIRPERSON

I read the list where I was seeing your name at the end before theirs, but I agree you have had the floor before and made some detailed proposals. Perhaps I should give France the chance to intervene for the first time. I will give you the floor afterwards.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Je voudrais reprendre le paragraphe (a) tout en haut. Il y avait une proposition importante et beaucoup d'interventions l'ont mentionnée pendant tous nos débats, il s'agirait donc de remettre ce qu'avait proposé le délégué allemand: après «rural poverty» rajouter «addressing climate change»; virgule; c'est un concept que beaucoup d'entre nous ont mentionné.

Ensuite, allons sur «taking into account» proposé par l'Argentine. Je reconnais parfaitement la nécessité de traiter les trois dimensions de la soutenabilité et donc je le renforcerais même en remplaçant «taking into account» par «fostering»: «and fostering sustainable development in its three dimensions».

Ensuite pour le paragraphe (d), je suis d'accord aussi avec l'Argentine sur son souhait de voir les sujets traités par les comités techniques, mais n'oublions pas que ces comités techniques se réunissent tous les deux ans, et cette année même plus. Il pourrait y avoir des sujets très urgents. Je pense par exemple aux criquets pèlerins. Si nous voulons en discuter, on ne va pas attendre deux ans qu'un sujet soit traité par un comité technique. C'est pourquoi je rajouterais simplement le mot «in principle», qui permet de garder cette idée tout à fait juste, mais qui, en cas d'urgence ou pour une raison autre, permet de traiter d'un sujet avant que le comité technique, trop lointain, ne se réunisse.

Je voudrais maintenant reprendre la référence à l'élevage, je crois que c'était au paragraphe (k). Je soutiens l'intervention du Burkina Faso, mais j'entends aussi ce qu'a dit la représentante de l'Australie. Il est vrai que le Comité n'a pas encore décidé, c'est pourquoi je garderais la proposition qui avait été faite par le Burkina Faso, mais au lieu de «supported», on dirait: «and emphasize the need for the establishment of a subcommittee of livestock with the ministers of agriculture». Je pense que c'est important, beaucoup de pays africains l'avaient mentionné également, et comme cela avait été un point important au Comité du Programme, je pense que nous devons écouter leur demande.

Maintenant, au paragraphe sur la biodiversité, juste en-dessous, je ne sais pas si nous avons vraiment besoin de consultations, «further inclusive informal consultations», puisque nous avons déjà dit: «it would be reviewed by technical committees». Je crois qu'il faut surtout agir maintenant au moment où les comités reverront les documents, aussi je me demande si nous avons vraiment besoin de ces consultations. Je dirais: «highlighted the need to reach a result to adopt an action plan as soon as possible».

Ensuite, je voudrais aller au paragraphe (n) sur le «Food Systems Summit». Je crois, Monsieur le Président, que nous avons tous une vision ambitieuse de ce Sommet. Nous l'avons dit dans les différentes déclarations et je voudrais reprendre la formulation proposée par mon collègue allemand; notre ambition ne se limite pas à simplement recevoir des informations sur la date; nous avons su, lors de la réunion du Comité consultatif hier, à laquelle participait le Directeur général de la FAO, que nous saurons date et lieu un peu plus tard. Je crois qu'il nous faut ici exprimer, collectivement, notre ambition pour un Sommet qui soit important pour l'avenir des systèmes alimentaires et pour la sécurité alimentaire, tous des sujets qui sont au cœur de la FAO. Je dirais donc «looked forward to an ambitious outcome of the Food Systems Summit» et l'on peut enlever «receiving information». C'est à Mme Agnès Kalibata ou Mme Amina Mohammed qu'il faudra le dire, mais ce n'est nécessaire ici au Conseil de la FAO.

Quand on parle des produits du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA), je crois qu'il faut être précis, car on discute de choses qui sont absolument au cœur du Sommet. Ainsi après «products», je dirais: «en particulier» et là on pourrait remettre les noms des deux produits qui sont en discussion: les «voluntary guidelines» et les «policy recommendations». Je suis d'accord bien sûr pour ajouter ce qu'avait proposé, je crois, l'Argentine «under discussion».

Avant-dernier point, sur la forêt, je voudrais rajouter un concept que nous avons mentionné et qui avait été discuté aussi au Comité du Programme. Je crois qu'il est important d'encourager la FAO à continuer de le soutenir, ainsi je rajouterais au début du paragraphe, au deuxième point, «encourager la FAO à continuer d'aider les Membres à prévenir la déforestation et la dégradation des forêts, à y mettre fin et à inverser la tendance.» C'était l'ancien paragraphe (h).

Permettez-moi simplement de revenir peut-être sur le paragraphe (d), pour voir où vous aviez mis le mot «in principe», voilà très bien.

CHAIRPERSON

France, could I ask you to repeat your comment on forestry because we have not quite captured it.

Ms Delphine BORIONE (France)

Yes, I will say it in English; “encourage FAO to continue to support Members to prevent, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation”.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got a long list of speakers and the request from the Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the floor.

I will give the Chairperson the floor and then we will take a 10 minute break.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of Programme Committee)

There was a question asked by one of the Members of the Council regarding the discussion on the Agenda and the purposes for the Council when I had the floor. Let me take this opportunity again to say that I am a little concerned and surprised by how we are now conducting our work because we have discussed it in formal consultations with Regional Chairs.

We highlighted it, when you go up to the first page of the conclusions it said that “we endorse the recommendations of the Programme Committee”. However, in some cases, because you highlighted some of the recommendations, not all recommendations, I would say it changed a little bit the language of the conclusion of the Programme Committee, which says we will endorse these conclusions, or not to change these conclusions.

I think it partly reopens partly discussions, which we had in the Programme Committee. For example, this question on livestock, we looked at subparagraph 6(m) of the conclusions of the Programme Committee and we had a long discussion in the Programme Committee, similar to the discussion, which we have now in the Council. We found consensus with the language in the subparagraph 6(m), which says “in the light the workings discussions of the proposal of a Sub-Committee Livestock in the forthcoming Session of Committee of Agriculture taking into account” followed by the rest of the text. I would say, it is a clear conclusion, and I think we have the support of all the [XX] Programme Committee Members then avoid I think the depth of discussions, which we have in the Council.

It is the same when it comes to the reference of the Committee of Food Security’s work on voluntary guidelines and the policy conversion process. I think, again, we had a long discussion in the Programme Committee and there we had found consensus on subparagraph 12(h) where is said, “note that the important work of the Committee of Food Security” and then the rest of the text. For example, on mention of biodiversity I think now the text is slightly different than the 14(i) of measuring biodiversity where in 14(i) it stated “stressed the need for participation in inclusive consultation process looking forward to further discussions on the Development Action Plan and requested that informal consultations be held in support of the formal process”.

The last bit of this on the Report we had also cleared a paragraph, which stated, and this is subparagraph 20(h), “encourage FAO to continue to support Members to [XX] prevent and hold and reverse deforestation and forest degradation and to enhance FAO’s work in areas [XX] of prevention, prediction and controlled forest [XX].” I think it is important.

Again, I think we should discuss how to avoid repetition of work between Council and the Programme Committee. That is up to the Council, but if we do not want to endorse some of those conclusions, I think with the authority of the Council we have to clearly state it, but now we are picking and choosing. I will leave it at that because we have spent a long time on this.

On the special request on how to work with the Agenda, I think that when you look to the last subparagraph (r) and also subparagraph proposed by Argentina at the beginning of this Session, I think we have three issues. First is the issue with the Technical Committees and indeed we need to harmonize and sequence our work of the Programme Committee with the work of the Technical Committees taking into account a bottom-up approach. I think that should be formatted in this text and I will care to see the text proposal. However, I think we have to also be very careful because in most of the procedures of the Programme Committee it is also stated that it can take up any issues, which the Members want to take up.

We cannot say that the Programme Committee cannot take an issue of which is requested by a Member, of course, we have at least try to ensure, but not approach the final Technical Committee, but also what was already said by one of the Members of the Council the Programme Committee is meeting four times in the two years, the Technical Committee is only two times. We have to be very careful that we do not have part of the work in the Programme Committee, but of course, the principle should be let us first have the Technical Committees look at an issue before we discuss it in the Programme Committee. It is a principle that cannot be ruled because that is not in accordance with the Basic Texts in the Rules and Procedures.

Then when it comes to what my Russian colleagues said, I think I support it. He clearly stated that first of all we have to make sure that when we have switched to the large Agenda that the *Report of the Programme Committee* is available as soon as possible in order to prepare for Council and behind the problem is, of course, that there are many documents that have to be studied to prepare positions of the Council. Therefore, we have to ensure the early availability of the Report.

I think and perhaps there we should also make a [XX] formal step. When we have large reports of the Programme Committee with many agenda items, it is important that we have perhaps enough time to discuss. Enough time in the Agenda of the Council to discuss the several important items of the opening because now all the items that are mentioned are crucial items for the future and the direction of the FAO. Not only of FAO work itself, but also FAO's work in the broader United Nations framework.

I think we have to see how we manage our Agenda and perhaps even split up some of the items in the Report. This has already been done several items, because some of the times are now coming back on Item 9 and 10 as well, which were already deal within the Report of the Programme Committee.

There we have to I think to see how we can make the work of the Council more effective and efficient, in dealing with the Report of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee. [XX]. Certainly, when the Finance Committee has many Agenda items. Perhaps we have to split the Report, but I think that is a certain issue, which should be discussed in the informal consultations. I think we should make a recommendation on that as well because it is three items we are sequencing with the Technical Committees, the availability of the Report to the Council and how to deal with these reports in the Council. I will suggest some language for you in the conclusion.

CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson of the Programme Committee, you have raised an important issue and that is the discussion which takes place when the conclusions are put on the screen. That is one aspect and the other is you had a word about the conclusions themselves. The conclusions are not just the conclusions of the Report of the Programme Committee. The conclusions are also supposed to reflect the debate and discussion which takes place on the Committee's Report because Council Members are giving their views on the report of the Programme Committee. It does not come for rubber-stamping, it comes for discussion and debate.

That is why Members propose amendments. When they say they do endorse the Report of the Programme Committee, it does not mean that they do not have an opinion on it. They may endorse the topics in that Report, but they have views which they declare. It does not mean that, if my conclusions are worded differently from those of the Programme Committee, they go against it, but they try to

conclude on a specific Item, so they have to be different from the wording of the Programme Committee.

In my view, the problem has been ever since we decided to put the conclusions on the screen. I have been reminding Members to deal only with substantive issues and leave the rest to the Drafting Committee. I am going to take up the aspect of how useful is the Drafting Committee in this present circumstances at my informal meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs, because all the drafting work is being done in the Council. I have been reminding Members ever since this matter was put on the screen.

This is an issue, which we have to discuss, but the important thing, which I am sorry I am unable to agree with you, is that my conclusions do not reflect the Programme Committee's conclusions. They are not supposed to. My conclusions are supposed to reflect the debate of the Council and that means how I have understood the debate and it could be that my conclusions need amendment, additions, deletions etcetera and that is up to the Council.

Having said that we will make a break for 10 minutes and then come back because I have got a long list of speakers.

The meeting was suspended from 11:20 to 11:52 hours

La séance est suspendue de 11 h 20 à 11 h 52

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.20 a las 11.52

CHAIRPERSON

I follow the system that those who are requesting the floor for the first time, I will give them preference over the ones who have already taken the floor. So, I give the floor to Mexico.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

Voy a ser breve.

Continues in English

I will speak in English, to be brief.

Let us move to subparagraph (m), I have a small amendment to this subparagraph. Sorry, "notes" is in the previous one, subparagraph (k). It is (m). I was in subparagraph (m). Now it starts with "appreciate the cross FAO Regional Group statement and I want to propose a change to reflect what has happened. The change will be "appreciate" as it is, then start with "a multi-regional FAO statement" and continue with what it is now with, "on the 2021 Food Systems Summit" etcetera.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I follow the list, as it appeared, Brazil.

I give the floor to Angola.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

Je préférerais parler après l'intervention du Cabo Verde. C'est pour poser une question au sujet de l'élevage, c'est une question qui est en discussion, ainsi que sur la question des criquets pèlerins.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, colleagues, I will follow as it is on the screen. I will go to Brazil; all the new speakers are off the list now.

Ms Gianna MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

I would just like to make a quick comment regarding the comments of the Programme Committee Chair. We understand perfectly the issues and considerations, because we believe that they cannot jeopardize much more [XX] of the Council on the work of FAO and maybe, we think that it is a

prerogative of the Council to change language. Maybe to avoid future misunderstandings, we can consider changing the [XX] of the Programme Committee Report for taking out, for instance, for future taking up for now.

I will go to the language that we would like to see reflected in this Report. The first one, on the subparagraph regarding statistics where we say, “more resources to,” “more core resources”. There was a change by the United States of America, which we support and I would like to see “in particular for capacity development” after “Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2022”, “in particular for capacity development” because this was the main finding of the evaluation, the countries’ problem to properly forward these indicators.

Then I will go to the subparagraph on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We would like to erase “crucial”. In our interventions, we said many times that AMR is a very important debate, but it is now amongst very important things. In addition, we are supporting that we are only talking about AMR here, not biodiversity, as many Members already said.

We supported, in our intervention, the recommendation on the new indicator, so where it is saying, I think in the fifth line, in the fourth and the fifth line, it be “Technical Committees be provided to further improve or change the proposed indicators.” In the end of the subparagraph, we would like to see some language regarding the statements some or many Members made in our discussion yesterday, regarding the need to avoid duplication “and underline the need to avoid duplication of activities undertaken by other actors, such as Codex and its intergovernmental task force on antimicrobial resistance.

In the subparagraph we propose, I understand Members need more clarification from the Secretariat, I think, regarding the [XX] but this is a crucial Item for us and we would like to underline here that it is very important for us.

The other change we would like to see is under subparagraph (b) on the locusts. We very much support this subparagraph and we understand the problem that it poses also in Latin America and it is a local plague right now. However, I would like to see that the last insertion “and called on Members to further contribute to control this plague according to their capacities”, at the end “their national capacities.”

Then, under the subparagraph regarding the peste des petits ruminants (PPR), we understand Burkina Faso’s request from to having this subparagraph and very much support discussing livestock in the Programme Committee and the Council. However, we understand the concern expressed by Australia and other Members regarding the procedure as we are discussing in advance matters that must be discussed in the right Technical Committees.

We, therefore, suggest having a new subparagraph. After the subparagraph that deals with the PPR, having a new subparagraph and we suggest the following language: “Acknowledged the importance of debating livestock issues and the upcoming discussion on the creation of a Sub-Committee on Livestock at the Committee on Agriculture (COAG).”

We think that in this way we address the concerns and the wishes of the many colleagues from Africa and also other colleagues with the importance of livestock and also the concerns regarding the procedure of supporting something that is going to be discussed in the next COAG.

The very last comment on the subparagraph on the Food Systems Summit, Argentina and the United States of America supported the science and evidence-based outcome of the Summit and this was erased at some point of the discussion. We think that it is a very good inclusion, so we would like to see science and evidence-based outcome.

Sr. Guillermo Valentín RODOLICO (Argentina)

Entiendo que habían otras delegaciones antes que nosotros en la solicitud de pedido de palabra. No sé cómo quiere proseguir. [XX]. Habían otras delegaciones en la lista de pedido de palabra, pero si quiere proseguimos.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to give the floor to countries, who are asking for the floor for the first time. I see some of them have appeared now. Angola wants to speak after Cabo Verde, so I will give the floor to Cameroon, Egypt and then Kuwait, and then go back to the countries who have already spoken.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

We have been very silent on this issue of the adoption of this Report, as we thought that it was going in the right direction. However, we think that we have to come back to the issue of the creation of the Sub-Committee on Livestock and propose some language, we know perfectly well that this is an issue that has been going on for four years now, since the 25th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), it has been discussed at the 25th and 26th Sessions of COAG.

We are unfortunate that with regard to the 27th Session, this year we have not yet been able to hold a COAG meeting, which, in principle, was supposed to discuss this matter, given that the 26th Session entrusted the 27th Session of COAG to discuss the proposal for the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Livestock and requested the Secretariat to prepare a report illustrating the financial implications developed, terms of reference, that includes rationale, structure, any of the modalities to be considered by the Bureau for submission to the next Session of the Committee, and that is the Session that we were supposed to hold this year.

“COVID-19” is there to tell us that the Session is not yet effective, so we wish to suggest, probably along the line with Brazil’s suggestion, “acknowledged the importance of the matter before the COAG pertinent to the creation of a Sub-Committee on Livestock and encouraged the discussion to move forward within the COAG”.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I just have two comments, one is very generic. I think we have already discussed this Item for more than two hours and I feel we are doing the work of the Drafting Committee here.

This is a very long conclusion and each Member, with all respect for all distinguished delegates, has priorities and needs, and also the need to find some of their priorities reflected in the conclusions. However, I think that in the first paragraph we are endorsing all the conclusions of the Report of the Programme Committee.

The second comment is that we fully support the text that has been drafted right now by my colleagues from Cameroon, regarding the creation of the Sub-Committee on Livestock and I would like to add language after “acknowledged the importance of livestock”, I would like to propose here “the livestock” and I would like to add something regarding its role in supporting Members in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am very flexible with the language and I fully support what has been said by my colleagues from Cameroon.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

One thing that I would like to request. Now as you mentioned, Chairperson, how the conclusions of the Council are different from the Report of the Programme Committee, perhaps a bit of clarification can be added to amend or delete some of the items as we see. Or will this be like what happened yesterday when a couple of the issues that some Members objected to on one of the matters, that was not mentioned in the Report of the Programme Committee as we see now. Many things have been added. I understand exactly how important these issues before us are.

Then the other thing that I would also probably request of the Chair of the Programme Committee, when he requests a word, or the floor, to be given after any Members, so we can understand exactly. Because it is so hard for him, I think, to go over so many things at the same time, after five or six or seven countries speak and then for him to go over every point. I think it would be better if he can intervene, if he requests, if he few wishes, of course, after any Member.

The other thing I would like to stress is the importance of the Sub-Committee on Livestock. Yes, as our dear colleague from Cameroon mentioned, it has been discussed many times before, during the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and it is quite important. Especially at this time, with the COVID-19. It is very important that we stress the importance of the creation of the Sub-Committee on Livestock and I also appreciate the suggestion given by France on this matter.

CHAIRPERSON

The only comment I can make is that additions and deletions in the conclusions are supposed to reflect the discussions done here. The first sentence of the conclusions is: “The Council endorses the report of Committee X”, in this case the Programme Committee. However, the Council spent half a day debating and giving views on various issues. The conclusions have to reflect the discussions of the Council. That does not mean my conclusions are perfect. That is why it is up to the Council to amend, add or delete.

However, the Council saying, “The Council endorses the Report of the Programme Committee” and then goes on giving different opinions on some of the issues, that is because the Council is not rubber-stamping the Programme Committee’s Report, otherwise we would not need a debate.

When we started putting conclusions on the screen, my view has always been to differentiate, make a difference between adding words and dealing with some particular aspects, substantive issues. We have a Drafting Committee for the rest.

The Drafting Committee has representatives from every region. The Drafting Committee has the verbatim records of what Members said as well. The Drafting Committee would have the conclusions of the Chair as amended by Members, like they are doing now. My appeal has always been to leave the refinement of the words to the Drafting Committee and deal with substantive issues. That is my view, but it is up to the Council to deal with the conclusions.

As for giving the floor to the Chair of the Programme Committee, or the Chair of the Finance Committee, depending on which Committee’s Report is being discussed, the reason I gave the floor is because I felt that the Chair has some clarification to give on certain issues which different Members may keep referring to, unless a clarification is there, and at least that issue may be off the table. That is why one should not wait right until the end, because then the Chair may be clarifying issues and the debate would start all over again.

He should be given the floor as differences develop, so that he can give a clarification which may influence the Members to intervene in a different way. I do not know what other Members think, but my view is that we should not spend time on this; we will take this up at the first next meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs, where the working methods of the Council are discussed. I would like to concentrate on the conclusions, which are on the screen.

China, you have the floor.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

First of all, I would like to look at the subparagraph related to statistics. Earlier we also noticed that colleagues added the second half of the subparagraph. We suggested deleting “existing” before “resources”, because the statistical work is a priority of FAO. Therefore, in the future, we should increase resources to support the FAO’s work in this area. We feel that we can delete “existing” and that we can shift “founding within the Organization”.

In addition, we would like to increase wording such as “voluntary contributions”, so “more resources or and voluntary contributions and other resources”.

Second, please let us look at subparagraph (n). The World Food System Summit. We have noted that some colleagues have mentioned that we used “requested”. China also considers that we can change the word from “requested” into “suggested”. Exactly.

Furthermore, I would like to have a look at subparagraph (f). The discussion on the creation of the Sub-Committee of Livestock. Burkina Faso suggested to add the content related to the creation of a Sub-Committee of Livestock, which we support. We have noted that livestock plays a very important role to the livelihood production and economy in Africa. We also have had lengthy discussions on this issue at the Committee on Agriculture (COAG). That is why we feel we have to stress this issue.

Meanwhile, we also have noted that Brazil made a point, the issue of procedure. Therefore, we also support the opinions made by Brazil, Cameroon and other colleagues. However, here we would like to modify the last part of the subparagraph, so that we do not use “encouraged”, and we change it into “requested”, by which we support the work done by the Committee for further in this area.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Having heard the discussion between you and the Chair of the Programme Committee before the break, and having heard the reaction, in particular from Brazil, we can propose to consider the following suggestion in order to avoid possible further misunderstandings.

There is suggestion on subparagraph 1 in the *chapeau*. We could say, “The Council reviewed the report of the session of the Programme Committee and in particular”. Changing “endorsed” to “reviewed”. We are not insisting on this, but we think there is a logic behind this proposal, and it is absolutely in line with the rubber-stamping principle you just introduced to us. Probably this approach could work in the future, applying to other Council Sessions. However again, this is for the consideration of Council Members.

Secondly, we have to say that, still we think that this is not the best idea to rewrite the FAO vision and I am referring to the subparagraph 1(a). The Council Members, in our opinion, should not produce the new FAO vision whenever they like. The current Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) – that was approved in 2019 – provided us already with the definition of FAO’s vision. This FAO vision is absolutely different from what we have on the screen right now. If there is intention to discuss FAO’s vision, we are ready to do this, but we think it would be more logical to discuss this issue within the consultations on the Strategic Framework of FAO, the future Strategic Framework of FAO. That is why we reiterate our position about this subparagraph 1(a).

Speaking about the UN Food Systems Summit, and I missed the correct number of the subparagraph, yes, thank you very much. That is fine and about (o), our proposal is to insert the word “agreed” in between “Committee on World Food Security (CFS)” and “products.” It is absolutely crucial that we are talking about the agreed products and we are not talking about something which is not agreed by the Members of the Committee on World Food Security. Again, in this subparagraph, we think it would be more appropriate to say “science- and evidence-based results from the CFS”. So, to change “outcomes” to “results” or “result”. We are flexible on this.

Speaking about the subparagraph and the modifications proposed by several delegations on the financing on statistics. Probably it would be appropriate to say: “should be allocated to the FAO’s statistical work in the future approved PWB”, because we all should understand that the PWB should be approved and the budget of this future, PWB should be approved. Therefore, I think that we do not need to put a comma between “future” and “approved”. We can delete “future”. Yes. “Statistical work within the approved PWB 2020 to 2026.

Ms Elsa SIMÕES (Cabo Verde)

I would just like to support the proposal on subparagraph (l), on the Sub-Committee for Livestock, the proposal made by Cameroon, Brazil, Egypt and China. Just to give our complete support to that that would reflect what we wanted to share.

We would like to go to the subparagraph on locusts and before “avert its reappearance”, we would like to have “Request FAO to consider long-term strategies, including institutional capacity and benchmark research studies to avert its reappearance.”

Sr. Guillermo Valentín RODOLICO (Argentina)

Antes que nada quería hacer un comentario. Lo que dijo usted y lo que dijo el Presidente del Comité de Programa a lo cual totalmente coincidimos. Efectivamente, no se trata de poner un sello a lo discutido en el Comité de Programa. Obviamente el Consejo es soberano y puede tratar los temas y discutir y tener conclusiones inclusive diferentes al Comité de Programa. Eso nadie lo discute.

Lo que sí nosotros queremos llamar la atención es que como miembros del Comité de Programa, no hemos traído al Consejo ninguna posición diferente a lo discutido y acordado después de largos debates en el Comité de Programa bajo ningún tema y aún estando en desacuerdo hemos traído al Consejo. Entonces, efectivamente, nadie prohíbe que eso no ocurra, pero sí nos llama la atención que miembros del Comité de Programa traigan al Consejo cuestiones que han sido acordadas y que han sido consensuadas en el Comité de Programa.

Así que, habiendo dicho esto, sí quisiéramos empezar a ser esquemáticos en los comentarios que tenemos en este momento. Así que si pueden, por favor, empezar desde la frase inicial del informe sería muy bueno.

Antes que nada, entiendo justamente en el sentido de que el Consejo no es un sello de goma de lo que se discute en el Comité de Programa pero sí quisiéramos destacar que durante el debate del Consejo casi todos los delegados, sino todos, hicieron loas al trabajo del Comité de Programa teniendo en cuenta la bastedad de los temas, la profundidad del debate, las conclusiones arribadas y por supuesto el rol de Presidente.

Entonces, teniendo en cuenta todo eso, yo creo que no debemos sentar un precedente y debemos seguir las prácticas de la FAO en cuanto a que el Consejo adopta el informe. Habiendo dicho esto, quisiera decir que la delegación argentina, en el párrafo A, está totalmente de acuerdo con lo expresado por el colega de Rusia.

Nosotros inicialmente no veíamos un valor agregado en el párrafo pero quisimos mejorarlo y en esa voluntad de mejorar los párrafos propuestos hicimos esa modificación. Ahora, estamos totalmente de acuerdo con el colega ruso que tal vez, teniendo en cuenta que por allí, aquí y ahora no sería el momento propicio de discutir la visión de la FAO, este párrafo podría quedar afuera. En todo caso deberíamos ver cuál es la visión de la FAO en los textos que ya fueron aprobados en otras instancias pero creo que eso no fue objetivo de debate bajo este punto en el Consejo.

Si bajamos al párrafo (b). Entiendo perfectamente también la propuesta del colega de Rusia de tener en cuenta los procesos formales y las consultas informales. La única preocupación nuestra es que justamente hay una diferencia, no están a la par un proceso formal con una consulta informal, digamos. Hay diferencia de origen; entonces, nos gustaría proponer como lenguaje aquí *“including the formal process, which will be supported, or shall be supported by another category”* or *“which shall be supported by informal, inclusive, transparent and Member-led consultations for its development”*. Not *“a formal process”* - *“the formal process”* porque es el proceso formal específico para discutir esto. *“shall be supported”* para no ser tan categóricos. *“Encourage FAO to continue to support Members to access funding from platforms such as Green Climate Fund in order to protect forests”*.

Sacamos “processes”. Sí. Perfect. Pasando al párrafo C, creo que está bien. Tal vez allí una corrección para el Comité de Redacción, *“matrix”* for *“metrics”* pero lo dejamos para el Comité de Redacción. Respecto al punto D, efectivamente, estamos de acuerdo con lo que dice el Presidente del Comité de Programa, siempre lo escuchamos atentamente.

Efectivamente el principio tiene que ser que los Comités Técnicos son los puntos de entrada de las cuestiones técnicas para respetar el bottom-up approach. Sí quisiéramos resaltar que, la representación de Francia habló que los Comités Técnicos se reúnen cada dos años y eso es una media verdad porque el Director General, en caso con el acuerdo del Presidente del comité técnico específico puede llamar si es necesario, ante una emergencia, y convocar a un comité técnico; también como el presidente de un comité técnico con la mayoría de los miembros pueden también solicitar que se reúna un comité técnico [XX] un nuevo período.

Nosotros creemos que esto es importante remarcarlo porque a lo largo del Comité de Programa y en todas las intervenciones, somos muy cuidadosos del proceso formal, porque no hay que enamorarse de la excepcionalidad y situaciones como la que estamos viviendo con la pandemia, no pueden ser excusa para avanzar en procesos formales que garantizan la transparencia, la inclusividad y la oportunidad para que todos puedan intervenir en los temas de sustancia.

Bajando al párrafo 9(e). ¿Si puede bajar un poquito más? No, aquí no teníamos nada. Bajando un poco más el informe; (f) no. Perfecto. Siga bajando al próximo párrafo. Siga bajando, por favor, no tenemos comentarios aquí. Siga bajando, no tenemos comentarios con el (i). No tenemos comentarios, tampoco. Siga bajando. Disculpe que tengo que hacerlo así pero es que hubo tantos cambios que ya estamos.

Voy a hacer comentarios respecto al párrafo (p). En el párrafo (p), quisiera recordar específicamente, haciendo eco de la propuesta de la colega de Estados Unidos, quisiera recordar el Informe, el documento CL164/4, que es el *Informe del Comité de Programa respecto al Hand in Hand Initiative*, lo que no se dijo es que para establecer el criterio, definir criterios, se tendría que tener en cuenta el impacto de la pandemia del COVID-19.

Y que, además, quisiéramos también recordar el párrafo 7(d) de la sesión 163 del Consejo. Entonces, voy a proponer el lenguaje. Después de “define criteria” sería el siguiente wording “and would take emergency crisis, such as the impact of COVID-19, into consideration in the selection process, as well paragraph 7(d) of the 163 Session of the Council.”

Que recuerdo, este párrafo decía que en el Hand in Hand Initiative también se tenía que tener en cuenta la necesidad de los países de ingresos medios. Y lo otro habría que borrarlo.

¿Podemos pasar al próximo párrafo, Presidente? Podemos seguir pasando. En el párrafo (r), “encourage FAO to continue to support Members”, y aquí quisiéramos cambiar el texto, modificarlo. “To access funding from platforms such as Green Climate Fund in order to protect forests”, y lo otro lo borraríamos. Y todo el resto después de forests lo sacaríamos. “To protect forests” es inclusivo a todo lo que involucra la protección de los bosques.

Estos son nuestros comentarios por ahora. Disculpe, señor Presidente, pero quisimos ser esquemáticos para no ir y volver sobre el texto.

CHAIRPERSON

I think I still got some speakers and we have gone beyond the time for the break. It is 12:45 hours, we should have adjourned the Session at 12:30 hours. I will adjourn the Session now and we meet again at 14:30 hours and proceed with the discussion.

There are still about four speakers on the list and going by my experience, I think the Members will make quite a few suggestions. Therefore, I will adjourn the meeting and we will meet again at 14:30 hours.

The meeting rose at 12:44 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 44

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.44

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatrième session
164.º período de sesiones**

**Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020
Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020
Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020**

**SIXTH PLENARY SESSION
SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

8 July 2020

The Sixth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:31 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La sixième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 31
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la sexta sesión plenaria a las 14.31
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 6. Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (8-18 June 2020) (continued)

Point 6. Rapport de la cent vingt-huitième session du Comité du Programme (8-18 juin 2020) (suite)

Tema 6. Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020) (continuación)

(CL 164/6, REV 1)

CHAIRPERSON

We can now start our afternoon session. We are still continuing with the conclusions on Item 6. I have on my list quite a few speakers. I give the floor to Finland.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I would like to give my support that this conclusion starts with “endorsed” because we really have recently endorsed a very valuable work made by the Programme Committee. This idea of the conclusion is to discuss and reflect what was said during these discussions. I have two points to make this a bit more balanced. One is in [XX] on the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) issues. Now the common tone in this is a bit restrictive. There was a lot of encouragement for the AMR work in FAO and there are several possibilities, for example, in subparagraph (j) rather than “emphasize that it was signed by FAO Management”, “note that it was signed by”. In this case what it says it is more important and not to emphasize on everything.

Another issue concerning forests in subparagraph (r) gives a very limiting picture of the very important work of FAO in forests. In our statement, we wanted to highlight the very strong interlinkage between food security and forestry. I would propose to put it in the beginning, after “feed the planet” we have “deforestation”, therefore, “transform this food system to feed the planet without deforestation and stress the interlinkage between food security and forestry”.

This formulation gives constraints for the very broad area of forestry work in FAO. I do not want to say this funding is very important, but it cannot be the only one mentioned. I would like to add what was actually deleted, the last sentence, “the forthcoming Session of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and encourage FAO to continue to support Members to prevent, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation”. I think it describes in a more balanced way the work on forestry in FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Finland. Following the principle of first speakers, Angola and then United Kingdom and then Germany.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

Je voudrais intervenir sur deux points. Le premier concerne le sous-comité de l'élevage. Je tiens à remercier le Burkina Faso, le Brésil, le Cameroun, l'Égypte et la Chine pour leur contribution sur ce point avec lesquels je suis pleinement d'accord. Le deuxième point concerne les criquets pèlerins, qui posent problème en ce moment en Afrique de l'Est et au Proche Orient, mais nous devons tenir compte du fait que dans un proche avenir, ils pourraient devenir un problème pour d'autres régions du monde. Nous devons tout faire pour éliminer ce fléau. Pour cette raison nous accueillons la solution offerte par Cabo Verde sur la rédaction de ce point.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Could we start at the top, with the *chapeau* in paragraph 1? I would like to stress the words of Finland, and others, that we would prefer to continue with the wording “endorsed” and I hope that the Programme Committee Chair has got some language to propose, which I certainly invite him to do.

Moving down, could we go to the subparagraph (d)? Here is where I think the Programme Committee Chair has got some language that would be useful, and I would encourage that.

I would now like to turn to the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) subparagraph. Where it says “to further improve or change the proposed indicators on AMR,” we spent a lot of time discussing this in the Programme Committee and eventually we agreed a form of wording which I would encourage us to use here and I think the wording was, “change, if needed, the proposed indicator.” I would encourage us to include the words “if needed” in there.

Could we go back to subparagraph (c)? You will remember that I mentioned this subparagraph in my first intervention on the conclusions. I highlighted the importance, as others did in our discussion yesterday, highlighted the importance of FAO’s Strategic Framework and Results Framework reflecting its normative work. I would like to propose a form of words to address that point.

Just before that, I would completely agree with Brazil, with their desire to have FAO’s Results Framework very much focused on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. That is a really important point and something that I have been advocating for, for IFAD and for WFP as well because I think if we really want the collaboration between the United Nations and others, we all need to focus on achieving the same results. Therefore, I absolutely agree with the point.

Moving on to my proposal here I would delete the first two lines and start the subparagraph, “Requested the FAO’s Results Framework focuses as much as possible on SDG indicators,” and I would remove the word “custodian” because, as Management has explained, there are many relevant SDG indicators that FAO will be reporting on that they are not custodian for and the example that was given was the climate change indicators, but there will be others. “Requested that FAO’s Results Framework focuses as much as possible on SDG indicators for monitoring impact at country level, recognizing that FAO’s normative work will require monitoring outside the SDG framework.”

I would now like to move to subparagraph (g) on statistics evaluation. Just a short background. The recommendation in this evaluation was that more Regular Programme resources be allocated to FAO’s statistics work. I would insert the words, “Regular Programme resources”.

Turning to the last subparagraph, I think the Chair of the Programme Committee might have some language to propose here.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I have only two remarks. Could we go to the subparagraph on the Food Systems Summit (FSS)? It is subparagraph (o).

I would suggest that we change it in order to express more clearly our commitment as Council and take a more active approach I had suggested at the outset, instead of “looked forward” to “support”. That is number one.

Number two, and that refers to the intervention of the distinguished Chinese colleague, who had introduced “suggested FAO and all other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to provide all necessary support.” I would like to go back to, “requested,” because, as I think we all agree, we have to give guidance to the Organization, to FAO and also the other RBAs. This is a clear request; it is not just a suggestion which is in the prerogative of Management.

Furthermore, it is in line to speak of requests with the multi-regional statement, where we also request explicitly FAO to provide all necessary support. I think this would be agreed language.

On subparagraph (r), on the forestry, deforestation, we would support what Finland just had introduced “encourage FAO to continue to support Members” because this is agreed language from the Report of the Programme Committee. This language finds our support.

Ms Gianna MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

I will go in alphabetical order. Subparagraph (a), we understand and support Russia and Argentina’s considerations and suggest maybe deleting the subparagraph and the discussions on FAO’s vision be done during the consultations on the new Strategic Framework.

To subparagraph (f), we mentioned in our intervention, yesterday, our concern of this desire to redesign the governance at country level and, as I understood from the explanation from the Director of the Office of Evaluation, it was not really the governance, it was the management or the coordination, so to redesign its management or coordination. I do not think “governance” is the right word there.

Then in subparagraph (r), in the very end of the subparagraph, we would like to see “and access funding from platforms such as Green Climate Fund (GCF) in order to”, we would like to read “protect, restore and sustainably manage forests.”

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

I fully agree with what Egypt said earlier. We are very uneasy to spend a whole day on one issue; it is too much for the Plenary. My Minister can get annoyed by this and if we have High-Level people in this context, it might be worrisome. I really plead that we focus.

Let us go to subparagraph (a), first sentence. There is no added value to this sentence, so we support deletion of this subparagraph.

We go to (c). I think the previous (c) is now becoming (b). I think we should use the words “recognize FAO’s work”. If this is on normative work, it is not only what we need. Therefore, “we recommend that FAO’s work”, not “normative work”, “work will require monitoring outside the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework”.

We go to subparagraph (n). It should be subparagraph (m) now. This is appreciating a multiregional FAO statement. We should be mindful of the fact that we can understand that. However, the future readers of this Report, will not understand what we meant by multiregional FAO statement.

The first one “the cross-regional group statement at FAO”, that was the best way to formulate it. I would prefer instead of “multiregional FAO statement,” the “the cross-FAO Regional Groups statement”.

Finally, we go to subparagraph (r). What we want to do here is to support the work of the Committee on Forestry (COFO) and then the Council should send a message in support of the work of the Council towards sustainable management of the forest. I am suggesting the following “...and urge Members to support the work of COFO in sustainable management of forests,” and we delete the rest. When we start citing one by one, then it makes it much more difficult. We stop it at “sustainable management of forests.”

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

On the new subparagraph (d), subparagraph (b), about the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, we fully agree with the statement made by distinguished representative of United Kingdom that there are many relevant SDG indicators. At the same time, there are many irrelevant SDG indicators for FAO’s work. In this regard, we think it would be important to mention the word “relevant” or “custodian” or that indicators are within the mandate of FAO. I can propose many alternatives to this idea, but since the Representative from the United Kingdom already mentioned the word “relevant”, I can agree with this proposal.

Regarding the second part of this phrase, we would be pleased to know what kind of outside SDG frameworks we are talking about. Probably, the author of this subparagraph could kindly explain us. We think it is absolutely necessary to be on the same page when we are talking about Strategic Framework and Results Framework of FAO.

Let me also comment a new subparagraph (n). This subparagraph seems to us quite strange. It is not within the mandate of FAO Council to request funding from Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). We can invite, we can encourage, we can propose, suggest, but, in our opinion, it is not very appropriate to say, “request IFAD to do,” because they have their own Governing Bodies. To insert “invite” will be a good solution. In the beginning of this subparagraph, we say, “support the ambitious results in 2021.” I have to ask you, how can we support something that will be precursed in future? Maybe some further

explanations could be received, but we think the initial proposal, “looked forward,” is more in line with what the Members expressed during the debates.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Can we go back to new subparagraph (b) please?

I support the inclusion of the word “relevant.” I wanted to come back to the last segment of that subparagraph that currently reads, “recognizing that FAO’s work will require monitoring outside the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework,” and my Russian colleagues asked for a bit of explanation. The point I was trying to make here is that, the work that FAO does at country level, we should, as far as possible, use relevant SDG indicators to monitor it.

However, FAO’s Results Framework will not just be looking at what FAO does at country level. The Results Framework will also look at the work that FAO does at Headquarters, for example some of the normative work. It will also look at some of what is currently included under the functional indicators. That is what I am getting at here because we want the Results Framework to focus, at the country level, but we also want it to focus on some other things as well. I do not think that is controversial and that is what I am trying to get at with the last part of the subparagraph.

Originally, we had included the word “normative work” to distinguish it and Cameroon suggested that was delete. Perhaps we could say, “recognizing that some of FAO’s work”. We would insert the words, “some of”, “will require monitoring outside the SDGs framework”. That, essentially, is all the things that includes some of FAO’s normative work, but it also includes a lot of other functional administrative indicators as well.

CHAIRPERSON

France, then Argentina, and I hope then that is the end because I have got no one else on the list.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Nous touchons des sujets qui comptent beaucoup pour chacun de nous et il est important d’avoir cette discussion. Je voudrais revenir sur le sous-paragraphe (r) et faire appel à mon collègue du Cameroun pour garder la fin du sous-paragraphe qui contient des concepts importants pour beaucoup de pays et que plusieurs rapports ont mentionnés. Je crois qu’il y avait un accord et nous pourrions garder ce sous-paragraphe ainsi que les deux ajouts proposés d’un commun accord par différents États Membres, dont la Finlande, l’Allemagne, le Brésil, ainsi que l’Argentine et la Grèce récemment. Donc je voudrais qu’on reprenne ce qui avait été écrit.

Pour revenir à la formulation du sous-paragraphe sur le Sommet des systèmes alimentaires et prendre en compte l’esprit de l’intervention de la Russie, plutôt que « *look forward* », qui est une expression trop passive; je crois qu’on pourrait dire « *is committed to* », qui rend bien le sens de notre engagement commun, car je crois que tout part d’un engagement commun.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quisiera respaldar la sugerencia del representante de Brasil sobre el primer punto, la letra (a). Creo que la sugerencia de Brasil de eliminar el párrafo me parece más pertinente.

Con respecto a lo expresado por el representante de Angola, quiero manifestar mi total respaldo a su preocupación y a la preocupación de la región de África, y no solamente, con respecto al tema de la langosta del desierto, en la cual estamos absolutamente de acuerdo.

Con respecto al subpárrafo (g), subpárrafo (f) perdón, cuando dice, “*request of the [XX] resources.*” Nosotros preferimos la expresión anterior que es “*existing resources.*” La logica de esto es simple, nosotros entendemos que deben ser tanto los recursos ordinarios como las contribuciones no condicionadas. Y, por lo tanto, entiendo que ese sería el *wording* más correcto.

Luego, si me permite, pasaría al subpárrafo (m). En el subpárrafo (m) me parece que México planteó una cuestión que refleja la realidad más allá de los esfuerzos que hemos hecho todos los Grupos

Regionales que el “*FAO multiregional group*” no “*regional*” sino “*multiregional FAO*”. “*Multiregional*” not “*regional*”. “*Multiregional FAO statement.*” Correcto, porque eso es la realidad.

Por último, el subpárrafo (o). No, este es ok. Vamos al subpárrafo (r), sobre bosques. En el tema de bosques respaldamos la posición de Brazil. Y en el subpárrafo (r), en lugar de decir “*Committee*” nosotros sugerimos colocar “*Council*”. “*Of the Council.*” Hay que eliminar “*Committee*” y reemplazarlo por “*Council*”. “*Methods of the Council*”, no “*Committee*”.

Y el último comentario, es el punto sobre biodiversidad, si me permite, que sería el subpárrafo (l). Allí quiero decir que me pareció correcto la sugerencia planteada por mi distinguida colega del Reino Unido sobre la idea de respetar el lenguaje acordado. Y en ese mismo sentido, quisiera decir que la expresión “*as soon as possible*” no refleja ni el lenguaje acordado, ni tampoco los procesos como tal cual son. Si usted me permite justificar este planteo, yo lo haría a partir del *Informe del 128.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (8-18 de junio de 2020)* respecto de la aplicación de la estrategia sobre biodiversidad que surge del subpárrafo 14 (h). Si me lo permite, lo leo rápidamente. El subpárrafo 14 (h) habla: “recalcó la necesidad de que los comités técnicos sobre pesca (COFI), actividad forestal (COFO) y agricultura (COAG) examinaran el proyecto de Plan de acción, como decidió el Consejo en su 163.º período de sesiones, antes de que se revisara el proyecto de Plan de acción en el Comité del Programa.”

Lo que quiero decir, es que hay un proceso preestablecido. Por lo tanto, la expresión “*as soon as possible*” podría dar lugar a interpretarse que podría haber alternativas a un proceso preestablecido. Por lo tanto, mantenemos la idea de que la expresión, “*as soon as possible*” en ese párrafo no es conveniente, ni razonable.

Ms Agnes Rosari DEWI (Indonesia)

Can we go to subparagraph (e)? We would like to agree with our colleague from Brazil in her suggestion to use the word “coordination”, “redesign its coordination, at country level” and the rest remains the same.

The second suggestion we would like to propose is on subparagraph (n). We would like to suggest to delete from “in particular” until “under the discussion.” The reason for this is, we agree that the Committee on World Food Security’s (CFS) work should fit to Food Systems Summit (FSS) substantively. We should not limit ourselves to this ongoing work and if this ongoing work concluded, [XX] will contribute to FSS.

The last thing is on the Livestock Committee. We would like to express our support to the creation of Sub-Committee on Livestock.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

My suggestion is that you leave some of the statements where two parties are making different statements on the same subparagraph, and you leave that to the Drafting Committee to address it. I know you want to send a clean text to the Drafting Committee, but I am afraid we cannot be in alignment with some of the statements that are made here and so, it is up to you to decide.

Let us go to subparagraph (m) first. I still do not understand what multiregional FAO is. This is the first time I am seeing multiregional FAO, as an expression. Please leave what we said and what is on the screen now and send that to the Drafting Committee to decide. What we heard yesterday was a statement from across all regions. You might not be part of it as a country, but across all regions there were countries that joined that statement. That is why we say, cross-regional statement because it was read by Canada, and I cannot remember if it was Bangladesh or Myanmar. However, it was read by two regions. That is the fact that we had yesterday, so what is a multiregional FAO?

Let us go to subparagraph (r), please. I am from a forestry country and my country is part of those countries that are in the second forest basin of the world and we perfectly know what we want, as a forest country and what we are doing is sustainable management of our forests. Nobody can stop us from exploiting our forests. There is no more forest exploitation. If we think of deforestation, there is

no word of forest replanting. We prefer one word, if that is not possible, we leave those two expressions and send it to the Drafting Committee.

We propose and we stick to sustainable management of forests because we are a forest country.

I am sorry if I had to explain because this is not the time for arguments, it is the time to bring statements and to complete the Report. If you want to propose something, you do it straight away. That is our proposal and our submission.

CHAIRPERSON

We have to take a decision, because at every Council we have had this view that the Plenary is becoming like a Drafting Committee. I have pointed it out at every Council Meeting. I have even once said that if I go in the corridor, and come across some smiling Members, they are bound to be Members of the Drafting Committee, because their work has already been done. This really cannot carry on. We started this Item yesterday. We spent the whole afternoon on it. The first thing in the morning today were the conclusions, and we are still here at nearly 15:30 hours. We still have got the whole Agenda left, and tomorrow is supposed to be the Drafting Committee.

The Plenary is not doing what it always said to do, or rather that it does the negotiations in this bigger Membership and does not want to leave them to the Drafting Committee. We have been arguing over words. Yesterday, there was the suggestion that we should not use the 100th and something session of the future Committee, but we should say it in the future session. The substantive issue there is that probably even the Drafting Committee will not spend time on that.

We have come to a point where we have to make a decision. I had only one speaker left before the Chair of the Programme Committee, and I thought that would be the end. However, as soon as someone makes an amendment, four other speakers come forward, and now I have got six speakers on the line. If you carry on this way, the Council will never end.

I put this suggestion to you, and I am grateful to Cameroon for suggesting it. Should we leave to the Drafting Committee wherever there is a difference on the wording, instead of holding up the whole process?

Can I have some input on this, before I give the floor to suggest amending the conclusions further or proposing alternative wording? Can I have some views on whether we should leave this word versus that word to the Drafting Committee?

The floor is open for Members.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I think we have discussed this Agenda Item long enough and I think countries have had enough time to share their views. I think we can leave the conclusions as they are now and pass them on to the Drafting Committee for them to look at the wording. We are discussing enough in detail and let us pass it on to the Drafting Committee. Members who wish to raise issues can do so at the Drafting Committee, especially when it comes to wording and semantics.

I would like to touch the point raised by our dear friend from Cameroon. I understand his point of view, where he mentioned about the cross-regional statement on Food Systems Summit (FSS), but I just have to share with you that we do not get all the regions' agreement on this. That is why we have to use "multiregional statement", rather than "cross-regional statement". We have to be fair to the regions that did not come on board.

I urge you to allow the Drafting Committee to carry on the role.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico)

All I wanted to say is what our representative from Malaysia has just said. That this statement of yesterday was not shared by all the Regional Groups. Therefore, we have to use another word and maybe we can use "joint statement", which is a fact as well.

We can totally agree we need to move forward and we need to leave it to the Drafting Committee.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

On this particular subparagraph on forestry, I am happy to leave that to the Drafting Committee.

However, I am not sure that it would be right at this point just to leave the conclusions as they are, for the Drafting Committee because there are a number of other places where suggestions have been made and colleagues have not had an opportunity to query them. I think perhaps if we are going through. It is very difficult to change the process halfway through it. On this subparagraph, I am happy with that and perhaps we could highlight other subparagraphs, which we would like the Drafting Committee to resolve and certainly I think that would be fine as we go along. I am not completely happy about just leaving it as it is and moving on right now.

In particular, turning to subparagraph (g) I think, on statistics, I think the concept of existing resources is not very clear, partly because when the Programme Committee discussed this, we were clear in our conclusions that we wanted this to be for the next biennium onwards. Therefore, in a sense, the resources out there at the moment would be from 2022 onwards. The resources are not existing and that is why I do not think that concept is the right one. I would much rather it were Regular Programme.

I am happy to highlight that in yellow, with both options there, now I have discussed it, and send it to the Drafting Committee to work out. I think there will be other issues like that throughout the text where colleagues have not had the opportunity to say, okay, we will just leave it to the Drafting Committee to sort out. That is why I think it is a little bit tricky just to stop right now and hand it over to the Drafting Committee that perhaps, if there are a number of issues that we cannot agree on, we could highlight them and say, alright, we will give them to the Drafting Committee.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Mi colega de mi representación, en alguna de las intervenciones durante la mañana, mencionó con claridad que, si bien el Consejo es soberano para discutir todas las cuestiones, resultaría o hubiera resultado mucho más prolijo si los que participamos del Comité del Programa hubiéramos respetado los consensos que hemos acordado y cerrado en esa reunión. Interpretando que otros delegados que no son parte del Comité del Programa hubieran tenido, por supuesto, más espacio para participar y discutir de cuestiones en las cuales no tuvieron la oportunidad para hacerlo, pero ese no fue el caso.

Entonces, si este no es el caso, esto obliga a discutir cuestiones que ya habíamos discutido y que habíamos podido llegar a ciertos consensos. Por ello, resaltamos la labor del Presidente del Comité del Programa, por su liderazgo para facilitar esos consensos. Repito, no es una cuestión que viole ninguna normativa pero creo que es desprolijo volver a abrir cuestiones que hemos acordado y consensuado, por lo menos los miembros del Comité del Programa, entonces estamos en esta situación.

En segundo lugar, como dijo la delegada del Reino Unido en la última intervención, si vamos, solo como ejemplo, en el caso del punto (f) y hablamos de si ponemos “*existing resources*” o “todo tipo de recursos” no es lo mismo. Es un tema conceptual, una discusión política, no una discusión de *wording*. Yo no quiero ir a discutir al Comité de Redacción una cuestión que es política o conceptual porque el Comité de Redacción no negocia conceptos sino palabras, mejores textos y expresiones, pero no la discusión política que está en el trasfondo de conceptos importantes.

Respecto a la cuestión de los recursos, nosotros estamos discutiendo, por ejemplo en el punto (f), la importancia de que sean todos los recursos. Sean los recursos de los aportes que son los aportes obligatorios, como todo tipo de recursos, y esta es una discusión política, porque esto significa que los recursos a los cuales aspiramos, hayan cada vez menos recursos condicionados y los recursos que se aporten sean recursos para los objetivos que la Organización tiene como prioridad. Por lo tanto, yo acepto y acompaño su preocupación, nosotros no teníamos ninguna intención de discutir ni siquiera lo que no estábamos de acuerdo pero que habíamos consensuado en el Comité del Programa. Sin embargo, este no fue el caso.

Quizá habría que pensar bien artículo por artículo qué es lo que realmente podemos dejar para el Comité de Redacción y dónde hay discusiones de carácter conceptual.

CHAIRPERSON

This is the second time I have heard that the Report of the Programme Committee was a consensus report. I would agree. The Programme Committee did an excellent job. It is a Committee made up of 12 Members and a Chair. It is a Committee of the Council; the Council is 49 Members and is a sovereign body.

The Report of the Programme Committee comes to the Council. The fact that Members of the Council are discussing and amplifying on what the Programme Committee is doing does not take anything away from the good work which the Programme Committee has done. The Programme Committee has done an excellent work, it reached a consensus, but it was 12 Countries, plus a Chairperson. Here are 49 Countries and they have been talking on this Item since yesterday.

There is even disagreement between the same Members of the Programme Committee now, although they have agreed in the Programme Committee before. I would like to know why there is disagreement on wordings between Members of the Programme Committee. I can understand Countries who are not Members of the Programme Committee and are considering these issues for the first time, but I see there is disagreement at some points between Members of the Programme Committee themselves.

We have been talking about this since yesterday that the Council is made of 49 Members, for whom it is not enough to say that the Programme Committee came to a consensus. Of course, it did, and of course it did an excellent job, but it is a Committee of 12 Members plus Chair. Council is 49 Members and they are talking about the same recommendations and perhaps amplifying and making it clearer, etc.

I can understand the discussions, but what I cannot understand, and I have said it in every session, that we should not be a Drafting Committee. In this way, I do not see why we should have a Drafting Committee. What is their role? The Committee meets for two hours and then comes back. That is not what the Drafting Committee used to do in the old days. The Drafting Committee was the Drafting Committee. Here, we are drafting the Report, and we have been doing it since the morning. Each time there is an amendment, I have four other speakers to counter that amendment. It is a sort of running parallel, there will never be a meeting point.

We have to find a solution. We cannot carry on this way. When I said I have got one speaker, then an intervention was made, and now I have five speakers, and when some of these five speakers speak, I will have five others. Is this the way you want to run your business and then start arguing over words?

I gave you the example of yesterday. The substitution was that we should not use the 112th Session, but we should set a future session. Where is the substantive matter there? I would still like to view how to sort this out.

We are nearly at 16:00 hours and we have still got the whole Agenda of the Council left. Tomorrow, the Drafting Committee is supposed to meet, and I have not got a clue of what the Drafting Committee is going to do, since we have done all the work for them.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

I completely agree and share with you the sentiment that it is becoming harder to find a way out of this. I think at the end we have to set informal meetings with the Chairpersons. At the moment, like the United Kingdom said, it is hard because we already started this process. It is hard now to cut it and just jump into the Drafting Committee. We have to decide, with the Chairpersons of the group, on a way to run the proceedings of the Council. It is impossible to do the work.

We are not only doing the work of the Drafting Committee; we are actually doing another Programme Committee meeting. This is what we are doing, putting all the more details and the actual Report. This is what we are doing at the moment. I completely agree with the Chair of the Programme Committee

that some of the subparagraphs are explanatory, everything is mentioned, but if you want to add more to it, everybody can do that, it is obvious, that can be done, but we cannot continue this work.

Yesterday, when we suggested an adjustment on one subparagraph, the colleague from Germany rightfully said we did not discuss that. I wish it would continue that way. This way we have an understanding. We cannot put everything from every Member that comes up now who did not follow the Programme Committee work. We can all follow the Programme Committee meetings; it is virtual and we all can sit.

We have our Members there. We can chat with them via WhatsApp and encourage them to add this and adjust that and then finish with all the details in the Programme Committee. Then when we come to the Council it is already cooked and done, rather than now putting everything and every detailed point back on top of it. It is another Report of the Programme Committee. I think in the future we have to do that with the Chairs of the groups and then find a way out of this.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

This is to make your life easier because I know the concern that you have, and I wish not to be at your place now. It is so difficult. Let me go back to subparagraph (r) to this issue of forestry. I think I understand perfectly the idea of leaving some of the aspects and this is just to make the life of everybody easier. Let me make an alternative suggestion: "Encourage FAO to continue to support Members in sustainable management of forests, including efforts leading to reforestation, afforestation," and the rest may continue. I hope that our colleagues, the Ambassadors of France and Finland could agree with this. This is just to make your life easy; it is not because I think I am personally very much convinced that we are in the negotiation process and we would suggest that the sentence be rephrased as I have just proposed.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to the Chair of the Programme Committee, because the United Kingdom had asked some clarifications or wording from him, I would like to propose to the Members the suggestion made by the United Kingdom.

I can understand the point that we cannot hand over the whole to the Drafting Committee halfway through because there are two different views. We could quickly go through paragraph by paragraph, using the United Kingdom yardstick and decide which subparagraphs can be left to the Drafting Committee, as in certain subparagraphs there is agreement on and there is no problem. Where there is a disagreement, it would be what to refer to the Drafting Committee.

Can I have you view the proposal made by the United Kingdom, so then we can move forward to the next Agenda Item?

The floor is open.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je suis depuis ce matin ce point que nous avons abordé hier, mais malheureusement nous sommes encore cet après-midi sur le résumé que les Membres devraient adopter concernant la session du Comité du Programme.

Comme l'a dit tout à l'heure le Koweït notre assemblée s'est transformée en un comité de rédaction mais également en une réunion du Comité du Programme dans le Conseil. Pourtant, je pense que tout a été résumé dans ce qui figure au tableau.

Toutefois, concernant la proposition du Royaume-Uni, nous pensons qu'il faudrait décider des points de contradictions entre les groupes et ceux que l'on peut d'abord tabler au niveau du Conseil; les autres points seraient envoyés automatiquement au Comité de rédaction.

Comme j'ai eu moi-même la chance de diriger le Comité de rédaction deux ou trois fois, je sais qu'on y retrouve tous les groupes régionaux, donc s'il y a des préoccupations, elles peuvent être traitées à ce

niveau-là. Je ne vois pas pourquoi insister sur des points, importants certes, mais qu'on retrouve dans le rapport que vous avez donné.

Les compléments que nous avons tous apportés sont dans le droit fil de la discussion qui a eu lieu au Conseil, bien que nous n'ayons pas eu le temps de discuter de tous les points.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I fully support your proposal. Let us go paragraph by paragraph to identify which one could be left to the Drafting Committee and which one was a substance so we could also solve it here because this is the first time for me, in three years, just one item from last night until today, all the day today. It is very difficult [XX] sometimes have a page analysed very hard, even also are represented in the Capital.

I fully support going paragraph by paragraph.

CHAIRPERSON

I see nobody is asking for the floor. Then we will go paragraph by paragraph because nobody is objecting.

Congo, let me have your view?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Concernant la proposition que le Cameroun a faite sur la question des forêts, je pense que ce qu'il a ajouté rencontrera l'assentiment de la France et des pays nordiques, car cette question regroupe la gestion durable des forêts, la question des services écosystémiques dans ce domaine, mais également la question des financements, que la France a évoquée. Je pense qu'on peut déjà élaguer cette proposition et la transmettre au Comité de rédaction.

Maintenant, si le Royaume-Uni ou les autres groupes pensent que des questions ne peuvent pas être transmises au Comité de rédaction, c'est à eux à ce moment-là de relever ces questions et chercher des solutions afin de pouvoir les transmettre au Comité. Cependant, à mon avis, toutes les questions que nous avons traitées durant les débats sont déjà inscrites dans le projet et le Comité de rédaction pourra les prendre et les examiner, et là où se trouvent des points de discorde, avec l'appui des procès verbaux, il y trouvera une solution.

Sinon à cette allure, nous risquons de passer toute la nuit à discuter sur ce rapport. Et à quel moment alors va-t-on examiner les autres rapports? Monsieur le Président, voilà la voie que je propose de suivre.

CHAIRPERSON

We should quickly go through paragraph by paragraph, it should not take us long, and highlight the issues. If the United Kingdom only is highlighting issues, we will stay here all night because there will never be an agreement.

I agree with Egypt that we should go paragraph by paragraph. It will not take long and you are there to give an opinion on the wording of the various paragraphs. I am starting with paragraph 1. The floor is open. Paragraph 1, there is no problem.

Subparagraphs (a), (b), and (c). Is there agreement on those?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think the Programme Committee Chair has got something to say that will be relevant to subparagraph (c). We might want to hear from him on that before agreeing it.

CHAIRPERSON

Chair of the Programme Committee, you can give us your view on this subparagraph, plus if you have any other comment, which I think the United Kingdom had raised earlier. You have the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I am always willing to support your work in any way I can. As requested, I explained, in the morning session, there were three items here which we discussed in subparagraph (c) and the last subparagraph. I would like to propose a slightly different text which I think encompasses all the items which we would like to address. I will read it in dictation speed.

“Requested to further harmonize and sequence...”

It is a separate subparagraph. As a separate subparagraph as an alternative of subparagraph (c).

“...harmonize the work of the Programme Committee (PC) with the work of the Technical Committees, where possible, taking into account a bottom-up approach; but aligned the need to have the reports of the Programme Committee available in all languages for the members, as soon as possible in order to prepare for the Council and requested the Independent Chairperson of Council (ICC) in consultation with the regional Chairs to explore options on how Council should discuss the substantive issues raised in the reports of the PC, Finance Committee (FC) and Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM).”

This would replace subparagraph (c) and the last subparagraph in this section.

CHAIRPERSON

Cameroon, then Brazil.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

At this point in time, this suggestion is too strong. We note that the Technical Committees have an element of reporting to the Council, an element of reporting to the Conference. We are asking now to harmonize the work of the Technical Committees and the Programme Committee, which for me is very difficult to understand because of the reporting line, which was delineated by the reform of FAO.

We cannot change that now, unless we do things otherwise. I may not be understanding the word harmonizing. It might be where the hick is. I prefer that we leave the text the way it was before because this sentence is too difficult to understand now if we have to do the work of the Council and these are not even sure that while we are preparing this report this element was discussed.

I did not hear anybody mentioning that in our discussion yesterday. It might be very difficult for me to agree on what was not discussed at this point in time. It is a new element in a discussion that makes our life difficult. I really suggest the Chair of the Programme Committee to kindly not stick to that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Cameroon, you do raise a valid point and perhaps the Chair of the Programme Committee may wish to react.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I would remind Members of the Council that I was requested to come forward at the request of the United Kingdom and if it is not meeting the concerns of the Council I always withdraw.

I think yesterday, and most of this morning, we had quite a discussion on how to sequence the work of the Programme Committee (PC) with the work of the Technical Committees so that we follow first the principle that cannot always be done best with the work of the Technical Committees and then the PC because we want to have a bottom-up approach.

We also said, at the request of the Russian Federation that we need to have reports available in time, especially when we have many items to adequately prepare for the Council. I think this discussion, today, when we have many items on the PC Agenda, with many conclusions, and how do we address those conclusions then during the Council. I think that is what I try to capture in the three elements, but if it will not help then I will withdraw. However, I think that was the discussion yesterday and this morning.

CHAIRPERSON

This is another issue where I cannot see people coming to a consensus. Will it not be better that the whole concept be discussed at the meeting of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the Regional Groups? They are also not really just Regional Groups, because besides them there are the Chairs of Programme and Finance Committees, the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), there is the Nordic Group, there is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and there is the Group of 77 and China. It is a larger group than its title signifies.

Would it not be better to discuss this whole issue in that meeting and bring it back to the Council? Since I cannot see an agreement being reached either here or in the Drafting Committee on this issue.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of the Programme Committee)

I would be very positive about this suggestion because I think it will save a lot of time. I think I would follow your suggestion and bring it back to your informal consultations.

CHAIRPERSON

There is a text being proposed here, which is not the text. The text will be refined or worked out by the Drafting Committee. It is just the principle, as it was. Would it be acceptable to put this and refer the matter to the Drafting Committee to draft the subparagraph, dealing with reports the Chair of the Programme Committee put forward?

Ms Gianina MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

We support the considerations made by Cameroon. We think that maybe it is not the place to discuss it now. We really appreciate the Chair of the Programme Committee's suggestion, but we would prefer to see the text that it was before. We think that it is was a good one. I do not know why we started changing it.

Regarding your meetings with the Regional Groups, we would like to see all the mention in the Council reports that it is the meeting of the Independent Chairperson of Council (ICC) with the FAO Regional Groups. It is not the first time we are requesting this. We understand it is an informal meeting, but we do not support the enlargement of the Regional Groups of FAO by now.

I would like to mention four Regional Groups, if there is any consensus going on, in this way you are proposing. However, we would support what Cameroon has said before, that it was better to keep the original wording and avoid this discussion right now.

CHAIRPERSON

There is no discussion now, it is just referring the matter.

Ms Gianina MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

Yes, but it is referring a matter to the Drafting Committee and we would not like to see that. We think this is a very important governance discussion. Which Committee should discuss which subject and where and how the discussions have to take place and which committee should come first. We think that the wording as it was before was okay because it expressed the worries expressed by many Council Members during the discussions, the importance of discussing issues in the relevant Technical Committees. We do not think that at this point we have to open this discussion or leave it to the

Drafting Committee. We think this is a very important discussion, so we would not leave it to the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Brazil, there was no agreement on that and what is being suggested is not that a particular Committee will decide, or the Regional Groups will decide. They will do the analysis and then come back to the Council. You will be considering it as Council. It is not that the Drafting Committee will propose a wording and it will be decided, or the Regional Groups will decide. The Regional Groups are not a decision-making body. They would do the analysis and have the discussions.

There was no agreement on subparagraph (c), since you were in favour, but the others are not. That is why they were proposing a different wording. This was the way out, to have it discussed in the Regional Groups and bring it back to the Council. You will be the last say in the matter, as a Member of the Council.

Ms Gianina MÜLLER POZZEBON (Brazil)

We would like to see FAO Regional Groups.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, that definitely is a valid issue, the fact that the Regional Groups at the seven Regional Groups of FAO. I do not think there is a problem there. All it means is that you will get the results of these discussions in the Regional Groups at the next Session of the Council and you, as a Member of the Council, together with other Members will decide. Also, as Cameroon pointed out, the reporting lines of some of these Technical Committees, as a result of the reform of FAO, are also dual reporting lines. All these issues will be thrashed out at the Regional Group meetings with the Independent Chairperson of the Committee (ICC), and a refined position will come to the Council at the next Session.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quiero apreciar y valorar el esfuerzo que Usted está haciendo para tratar de llegar a puntos de consenso. Sin embargo, mi país hizo una propuesta, en particular en el punto (c), por lo tanto, necesito explicarla porque la propuesta del Presidente del Comité del Programa me parece muy válida y muy importante, si es un complemento de la propuesta que nosotros habíamos hecho. En mi opinión, el punto de consenso no es una o la otra, ni tampoco lo que Usted sugirió, sino dejar lo que estaba y agregar la sugerencia del Presidente del Comité del Programa. Me permito tomarme 30 segundos más para justificarlo.

Estamos hablando de dos cosas distintas: nuestro planteo es una cuestión de procedimiento, cómo los temas sustancias son tratados y debieran ser debatidos a fin de garantizar que sigan el *bottom-up approach* para que la discusión sea inclusiva, transparente y plena de sustancia. Lo que planteó el Presidente del Comité del Programa y lo que Usted sugirió *a posteriori*, a mi criterio, tiene que ver con los métodos de trabajo del Consejo y cómo aborda los informes de los Comités asesores del Consejo a través de los Grupos Regionales, todo lo que Usted mencionó me parece saludable, me parece bien, pero como complemento a la lógica de lo que la Argentina planteó y con lo cual otros países estuvieron de acuerdo.

Por lo tanto veo dos párrafos separados, el párrafo original sugerido por nosotros, más las sugerencias del Presidente del Comité del Programa, pero en un párrafo aparte. Creo que Brasil está en esta misma línea y otros países también. Es decir, no es cuestión de conseguir un consenso donde implique mezclar conceptos que son distintos. Yo creo que la intención es muy clara y muy positiva. Nosotros estamos de acuerdo con lo sugerido por el Presidente del Comité del Programa, por Usted Presidente, como complemento del artículo que nosotros habíamos planteado. Eso sería absolutamente una manera de destrabar esto.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

For the proposal put forward with the FAO Regional Groups, in a sense this issue is a working issue. I am not sure we really have got the time or really the concentration, at this point in the day, to resolve this. That is why I would much rather it was resolved separately and come back to the Council as you proposed.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Just to express my full support for your proposal and asking to delete in your text proposal FAO because this discussion that you have suggested should be inclusive and it should encompass and comprise not only FAO Regional Groups, but also other regional groupings and sub-groupings.

CHAIRPERSON

We are in a situation where I do not see how consensus will be reached. That is why I had opted for the United Kingdom's proposal, to go through paragraph and paragraph and decide what should go to the Drafting Committee.

About this particular issue to be discussed in the Regional Groups, what about the Argentinian proposal, that the Regional Groups can discuss this and come back to the Council? However, that original wording the three or four lines, could stay. Otherwise I do not see how we can move forward, since we have three proposals there.

Even the Argentinian proposal is saying to be addressed in principle. It does not seem to be cast in stone. We can still discuss it, leave the Argentinian wording and discuss the matter in the Regional Groups and come back to the Council.

Mr Mougui MEDI (Cameroon)

I believe (c) here is like a statement of fact, highlighting the need for technical matters to be addressed in principle in the relevant Technical Committees. This is how it is; all technical matters are discussed in the specific Technical Committees and that is why I think it is a statement that does not disturb anybody.

The process that is going to be established and the wording that comes in, we can leave it to the Drafting Committee to agree whether this is acceptable to the Council or not. We can leave (c) and (d) the way they are now and move on.

CHAIRPERSON

What Cameroon is saying is quite valid, because it is firstly saying "highlighted the need for technical matters," and then saying, "in principle," and they have to be discussed in the relevant Committees prior to the discussion in other Governing Bodies. It is a statement of fact that it is quite big. Would you agree to leave it and then do the review in the Regional Groups and coming back to you at the next Session?

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Just a short and small correction with regard to the Regional Groups, the new subparagraph (d). We fully share the views expressed by the delegate from Brazil to specify FAO Regional Groups. We are sitting in FAO and we understand that these are informal meetings, but these informal meetings very often prepare the draft decisions and that is why we think it is absolutely necessary to have a clear order of our work and it should be FAO Regional Groups, otherwise we could propose the groups like the BRICS (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa), the groups like Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and many other groupings in the world.

CHAIRPERSON

I know there are these FAO Regional Groups, and the normal Regional Group meetings are these other groupings as well. We could follow what we did in the last two meetings of the Independent

Chairperson of the Committee (ICC) with the Regional Groups, where we were trying to work out the methods for this virtual meeting of the Council.

We allowed observers. We allowed the Regional Groups and each region which had Members of the Council. Those Members were invited as observers. It could be ICC, the FAO regions, and observers from each region who is Member of the Council, but silent observers.

That is what happened in the last two meetings and it worked quite well. Would that be acceptable?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero absolutamente decir que estoy de acuerdo con la posición del representante de Camerún de mantener ambos párrafos. Me parece que es la solución, como también nosotros habíamos planteado, porque creemos que se complementan y apuntan a cosas distintas, pero, también creo que es absolutamente razonable lo que plantea el Representante de la Federación de Rusia, respecto del párrafo agregado.

En realidad, el problema que tenemos aquí, y eso realmente sería importante ver, porque no creo que sea éste el momento para discutir cuáles son los grupos que no son los Grupos Regionales de la FAO que tendrían derecho a participar, porque en América Latina y le Caribe seguramente existen otros grupos, que podrían ser el grupo de amigos del banano, grupo de amigos del café, los grupos amigos de la soja, es decir, nosotros tenemos muchos amigos, pero me parece que debería ser importante tener un límite y, en todo caso, si fuera necesario, mantener su sugerencia que estén en calidad de observadores silentes, lo que podemos plantear es incorporar, entonces, para diferenciar los *FAO Regional Groups*, porque, entonces, no es lo mismo, los que son grupos regionales reconocidos por la FAO y los que son otros grupos de amigos. Podríamos incluir también a el Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI), tenemos muchos grupos, muchos amigos, pero para darle un orden a esto, en todo caso “*the FAO Regional Groups*” más lo que Usted sugirió, Presidente, que haya observadores silentes que pueden ser muchos grupos adicionales.

CHAIRPERSON

Let’s maybe keep the two subparagraphs and have the FAO Regional Groups with Observers proposed by each region who are Members of the Council. Silent Observers, like we did for the past two meetings. That will enable us to move forward. The major analysis and substantive work would be done in these meetings of the Independent Chairperson of the Committee (ICC) with the FAO Regional Groups, and the whole thing would come back to you. You would be the final judge of the report which comes to you. I would appeal that we keep both subparagraphs and move forward the way I have suggested.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Quiero referirme al subpárrafo (c) en específico, en el cual creo que es necesario que los temas técnicos sean tratados por los comités técnicos competentes antes que cualquier otro foro.

Creo que esto ha quedado muy claro en la discusión sobre el Subcomité de Ganadería. En ese sentido, la propuesta de mi colega argentino, sobre ese particular, nos parece válida y muy apropiada. Así que, apoyamos totalmente la propuesta argentina con el fin de poder avanzar con este tema y otros temas particulares.

CHAIRPERSON

My proposal is that we keep both subparagraphs, and subparagraph (d), which talks about the review being done by the Independent Chairperson of the Committee (ICC) with the Chairs and the Vice-Chairs of the FAO Regional Groups with silent Observers, and bring the matter back to the Council at its next Session. Can we keep the two subparagraphs, plus subparagraph (d), and move forward, because we still have to move to the next Item on the Agenda, together with also agreeing the next subparagraphs? The floor is open.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

We agree with your proposal and need to move on.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests for the floor, so we move forward, keeping both subparagraphs and subparagraph (d) for the review with the Regional Groups and the Independent Chairperson of the Committee (ICC) and silent observers and the matter would come back to the next Session of the Council.

Subparagraph (e)? There is agreement on subparagraph (e).

Subparagraph (f)? There is agreement on subparagraph (f)?

Subparagraph (g)?

There is something which the United Kingdom had suggested. United Kingdom, you have the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Just to highlight that this one has not been resolved, so it can go to the Drafting Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, this goes to the Drafting Committee.

Subparagraph (h)? There is agreement.

Subparagraph (i)?

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I believe that there were four words here that should have been deleted after antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We suggest removal of “and for sustainable food systems” leaving in AMR, of course.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (j)? This goes to the Drafting Committee.

Subparagraph (k)? There is agreement.

Subparagraphs (l) - (m) - (n) - (o) - (p) - (q)?

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

Please scroll up a bit to the matter of the Food Systems Summit. “...is committed to ambitious science and evidence based”, we are not looking for results, we are looking for outcomes. Sometimes we can use the most appropriate word, however, I will go for “outcomes” here.

I do not want to go back to some of the considerations that we had; therefore, we can accept that the subparagraph, the way it is, go to the Drafting Committee. However, we need to know that the outcome should go beyond the issue of science and evidence base, it is not only that, also best practice and so on. Therefore, we need some of those aspects to be applied. I would accept it to go that way, as I do not want to call up another discussion now.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (p)? We agree on Subparagraph (p).

Subparagraph (q)?

Subparagraph (r)? It would go to the Drafting Committee.

Subparagraph (s)?

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

I think we have an agreement here and I have received a commitment that we have an agreement with the last submission that I made, so we can send a clean text to the Drafting Committee.

We can remove the yellow mark "...and encouraged FAO to continue to support Members in sustainable management of forests, including efforts leading to reforestation" and remove the second "for sustainable management of forests" that is no longer valid, "including effort to reforestation, prevention, halt and reverse of deforestation" and the rest can go.

I think we have agreed on that, unless France and Finland have other views.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

My comment is related to subparagraph (s). I am happy to wait until you have finished on subparagraph (r).

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Merci au délégué du Cameroun. En fait j'avais lu trop vite tout à l'heure, je croyais qu'on parlait de déforestation ou il s'agit de reforestation, ce qui me semble trop limité, car avant de reforester, il faudrait essayer de moins déforester, et avoir cette gestion durable. Donc, je propose qu'on transmette le texte au Comité de rédaction.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I just wanted to also thank Cameroon for this compromise, and I have to say that it looks good, but, as France said, this is something we should do in the Drafting Committee to look again and check.

CHAIRPERSON

Subparagraph (s)?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think, given our discussions on subparagraphs (b) and (c), and we have now included the subparagraph on the proposal for you to host a discussion with the Regional Groups, I think we should delete this subparagraph entirely and this will be captured above.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We have to say that in our view the reason why we are sitting here still on Agenda Item 6 is not because the Members would like to accurately reflect the conclusions of the debate, but because the Programme Committee decided to consider so many questions, the huge volume of work that was done, was done very well, and we welcome the work that was done by the Programme Committee.

It was really fantastic and brilliant, but the number of substantial issues is really huge and that is why it led to the current situation, 19 substantial issues is too much. We would be pleased to somehow reflect the language proposed here in the subparagraph (s) is very strong. We are not objecting to this idea, it could be strong. We can think about how to make it lighter. However, somehow, we should reflect this. That is what I wanted to say.

CHAIRPERSON

This aspect would also be considered in the discussions between the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and the Regional Groups. I believe that is why the United Kingdom was suggesting its deletion, since this would be one of the principle items to discuss in that ICC-Regional Group discussions.

Would you agree that, since we are going to take it up in that, it may not be here, and you will have to wait until you get the report of those discussions and those analyses in your December Session? This would surely be one of the principle aspects which will be taken up.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Thank you, Chairperson for the explanation, but unfortunately, we did not get the link between subparagraphs (c) and (d), and subparagraph (s) when we discussed them in the beginning of our document. We did not see this link and in this regard, we would be pleased to come back to this issue in the Drafting Committee and if we do not find a compromise, solution, and we do find the appropriate language for everybody, we could think about some alternatives.

CHAIRPERSON

The United Kingdom, would you agree that the matter should be handled by the Drafting Committee?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think if we are to leave it to the Drafting Committee then I would also want the Chair of the Programme Committee's language on the table, which did try to address this issue as well but was taken off the table. If we put that language back on the table for the Drafting Committee then we can have them look at subparagraphs (b), (c), (s) and the subparagraph that the Chair of the Programme Committee suggested, which was trying to address this specific issue.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to Cameroon and the United Kingdom, we have put in subparagraph (d) as reference to the process of agenda setting of the Committees. Hopefully, that ensures that the discussion of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the Regional Groups would take this Item up.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

Chairperson, is the text the way it is in (d) now or is there any other text that we should expect?

CHAIRPERSON

We have added to subparagraph (d) a wording which says the matter of consideration by the Council of the reports, and then the addition has been, "...and the process of the agenda setting of its Committees in future." That will ensure that subparagraph (s) would also be taken up in the discussions.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

Chairperson, there is one essential thing that we are missing here. As we only have three Committees of the Council, our understanding is that in the other Technical Committees we still need to discuss those. We are now limiting the discussion to the Council's Committees. If that is the way we choose to go then we are ready to go along as well, but we will not have the opportunity to discuss the reporting of the other Committees.

CHAIRPERSON

I think what you were mentioning is mentioned in subparagraph (c). The subparagraph refers to the Technical Committees.

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

Yes, but the streamlining of their own Agenda too is not. Anyway, alright, it is there, so can we now suppress subparagraph (s)?

CHAIRPERSON

I will listen to the United Kingdom first. United Kingdom, you have the floor.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The proposal that we had from the Chairperson of the Programme Committee went much further than just agenda setting. In a sense, the problem is not so much the Agenda. I think it is the fact that it was a long Report with lots of different issues. The Chairperson of the Programme Committee had suggested that we look at options for addressing the substantive issues in the reporting, which is why I wanted to keep his language on the table. I am happy with the way forward where we just tweak this subparagraph a bit and then we can delete subparagraph (s). Perhaps we could make it a bit broader than just the process of agenda setting.

CHAIRPERSON

Sorry, United Kingdom, but the reporting of the Programme Committee would flow from the Agenda. If it is not on the Agenda, I do not think it would find its way into the Report.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Well, it is funny how many things do end up in the Report when they are not on the Agenda. This whole issue, for example. I think the point the Chairperson of the Programme Committee made was that it is up to the Members of the Programme Committee to set the Agenda. We would not want that to be restricted in any way. I think we need to find a wording that means that it is much broader than just the process of agenda setting.

CHAIRPERSON

The aspect of the Members setting the Agenda, the discussions of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with the Regional Groups, is based on the thing that we have to accept, just like in the Drafting Committee, that each region is represented. Therefore, they should be taking up issues which are important to their regions, and the same thing is with the ICC. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are not supposed to just reflect their personal views. They should have meetings with their regions before coming to a meeting with me and reflect what the regions said.

In this meeting of the ICC, the various regions represented there, together with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons, can make sure that there is no restriction placed. I think we have to get used to getting our representatives, being them regional representatives or of any other mechanism, to reflect the views of the region they represent.

They are not there in their personal capacity. They should be reflecting the views of their regions on this issue, which I assume they would have dedicated Regional Group meetings. I would give sufficient notice to save the date for my meeting, and then they can meet their Regional Groups, get guidance from them, and then come to the meeting with the ICC.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Perhaps we could highlight it in yellow and leave it for the Drafting Committee then.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, okay. Russian Federation?

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Could you kindly describe to us what happened to the last subparagraph of this document? It is currently deleted, but my delegation proposed to further discuss this subparagraph in the Drafting Committee to find the most appropriate language. We would be pleased if you mark it in yellow and not delete it.

CHAIRPERSON

Here is a proposal for an amended wording of subparagraph (s). We have brought it forward to join up with subparagraphs (c), (d) and (e). Would that be acceptable?

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

If we could remove the words, "...and the process of agenda setting," from subparagraph (d), then I would be happy for subparagraphs (d) and (e) and to be left as they are, and the yellow could be taken off.

I am hesitant to say, we do not want the Drafting Committee to look at anything that is not in yellow. We want the Drafting Committee to look at everything and make sure that the language is correct and the punctuation and the spelling and everything is okay. Therefore, we do want the Drafting Committee to look at the whole Report for coherence, but I do not think they need to pay special attention to this if we can leave it like that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United Kingdom, we have deleted it. Russian Federation, are you okay with this revised wording?

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

Yes, thank you, Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we have completed this Item. Since we have got several other Items on the Agenda, I would like to propose that we break for half an hour for the next Session to be organized. We would need to work at least another three hours to deal with the rest of the Council Agenda, and so the Secretariat has to organize that.

We break now and reconvene at 17:30 hours to carry on with the Council Agenda, since the Drafting Committee has to meet tomorrow and the documents have to be translated, etcetera. We have to finish today.

I would adjourn the meeting and we will reconvene at 17:30 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 16:57 to 17:35 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 57 à 17 h 35

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.57 a las 17 h 35

Item 7. Reports of the 179th (6-7 February 2020), 180th (8-17 June 2020) and 181st (3-5 June 2020) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dix-neuvième (6-7 février 2020), cent quatre-vingtième (8-17 juin 2020) et cent quatre-vingt-unième (3-5 juin 2020) sessions du Comité financier

Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 179.º (6 y 7 de febrero de 2020), 180.º (8-17 de junio de 2020) y 181.º (3-5 de junio de 2020) del Comité de Finanzas

(CL 164/4; CL 164/7; CL 164/8)

Item 7.1. Status of Current Assessments and Arrears

Point 7.1. Situation des contributions courantes et des arriérés

Tema 7.1. Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos

(CL 164/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We can commence our Session.

I will begin with Item 7, *Reports of the 179th (6-7 February 2020), 180th (8-17 June 2020) and 181st (3-5 June 2020) Sessions of the Finance Committee*. This Item has one sub-Item namely: Sub-Item 7.1, *Status of Contributions and Arrears*. The documents before Council are *CL 164/4, CL 164/7, CL 164/8 and CL 164/LIM/2*.

I wish to note that the Reports of the 179th and 181st Sessions of the Finance Committee deal with World Food Programme (WFP) matters and have been considered by the WFP Executive Board.

The introduction to the Item by the Chairpersons of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic, has been circulated to you.

I draw your attention to document *CL 164/LIM/2* that sets out the *Status of Contributions and Arrears* at 29 June 2020. Member Nations owe to FAO USD 163.09 million and EUR 135.72 million for 2020 and prior years, which represents 65.20 percent of current assessments. As at 29 June 2020, the Organization had collected USD 163.78 million and EUR 99.34 million in respect of 2020 assessments. This represents 59.68 percent of US dollar assessments and 52.78 percent of EUR assessments (56.54 percent consolidated).

During 2020, USD 9.18 million and EUR 5.28 million was received from Members in full settlement of arrears and USD 27.13 million and EUR 25.55 million was received in partial payment of arrears.

As of 29 June 2020, 43.46 percent of 2020 assessed contributions still needed to be settled. This is an improvement when compared to the same period last year (64.23 percent).

Based on the latest information from Members about the expected payment dates, the Regular Programme cash level is expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs through the end of December 2020.

Seventy Members still had arrears outstanding from 2019 and previous years and 24 owed arrears in such amounts as to jeopardize their right to vote in accordance with Article III.4 of the Constitution.

After the preparation of document *CL 164/LIM/2*, the following payments have been received:

- USD 503,501 and EUR 349,623 received from Egypt on 1 July 2020, representing full payment of their 2020 assessments.
- EUR 11,463,962 received from Germany on 2 July 2020, representing full payment of their outstanding 2020 assessments.
- EUR 14,484,135 received from the United States of America on 3 July 2020 representing partial payment of 2019 arrears.

The Council is recommended to emphasize the importance for all Members, irrespective of size, to honour their financial obligations towards the Organization, since only in this way, with proper financing, can the Organization continue to fulfil its mandate. This is particularly important under the challenging pandemic conditions that we face in this period. The Council may wish to include a statement to this effect in its Report on this Item.

Introduction to Item 7: Reports of the 179th (6-7 February 2020), 180th (8-17 June 2020) and 181st (3-5 June 2020) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Ms Imelda Smolcic, Chairperson of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the Reports of the 179th, 180th and 181st Sessions of the Finance Committee. These Reports are submitted to the Council in documents CL 164/8, CL 164/7 and CL 164/4 respectively. In addition, document CL 164/LIM/2 has been prepared to provide the Council with an update on the status of contributions and arrears as at 29 June 2020.

The Council is requested to approve the reports of the 179th, 180th and 181st Sessions of the Finance Committee.

While the 180th Session dealt with FAO issues, the 179th and 181st Sessions were special Sessions convened to deal with WFP matters. Our reports on WFP matters have been submitted to the WFP Executive Board for its consideration.

The 180th Session of the Finance Committee examined the financial position of the Organization, budgetary, human resources, oversight and other matters within its mandate. These are presented in detail in document CL 164/7. I would like to highlight the following matters for which action is requested by the Council.

On the Committee's review of the *Financial Position of the Organization*, the Council is requested to urge Members to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions.

On the Committee's review of the *FAO Audit Committee 2019 Annual Report*, the Council is requested to endorse the change in denomination of the FAO Audit Committee to the "FAO Oversight Advisory Committee".

On the Committee's review of *FAO Audit Committee Membership*, the Council is requested to endorse the appointment of Ms Malika Aït-Mohamed Parent (Algeria) and Ms Hilary Wild (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as Members of the FAO Audit Committee for an initial period of three years.

On the Committee's review of the *Annual Report on Budgetary Performance and Programme and Budgetary Transfers in the 2018-2019 Biennium*, the Council is requested to note the Finance Committee's approval of the final budgetary transfers arising from implementation of the 2018-19 Programme of Work and Budget.

The Council is requested to note the Finance Committee's review and approval of the *Revised Charter of the Office of the Inspector General*, including further amendments to provide international financial institutions and other institutional resource partners with access to audit reports directly relevant to their voluntary contributions.

Finally, the Council is requested to note the Financial Committee's guidance to Management on all other matters within its mandate and covered during the Committee's considerations at its 180th Session.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our reports.

CHAIRPERON

I now would like Ms Smolicic to provide any additional comments on the Item.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

Me complace presentar los informes del 179.º, 180.º y 181.º períodos de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas. Estos informes se presentan al Consejo en los documentos CL 164/8, CL 164/7 y CL 164/4. Además, en el documento CL 164/LIM/2 se presenta una actualización del estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos al 29 de junio de 2020 que usted acaba de poner al día con los últimos pagos.

En la introducción al tema 7, publicada en el sitio web del 164.º período de sesiones del Consejo he resaltado los puntos de interés que requieren la adopción de medidas por parte del Consejo que incluyen las recomendaciones del Comité sobre el pago puntual de las cuotas asignadas, el cambio de denominación del Comité de Auditoría de la FAO y la designación de algunos miembros del Comité de Auditoría. Las decisiones del Comité sobre las transferencias previstas entre capítulos presupuestarios como resultado de la aplicación del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para 2018-2019 y la Carta revisada de la Oficina del Inspector General. En esta introducción quisiera resaltar otros puntos de interés general para el Consejo.

El 180.º período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas tuvo lugar virtualmente con carácter excepcional debido a la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus, COVID-19. El Comité acogió con beneplácito el procedimiento seguido de examinar por correspondencia determinados temas del programa y recomendó que se considerara la posibilidad de continuar con esta práctica en futuros períodos de sesiones.

El Comité examinó la situación financiera de la Organización al 31 de diciembre de 2019 y tomó nota de la información proporcionada sobre las tasas de aprobación y gastos respecto del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) en los bienios 2016-2017 y 2018-2019 e hizo hincapié en la importancia de mantener un nivel de gasto que permitiera conseguir la plena ejecución de la consignación para el Programa de Cooperación Técnica aprobado por la Conferencia. También, el Comité tomó nota del informe sobre las inversiones correspondientes a 2019, en particular de la información sobre las repercusiones de la COVID-19 en el rendimiento de los mercados y las medidas que se estaban

adoptando para seguir esta situación, en particular, por medio de los mecanismos de gobernanza establecidos.

El Comité acogió con agrado la información proporcionada sobre la preparación de un plan de acción estratégico detallado en materia de recursos humanos con los plazos y resultados específicos, necesarios para mejorar la gestión de los recursos humanos; y manifestó su interés en examinar dicho plan en su próximo período de sesiones en noviembre de 2020. Expresó su agradecimiento por la calidad del informe y alentó a la Administración a seguir mejorando la información presentada en futuros informes, en particular, mediante una actualización anual sobre los parámetros de referencia y los progresos realizados en relación con el Plan de Acción Estratégico de Recursos Humanos.

El Comité expresó preocupación por la tasa de vacantes cada vez mayor, tanto en la sede como en las oficinas descentralizadas y solicitó a la Administración que enfrentara la situación con carácter prioritario para reducir esa tasa. También, acogió con agrado la suspensión de las listas de reserva de candidatos precalificados mientras se finalizaban los ajustes en curso al proceso de contratación.

Observando con inquietud el significativo incremento del número de consultores, el Comité hizo hincapié en que, en general, los consultores debían contratarse para responder a necesidades específicas a corto plazo. Reiteró la solicitud que ya había formulado en su 178.º período de sesiones para que la Administración abordase el tema de la delegación de autoridad con carácter urgente tomando en consideración el artículo 37, numeral 5 del Reglamento General.

Acogió con agrado, también, que la Administración hubiera difundido los aspectos más destacados de la encuesta sobre la satisfacción de los empleados realizada en 2019 y solicitó a la Administración que le presentara, en su período de sesiones de noviembre de 2020, todos los resultados y el análisis conexo de la encuesta; y que informara sobre su plan de acción para abordar las cuestiones relacionadas con la encuesta, especialmente las relativas al hostigamiento, el acoso sexual y el abuso de autoridad, los comportamientos contrarios a la ética, la comunicación y la formación profesional del personal. El Comité señaló que esperaba con interés que el Comité de Auditoría examinara el mandato del oficial de ética, en particular, la duración del nombramiento para el puesto y solicitó a la Administración que consultara también con el Comité de Auditoría sobre el mandato para la nueva función del Ombudsman.

El Comité manifestó su agrado por el informe recibido del inspector general sobre la auditoría del programa de movilidad del personal y alentó a la administración a considerar debidamente los resultados y conclusiones de informe en la preparación de una nueva política de movilidad del personal que satisficiera las necesidades específicas de la FAO. El Comité solicitó a la Administración que elaborase una metodología para seguir las consecuencias financieras de la movilidad del personal.

El Comité también acogió con satisfacción el informe anual del Comité de Auditoría de la FAO correspondiente a 2019 que contenía conclusiones positivas sobre el funcionamiento de la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG), así como, el asesoramiento pertinente en relación con el sistema de control interno, gestión del riesgo y gobernanza de la FAO. Apreció la concisión y calidad del informe anual del Inspector General correspondiente a 2019 en el que se ofrecía un panorama general completo e ilustrativo de las diversas actividades de la Oficina.

El Comité expresó preocupación por el elevado número de observaciones que seguían planteándose en relación con deficiencias y lagunas en los sistemas de control interno, la gestión del riesgo y la separación de funciones, en particular en las oficinas descentralizadas, e instó a la Administración a intensificar las medidas que se estaban adoptando para colmar las lagunas detectadas por el Inspector General.

El Comité tomó nota de que actualmente no existía un proceso para tramitar denuncias de conducta indebida del Jefe Ejecutivo de la Organización y solicitó a la Administración que le informase sobre los progresos a este respecto en su período de sesiones de noviembre de 2020. El Comité alentó a la FAO a participar activamente en la elaboración de un enfoque coordinado y coherente para todo el sistema de las Naciones Unidas sobre la manera de tramitar las denuncias de conducta indebida contra el Jefe Ejecutivo de una organización.

El Comité apoyó el nombramiento del Señor Mika Tapio para ocupar el puesto de Inspector General y expresó su agradecimiento por la labor del Inspector General Interino, el Señor Egbert C. Kaltenbach durante su período en el cargo.

En conclusión, en términos generales, los períodos de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas fueron muy fructíferos y, en particular, fue posible tratar una serie de cuestiones cruciales a la que se ve enfrentada la Organización en sus asuntos financieros y presupuestarios. En nombre de los miembros del Comité, quisiera expresar nuestro aprecio a la Secretaría por la asistencia prestada durante nuestras deliberaciones y nuestra gratitud a los Miembros de la FAO por brindarnos la oportunidad de contribuir a la labor de la FAO. Por otra parte, quisiera en esta oportunidad agradecer profundamente al Secretario del Comité de Finanzas, David McSherry, su constante apoyo durante los trabajos del Comité de Finanzas.

Quisiera agregar, además, que el Comité en todas sus sesiones trabajó de una forma absolutamente eficiente tanto en sus deliberaciones como en el uso racional de su tiempo y en sus conclusiones. En ese sentido, ha hecho una labor realmente admirable. En ese sentido, no tengo nada más que palabras de agradecimiento hacia los miembros del Comité. Quedo a disposición de cualquier pregunta que los miembros del Consejo quisieran formular.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor to Members for their comments and interventions. The floor is open.

Mme Jeanne DAMBENDZET (Congo)

C'est toujours une grande joie de se retrouver avec la grande famille de la FAO, même par voie de la vidéo-conférence comme c'est le cas en cette session. Aussi, au nom de mon groupe régional, et en mon nom propre, je vous exprime à toutes et à tous, le profond sentiment d'amitié et de fraternité qui nous unit. Monsieur le Président indépendant du Conseil, permettez-nous d'abord de féliciter Monsieur le Directeur général de la FAO pour son leadership et son engagement de faire de la FAO une organisation inclusive, dynamique, transparente et efficiente afin de relever les défis auxquels le secteur de l'alimentation et de l'agriculture sont confrontés. Nous appuyons pleinement cette vision.

Nos félicitations s'adressent également à vous-même, pour la manière dont vous conduisez, les travaux de la 164e session du Conseil de notre Organisation et nous sommes persuadés que cette session sous votre conduite éclairée aboutira à des conclusions satisfaisantes pour avancer dans la lutte contre la faim et la malnutrition dans le monde. Mesdames et Messieurs, le Congo, réuni au Niger et au Sénégal, s'exprime sur le point 7 de l'ordre du jour au nom du groupe régional Afrique.

Nous accueillons favorablement les recommandations formulées dans les rapports des 179e, 180e et 181e sessions du Comité financier. Les 179e et 181e sessions du Comité ont porté sur les questions intéressant le Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM), en abrégé PAM. Nous prenons note des recommandations formulées par le Comité sur la feuille de route intégrée, les comptes annuels vérifiés de 2019, la reconstitution du compte spécial pour les Programmes de promotion du bien-être, le rapport annuel du Comité d'audit, le rapport annuel de l'Inspectrice générale et la note du Directeur exécutif ainsi que d'autres rapports.

Nous nous félicitons que les recommandations par le Comité aient éclairé les débats du Conseil d'administration et du PAM à sa dernière session annuelle et que ces rapports aient été examinés et approuvés. Nous souscrivons aux recommandations formulées par le Comité à sa 180e session consacrée aux questions de la FAO. A propos de la situation financière de la FAO, nous notons que la trésorerie de l'Organisation est suffisante pour faire face aux besoins opérationnels jusqu'au 31 décembre 2020.

Tout en sachant que cette trésorerie est tributaire du versement en temps opportun des contributions mises en recouvrement, nous souscrivons aux recommandations du Comité concernant le versement ponctuel des contributions y relatives. Nous accueillons favorablement les renseignements supplémentaires sur les taux d'approbation et les taux de dépenses du PCT pour les exercices 2016 et 2017, et 2018-2019. Nous demandons à la direction de maintenir ce taux à un niveau qui permet

d'utiliser intégralement les crédits ouverts au titre du PCT tel qu'approuvés par la Conférence. Mesdames et Messieurs, au sujet de la gestion des ressources humaines, nous souscrivons aux recommandations formulées par le Comité.

Nous sommes préoccupés par le taux de plus en plus élevé des vacances de postes au Siège et dans les bureaux décentralisés, ce qui constitue assurément un handicap pour l'exécution du programme de travail de l'Organisation. Nous demandons donc à la direction d'examiner cette question en priorité en vue de réduire ce taux. Nous sommes aussi préoccupés par le fait que les représentants de la FAO dans les bureaux décentralisés aient été nommés à des classes différentes, en particulier en Afrique.

Ceci peut constituer une entorse à une représentation adéquate de l'Organisation au niveau sous-régional et national. Nous demandons donc de relever le niveau de représentation dans les bureaux sous-régionaux et nationaux, notamment en ce qui concerne le grade des directeurs sous-régionaux et représentants de la FAO. Concernant la composition du Comité de vérification de la FAO, nous appuyons les recommandations portant sur le changement d'appellation de ce Comité de vérification et les nominations de ses membres recommandées par le Directeur général.

Mesdames et Messieurs, en ce qui concerne le rapport annuel sur l'exécution du budget et les virements entre programmes et chapitres budgétaires pour l'exercice 2018-2019 et la Charte révisée du bureau de l'Inspecteur général, nous prenons note et approuvons les décisions du Comité sur ces deux questions. S'agissant d'autres questions relatives à la vérification du programme de mobilité du personnel par le bureau de l'Inspecteur général, le rapport annuel de 2019, la nomination de l'Inspecteur général et les méthodes de travail du Comité financier, nous approuvons également les indications que le Comité a donné au Secrétariat, sur toutes ces questions qui relèvent de son mandat.

Nous souhaitons que la FAO et les Etats membres unissent leurs efforts pour combattre la COVID-19, cette pandémie qui bouleverse les relations dans le monde. Nous souhaitons que la FAO prenne également des dispositions pour aider les pays afin de mettre en place des programmes et des plans de combat, de lutte contre cette pandémie. Monsieur le Président, pour ne pas abuser du temps de la session, avec ces commentaires, le groupe Afrique approuve les rapports des 179e, 180e et 181e sessions du Comité financier.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We would like to focus on the *180th Session of the Finance Committee*, which dealt with FAO related matters. While, in general, endorsing the conclusions and advice to the Council as contained in the report of this Session, we would like to highlight the following points.

Firstly, Human Resources (HR) management. We very much look forward to the Human Resources strategic action plan that is currently being prepared by the Management. We acknowledge that this is a difficult task, given the multiple challenges highlighted in several Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit reports and the 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey. The same considerations apply to the need for a complete parole of the staff mobility programme, as recommended by the OIG audit of the programme.

Furthermore, we would like to underscore the Finance Committee's recommendation on the need to reduce the increasingly high vacancy rate and the considerable use of consultancy contracts. Consultants should be hired primarily to accommodate specific short-term requirements and not to back-fill vacant professional posts. We expect to see significantly better figures in the next report to the Finance Committee. Likewise, we urge the Management to address the repeated request of both the Finance Committee and the Council for further delegation of authority, to be implemented before the next 165th Council Session.

Finally, we welcome the reassurance given by the Inspector General that OIG has enjoyed full cooperation and has not been exposed to any interference since the new Director-General took office. We think that further improvements are nonetheless needed to strengthen OIG and its operational dependents to make sure FAO is not exposed to financial, legal or reputational risks.

Therefore, we fully support the Finance Committee's recommendations on the need for sustainable funding for the Office and on the need to delegate to the Inspector General appropriate managerial responsibility and control over the financial and human resources of the Office.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I have the honour, to deliver this statement on behalf of Malaysia and the Asia Group.

The Asia Group would like to commend the excellent work carried out by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolcic of Uruguay, and the Members of the Finance Committee and the support of the FAO Management and Secretariat.

Asia Group supports the view and recommendations in the report of the 180th Session of the Finance Committee on FAO matters and would like to highlight the following points.

In regard to the financial position of the Organization, Asia Group is satisfied with the sufficient liquidity of the Organization, through to the end of 2020 in consideration of the payment pattern of the Members and encourages all Member States to continue the timely payment of assessed contribution to ensure the sound financial health of the Organization.

Regarding the human resource management, Asia Group welcomes the appointment of Ms Greet De Leeuw as Director of Human Resources and appreciates the efforts to develop a human resource strategic action plan which improves the human resource management of the Organization. We are concerned about the increasingly high vacancy rate, both in Headquarters and in decentralized offices, and request Management to make it a priority to reduce such rates.

Asia Group requests the Management to achieve equitable geographic representation by reducing a number of non-under and over-represented countries.

We welcome the Management sharing highlights of the 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey and request Management to present the full set of results and related analysis of the staff satisfaction survey at the November 2020 session of the Finance Committee.

Finally, with regard to the oversight of the Organization, Asia Group welcomes the appointment of Mr Mika Tapio for the position of Inspector General and expresses appreciation for the work of the Inspector General *ad Interim*, Mr Egbert C. Kaltenbach, during his period of office.

We welcome the approval of a revised charter of Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which ensures a strong and independent internal oversight function in the Organization. Asia Group encourages FAO's active participation with development of a coordinated and consistent United Nations System wide approach on how to address allegations of misconduct against the Executive Head of the Organization.

Chairperson, with these comments Asia Regional Group endorses the reports of the Finance Committee.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

Me referiré al *Informe del 180.º período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas (8-17 de junio de 2020)*.

Nos preocupa el bajo rendimiento, las cuestiones financieras. Me preocupa el bajo rendimiento de las inversiones a corto plazo. Es algo común en el contexto actual, pero a largo plazo puede tener un impacto serio, incluyendo las obligaciones relacionadas con el personal. Tenemos que abordar estos problemas potenciales desde ahora.

En materia de recursos humanos, como otros colegas han mencionado, vemos con preocupación la tasa elevada de vacantes, en torno al 19%. Esta tasa de vacantes es superior en algunas oficinas regionales, como la de América Latina y el Caribe, que es cercana al 25%. Esto se tiene que arreglar pronto. El año pasado cuando aprobamos el Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP), lo hicimos con la idea de maximizar el uso de puestos en la FAO, a fin de que la Organización esté en posición óptima para cumplir su labor. El alto número de vacantes hace más difícil esa tarea.

Por otro lado, preocupa el alto número de consultores, que se ha duplicado en los últimos dos años. Los consultores tienen un espacio en la FAO para cubrir necesidades específicas y temporales, pero no para reemplazar de personal de largo plazo. Respecto a los consultores, preocupa que las nacionalidades de ellos se han concentrado, en detrimento de la diversidad. Es necesario que aquellos consultores contratados a partir del presupuesto básico se les contrate de acuerdo con los méritos y tomando también el criterio de distribución geográfica y de idiomas.

Quedamos a la espera también del plan de gestión de recursos humanos y del programa de movilidad del personal.

En materia de auditoría, apoyamos el cambio de nombre del Comité de Auditoría a “Comité Consultivo de Supervisión de la FAO”, y aprobamos la designación de dos integrantes de ese Comité, la Señora Malika Aït-Mohamed Parent y la Señora Hilary Wild.

En cuestiones relacionadas con la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG), apoyamos el nombramiento del Señor Mika Tapio para ocupar el puesto de Inspector General, con mandato de siete años.

Respecto a la carta revisada del Inspector General, la aprobamos, incluso con la enmienda presentada recientemente por parte del Comité de Finanzas para que las instituciones financieras internacionales y otros donantes accedan a informes de auditoría pertinentes.

Finalmente, en cuanto al proceso para tramitar denuncias de conducta indebida del jefe ejecutivo de la Organización, lamentamos que a nivel de sistema no se haya alcanzado un acuerdo y pedimos que la FAO a que participe en la elaboración de un enfoque coordinado y coherente para todo el sistema de las Naciones Unidas, esperando que se llegue a un acuerdo a la brevedad.

Con estos comentarios, endosamos los *Informes de los períodos de sesiones 179.º (6 y 7 de febrero de 2020)*, *180.º (8-17 de junio de 2020)* y *181.º (3-5 de junio de 2020)* del Comité de Finanzas.

Ms Fiona PRYCE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom would like to thank the Finance Committee for its work and the Report submitted to Council with recommendations. The Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) adjustments have been discussed under a separate Agenda Item, so we would like to focus here on issues related to Human Resources (HR) and the work of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

As has been reiterated, HR are FAO's most important asset. We look forward to the HR strategic action plan to be submitted to the Committee in November, as well as FAO's action plan to address the issues related to the Employee Satisfaction Survey, especially on harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. We also request that the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), Sexual Harassment (SH) Action plan is updated to reflect this and that this is also submitted to the Council as part of the standing Council Agenda Item. We would also be grateful if FAO could inform us on the analysis conducted on the potential added value of making available for all three Rome-based Agencies a common specialized expertise on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, as requested by the Council.

The United Kingdom would like to thank the OIG for their report and the transition managed, underscoring fundamental need for independence. We reiterate the need to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure that the OIG can conduct its work fully.

We welcome the additional resources provided and would like to ask the Management to confirm steps to plan to address the resourcing concerns flagged in a sustainable manner.

The OIG's report also indicates that the Inspector General has not been granted any delegation of authority for the appointment of professional and general service staff, not in line with best practice in the United Nations System. Could we please ask for an update on this and any further steps to be taken?

We are concerned at the number of observations reported on weaknesses and gaps in internal control systems, risk management and segregation of functions highlighted in the report. There are some

important risks flagged, for example through the decentralized audits, including on fraud, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), procurement, segregation of duties, HR and internal controls.

In particular, it is concerning that one of the drivers is seen as the lack of priority being given by the Organization to safeguarding and fraud prevention. What steps has the Management taken to address these issues? As mentioned under the PWB item, we also look forward to further updates on FAO's internal control framework and request that this be submitted to the next Council following review by the Audit and the Finance Committees.

With regard to COVID-19, has FAO needed to change its risk appetite? For example, has FAO needed to amend any of its internal controls or due diligence processes to speed up the response to COVID-19? If there have been any changes, do they apply across the Organization and all partners. How does FAO see the impact of COVID-19 on the risk exposure to aid diversion, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), Sexual Harassment (SH), and how is FAO adjusting to that?

We would also like to ask the OIG what impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the 2020 work plan and how they are adjusting to that and dealing with operational constraints such as travel restrictions impacting on investigation processes.

Again, the United Kingdom thanks the Finance Committee for their report and confirms approval of the Audit Committee Membership, as well as the OIG revised Charter. We look forward to the continued strengthening of OIG's independence and transparency, including through making executive summaries of internal project reports available on FAO's website.

We approve the *Reports of the 179th and 181st Sessions* of the Finance Committee that have been submitted to WFP Executive Board.

Sra. Diana INFANTE QUINONES (República Dominicana)

La delegación de República Dominicana felicita a la Presidenta Imelda Smolcic por su excelente labor. Además, nos complace ver que los temas de la liquidez de la organización permitirá hacer frente a las necesidades operacionales hasta fin de año y apoyamos la recomendación para que los Miembros paguemos con puntualidad las cuotas.

En lo que se refiere a la propuesta de cambiar el nombre de Comité de Auditoría, la aprobamos. Así como la recomendación del Director General para la designación de los nuevos miembros para un período inicial de tres años. De igual manera, estamos de acuerdo con la Carta revisada de la Oficina del Inspector General y el *Addendum 1*, como un hito para fortalecer la supervisión interna, incorporar mejores prácticas y garantizar la independencia del Inspector General. Dicho esto, deseamos confesar nuestro aprecio la labor del Señor Egbert C. Kaltenbach y comendamos el nombramiento del Señor Mika Tapio.

Sobre la gestión de los recursos humanos, esperamos ver una reducción en la tasa de vacantes sobre todo en América Latina y el Caribe, fortaleciendo los equilibrios en distribución geográfica y de género con el mérito profesional como base fundamental. Asimismo, se debe continuar mejorando la respuesta tanto al acoso y al abuso sexual, como laboral. Con estas observaciones, respaldamos los Informes que nos presenta el Comité de Finanzas.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Egypt, as a Member of the Finance Committee, fully supports the recommendations of the *Reports of the 179th, 180th and 181st Sessions* of the Finance Committee and we would like to commend the leadership of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in conducting the work of the Committee.

Given that we are far behind with the Agenda, Chair, Egypt would like to highlight the following points, with regard to the 180th Session of the Finance Committee.

Egypt urges the Member Nations to fully and timely pay their assessed contributions in order to enable FAO to cover its operational needs and to provide the necessary support to the Members, in particular

the developing countries, in responding to the negative and unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic on food and agricultural sectors.

Egypt welcomes the additional information provided on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), approval and expenditure rates for the biennia 2016-17 and 2018-19 and we would like to lay stress on the need for maintaining the TCP expenditure rate at a level to ensure its full implementation given the essential role of TCP in helping the developing countries to address their national needs and in implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well. Therefore, Egypt looks forward to reviewing the detailed information that will be presented through the Joint Meeting at its autumn session.

With regard to human resources management, Egypt welcomes the commitment of FAO Management to reviewing its Organization's human resources policies and practices to ensure an engaged and empowered workforce, and to prepare a detailed Human Resources (HR) Strategic Action Plan with specific timelines and results to be achieved to improve human resources management. We are looking forward to reviewing this action plan at the next 182nd Session of the Finance Committee.

Egypt would like to encourage FAO Management in its continued efforts to enhance the Organization's human resources functions, including as regards:

- streamlined and merit-based selection and recruitment processes and procedures, taking into consideration equitable geographical representation, both for staff and consultants.
- further measures for the promotion of gender parity in the Organization, in particular in senior level positions.
- staff development and learning initiatives; and
- measures to enable strengthened employee engagement.

We would like these subparagraphs to be included in your conclusions.

Egypt agrees with the revised charter of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), which reflects a strong and independent internal oversight function in FAO, and we encourage FAO's active participation in the development of a coordinated and consistent United Nations System wide approach on how to address the allegations of misconduct against the Executive Head of an Organization.

In conclusion, Mr Chair, we would like to express our concerns on the high rates of vacancies, and we would like to request that FAO Management address this issue as soon as possible.

With these comments, Chair, Egypt endorses the *Report of the 180th Session* of the Finance Committee.

Mr Caka Alverdi AWAL (Indonesia)

Let me first convey our appreciation of the hard work and of the thorough report of the Finance Committee. Indonesia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Malaysia on behalf of the Asia Group. We endorse the Committee's guidance provided to the Secretariat on matters within its mandate. We would like to highlight the following issues.

Indonesia welcomes the appointment of Mr Mika Tapio for the position of Inspector General and appreciates the work of the Inspector General *ad interim*, Mr Egbert C. Kaltenbach during his period of office. We welcome the approval of the revised charter of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), which ensures a strong and independent internal oversight function in the Organization.

We noted with concern the increasingly high vacancy rate, both in Headquarters and in decentralized offices and requested the Management to address the situation as a priority to reduce such rates. In filling the vacancies, we urge the Management to observe the principle of equitable and balanced geographical representation, both for staff and consultants.

On the issue of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), we support the importance of maintaining TCP expenditures at a level that ensures full implementation of TCP appropriation as approved by Conference and in line with country needs and priorities.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States joins our colleagues in welcoming these Reports from the Finance Committee Sessions. We want to thank FAO Management for these productive Finance Committee discussions. We very much look forward to reviewing the Human Resources (HR) Strategic plan at the fall 2020 session. We believe that staff are FAO's biggest asset and largest budget item. We also appreciate the completion of a Employee Satisfaction Survey and we look forward to a discussion of the full results and analysis at our next session.

We share the concerns raised by several other colleagues today about the high vacancy rate and we look forward to that being addressed.

Finally, on the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Charter, we did have discussions during the Finance Committee meetings, and we noted that there is not a process in place currently to address allegations of misconduct against the Executive Head of the Organization. Therefore, we request the Management to report on progress on this issue at the November 2020 Session.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

We are grateful to the Chair, Ms Imelda Smolcic, and the Secretariat in relation to the preparations for the Sessions of the Finance Committee. Many issues were considered, and we agree with the overwhelming majority of the recommendations in the Reports.

I would like to speak about an issue related to the staff of the Inspector General of FAO. It is very important to follow a system wide approach, meaning that it is very important to follow general principles to resolve issues and this goes for Management of the Organization as well. That was touched upon in the Finance Committee Session and this is in the Report of the 180th Session.

I would like to thank Mr Egbert C. Kaltenbach who was the Inspector General *ad interim*. We think that he played a very important role in preparing the Report of the Office of the Inspector General and I just wanted to convey my thanks to him.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no more requests for the floor. I would invite the Chairperson of the Finance Committee; in case she has any additional comments to make. If not, I will go to the Secretariat. Ms Imelda Smolcic, you have the floor.

Sra. Imelda SMOLCIC (Presidente del Comité de Finanzas)

No tengo otros comentarios para hacer en este momento, así que creo que lo mejor es que la Secretaría pase a responder las preguntas que se le han formulado.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Mr Laurent Thomas.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

Let me join the Members in thanking the Chairperson of the Finance Committee for the exceptional leadership of the Finance Committee, particularly during the last Session.

I would like to thank the Members of the Finance Committee for their oversight role, an extremely important and productive relationship that will allow for working together to make FAO a better managed Organization with better risk management and with better internal controls, and an Organization which Members and partners feel is worthy of investing in.

We would also like to thank the Members of the Council for a very clear endorsement, with no reservations, of the report of the Finance Committee, which will allow us to further work on and to implement the recommendation and dialogue in November with the Finance Committee to see where we stand.

There were a number of comments made and very few queries. I think in the end the colleagues got it well from the United Kingdom on a number of subjects, and after my intervention I would like, if you agree Mr Chairperson, to pass the floor to the new Director of Human Resources, Ms Greet De Leeuw. There were many questions about the action plan, about vacancy rates, about the mobility policy and about the employee survey. I think it is worth giving a few minutes to Ms De Leeuw to give you an idea where we stand on this, and also to Ms Beth Crawford with regard to the concern expressed by Members on sustainable funding and resources, with what that means in terms of independence of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). I do not know if the Inspector General is following, maybe he also wishes to intervene himself.

What I want to say is that we have taken note, and that we would implement faithfully and in a timely fashion the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the different items raised. One of the important dimensions of the recommendations is with regard to risk management and internal control. I want to assure you that the Director-General regards this matter as a top priority for his senior leadership team, as he expressed in his statement of introduction to the Council.

The Director-General himself, and I think this is something new, meets with the Members of the Audit Committee and would like to make sure that the so-called “Third line of defence”, in terms of internal control, be strengthened, be it in terms of the appointment of an appropriate, very competent Inspector General, be it fully supporting the revised Charter of the Inspector General, be it supporting the good functioning of the Audit Committee and providing all the support required for the independent functioning of the now separated functions of the Ethics Officer, already present in FAO, and the Ombudsman, who will be joining as of mid-August. This is progress. There is a lot to do to improve. We are working on this to make FAO first class in the world, or within the United Nations, in relation to these matters.

There were questions asked by the United Kingdom on fraud prevention action in FAO. It is an area where the United Nations has to progress. There were discussions in the Finance Committee and in the Council whereby, two years ago I think, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) highlighted that there was underreporting on the United Nations System and so there was something wrong in our Fraud Prevention plan. We have been working intensively on this and I believe we have a solid Fraud Prevention plan in place that looks at all aspects from capacity building to the setup of right policies, monitoring, compliance, etc, and the third line of defence has a very important role to play here.

The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), in its last review considered that FAO was among the Organizations working well on this, even though there is still some progress to be made and we were rated as green, on a scale from dark red to dark green- we are dark green on this. Progress has been made, but we still seek to improve further.

In terms of issues regarding safeguards, sexual harassment, harassment, abuse of authority, sexual exploitation and abuse and progress made in terms of training, Ms De Leeuw will come back on this in terms of capacity development and in terms of awareness building. We believe that, with the work that will be done in the Plan of action on Human Resources and the Plan of action to follow-up on the 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey, we should make some further progress.

The good news is that on some of these items, the statistics from the employee survey are much better than the ones that stem out of the United Nations wide survey that was published, that were quite appalling. I am not saying that the statistics are good because the only statistic good is zero and 100 percent of positive perceptions that the Organization has the right policy in place. But, let us say progress and we will continue to work on this.

This is what I can say as an introduction. The last two points I want to make before passing the floor to Ms De Leeuw, regarding our Risk Management Framework and Policy as function in COVID-19

environment. I propose to come back on this when we discuss the COVID-19 response, but I could also speak about it now. I think it is quite interesting how it is good to report for all your Members.

With regard to the grading and the capacities of the Head of the Decentralized Offices, particularly the Country Offices, I did reply on this point when we reviewed the Item on the Programme Implementation Report (PIR). I can repeat that we are timely and faithfully implementing the Resolution of June 2019 Conference, which requested FAO to upgrade the level of the FAO Representatives (FAORs) at a minimum of Professional Level 5 (P-5). At the time of June 2019 Conference, we had 11 Representatives out of 39 that were rated P-4 in Africa, for example. Now we have only two left and we will continue to progress. We are also upgrading beyond the P5 level some FAORs in some countries, for which the challenges are such that they require more seniority. We are progressing on this also and will keep the Council Members informed.

Chairperson, if you agree, I would like to pass the floor to Ms De Leeuw. Please let me know if you wish that I speak about the risk management in the context of COVID-19 or you prefer that I cover this when we have the Item on the COVID-19 later?

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Mr Laurent Thomas, regarding COVID-19 under Item 10.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

That is fine, I would like to pass the floor to Ms Greet De Leeuw.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, okay. Thank you.

Ms Greet DE LEEUW (Director, Office of Human Resources)

I would also like to join Mr Laurent Thomas in thanking the Finance Committee, the Chair and the Members for the very fruitful discussions and the support and guidance on Human Resources (HR) matters.

I can confirm that my priority as the new HR Director is to develop an HR strategic plan, in order to ensure effective talent management in FAO. As some of you mentioned, it is valuable resource. I started working on the strategic plan, and it is quite a big task, since what it will try to do is to put together all the recommendations, including from yourself, from the Finance Committee and to address them in a holistic way. We talked about recruitment, vacancy rates, mobility, contractual modalities, delegations of authority, staff development, diversity and inclusion, and we will make sure that all these recommendations, together with some of the issues that you have highlighted, will be addressed over time.

I would also take into consideration in the development of the plan the internal and external audit recommendations, United Nations best practices and the 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey results, which are perfect in timing, as I will be able to really listen to what the staff have told us in a number of important areas. We have already started working with Ms Beth Bechdol, who is the survey expert, on having discussions with the different work streams, including in the regions and the staff associations, to really talk through with them the results of the survey and have some qualitative input from them in terms of how they see the results, how they also would recommend actions and priorities. All the input of these conversations will be collected and reflected in a corporate action plan and regional action plans.

I wanted to also come back to the issue of workplace conduct and the importance of having a workplace that is free of discrimination, abuse and harassment. The plan from the survey results is to have a special group coming together, looking at some of the details that have come out of the employee survey, and it is a blessing that we have a number of new people coming on board. We have a new Ombudsman, we have got a new Ethics Officer, we have got a new Inspector General, a new HR Director, so we can really put our heads together around these results and see, as was mentioned

by some of you, whether the existing action plans that have been approved by the Council, like the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) Action Plans, or gender action plans, whether these need to be adjusted in light of some of the recommendations and the results that we have received.

In pulling it all together, I can tell you it is a massive task that is ahead of us, and the expectations are high. There is a lot of engagement from staff. It is a real pleasure to discuss the survey results and to engage with some of our managers and staff on what they see as important in HR. It would be good to have a Strategic Plan that can really articulate the priorities as well and how we are going to move forward over time, how may one action sequence another, and how we are going to move forward on that. There is a lot of work to do and it is important to be able to move forward in a planned way and to be able to communicate on that.

With that, I am looking forward to continuing the discussion and I am always available for any questions or further suggestions you may have.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

Mr Chairperson, if you agree I would like to pass the floor now to Ms Beth Crawford to briefly recap the issues that were raised by many Members and groups on the sustainable funding of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, okay, go ahead.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

[XX] funding for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). I think the Director-General also, in his remarks earlier, stressed the importance of that in the high priority for him. As you know, in the current budget, *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21*, we have added in USD 400 000 for the OIG that is within the flat nominal budget we have added in USD 400 000 and following the discussion with the Finance Committee we have shifted that from non-staff resources to a new Professional Level 4 (P-4) post.

That is one of the updates that you received after the Finance Committee to show that we have added one additional post to the OIG. In addition, where we have confirmed to the Inspector General that if additional resources are needed for the implementation of the work plan in 2021 that we will identify savings from elsewhere in order to provide additional resources. This would then be reported to the Finance Committee in the context of the annual report on budgetary performance and programme and budget transfers. But, we have been very clear with the Inspector General that we do not in any way want to hold up the implementation of the work plan, taking into consideration on their part, as all of us, that we need to do all of our work in the most efficient and effective way possible, seeking efficiency savings where possible.

CHAIRPERSON

Mr Laurent Thomas?

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

Chairperson, I would like to propose that Deputy Director-General, Ms Beth Bechdol, offers a few comments on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) because there were many comments on the TCP. It is important to get some feedback.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

Thank you to Members who have again raised the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). I just want to say that we have again noted the points raised about the importance to maintain the expenditure levels related to TCP, specifically comments from Indonesia, Egypt and others.

I want to just say on reflection that you all had the benefit of hearing the Director-General's personal intervention regarding TCP, and his challenge to all of us in leadership and also to you, as Members, to approach the TCP in a way that I think in the future will make it even more catalytic, fit for purpose, flexible and judicious.

To close, I just would say that we do very much look forward to continued engagement with many of you. I have some personal engagement with some of you already since the Finance Committee had met, and look forward to more of those, along with review of both the evaluation report, as it is completed, and also to the standalone presentation that we will make to the Finance Committee in November.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor. I will conclude on this Item and put the conclusions on the screen.

Item 7: Reports of the 179th, 180th and 181st Sessions of the Finance Committee.

1. The Council approved the Reports of the 179th, 180th and 181st Session of the Finance Committee and in particular:
 - a) urged all Member Nations to make payments of assessed contributions on time and in full.
 - b) noted the Finance Committee's approval of the final budgetary transfers arising from implementation of the 2018-2019 Programme of Work.
 - c) endorsed the Finance Committee's guidance to Management in its continuous efforts to enhance the Organization's human resources functions.
 - d) welcomed Management's commitment to prepare a detailed Human Resources (HR) Strategic Action Plan, specific timelines and results to be achieved to improve the human resources management.
 - e) with regard to Human Resources (HR) matters, requested Management to address the high vacancy rate at Headquarters and in decentralized locations, put in place the new staff mobility programme, pursued efforts for equitable geographic representation, including by reducing the number of non-, under- and over-represented countries and further enhance delegation of authority.
 - f) appreciated the sharing of the highlights of the 2019 Employee Satisfaction Survey in a transparent manner and looked forward to the presentation of the full set of survey results and an action plan to address the issues identified at the November 2020 Session of the Finance Committee.
 - g) noted the Finance Committee's support for the appointment of Mr Mika Tapio to the position of Inspector General.
 - h) endorsed the appointment of Ms Malika Aït-Mohamed and Ms Hilary Wild as Members of the FAO Audit Committee for an initial period of three years. The first Member is from Algeria and the second one from the United Kingdom.
 - i) endorsed the proposed change in denomination of the FAO Audit Committee to FAO Oversight Advisory Committee.
 - j) noted the Finance Committee's approval of the revised charter for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), including the further amendments to provide international financing institutions (IFIs) and other institutional resource partners with access to Audit Reports directly relevant to their voluntary contributions.
 - k) stressed the importance of ensuring sustainable funding for the Office of Inspector General (OIG), in order to strengthen its function and ensure its operational independence.

- l) requested the action plan to prevent and respond to harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse be updated in response to the findings of the 2019-2020 Employee Satisfaction Survey.
- m) endorsed the Finance Committee's guidance providing on all other matters within its mandate, as well as initiatives to improve its own methods of work.

That ends my conclusions. I now open the floor for Members to make their interventions and suggestions.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

In our intervention we stressed that we need to find a language here regarding regional representation of staff and consultants in the Management's efforts to address Human Resources (HR) management issues. I did not see this, and I would propose to add it in subparagraph (c).

I would like to propose to add, after "human resources functions," the subparagraph which was agreed in the Finance Committee and always stressed during the deliberation of the Council and also the Finance Committee. I would therefore like to add a full subparagraph here to address the issue of regional representations for the staff and consultants. My proposal is to add after "functions," "including as regards a streamlined and merit-based selection and recruitment processes and procedures" Which is the same language as in the Finance Committee. "taking into consideration equitable geographical representation, both for staff and consultants and further measures for the promotion of gender parity in the Organization, in particular in senior level positions and staff development and the learning initiatives and the measures to enable strengthened employee engagement".

This is my proposal in subparagraph (c). I would also like to propose to find a language in your conclusions regarding Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) since most Members have raised the issue of TCP, which is a very important tool to all the developing countries. I am flexible with regards to the language.

CHAIRPERSON

Egypt, we will work out the language for the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Following up on the suggestion of my distinguished Egyptian colleague and given what he has introduced under subparagraph (c), we can delete in subparagraph (e) everything after "programme, pursue efforts." I would like to suggest, following subparagraph (e), another subparagraph "Reiterate the request of both, the Finance Committee and the Council, for further delegation of authority in line with General Rule XXXVIII.5".

Could we go to what was the "vacancy rate"? Instead of "requested Management address the high vacancy rate," I would say, "called on Management to substantially reduce the increasingly high vacancy rate and a reduction in the number of consultancy contracts," and we can delete "at Headquarters and decentralized locations," because that applies to all locations.

If you could go, what used to be subparagraph (k)? It is about the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). I give you the text first. Let us put it after the appreciation for support for appointment of the new Inspector General "Noted the support for the appointment of Mr Mika Tapio to the position of Inspector General." New subparagraph after that, "ask for further improvements to strengthen the OIG and its operational independence by ensuring sustainable funding for the Office and delegating to the Inspector General appropriate managerial responsibility and control over financial and human resources of the Office".

We have to see whether to keep it under subparagraph (l) or (m).

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

En el subpárrafo (e), sobre las tasas de vacantes, varias de mis propuestas van en el mismo sentido que las de Alemania, nada más quisiera verificarlas. Sí, creo que está de acuerdo. Una propuesta nada más en lugar de ponerlo. Lo voy a decir en inglés.

Mr Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico)

“...would call on,” maybe we can use “urged”.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

We cannot hear anything.

CHAIRPERSON

Just a moment, we are trying to put together the wording for Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) which Egypt requested. Egypt, does this text on TCP satisfy you?

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I want to start this subparagraph with, “The Council recalled its guidance regarding,” or “stressing,” “...stressed on the importance of maintaining the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) expenditure at a level that ensured full implementation of the TCP appropriation, as approved by the Conference.” This was also a guidance from the 163rd Session of the Council and we would like to add this language at the beginning of this subparagraph and we can complete with your language proposed.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

I would like to go back to subparagraph (e). I have noticed that before our German colleague deleted something from the Human Resources (HR) part, considering that in the statement made by the Asia Regional Group mentioned that geographical representation is a very important issue We feel that equitable geographical representation is a basic principle of the HR roles in FAO. We would like to maintain the original wording.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We just have one small adjustment to propose to subparagraph (i), regarding funding for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). We would like to add the words “after sustainable funding, within existing resources.”

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Just want to go back to the subparagraph regarding Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). My intention here that I would like to recall the guidance of the Council concerning the importance of maintaining TCP expenditure. I just want to add or propose after in the second line, “at the level to ensure full implementation of the TCP approved by the Conference.”

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Reaction to my distinguished Chinese colleague. I only suggested the deletion in subparagraph (e) because it was redundant there, given the fact that our Egyptian colleague had already referred to the equitable geographic representation in what is now subparagraph (c). We do not have to mention that twice and, therefore, I think we should delete it in subparagraph (e) and I would like to stick to this proposal. If it remained in subparagraph (e), then it should be added by merit.

CHAIRPERSON

As Germany has just pointed out, it is in another subparagraph. Perhaps you should look at that subparagraph to see whether it satisfies you.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original Language Chinese)

We feel this is not a repetition. Indeed, it is mentioned in both subparagraphs, but then they are different issues. Therefore, I would like to maintain the geographical representation in subparagraph (e).

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

As I said, it is redundant, but it is not a big point for us, so leave it in (e), but please add, “pursue efforts for merit based, equitable geographic representation.”

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Just also a minor amendment in the same subparagraph (e). I propose here to delete, “...with regard to Human Resources (HR) matters,” because I think there is a series of four subparagraphs in our conclusions regarding HR management, so I propose to delete it.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no further request for the floor. I consider that Item 7 is now concluded. Indonesia?

Mr Caka Alverdi AWAL (Indonesia)

I would like to go back to subparagraph (e). Just wondering, first I support the word “urge” and put the “...equitable geographical representation,” but “...reducing the number of non and underrepresented,” does it go with the message. I am just wondering because if you reduce the non-represented, then it will be minus and then if you reduce the number of underrepresented it will be none.

Perhaps we only mention reducing the number of over-represented, so delete “non” and “under”.

CHAIRPERSON

I think if you reduce the number of “non,” that means you have recruited from those countries. The same applies to the “under.” That is why the figure of “non” has reduced.

Mr Caka Alverdi AWAL (Indonesia)

I am at your hand on this one, Chair, but I just feel that it goes against the idea. However, with your explanation I will go along.

CHAIRPERSON

I can assure you it does not go against the idea.

Mr Caka Alverdi AWAL (Indonesia)

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no requests. I consider this Item 7 concluded.

Item 8. Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (28-29 May 2020)

Point 8. Rapport de la cent dixième session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (28-29 mai 2020)

Tema 8 Informe del 110.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (28 y 29 de mayo de 2020)

(CL 164/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We move to Item 8, *Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*, which took place on 28-29 May 2020.

The document before you is *CL 164/2*.

An introduction by Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 8: Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on the Constitutional and Legal Matters (Document CL 164/2)

Ms Daniela Rotondaro, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

It is my pleasure to present the Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), which was held virtually on 28 and 29 May 2020. This was the first virtual Session of an FAO Governing Body, which, thanks to all concerned, Members and FAO Secretariat, was completed, in my view, very satisfactorily.

The CCLM considered the following subject-matters:

- Voting procedures under Rule XII, paragraph 10 of the General Rules of the Organization;
- The use of unspent balance of biennial appropriations;
- The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture; and
- The Organization's voluntary adherence to the United Nations reporting system for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Under Any Other Matters, the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) provided a comprehensive updated report on the progress of his consultations regarding the appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies.

With respect to the voting procedures, the CCLM requested the development of a draft code of conduct addressing the candidates, Members and the Secretariat, consistent with Rule XII and the Organization's General Rules of the Organization, to be finalized prior to the 42nd Session of the Conference. The code should facilitate further the ICC consultations with the Regional Groups. The CCLM recommended that it be a Member-led exercise and participatory process.

In the context of its deliberations on use of unspent balance of biennial appropriations, the CCLM reaffirmed the importance of Financial Regulation 4.2 and underscored that FAO should operate in accordance with its regulations and policies. It recognized the authority of the Conference to make exceptions to Financial Regulation 4.2 but considered that these should be limited and made in accordance with a clear, well-defined and transparent process. The CCLM recommended that it reconsider the matter and provide advice on legal arrangements, upon review by the Programme and Finance Committees of the technical and policy aspects of the use of unspent balances.

Finally, the CCLM, by consensus, warmly welcomed the Organization's voluntary adherence to the United Nations reporting system for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse observing that it will increase the transparency and accountability of the Organization.

I invite the Council, through the Independent Chairperson of the Council, to:

- Approve the request for the development of a Code of Conduct both for Members and the Organization related to the voting procedures to be prepared before the upcoming 42nd Conference Session;
- Approve the CCLM Report and the recommendations and conclusions set out therein.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Ambassador Rotondaro to provide any additional comments.

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

First of all, as I am taking the floor for the first time, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Chair, on your leadership during all those difficult months.

Since the Members of the Council have already received my Introductory Note and it has been a very long day, I will not repeat its contents. I would just like to say that the Council of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) was the first Governing Body to hold a formal virtual Session in FAO history and I would like to thank all the Members, the Legal Office and FAO staff for having contributed to that and we reached consensus on very important issues through an open and constructive dialogue.

The meeting addressed some important items, which will need to be carefully considered by the Council this evening. In particular, CCLM recommended that the Secretariat finalized, before the next Session of the Conference, a code of conduct addressed to Members and the Secretariat on voting procedures, which must be a Member-led process, and so the endorsement tonight of the Council for such a process is sought.

The other Item was financial. While reaffirming the importance of Financial Regulation 4.2 and the need that FAO operates in accordance of its rules and policies, CCLM made recommendation within the context of its mandate on the use of the unspent balances and, as mentioned yesterday evening by the Director of Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP), these will be taken up by the Joint Programme and Finance Committees at its Session later in the year.

I will not address here the Item on the proposal of the establishment of the Digital Council for Food and Agriculture, since I understand that this Agenda would be under Item 9. I just would like to underline that CCLM observed that this initiative should not be regarded as creating a precedent, nor a new Governing Body, or establishing a formal institutional relationship between FAO and the Digital Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA). CCLM agreed that it would not be called "Council," but "Platform," and it will be discussed under Agenda Item 9.

Finally, following the request by some Members, you, Mr Chairperson, provided us with a comprehensive and updated report on the progress of your consultations regarding the appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies. CCLM took note of your report and welcomed your continued efforts in finding a suitable solution.

I would like to request that, through you, the Council approves the requests for the development of the Code of Conduct, both for Members and the organizations related to the voting procedures, to be prepared before the upcoming Conference Sessions, approve the CCLM Report, its recommendations and conclusions.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for Members' interventions.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. We welcome the report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and would like to make the following remarks.

We appreciate the request for a draft code of conduct on voting procedures and the framework of the General Rules of the Organization addressing the candidates, the Members and the Secretariat. The drafting of this code of conduct should be Member-led with the support of the Secretariat and should be ready for adoption at the 42nd Session of the Conference. The EU and its Member States stand ready to participate in this process, which needs to be taken forward in accordance with FAO's well-established decision-making procedures.

We concur with the approach taken on the use of unspent balance of biennial appropriations, reiterating that FAO is a rules-based Organization and must abide by its rules and regulations in reaffirming the importance of Financial Regulation 4.2. Although the Conference has the authority to make exceptions to Financial Regulation 4.2, the exceptions should not become the rule in FAO. We take note of the complexity of the issue, given the lack of clarity on how unspent balances could be used and expect further analysis on how unspent balances should be applied; we look forward to a further analysis on this topic by CCLM.

Regarding the establishment of an International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture, we agree with the name suggested by CCLM, “International Platform for Digitalization in Food and Agriculture”. We have a few important amendments which we would like to see in document *CL 164/9*. We will explain those under Agenda Item 9.

We would also like to underline that the CCLM recommends using the experiences of other hosting arrangements such as the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP), the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI), the Global Soil Partnership (GSP), and the Global Framework on Water Scarcity (WASAG) and we encourage FAO to take lessons learned, particularly on the financial implications, good governance and effectiveness of these mechanisms.

We highly appreciate that FAO has decided to voluntarily adhere to the United Nations reporting system for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. It will certainly help to increase the transparency and accountability of the Organization on this extremely important topic.

Mr Caka Alverdi AWAL (Indonesia)

Indonesia has the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Regional Group thanks the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro of San Marino, for the excellent presentation. Thank you, the CCLM Members, the Legal Counsel and the FAO Secretariat for their work, acknowledging that CCLM was the first Committee to do a hybrid virtual session among the Council Committees.

On the discussion, under 14 procedures, the Asia Group welcomes the request of the CCLM for the development of a code of conduct consistent with Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization. We look forward to a Member-led and participatory process, which should also take into account the technological and environmental exigencies of the post-COVID-19 world.

On the findings of the CCLM on the unspent balance, the Asia Regional Group appreciates the work of CCLM by engaging into a more fundamental discussion in accordance with Council guidance. This includes expanding the debate to the review of other financial regulations, aside from Financial Regulation 4.2 and studying regulations and practices of international organizations. Important was the acknowledgement of the complexity of the issue given that there is no clear definition of cash surplus. We agree that FAO should make a clear, well defined and transparent process on the matter and we look forward to the legal arrangement that the CCLM could propose on this matter.

The Asia Regional Group wishes to highlight to the Council that the CCLM found that the authority of the Conference to make exceptions must be limited, given that FAO, as a rule-based Organization, should operate in accordance within its own policies and regulations.

On the establishment of an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, we thank the CCLM for clarifying the process of the possible institutionalization of the safe platform. Important is that the proposed platform does not create a new Governing Body and that it does not establish the formal relationship with the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture. We fully agree that the possible platform should be grounded to FAO mandate.

As with the CCLM, the Asia Group warmly welcomes FAO’s voluntary adherence to the United Nations reporting system for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

With the comments above, the Asia Regional Group endorses Council’s approval of the Report of the 109th Session of the CCLM.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Original Language Russian)

The Russian Federation would like to thank the Members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for the work carried out during the 110th Session.

With regard to the matters which were considered during that session of the Committee, we would like to highlight some issues relating to the unspent balances. We refer to the fact that Financial Regulation 4.2 needs to be respected, which requires that such balances be returned to Member Nations at the close of the budget biennium. The practice, which started back in 2008-09, undermines

the meaning of the aforementioned financial regulation. It seems to be at odds with the logic of Zero Nominal Growth, which underpins the budgeting of the Organization.

The Russian delegation does not object to the transfer of the unspent balance from 2018-19 because this is a one-time measure and should not set a precedent for the future, when it comes to the practice that has been used so far. We think it is very important to have a further analysis of the practice of unspent balances and how they are used in FAO.

First and foremost, in order to find out why they come about, this will help to fill possible gaps in the planning and implementation of the expenditure budget.

Taking into account these comments, our country has no objection to the approval of the report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Sra. Patricia RODRIGUEZ (República Dominicana)

Agradecemos la presentación del documento *CL 164/2 Informe del 110.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (28 y 29 de mayo de 2020)* y acogemos de manera favorable las deliberaciones realizadas por el Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos en su 110º período de sesiones.

Valoramos positivamente que la FAO comience a reportar al *Tracker del sistema de las Naciones Unidas* para trabajar de forma más efectiva y coordinada contra la explotación y los abusos sexuales y proteger a las personas vulnerables, mejorando la rendición de cuentas y reportes.

Reiteramos la importancia de continuar la discusión política en cuanto al alcance y flexibilidad del artículo 4.2 del Reglamento Financiero, a fin de fortalecer las finanzas de la Organización para el logro de su mandato y teniendo en cuenta la necesidad de garantizar procesos y procedimientos presupuestarios transparentes y adecuados.

Con estos breves comentarios República Dominicana aprueba el documento *CL 164/2 Informe del 110.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (28 y 29 de mayo de 2020)*.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

Mi intervención es muy breve y es sobre la cuestión de los saldos no utilizados. Creemos que se deban seguir los reglamentos de la FAO, en el artículo 4.2 del Reglamento Financiero están establecidos, pero veo en el Informe que una barrera que impide cubrir eso. Hay un problema allí, es la ausencia de una definición de superávit de la tesorería que no está definida en el reglamento financiero. Mi pregunta, creo que es para la Administración, sería ¿por qué no se tiene esta definición básica? Y ¿qué Oficina o qué Órgano sería el apropiado para definir?

CHAIRPERSON

I have no more speakers on my list. I would pass the floor to Ambassador Daniela Rotondaro in case she has some comments. If not, then I will pass the floor to the Secretariat.

Ms Daniela ROTONDARO (Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

I see that there is a general consensus on the work and recommendations by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and I see that Members of the Council are endorsing the Report of CCLM. There is just one question from our colleague from Mexico and I would like to request the legal advice of Ms Donata Rugarabamu, if she can provide us with a reply to Mexico's question.

CHAIRPERSON

I now the pass floor to the Legal Counsel for not only addressing the questions raised by Mexico but also some other issues raised by Members.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Thank you very much for the very useful and helpful feedback on the Report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). I have particularly taken note of the interest in the development of the code of conduct under the guidance and leadership of the Members in the context particularly of informal consultations led by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC).

I can assure you that our Office is ready and will certainly begin working very rapidly on developing some text which could assist those consultations, always bearing in mind that this will be a membership and participatory process. We are here to assist you and we will indeed also look at what other organizations are doing in that context, in order to share experiences, adding to analysis we have done of 12 other organizations in preparation for the CCLM.

I will not make any observations unless, of course, requested vis-à-vis the platform on [XX], bearing in mind that there will be a full discussion of this Item shortly, beyond saying that even from the FAO perspective we have been looking at it as an arrangement akin to the other hosting arrangements, which are fully aligned with the CCLM in that context.

Most importantly, as far as responding to queries as opposed to making observations and comments, with respect to the unspent balances, you have all noted there was a very careful analysis of the legal framework by the CCLM on them.

The CCLM was very careful to stay within its mandate, as its title speaks for itself, and in that regard, as many have noted, there are clear legal lacunae or legal ambiguities and in that regard. I can confirm that the CCLM, as reflected in its Report, is ready to remedy that. Those lacunae, once they receive the guidance of those Committees which are competent to provide the technical and policy guidance, will be remedied by the CCLM.

How these lacunae or these ambiguities came up, I have to admit I do not have an answer. There just seems to be a gap, maybe there was felt to be no need for such definition. It is highly unusual in most international organizations' financial regulations that there is such definition. I believe here we now have an opportunity to actually remedy that by going forward, and that process would start with the substantive discussion by the Programme and Finance Committees later this year.

I stand ready to provide further guidance, should you need any, but at the moment this is all that I have to add to the conversation.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings to an end discussion on Item 8. I will put my conclusions on the screen.

Item 8: Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

1. The Council endorsed the Report of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and in particular;
 - a) with regard to the issue of voting procedures under Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, endorse the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters' (CCLM) request to the Management for the development of draft Code of Conduct to facilitate further consultations by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and for consideration by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, with a view to having a draft Code finalized prior to the 43rd Session of the Conference.
 - b) agreed with the view of the CCLM that this Code should address the candidates, Members and the Secretariat, be consistent with Rule XII at large and the General Rules of the Organization and be developed through a Member-led and participatory process.
 - c) reaffirmed the importance of Financial Regulation 4.2 and endorsed the CCLM's recommendation that it consider the matter and provide advice on legal arrangements upon review by the Programme and Finance Committees of the technical and policy aspects of the use of unspent balances.

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

Japan appreciates FAO's efforts on the development of the Concept Note on the establishment of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

The current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for the application of digitalisations in the food and agriculture sectors, which is one of the FAO's core priorities.

In this regard, it's necessary to establish the appropriate modality and structure including governance, membership and timeline. Japan is interested in the function of the Platform such as coordination, policy [XX]. We request the Management to provide a clear timeline process to the Members in order to discuss platform activities.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

Now it is 9:30 p.m., after a long and tiring day. I can see that the Chairperson and other colleagues are working very hard to conclude the Item today, including the effort by interpreters as well as by people remotely joined this meeting from Asia. China is going to make the statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

Continues in English

We would like to start our statement by mentioning that we are truly living in the digital world so-called in the era of the first Industrial Revolution.

The COVID-19 era forces most of our actions, particularly works in the food and agricultural sector to be more digitalized as an essential course of action. In this regard, the Asia Regional Group strongly welcomes FAO hosting The International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. We appreciate what FAO has done for digitalization of food and agriculture so far, but we are looking forward to seeing more outcomes through the establishment of the platform while considering several already existing systems.

In this regard, the Asia Regional Group wish to highlight several issues. First, while very positive regarding the legal nature of the Platform, which should be flexible, light and under consensual coordination mechanism supported by FAO rather than through the creation of an autonomous legal entity or a new FAO body, also this platform can operate under FAO's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

It should be in accordance with FAO's procedures and policies, and all administrative support cost should be covered by extra budgetary contributions. Furthermore, we work on several key principles such as transparency, openness and the inclusiveness to be followed along with cost efficiency.

With regard to the composition of the mechanism such as an Intergovernmental Group and an advisory group, we do support a fair geographic distribution and gender balance as the very basic element. Thus, we request the Management to provide a clear timeline in advance and to leave adequate time to Members in order to have a sufficient consultation.

Last but not least, since our technology is like a double-edged sword, we are also concerned about potential risks with regard to digital technology, data protection and the upholding of privacy and most significant issues which need thorough preparation. Technology is developing in a flash. It speeds sometimes well above our expectation. It is crucial to timely follow the change. Therefore, we strongly emphasise the importance of human resources and request FAO to work with experts with adequate capabilities.

With these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Council's approval of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by China on behalf of Asia Regional Group.

- d) welcomed the Organization's voluntary adherence to the United Nations' reporting system for allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

That is the end of the conclusions. I open the floor to Members.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

With regard to the Code of Conduct development, that is subparagraph (a), I would like to suggest to include the expression Member-led. "to facilitate further Member-led consultations by the Independent Chairperson and for consideration", I think perhaps there.

We would like to have the expression "Member-led" included in subparagraph (a).

With regard to Financial Regulation 4.2, "reaffirmed the importance of abiding by Financial Regulation 4.2".

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, I just would like to point one aspect. In subparagraph (b) there is a reference to Member-led participatory process. Would you like it to be in subparagraph (a) as well?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I overlooked that. I think that is good enough.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no requests for the floor, so with this Item 8 is concluded.

Item 9. International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

Point 9. Plateforme internationale pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture numériques

Tema 9. Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales

(CL 164/9)

CL 164/2 - Report of the 110th Session of the CCLM (paragraphs 18-21)

CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraph 13)

CL 164/6 Rev.1 - Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (paragraph 17)

CHAIRPERSON

We move on to Item 9 on our Agenda, *International Digital Platform for Food and Agriculture*.

The relevant document before you is *CL 164/9*.

The Secretariat's introduction by Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist has been circulated to you.

I now open the floor for Members to make their comments.

Introduction to Agenda Item 9: International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

Food systems are in dire need of innovative solutions to address interlinked challenges, such as ensuring food security and nutrition for all, contributing to inclusive growth and managing natural resources sustainably. Digitalization can play an increasingly important role in achieving the global goal of improving food security and rural livelihoods. Digital technologies boost connectivity, reduce inefficiencies, provide access to information and stimulate cooperation across the value chain. Digital technologies can have a tremendous impact, making agriculture more productive, sustainable and efficient. Although the opportunities offered by digital technologies are vast and profoundly transformative, there are also underlying risks.

Although digital technologies affect all sectors of the economy and society as a whole, their impacts on agriculture can be specific and can give rise to challenges that should be addressed by policymakers.

The proposed Platform would not duplicate other UN entities' (International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), etc.) work, but would complement it by creating linkages between international organizations and fora that focus on food and agriculture, and those that work on the digital economy. Creating such linkages is important for the development of an environment that is conducive to the application of digital technologies and agricultural development.

1. Process

In January 2019, the Agriculture Ministers of 74 Nations, during the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA)¹, requested FAO in consultation with international organizations and stakeholders to develop a concept note for the establishment of an 'International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture'.

FAO started working closely with other international organizations and engaged other stakeholders in the consultations. The process included a series of workshops and a broad online consultation using FAO's Food Security Network. FAO organized a side event during the Committee on World Food Security last October, where Members had the opportunity to be informed of this multi-stakeholder initiative and discussed its objectives.

The concept note was finalized in January 2020 and considered by the GFFA Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference on 18 January. As a result, 72 Ministers for agriculture called upon FAO and its Governing Bodies to support the establishment of the Digital Council².

Although the ministers requested FAO to work on establishing an 'International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture,' FAO proposes that the Governing Bodies change the name of this initiative to 'International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture'. The term 'platform' better reflects the nature and functions of this initiative. It is a multi-stakeholder forum where information is shared, and issues are discussed to develop a shared understanding of the benefits and risks of digitalization and achieve a consensus on the way forward.

FAO houses similar initiatives, such as the Global Soil Partnership, Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS).

In the context of digital technologies, the proposal for establishing the Platform is in accordance with the UN Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies that supports multi-stakeholder dialogue on normative frameworks that support these technologies to build trust and confidence. It is also in line with the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation for developing multi-stakeholder or bilateral initiatives on specific issues.

2. Objective and roles of the proposed International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

The broad objective of the proposed International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture would be to provide a forum for examining and discussing the potential benefits and risks of digitalization of agriculture and providing advice and guidance to governments. These would be voluntary and not legally binding and aimed at supporting decision-making at higher levels.

The Platform will be a voluntary initiative, and the functions will entail: i) drive the exchange of ideas and experiences and act as a coordination mechanism; (ii) act as a policy adviser to governments to harness the opportunities presented by the digitalization.

Coordination Mechanism

¹ See the 2019 GFFA Communiqué: <https://www.gffa-berlin.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GFFA-2019-Communiqué.pdf>

² See the 2020 GFFA Communiqué: <https://www.gffa-berlin.de/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GFFA-Communiqué-2020-EN.pdf>

This role entails the facilitation of the dialogue between governments and a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, such as farmers' organizations, civil society, technologists, academics and the private sector.

More importantly, this coordination role will aim to bridge the gap between the organizations and fora where the digital economy is discussed (such as in ITU) and, more specifically, those that focus on food and agriculture. Currently, there is no link between these two processes and issues related to digital technology applications on agriculture are not covered in the digital economy *fora*. The proposed Platform would bridge this gap by strengthening cooperation between International Organizations and fora mandated on food and agriculture and those that focus on the digital economy. It would raise awareness on agriculture, so that related impacts are considered and discussed within the digital economy *fora*.

Policy Adviser

Policies and regulations will be vital in maximising the benefits of digital technology and minimising their risks. Through open dialogue and consultations, the proposed Platform would support governments and policymakers to formulate policies by developing voluntary guidelines, norms and principles that can address the technical, social and ethical challenges the sector is facing in the context of digital technology. Policy advice deliverables will be reviewed by the FAO Members that would participate in the proposed Platform before they are issued.

3. Operating Mechanism of the proposed International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture

To fulfil the foreseeable roles as coordinator and policy advisor, the envisaged Platform will assume an agile and inclusive structure as follows:

The Intergovernmental Representatives Group would serve as the decision-making body of the Platform. This Group will be composed of experts from the Members or experts nominated by Members, ensuring that all regions are represented. There will be 12 members/delegates: two from Africa, two from Asia, two from Europe, two from Latin America and the Caribbean, two from the Near East and two from North America and the Southwest Pacific region. This Group would identify issues, set the Digital Platform's priority list, deliberate on best practices and recommendations submitted by international organizations and experts (the Advisory Committee, see below), and assess the initiative's overall effectiveness and performance. These members will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Advisory Committee would be composed of international organizations and technical experts. It would also include experts from farmers' organizations, the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and it would undertake most of the technical work. The Advisory Committee would work on issues requested by the Intergovernmental Representatives Group, ensuring that these would be discussed by all stakeholders (in the Multistakeholder Forum, see below) and by forming ad hoc Working Groups, if the need arises. The Advisory Committee would make proposals (on best practices or recommendations) to the Intergovernmental Group for discussion and endorsement.

The Multistakeholder Forum – an online forum open to stakeholders would ensure inclusion and a bottom-up approach at a low cost. If there is a need to address specific issues (such as, for example, Artificial Intelligence for which the Advisory Committee may have no expertise) the international organizations and other experts could form ad hoc Working Groups. The Multistakeholder Forum would involve farmers through their umbrella associations, such as the World Farmers' Organization and regional associations. It would include NGOs, academia and the private sector.

The Coordination Unit would provide day-to-day operational and administrative support to the Digital Platform's activities and technical support. It will be funded by voluntary and extrabudgetary contributions and will be comprised of a Director Level 1 (D1), a Professional Level 4 (P-4) and an administrative assistant level 3(G3).

The rules and procedures that would guide these groups would be discussed later by the Members who would participate in the initiative.

Ms Mietani CHAUKE (Zimbabwe)

I am delivering this statement together with Kenya on behalf for the Africa Regional Group.

Digital technologies offer unique opportunities for improving food production and trade, especially to smallholder farmers and for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the perennial challenge of food insecurity and hunger facing the world, the current COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented challenge with deep social economic consequences further compromising the food security and nutrition situation.

The Global Report on Food Crisis (GRFC) 2020 highlights that 135 million people in 55 countries face acute food insecurity with another 181 million people are on the edge of sliding into this situation. Against this backdrop, digitalization can play an important role in improving food security in rural livelihoods.

Digitalization has the potential to boost connectivity in the agri-food system with information and communication technology (ICT) providing access to technical information and stimulating cooperation across the value chains.

“Big data” also offers insights for improving productivity in decision-making through real-time alerts, such as when coping with natural disasters. Open sharing of information also helps to increase transparency and trust between otherwise disparate stakeholder groups in the global agri-food system.

We acknowledge that digitalization can have important drawbacks. It may increase digital divides across the system and cause workforce displacement, especially where agriculture is the primary source of employment. Digitalization can also make it harder for smallholder farmers as they struggle to compete with new technologies that can even cause price rises by increasing market concentration.

It is, therefore, imperative to reduce the digital gap and strengthen the role of small and medium farmers, reduce inequalities and increase resilience. Consequently, we welcome an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture that is inclusive, and which promotes access to all, including women and youth. It is encouraging that the operating mechanism for the proposed Digital Platform includes a Multistakeholder Forum that could ensure this inclusion. We call upon the platform to target smallholder farmers’ capacity building and adopting local and indigenous innovation and technologies.

We welcome the addition of an Inter-governmental Representative Group that would ensure that the priorities for the Digital Platform will continue to be Member-driven with full representation from all regions. We encourage effective involvement of national governments at all levels.

We appreciate and support the coordination role that this Platform will play as a linkage between International Organizations and fora with mandates on food and agriculture with those where digital economy is discussed. As it has been noted, there are no linkages between the two. Bridging this gap, including regional and local level benchmarking, would ensure that agriculture is not left behind where discussions on digital economy are held.

It is our belief that such initiatives must prove themselves to be sustainable and impactful. We therefore welcome the proposal to review the Platform after a five-year trial period to evaluate the sustainability and to ensure that it continues to be fruitful.

In closing, the Africa Regional Group, praises the formation of an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture is a step in the right direction to ensure that agriculture is not left behind in the technology age. Digitalization of agriculture has the potential of accelerating agricultural development across the African continent.

With these few remarks, the Africa Regional Group endorses the proposal for FAO to hold an International Platform for Digital Foods and Agriculture, as outlined in document *CL 164/9*.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Mexico as the last speaker before we adjourn. As I explained in the beginning, we will have to adjourn at eight o’clock and then reconvene at nine to carry on with our session. I will

give the floor to Mexico and that will be the last speaker before our adjournment at eight. Mexico, you have the floor.

Sr. Elias REYES BRAVO (México)

México respalda la propuesta para que se constituya esta Plataforma internacional y en que sea hospedada por la FAO. Coincidimos en que las oportunidades que las tecnologías digitales ofrecen son muy amplias y que también implican riesgos, los cuales deberán atenderse con oportunidad para no dejar a nadie atrás.

En virtud de las diversas partes interesadas que habrán de concurrir en la Plataforma, esta deberá priorizar los contenidos de sus distintos apartados de manera que responda a los requerimientos informativos de manera selectiva y que vaya acorde con las necesidades de los diversos actores. Un segmento fundamental de la plataforma deberán ser los productores, tanto desde el punto de vista de los procesos productivos en los que participan, como de los temas de la agenda internacional de los que deben estar bien informados, al ser los protagonistas fundamentales de la agricultura y la alimentación.

CHAIRPERSON

It is just a couple of minutes to 20:00 hours. We will adjourn and reconvene at 21:00 hours. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 19:58 to 21:02 hours

La séance est suspendue de 19 h 58 à 21 h 02

Se suspende la sesión de las 19.58 a las 21.02

CHAIRPERSON

It is 21:00 hours. I have my list of speakers. I go to the Dominican Republic.

Sra. Patricia RODRIGUEZ (República Dominicana)

De manera breve, queremos señalar que muchos pequeños y medianos productores no se pueden beneficiar de la digitalización porque necesitan un sistema de apoyo que cubra la brecha digital existente. Y en el contexto actual de la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) hace que los esfuerzos dirigidos a fortalecer las cadenas de suministros de alimentos sean aún más pertinentes.

Por esta razón, acogemos la iniciativa de hospedar esta *Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales* y apoyamos las acciones emprendidas por la FAO para promover su establecimiento.

Finalmente, vista la naturaleza inclusiva y transparente de esta plataforma, aplaudimos que se contemple utilizar los mecanismos ya establecidos del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) para integrar a múltiples partes interesadas.

Mr Won-chul JOO (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea fully aligns itself with the statement which will be made by China on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

Climate change and COVID-19 are posing immense threats to the global food security and nutrition. To tackle these challenges, innovation is essential in the agricultural sector, such as digitisation of a good food system. In this context, Korea highly appreciates FAO's effort for the establishment of an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

In addendum, I would like to mention three points.

I would like to suggest that more participants from various countries get involved in the Digital Platform. According to the Council note of the Digital Council, only two countries by region can join the [XX] Group. In the Asia Regional Group the level of technologies and the number of farmers with digital technology vary among the countries. I think there are not enough participants to reflect the

various circumstances within the region. Fortunately, as this Platform goes online, it can accommodate as many users as necessary, like this Council.

Secondly, I believe the Platform should ensure broad participation in advisory committees, including participation of scientific experts from academia and research institutions from around the world. In this context, I would like to ask the Management for further information on the modality for advisory committees.

Third, we should avoid redundancy with other international organizations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) or the World Bank (WB). At the same time, to put this platform fully in place, and to have more synergic outcomes, we should strengthen connectivity with those international bodies.

Korea is making every effort to submit a sustainable and effective digital agri-food system by enhancing digitization of agriculture. The main project in my country is to spread the number of small farms where farmers control the environment with the help of an expert system and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to raise crops and animals.

Regarding Smart Farming as an innovative engine to its agricultural industry, Korea is providing comprehensive support to farmers. As well as smart farming in greenhouses, we are also trying to apply digital technology to field farming which we believe to be more useful and applicable to developing countries.

Moreover, in cooperation with FAO, we have been ready to launch the Smart Farming project in some developing countries in Asia since last year. Korea is providing smart farm technologies to some Mekong (delta) countries through the project. Korea hopes the people in these countries will be able to mitigate and adjust to climate changes while increasing agricultural productivity.

Korea is ready to share its experience in the agricultural sector with Members.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Finland. Egypt, you are on the list but further down.

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I asked for the floor. I have been on the list since before the rest.

CHAIRPERSON

However, it does not show on the screen.

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I do not know why. It is here.

CHAIRPERSON

Because on the screen...

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I do not know, something is wrong.

CHAIRPERSON

There are five speaker countries before you on the list here on the screen.

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

Here my name is Egypt, Ramzy Steno in the participants list.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got the participants list but you are further down. There are five countries before you. They put that order, the order which you...

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I raised my hand.

CHAIRPERSON

If you want to participate...

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

...during the rest period.

CHAIRPERSON

I can only follow the list of what I see.

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I have no problem but that is what I did, but perhaps there is something wrong. There is no problem.

CHAIRPERSON

Therefore, Finland. Sorry, I have to follow the order.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I will be reading out this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

The European Union (EU) and Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the EU statement which will be delivered by Germany.

We welcome the initiative for the new platform. We see great opportunities for farmers and rural communities through digitalization. This is how services can provide farmers with an improvement of production technologies, administration and knowledge. The digital devices can revolutionize farmers' marketing channels, finance and business management and open up important new opportunities.

Nevertheless, when fostering digitalization, we have to make sure that transparency, inclusiveness, access, including through open source and data sovereignty, are values which may not be compromised. The International Platform has an important role also in reflecting these questions.

As commented by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), we support the name of the new platform as it follows: *The International Platform for Digitalization in Food and Agriculture* in order to clarify the tasks and goals of the new platform better.

Mr Rodrigo ESTRELA DE CARVALHO (Brazil)

Brazil would like to thank the Secretariat for the documents provided on this matter, particularly the *Concept Note on Realizing the Potential of Digitalization to Improve the Agri-Food System*.

The progressive adoption of digital technologies by agriculture in livestock sectors is potentially one of the most important ways to stimulate improved rates of productivity growth. In the last two decades alone, Brazil has increased grain production by approximately 250 percent - expanding only 50 percent of the planted area. This tendency has turned Brazil into a case of sustainable production with more than 60 percent of its total area still preserved, in less than 30 percent of the country's territory destined for agriculture and livestock.

The Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) has identified technology as the most important factor for this steady growth in productivity.

In Brazil, the digitalization of agriculture has gained centrality in the planning of harvests and in the acquisition of inputs, as well as in access to up-to-date agricultural machinery, especially among the younger generations of rural producers.

We endorse the proposal for FAO to host an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. The platform may play an important role in advancing knowledge and sharing good practices.

While it is important to understand the potential that digitalization may provide for food systems, it is also essential to recognise that this potential will not be achieved unless a number of challenges are overcome. Uneven access to technology, especially in developing countries, shall be addressed. At the same time, it is crucial that small producers do not become dependent on technology packages that are inappropriate to their local realities.

By supporting the creation of the Platform, we would like to underline our discomfort regarding the process that has brought us here. The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), the Programme Committee (PC) and the Finance Committee (FC) reports were accurate on this point. We are facing another case in which the Secretariat has rushed a debate that should have been conducted primarily, and from the beginning, in the Technical Committees (TCs).

Sr. Gustavo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Deseamos expresar aprecio por la presentación del documento *CL 164/9 Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura*, destacando la importancia del uso de la tecnología como una herramienta para encarar los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria y la sostenibilidad del sistema agroalimentario, contribuyendo a mejorar los medios de vida y proporcionando soluciones para una mejor adaptación al cambio climático y la mitigación de sus efectos.

El Perú acoge la nota conceptual sobre el establecimiento de un “Consejo Digital Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura”, que propone la creación de una estructura dinámica que sería hospedada en la FAO, para fomentar la digitalización en el sistema agroalimentario y reforzar la cooperación internacional, el intercambio de conocimientos, la creación de sinergias y evitar la duplicación de esfuerzos. Asimismo, respaldamos las sugerencias emitidas en los Informes de los Comités del Consejo, por el Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos en su 110.º período de sesiones, así como por el Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y en su reunión conjunta con el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones, sobre el cambio de la denominación por Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales.

Concordamos con la propuesta de que esta plataforma cumpla una función asesora en temas concretos, facilitando el diálogo basado en el multilateralismo y la participación de todas las partes interesadas, fortaleciendo el vínculo entre las organizaciones a nivel internacional. Por tanto, debe ser un mecanismo flexible, voluntario, inclusivo y basado en el principio del consenso.

La creación de esta plataforma nos abre las puertas a nuevas oportunidades para reducir las brechas socioeconómicas; mejorar la calidad de los alimentos; así como los medios de vida, principalmente en las zonas rurales.

Además de servir como centro de coordinación para fortalecer los vínculos entre las partes interesadas y asesorar en materia de políticas y mejores prácticas, se recomienda a la FAO aprovechar el nuevo enfoque basado en innovación -propuesto por el Director General- para desarrollar y poner a disposición tecnologías informáticas que puedan ser fácilmente implementadas por los países, especialmente para aquellos en desarrollo y con capacidades limitadas.

Los pequeños productores, requieren hoy más que nunca, un apoyo decidido por parte de los países, las organizaciones internacionales, la academia, el sector privado y la sociedad civil. Para ellos, invertir en tecnologías digitales, puede resultar costoso e involucra riesgos que normalmente no les son fáciles de afrontar.

Por ello, esperamos que dentro de las prioridades que se establezcan para la plataforma se considere promover el desarrollo de herramientas tecnológicas que los países puedan aplicar, en base a su propia

información y conforme a sus particularidades. Por ejemplo, aplicaciones sobre comercio electrónico de productos e insumos, buenas prácticas agrícolas y de manufactura, monitoreo y manejo integrado de plagas, entre otros temas.

Respecto al mecanismo de funcionamiento, acogemos la propuesta sobre su composición, en tanto se garantice la representación regional; la participación amplia de expertos y de entidades científicas y técnicas pertinentes; la discusión eficaz e inclusiva a través del foro en línea de múltiples partes interesadas; y, de manera especial, el necesario establecimiento de una unidad de coordinación para brindar el apoyo técnico, operacional y administrativo.

Con estos comentarios, el Perú apoya la propuesta de la creación de la *Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales*, la misma que sería hospedada en la FAO.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I believe China is supposed to give the statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group, so I can do it after them. I think some of them logged in and logged out again so that's why the sequence is running.

CHAIRPERSON

Malaysia, I was looking at the order of the list. China is way below.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I think because they logged in again. I would rather wait until after China anyway.

CHAIRPERSON

I have just made a ruling regarding Egypt. Argentina, thank you.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tal cual lo expresó el Ministro de Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca de la Argentina durante la Semana Verde en Berlín, en enero pasado, y conforme a mis exposiciones en la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones, mi país apoya con entusiasmo la iniciativa de crear la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y las Agriculturas Digitales, ya que entendemos que se trata de un instrumento válido, actual y necesario para enfrentar los desafíos que suponen fortalecer un esquema económico donde estamos llamados a producir más alimentos con menos recursos.

Enfrentamos un contexto global adverso que está marcado por las externalidades que dejará la pandemia del COVID-19, con regiones vulnerables que se volverán aún más pobres, panoramas económicos alarmantes y con millones de puestos de trabajo rurales en peligro.

La FAO no puede menos que estar a la altura de las circunstancias y utilizar toda su capacidad técnica para brindar soluciones inteligentes con base en herramientas digitales para atender las temáticas de alimentación, nutrición y producción agrícola-ganadera del futuro. Creemos que la plataforma digital es el instrumento adecuado para superar estos desafíos.

Aunque, insistimos en la necesidad de que se trate de un espacio inclusivo y transversal que sirva fundamentalmente para achicar la brecha digital entre los productores, garantizando la capacitación de pequeños y medianos agricultores en el uso, en el acceso y en la implementación de nuevas tecnologías; garantizando, al mismo tiempo, la conectividad y la adquisición de nuevos conocimientos.

Otro elemento que valoramos como clave es la interacción del sector público-privado en la plataforma. Creemos que su sinergia puede ser el catalizador adecuado para impulsar el desarrollo de soluciones agrodigitales que ayuden a mejorar la producción de alimentos y combatir la desnutrición en una amplia gama de regiones del mundo. Sin embargo, recordamos la necesidad de asegurar la participación gubernamental, geográficamente balanceada en el grupo de representantes, así como la importancia de evitar desequilibrios en las contribuciones voluntarias y aportes específicos a proyectos

donde subyacen objetivos que no persiguen el espíritu de desarrollo sostenible en sus tres dimensiones.

Las dificultades que estamos enfrentando requieren de respuestas originales con carácter disruptivo. Hace falta dejar atrás lógicas de acción que responden a paradigmas extemporáneos que no contemplaban una calamidad sanitaria como el COVID-19. FAO entendió esta necesidad y ofreció una propuesta innovadora para ayudar a los agricultores independientemente de su escala productiva e ingresar con pasos firmes en la era digital. También, expresamente apoyamos la gobernanza propuesta por la Oficina del Economista Jefe, conforme figura en la *Concept Note*, la mecanización, la automatización y hasta la robotización en la agricultura son ya realidades palpables que no solo impactarán en cómo producimos sino también en quién puede producir.

Frente a estos desafíos, nuestra responsabilidad es no dejar a nadie atrás y para lograr ese objetivo, qué mejor que contar con la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digital. Por si hubo algún problema de traducción, quiero concluir diciendo que apoyamos el nombre y lo pongo entre comillas “Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digital”, tal cual fue aprobado por el Comité del Programa que en inglés sería, “International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture”.

Mr Ramzy STENO (Egypt)

I would like to speak both as a University professor and a small-scale farmer. Egypt supports the establishment of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. In order to help Members with technical assistance, given the negative impacts of COVID-19 on food supply chains and agriculture.

We believe that this Platform should end with local smallholder farmers by using and adopting simple technologies at the beginning and providing them with their crucial needs of extension service, inputs, knowledge of prevailing climatic change and market prices. This is very crucial for these poor farmers who represent a great portion of the world’s productivity.

I recommend not to start with very high technologies. The high technologies for nations’ policies but you should look down and not leave these poor farmers.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The United States supports increased innovation, including digitalization in agriculture to increase sustainable production. Thus, we support the Platform’s proposed role in knowledge sharing of best practices and raising awareness.

We note the recommendations from the Joint Programme and Finance Committees Meeting explicitly noted that the new platform should not have a policy setting function in its mandate. It is imperative that this new platform, if established, avoid duplicating established work programmes and the activities of other international bodies with comparative advantage in policy areas involving information communication technologies, use of digital technologies and data and digital economy, as well as multi-stakeholder fora providing recommendations and guidelines or supporting governments as they create new policy framework.

If such a platform is established, we would also like to stress the importance of the protection of data and intellectual property rights. In fact, the United States requests that any terms of reference for this Digital Platform, if adopted, be discussed at the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and subsequently subject to approval by Council.

Ms Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

I applaud all of you who are there working where you have been for the past many hours.

The International Platform is a welcome initiative. Every country is now in the process of making greater use of digital technologies, and we know that digital applications are already being used with great effect in the food and agricultural sector.

However, all countries are not at the same place in the use of these technologies. Therefore, as workers undertake in the countries, it will be necessary to meet them where they are in their respective processes. Training and capacity building will be a necessary prerequisite in many instances.

With respect to the food and agricultural sector, the digital tools have to be accessible, affordable and user friendly for those who will be using them. The introduction of new digital technology, e-agricultural and productive assets should allow Member States to have greater capacity to meet the growing needs of their population for safe and nutritious food.

As reflected in the Report, there are many opportunities and potential benefits in the use of digital technologies, especially for young people, women and other marginalised people. In this context, there will still be conceptualized the Caribbean Digital Innovation Hub for Youth, Entrepreneurship, and Employment which is being designed. The ultimate objective is to increase youth entrepreneurship and employment in the agri-food sector and rural areas to create a sustainable and enabling regional environment for digital innovation, and to stimulate the development of targeted financing mechanisms to reduce specific entry barriers for youth and women.

It is imperative that the use of digital technologies contribute to the building of resilience, both society-wide and in the agricultural sector, and to combat climate change. We, therefore, welcome the references in the report that technologies such as this will facilitate adaptation and mitigation of the impact of climate change.

In the Bahamas, as we are moving towards greater use of digital applications in various sectors, we have reached out to international organizations, as well as to other countries, and have had a high rate of success in using such technology. The creation of partnerships is an important component for the success of the Platform, and I see that is reflected in the Report.

While digital technology offers the opportunity for great benefits, we should also put in place robust mechanisms to manage risks especially for small countries, and for those who are vulnerable within countries.

We are pleased to support the proposed Platform and the recommendations contained in the Report of the Joint Programme and Finance Committees Meeting.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom supports the establishment of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture, along with others, to promote sharing of evidence, technology and capacity building; to enable the range of food systems actors to maximise benefits and minimise risks from digital solutions.

The United Kingdom recognises that there are a range of similar initiatives led by both public and private sector actors to promote access to digital agriculture and food systems solutions. We, therefore, welcome the focus of the FAO Digital Platform on building linkages across these existing initiatives and promoting the sharing and uptake of evidence and policy advice that is already available.

We also welcome the focus of the FAO Digital Platform on providing policy advice to public sector partners, an area where FAO's expertise and convening power will make it particularly well placed to engage. We caution against a platform overreaching on its scope. For example, we see the role of capacity building as critical but given the resources envisaged struggle to see how the Platform as currently proposed could deliver on this. Rather, the Platform could perform a convening role by supporting Members in navigating the options that exist through others.

The needs are huge, as are the opportunities. We believe the Platform will have greatest impact where it can effectively leverage other resources and work in strategic partnership with others in delivering its mission.

We accord importance of digital technology to transform agriculture and the food systems towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We therefore welcome the establishment of the International Digital Council for Digital Food and Agriculture to promote a change of ideas and expertise in the field.

The whole thing of this Platform can help countries to harness the potential of digital technology for food and agriculture.

The COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of our food systems and we feel that digital technology can play a critical role in minimizing the pandemic's impact on food production and distribution.

To ensure the broad participation of stakeholders in the Platform, we would like to stress the importance of considering digital gaps in countries which lack technology development, and communities with limited knowledge and access to digital technology, such as smallholders and family farmers and insist that these groups can bridge the gap.

We note that this Platform will be funded with extra budgetary resources and call for a concrete plan for its sustainable funding.

Ms Lynn Marlar LWIN (Myanmar)

My delegation would like to align with the statement delivered by the distinguished delegate of China on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. Myanmar joins the views expressed by others in supporting the idea of digitalization in the agri-food system to harness its enormous potential to accept global food security in improving livelihoods, especially of the rural poor.

On the other hand, we are concerned about the related risk as we have seen the growing digital divide between modern and subsistence farming as a consequence of innovation. Furthermore, questions around interpretation pose another challenge. We are of the view that it is of paramount importance for the proposed Platform and its operating mechanisms to strike the right balance between the opportunities and the risks of the digitalization, and to make sure the ultimate purpose of this initiative is to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We appreciate the Concept Note that outlines the composition of the operating mechanisms. In connection with the Advisory Committee, we have noted that there will be a maximum of two stakeholders from agriculture among 25. We wonder how the voices of the farmers, especially from the developing world will be heard as we believe that we would not be able to bring best outcomes to them without knowing their challenges and insights.

With regard to the Online Multistakeholder Forum, we have noticed that it would be open to everyone with professionally experienced stakeholders. Nonetheless, we are not clear about the term "other non-state actors". Since we understand that the Platform would serve as a flexible, light, inclusive and voluntary coordination mechanism supported by FAO, we believe that there would be future opportunities to review and adjust the composition and operating mechanisms, and we invite FAO to take into account these views in developing the Platform.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

First of all, we would like to thank FAO for preparing document *CL 164/9*. We emphasise the need for its essential international platform to discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by digitalization in food and agriculture and to provide for solutions allowing all stakeholders to best benefit from digitalization while minimizing its negative effects thus promoting sustainable development in all its three dimensions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the role of digitalization in food and agriculture even more topical. We firmly believe that this Platform has to be in line with the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and regional distribution. These principles are also essential for finding solutions for widely acknowledged key issues such as security and privacy of data and data sovereignty and for

abolishing digital divides both within countries or regions and between stakeholders with regard to the availability and affordability of digital technologies.

We would stress the need for solid and sustainable funding for this platform and request the Secretariat to present, at the latest at the December Session of the Council, a solid funding concept based on voluntary contributions. Apart from providing support to governments, the Platform should also support farmers, smallholders and farmers' organisations, as well as other actors along the food chain including consumers. Moreover, we emphasise the importance of ensuring that the Platform functions in accordance with FAO's mandate and does not duplicate activities carried out by others. Regular reporting by FAO, including on the results achieved, will be important in this regard.

In addition, we would ask the Council to change the proposed name of the Platform to: *The International Platform for Digitalization in Food and Agriculture* since this best reflects the essence of the Platform.

We request that in point 10 of document *CL 164/9*, the reference to governments be replaced by references to FAO Members, and that the reference to the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), be deleted as this entity does not exist anymore.

Apart from these important substantive changes, a few editorial corrections need to be made. We will provide those corrections in writing.

To conclude, we endorse the hosting of an International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture by FAO, provided that our comments and requested amendments to document *CL 164/9* are adequately addressed.

Mr Kirill ANTYUKHIN (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We support the implementation within FAO of the initiative to create the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. We feel that the creation of such a mechanism is both timely and necessary, if we consider the benefits which digital technology can provide for producers and consumers of agricultural production, particularly in the conditions of the current crisis related to COVID-19.

We agree with the fundamental goals and targets of the Platform. We feel it is important to ensure that it is inclusive and open at the same time. It is important to avoid duplication of activity under the mandates of other international organizations and global multilateral initiatives which also examine the issue of digitalization, including in agriculture. At this time, we support the conclusions of the Programme and Finance Committees (PC) (FC) to the effect that the activity of the International Platform should be financed by voluntary contributions.

In addition, it will not be considered within the Governing Body of FAO. We support the structure of the mechanism of the Platform which will include the Intergovernmental Group, the Advisory Committee and the Coordination Unit. We note the importance of holding a multilateral online forum with access based on registration which will be open to the private sector, civil society, governments and the scientific community.

These supporting groups can make a considerable contribution to the work of the Platform.

Ms Qamer HAMEED (Canada)

Canada welcomes the initiative and its broad policy objectives. We would stress that the Platform should not duplicate activities under the mandate of other international organizations or other global multistakeholder initiatives already underway. We urge consideration that our terms of reference go through the Committee of Agriculture (COAG) and have been brought to the Council for approval.

Sr. Junior ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la preparación y presentación del documento *CL 164/9 Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales*. Nicaragua ha firmado la petición realizada durante el Foro Mundial para la Alimentación y la Agricultura en la ciudad de Berlín, en la

cual se solicitó a la Administración de FAO iniciar un proceso de consulta con los Órganos Rectores para que nuestra Organización hospedara una Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales en el marco de su reglamento, normas y procedimientos.

Como es posible constatar la digitalización en términos generales, avanza rápidamente en muchos de los países desarrollados mientras que para otros países en desarrollo aún existe una gran brecha digital debido a múltiples causas. Solo por mencionar algunas, la falta de acceso a infraestructuras esenciales como la energía, la telecomunicación, las redes viales, la salud, la educación.

Esta consideración es fundamental al momento de considerar los objetivos y alcance de la propuesta de establecimiento de la plataforma, la cual, al margen de considerarla pertinente, debe comprender holísticamente todos los aspectos relacionados a la alimentación y agricultura entre estos, la producción, el transporte, el acceso a mercados, el control de enfermedades fitosanitarias y de animales, las certificaciones y, sobre todo, debe de favorecer el acceso para todos, en particular, a las nuevas generaciones de agricultores, hombres y mujeres.

Nicaragua avanza en ese sentido en la preparación de estos prerrequisitos fundamentales para hacer efectivos los procesos tecnológicos y digitales del futuro. La producción de alimentos, en el mundo recae en los pequeños y medianos productores. La mayor parte de los cuales están ubicados en zonas rurales sin acceso a los servicios básicos fundamentales.

Si bien las tecnologías digitales ofrecen oportunidades únicas para mejorar la producción y el comercio de alimentos, especialmente en el caso de los pequeños agricultores, es necesario que la plataforma propuesta sea estructurada de forma sencilla, inclusiva, flexible, de carácter voluntario, evitando duplicar esfuerzos con otras iniciativas ya en marcha y buscando sinergia y complementariedad.

Consideramos que el multilateralismo y la colaboración con múltiples partes interesadas que ya trabajan en los territorios sobre el tema de digitalización y desarrollo rural, como el Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA), y otros organismos regionales e instituciones nacionales, puede generar mecanismos virtuosos para compartir las mejores prácticas acorde con las realidades de cada país.

Confiamos que la elección de FAO examinará y caminará con éxito el proceso irreversible de la plataforma en forma transparente. Esperamos conocer en adelante detalles sobre las modalidades, la participación, aspectos organizativos y logísticos de la plataforma, asegurando desde ahora nuestra participación activa.

Con estos comentarios, apoyamos la propuesta de establecimiento de una Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales, como está definida en el *Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 128.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 180.º período de sesiones (8, 12, 16 y 17 de junio de 2020)*.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

In its current proposed form, our region welcomes the establishment of the Digital Platform.

As noted by my esteemed colleague from Fiji during the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), we welcome the opportunity the Platform will provide for the engagement of small Members, and we encourage an inclusive design process moving forward which aims to ensure fulsome engagement of all parties, big and small.

Our region also looks forward to using the Platform to work globally and to share information on world leading capabilities and to collaborate on major challenges.

Importantly, we look forward to working with the FAO on further refining the proposal, including establishing appropriate government arrangement.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Merci beaucoup Monsieur le Président, et bien sûr la France s'aligne sur la déclaration prononcée par l'Allemagne au nom de l'Union européenne et ses Etats membres. La France salue la création de cette plateforme qui vise à mieux diffuser des innovations permettant de rendre plus durables et plus résilients les systèmes alimentaires dans un contexte de changement climatique. Afin d'exploiter pleinement le potentiel de ces innovations numériques, la France insiste sur le besoin de les rendre accessibles à tous, en particulier aux petits producteurs et agriculteurs familiaux, et parmi eux, mettre l'accent aussi sur les femmes et les jeunes.

Cette exigence d'inclusivité doit aussi se traduire spatialement, en redoublant les efforts dans les zones encore peu connectées. Ces exigences d'accessibilité et de transparence doivent s'accompagner de garanties fortes sur la protection des données et le respect de leur caractère privé comme l'ont ainsi souligné beaucoup des personnes qui sont intervenues avant moi. Je vous remercie.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tengo una pequeña confusión que me gustaría que usted me ayude a tratar de entender. Usted, durante la reunión de hoy, manifestó una queja muy fuerte respecto de aquellas cuestiones que aparentemente estarían de alguna manera acordadas y que nuevamente se vuelven a abrir después de las instancias que hemos discutido en las diferentes instancias, como por ejemplo el Comité del Programa y la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas. Usted también manifestó que, por supuesto, los Miembros tienen todo el derecho de poder seguir discutiendo y ampliar las cosas que de alguna manera ya fueron discutidas.

Entonces, tomando esos conceptos, la gran pregunta que yo me hago es la siguiente, después de haber escuchado a mi estimado colega de Alemania, yo no tengo muy claro porque, yo lo vi en la reunión conjunta aprobando él por su país el nombre que está en la *Concept Note*.

Hemos acordado y saldado esa posición, como también lo hizo la representante de Francia en el Comité del Programa. Reabrir esa discusión nuevamente, que terminó y que llevó muchísimo tiempo en el Comité del Programa, muchísimo tiempo, que hemos pedido al Economista Jefe de la Organización si podía clarificar por qué la plataforma debía llamarse Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digital. A partir de eso y, a partir de todo ese debate, se llegó a un consenso, complejo, pero llegamos a un consenso, en el Comité del Programa y en la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas.

Pero, no solo eso. Repito, no me parece prolijo, pero bueno lo discutiremos acá hasta que las velas dejen de arder. Pero lo que me preocupa, sobre todo, es que un país o un grupo de países diga que está dispuesto a mantener el consenso que acordó a condición de que los demás Miembros del Consejo aprueben todas las sugerencias que ahora están planteando. Eso no me parece correcto. Yo acepto que cada Miembro pueda expresar sus intereses y sus planteos, pero si uno tiene un acuerdo, esos acuerdos, por una cuestión de buena fe, deben sostenerse.

Y si existen otros planteos adicionales, podemos discutirlos, pero no me parece que uno pueda colocarse en el lugar de condicionar a todos los Miembros del Consejo a que un acuerdo que se logró con un trabajo enorme del Presidente del Comité del Programa y con la Presidenta de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas, que vengan en esta reunión a hacer un condicionamiento al consenso ya dado, a nuevos planteos en las cuales todos estamos dispuestos a discutir, pero no como una condición.

Entonces, señor Presidente, le ruego que cuando a las 5 de la mañana estemos discutiendo esto, le quiero recordar que nosotros llegamos a esta sesión de Consejo con acuerdos consensuados en el Comité del Programa y en la reunión conjunta y los mismos que plantearon y acordaron, ahora están condicionando ese acuerdo a determinadas nuevas cuestiones que quieren plantear con todo derecho en esta reunión. Entonces, le pido por favor que tengamos memoria sobre esta cuestión.

Ms Agnes Rosari DEWI (Indonesia)

Indonesia welcomes the proposal for FAO to host the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture and would like to deliver a few comments regarding this initiative.

Indonesia supports the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the agricultural sector. Indeed, Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays important role in our efforts to modernize the agriculture sector in Indonesia.

One of our major breakthroughs is the establishment of a Strategic Agricultural Command Centre also known as the Agriculture War Room (AWR).

The Agriculture War Room (AWR) aims to connect our farmers all over Indonesia through the use of teleconference, e-learning and online data sharing. This could significantly improve the capacity of our farmers, as well as better communicate agricultural policy and further support decision-making processes. In this regard, we would also like to appreciate FAO for its initiative to support the development of national strategy of e-Agriculture in Indonesia.

During this challenging global economic situation, we hope that our Agriculture War Room (AWR) and e-Agriculture strategy will also benefit from this Platform. We further hope that the Platform will bring forward concrete added values such as reducing digital divide, capacity building, as well as supporting data protection.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am not sure whether I fully captured the long and extended statement of my distinguished Argentinian colleague and I am not sure whether I am able to help them overcome his confusion. Let us just stick to the basics.

The Members in the Programme and Finance Committees are in these Committees in their personal capacities. So, they speak in their personal capacities. I would also like to remind my distinguished Argentinian colleague that I speak on behalf of 27 Member States of the European Union and the European Union (EU) itself. I am also confused that Ambassador Carlos Bernardo Cherniak is trying to question our right to speak in favour of a name that we would prefer. Perhaps he does not like it, but he will have to accept the fact that we have a preference, and I take the right to express this preference.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings an end to the list of the Members. I give the floor to the Observers.

Ms Teresa TUMWET (Kenya) (Observer)

Kenya aligns with the statement read on behalf of Africa Regional Group by Zimbabwe, which we prepared together. We wish to emphasize just two points.

First, the importance of government-led priorities in the Digital Platform for Ownership and Sustainability. In Kenya, digital solutions are gaining a lot of traction in all sectors. The youth has particularly actively taken up smart digital agriculture, and the government, on the other hand, has provided a conducive policy environment through having a dedicated Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Innovations and Youth Affairs.

Secondly, I would like to emphasize the need for deliberate efforts to support the smallholders in these Digital Platforms. As we know the smallholders are the ones who fill the majority of the population, yet many times these smallholders are not able to access technologies and innovations.

Also, when there are shocks to food security like droughts, floods, desert locusts, currently now COVID-19 and others, this is the group that is most affected. This is why we are requesting for deliberate efforts to support smallholders through capacity building and adopting local and indigenous innovations and technologies.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, I have since received requests from two Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sí, puede ser que estemos muy tarde a la noche y, entonces, claro sea más complicado comprendernos mutuamente. Jamás puse en cuestionamiento que ningún, quién podría ser, que uno de nosotros podría decir que alguno de nosotros no pudiera expresar lo que piensa. Tenemos un compromiso democrático muy fuerte, conocemos las reglas de la Organización. No, para nada. Lo que nosotros dijimos y lo que yo dije es que la forma en la cual se planteó la posición, para nosotros, Alemania más allá que exprese en nombre de la Unión Europea, porque el cartelito que figura en el Consejo dice Alemania, pero le reconozco que lo haga en nombre del grupo de países. Lo único que digo es que condicionar, aceptar el consenso otorgado a determinados comentarios adicionales que tienen que ser aprobados por todos porque si no, no acepto el consenso que ya di. Sí, yo insisto, eso no me parece una cosa muy prolija. Pero jamás cuestionar que ningún representante pueda expresar lo que piensa.

Por otro lado, tengo una lista larga de países que expresaron su apoyo en esta posición, porque vi el grupo asiático, vi el grupo africano, vi la Federación de Rusia, después individualmente vi a Brasil, a República Dominicana, además vi a Nicaragua. Hay muchos países que también piensan esto y que, además, muchos de ellos fueron parte de esos debates prolongadísimos sobre el tema del concepto y, es más, me permitiría incluso avanzar.

Voy a tratar de justificar ahora, porque es tarde, pero después va a ser más tarde, porque el concepto de agricultura digital se refiere al conjunto de técnicas que incorporan las nuevas tecnologías para ayudar a los agricultores para aumentar y mejorar su productividad. Es decir, las nuevas herramientas digitales impactan con diferente grado en todos los eslabones de la producción. De allí el producir más con menos.

No implica transformación y supone que se utilicen las nuevas herramientas en la medida que sean necesarias. Ejemplo, a las prácticas ancestrales no las alcanza, ya que son sustentables en sí mismas. Por otro lado, la digitalización de la agricultura es una idea que requiere, de alguna manera, un estándar mínimo para aceptar procesos productivos como digitales. También, hace referencia al producir más con menos, pero ahora la diferencia radica en que aquí se menciona como necesario que todo el proceso sea digitalizado.

Hago esta explicación para que después no digamos que es una cuestión de *wording*. No es una cuestión de palabras, es una cuestión conceptual. Por eso estamos teniendo esta discusión en esta instancia.

CHAIRPERSON

We have to move along. Apart from being late, we have not got any time left. The Drafting Committee is supposed to meet tomorrow. I would appeal the Members to be concise. We have to finish this Item; we have been too long on it.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Seré muy breve y muy conciso. En línea con lo expuesto por otros Miembros del Consejo, solicitamos formalmente, y con mucho respeto, que el informe refleje que la plataforma debe llevar el nombre específico de Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales. Esto para honrar los consensos realizados en el Comité del Programa y la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas, tal y como se ve reflejado en sus informes. Esto lo digo con mucho respeto y ojalá podamos avanzar con este acuerdo.

Ms Gunnvor BERGE (Norway) (Observer)

Norway aligns herself with the Nordic statement in welcoming the establishment of a Digital Platform for Food and Agriculture in FAO.

Digital transformation can accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That is why the governments of Sierra Leone and Norway, together with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the non-governmental organization (NGO) Indian Software Product Industry Round Table (iSPIRT) has established the Alliance for Digital Public Goods. It has all to do about access. This Multi-Stakeholder Initiative will support the follow-up of United Nations Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation that was recently adopted.

We welcome and appreciate FAO's participation at the recent, first meeting of the Community of Practice for Climate Adaptation (CCACoP) under the Digital Public Goods Alliance. FAO did participate in collaboration with among others the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Food Programme (WFP), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Norway has one comment on the second aim of the Platform, as outlined in the Concept Note. This aim is to support government with policy recommendations, best practices and voluntary guidelines, referring to paragraph 8.2 of the document. Under this aim, we would propose to add "information about relevant digital public goods", right after "best practices".

Emphasizing digital public goods is in line with the Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. The Secretary General strongly advocates for the United Nations system and other actors to promote and implement digital public goods. Particularly for small scale producers, such publicly available goods strengthen the ability to access and put digital information to use.

Sra. Julia VICIOSO (República Dominicana)

Seré sumamente breve. Tomo la palabra para decir que República Dominicana apoya todo lo aclarado por Argentina y Costa Rica, como reflejado en los informes. Por lo tanto, aprobamos la propuesta de la Administración para la Plataforma Internacional para la Alimentación y la Agricultura Digitales, pues refleja mejor el objetivo que anima la misma.

Ms Supajit SRIARIYAWAT (Thailand) (Observer)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement made by the Asia Regional Group, delivered by China. Thailand welcomes the proposed Platform initiative in providing advice, draft exchange of ideas and experiences, and help harness opportunities of digital technology in agriculture.

With regard to FAO mandate, we would like to echo our voices that the Platform should focus on the real and immediate needs of smallholders and family farmers by promoting digital technologies that take into account the illiteracy rates, scarce connectivity in the rural areas or with light infrastructure, authorizes intellectual property rights, data privacy and security, and enables employment creation in the rural areas.

With regard to financial sustainability, we recommend you to consider the voluntary nature of contributions, along the need to verify medium to long-term financial sustainability.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any more speakers. I will give the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some of the issues which have emerged during the debate.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Let me try to respond to the issues that have been raised to help the process. First of all, let me thank all Members for a huge interest in this International Platform for Digital Tools and Agriculture. It is a core topic, as it will support the reduction of the digital divide, being a platform, which facilitates information. Let me directly respond to some of the issues.

One of the core issues that were referred was about governance. The governance structure that we proposed in the document consists of an intergovernmental representative group composed by 12 FAO Members that will set the Platform priority agenda, including the Terms of Reference, on the basis of its Members' scientific and proven experience in digital food and agriculture. The idea is that the FAO

Regional Groups will be two for Africa, two for Asia, two for Europe, two for Latin-America and the Caribbean, two for the Near East and two for North America and the South-West Pacific.

These Regional Groups will be invited to select participants, and they will select also a Chair and a Vice-Chair from the elected Members. The participants can be also government officials responsible for digital agriculture issues, or experts accredited by their governments. This Intergovernmental Group will be the one that will deliberate in the first Session on the best practices and recommendations of international organizations and experts, together with assessing the initiative's overall effectiveness and performance. Each of the Members that will be part of this Group will be defining the Terms of Reference (TOR).

There will also be an Advisory Committee composed of international organizations, which will ensure the activities of the Platform are both consistent and complimentary, especially complimentary, to existing international efforts. We have done significant efforts to bring all the entities working in this topic, so that we do not duplicate or go against any other mandate that has been already established, like the mandate of the International Communication Union (ITU) and other international organizations. The idea is to be complementary in all terms.

We also have the Multistakeholder Forum, which objective is exactly to be inclusive. This Forum will be online and flexible, and as such will bring farmer groups, including umbrella farmer associations, which will allow to bring in small farmers and all the different groups that we want to include. The goal is to minimize the digital divide. It will bring the civil society, the private sector and the knowledge society. The whole goal of this governance structure is exactly to be inclusive as much as possible, and to bring all elements into play in the decisional process.

We fully agree with the idea of bringing the information about relevant digital public goods, which is also part of the process that was mentioned before. That is the governance, and that is why we believe that it will be the Members to decide the Terms of Reference, in order to proceed with the activities established.

The other key issue that was raised is how this Platform will fit within FAO's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and Strategic Objectives (SOs), which is a central issue. That is why it was submitted to the Programme Committee (PC) and also to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), as to be able to identify the legal issues behind the Platform, and also submitted to the Finance Committee (FC) because of the funding issues.

Regarding the links with FAO and Strategic Objectives, the proposed Platform will not result, as is clearly stated in the new FAO body, but will form a coordination mechanism. It will support all FAO Strategic Objectives (SOs) by building an enabling environment for digital technologies, to accelerate effective delivery, maximise the greater benefits and minimize underlying risks. All the risks will be identified, as it has been requested, and we will try to minimize them. It also falls within the core functions of the Organization, as it will facilitate partnerships within governments, development partners, civil society and private sector.

The proposed Platform can also provide information to FAO Technical Committees (TCs) and support their capacity to identify and respond to many challenges. The Platform will be entirely managed by FAO on its mandate and its international framework, within its Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). These structural programmatic adjustments proposed by the document *CL 164/3* have a strong focus on building a digital FAO and extending partnerships, including with the private sector. This provides an entry point for activities under the proposed initiative.

Regarding the name, and this is something that was discussed in both the Programme Committee and the Joint Meeting of Finance Committees what are we trying to achieve with the names that we are putting on Digital Food and Agriculture? The proposed initiative, Digital Food and Agriculture, denotes the applications of digital technology on food and agriculture, also how we can facilitate it through best practices, policies and regulations that have administrative implications. Digital technology is an all-encompassing term to refer to computerized tools that can access the stock process and generate data for a variety of proposals.

We are trying to bring together what we call the three ‘Cs.’ It is connectivity, content and capability, which is central to be able to reach the objective of this Platform. Digitalization alone is a very restrictive term, since it is the process of converting information into digital format organized into bytes. The result is the representation of an object, an image and a sound, document or signal by generating a series of numbers that describe a discrete set of points and samples.

Digitalization will be extremely restrictive to what we try to achieve in this process. We do not want to digitalize everything, as it was correctly raised by the Members and, specifically, by Argentina. The idea is to utilize the proper digital technologies, incorporating content and capabilities necessary to be able to achieve the main objective behind this initiative. It is not just an issue of digitalization, and that is our concern and what we tried to discuss in the previous Sessions in the Programme Committee and in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees. We believe that [XX] the concept behind the Initiative that we are trying to bring forward. As a part of the analysis of the risks, we are concerned, and we will focus on the best practices on data security, privacy and sovereignty. That is for sure a topic of central importance.

Our governance designs the proposal, and the design of the governance is based on the concept of inclusiveness, trying to reach in the most effective and efficient way small farmers, farmer associations and farmer groups. We also need to reach governments, because they are the ones that have to scale up our interventions to obtain a successful result. We will also not duplicate over entities in digital technologies, as I mentioned before.

With your permission, I might pass to Deputy Director-General, Mr Laurent Thomas that wanted to say a little bit more on the matter.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

In addition to what Mr Máximo Torero Cullen said, I want to thank the Members of the Council for their support to the call of the 71 Ministers of Agriculture Meeting in 2020 Global Forum for Food Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin.

FAO and its Governing Bodies were called to support the process for the establishment of the Digital Council, which we want to call now Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. I want to record that it has been a very inclusive process, including all key stakeholders from the World Bank (WB), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and many others. Ultimately also the Governing Bodies participated, both informally and formally, through our different Committees: Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC). The inclusiveness of this process of preparation will allow us to start immediately after approval by FAO Council.

I would like also to express special thanks to the government of Germany for their financial support to the initiative. Without their financial support, monetary contributions would not have been able to produce the papers that were presented to the Governing Bodies. I would also like to call on Members of the Council to consider funding the establishment and the functioning of this Platform. We have no doubt that, without progress on digitalization and digital food and agriculture, many countries and rural communities, the ones deriving their livelihood from food and agriculture, will continue to fall behind and the gap will be growing.

There is a sense of urgency. Kenya mentioned the linkage with the youth, and we really consider that digital food and agriculture is an essential condition for the future of youth in agriculture and the sustainability of food systems.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a request from the Chair of the Programme Committee (PC), Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson of Programme Committee)

I think it's very important, but perhaps not clear, when we introduce items that decide to [XX] with the Governing Structure of FAO across discussed words in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and

Finance Committees, as well as in the Programme Committee (PC) itself. It was all also discussed, and it was clear what was said by Brazil, which is that there was a strong push for bringing this Item to this FAO Council.

I think we should recognize and appreciate the initiative of the government of Germany to put digitalization in agriculture high on the political agenda, and to organize a ministerial meeting in [XX] on the digitalization of agriculture and the Platform for digitization in agriculture as well. Since the importance of the issue, we have already put it on the Agenda of the Informal Programme Committee in April, where the Members of the Programme Committee clearly recognized the importance of digitalization in agriculture, especially during the current COVID-19 crisis. They stressed the need to reduce the digital gap, to get access to big data and strengthen the role for small and medium farmers, reducing inequalities and increasing resilience. They also noted that the Platform would be funded by extrabudgetary sources. During the Programme Committee itself, I think there was a strong push for the Item, although not everything was clear. However, I think the Programme Committee welcomed the initiative and appreciated its establishment within the current FAO structure. The Programme Committee stressed that hosting such platform should not result in the creation of a new entity or a new FAO Governing Body. It should take the form of a coordination mechanism supported by the Organization, that is flexible, light, inclusive and voluntary, which also complies with the Organization's recommendations, rules and procedures.

The Programme Committee also stressed the need to have regional representatives in the Governmental Group which reflects a regional balance and an alignment in necessity to involve all stakeholders, including the private sector. I think it is very important, and also stressed by many Members in this evening that it should be, and I hope it will be a success, as we need this as a success for FAO and the implementation of where we want to go with FAO. I think there is a clear need for capacity building and training of the users, especially for family farmers and smallholders, and we also highlighted in the Programme Committee the specific needs of women and youth.

I also think that we highlighted what was reiterated by many Members this evening, that is the clear need for more information about the sustainability of the funding for the Platform, as the Platform has to be a success and certainly not only for the Members of the Council, but certainly at national and regional level too.

In the Programme Committee we had a lengthy discussion about the name of the Platform itself, and several names were discussed, even if we could not reach a recommendation at the end. We honour to leave the decisional effort to the Council, but as Programme Committee, we recommend that the proposed Platform would be called International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture. I still confirm that we should certainly applaud the German government for taking this initiative.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no more requests for the floor. I will conclude on this Item and the text is going to be projected on the screen.

Item 9: International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

1. The Council endorsed the Reports of the 110th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee with respect to the International Platform for Digital Food in Agriculture, and in particular:
 - a) welcomed the related document *CL 164/9*, including the comprehensive *Concept Note*.
 - b) recognized the increasing importance of the application of digital technologies in food and agriculture, especially during the current COVID-19 crisis, and highlighted the potential of digital technology to transform the food system, including to reduce the digital divide, strengthen the role of smallholder farmers, reduce inequalities and increase resilience and promote access to all, including women and youth.

- c) stressed the importance on the proposed Platform's roles in strengthening synergies among stakeholders and promoting coordination, knowledge sharing and best practices in the applications of digital technologies on food and agriculture.
- d) emphasize the hosting of such a platform should not result in the creation of an autonomous legal entity, nor a new FAO Governing Body, but rather in a flexible, light, inclusive and voluntary coordination mechanism supported by the Organization, while complying with its rules, regulations and procedures.
- e) Agreed with the recommendation of the Programme Committee (PC) and with its Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee (FC) that the proposed platform be called "International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture".
- f) looked forward to periodic information on modality and structure of the Platform including membership, governance and progress of implementation.
- g) endorsed the proposal for hosting by FAO of the International Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

That ends my conclusions. So, the floor is open.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Firstly, we thank the Chair of the Programme Committee (PC) and Mr Laurent Thomas for their words of appreciation. I suggest that you should introduce a new subparagraph under subparagraph (e) that should read "highlighted the importance of a solid funding concept based on voluntary contributions." I would like then to add at now subparagraph (h), after "Agriculture," the phrase "subject to the requested amendments to document CL 164/9, notably the replacement of "government(s)" by "FAO Members" and the deletion of the reference to the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)".

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

We would like to propose the addition of another subparagraph after subparagraph (h), which would state, "requested review of the terms of reference for the proposed platform or for the Platform by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and FAO Council".

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿Podemos empezar desde el principio, por favor? Okay. Título, okay. Subpárrafo 1(a), okay. Subpárrafo 1(b), en lugar de la expresión...

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En el subpárrafo 1 (b) después de "*digital technology*", en lugar de "*digital technology*": "*to achieve sustainable food systems*". Perfecto. Subpárrafo (c). En lugar de "*best practices*", "*good practices*".

Y después, al final, respecto del subpárrafo (i), sugerido por Estados Unidos de América, habría que agregar, "*COFI and COFO platform by the COAG*." Y en el subpárrafo (h), creo que quedó claro que lo que yo expresé lo vuelvo a reiterar ahora más. Quedó bien reflejado que esta condición que me parece que no corresponde, por lo tanto sugiero que con un espíritu constructivo mantengamos el párrafo como estaba y en todo caso agregar un subpárrafo aparte antes del subpárrafo (h) donde se planteen los "*request amendments to document CL 164/9*", pero no condicionando algo que ya está acordado.

CHAIRPERSON

That's right, well done.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Pido, por favor, que terminen de hacer el *delete* en el subpárrafo (i). Ahora sí.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

We would also like to request the addition of a subparagraph between subparagraphs (f) and (g) that says “stressed the importance of the protection of data and intellectual property rights.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Pido disculpas por pedir nuevamente la palabra tan rápido pero el subpárrafo (k) aparte de “COFI y COFO” sugiero que también se incluya al Comité del Programa.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY (Egypt)

I have just a minor amendment to subparagraph (h). I want to propose at the end of this subparagraph to delete “progress of implementation” and report “timeline for the establishment of the Platform.” After that we could ask “the progress of the implementation of this establishment.”

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

I hope our colleague from European Union (EU) might well mean, under subparagraph (i), that document *CL 164/9* is a working document for the Council. Are we entitled to correct a working document? I would rather suggest “requested that the term “FAO Members” be used in replace of “government(s)”. I think that, in principle, we are not entitled to correct a working document, unless it is something that we have to approve, and we are not approving that document. That is why I am bringing this correction. I hope that our colleague from EU will bear with me on that.

This applies also to the second part, since they did not correct it. If we can “delete,” what will be the intention now for the request of the term “FAO Members” to be used to refer to “government(s)”? I do not like the wording “the deletion of the reference to,” I do not like very much. I will prefer instead...

CHAIRPERSON

How does this wording sound?

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

My problem is with the word “deletion”.

CHAIRPERSON

No, but now “deletion” refers to “the term in the proposal.”

Mr MOUNGUI MEDI (Cameroon)

I think that can work.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay. I see no other request for the floor. Item 9 is now concluded.

Item 10. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems**Point 10. Impact de la pandémie de COVID-19 sur la sécurité alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires****Tema 10. Repercusiones de la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) en la seguridad alimentaria y los sistemas alimentarios**

(*CL 164/10*)

CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraph 14)

CL 164/6 Rev.1 - Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (paragraph 18)

CHAIRPERSON

Our next Item on the Agenda is Item 10, *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems*. The relevant document before you is *CL 164/10*.

The Secretariat introduction by Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Agenda Item 10: Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

The combined impacts of COVID-19, its suppression measures and subsequent global recession, will make hunger and malnutrition worse, increasing the number of people who are hungry and poor, especially in low-income countries that rely on food imports. The global recession is likely to erase a decade of progress on poverty reduction.

FAO has been working on assessing the threat of COVID-19 to food security and nutrition and providing evidence-based policy to Members. Unlike during the 2007-2008 food price crisis, today's challenge is not food availability but food access. While the food supply chains are holding together, countries are beginning to experience recession, and this is a serious threat because economic downturn makes hunger worse. According to revised FAO estimates, as many as 120.3 million people could become hungry because of the reduction in economic growth.

The fall in demand for commodity exports, including oil, cotton, and minerals, the collapse of tourism, and reduction in remittance flows have hit developing countries especially hard. Food demand will fall as the number of unemployed people rises. The extent of the pandemic's impact on food demand depends on the depth and length of economic shock, and access to credit and social safety net programs. This is why economic stimulus measures in all countries should be geared towards meeting the food needs of the most vulnerable people. Without access to food and nutrition, there can be no health.

Council document, *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems (CL 164/10)* also highlights FAO's efforts to assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture across the globe and to support policy analyses. FAO has also convened High-Level meetings to encourage Members to work in concert to overcome the challenges of the pandemic, and FAO is working with UN Country Teams and other international partners to boost efforts to prevent the emergence of food crises and improve food security during the pandemic.

While FAO Members have successfully applied the lessons of past food crises to avoid exacerbating an otherwise challenging set of circumstances, avoiding a generalized food crisis will remain a challenge. Apart from known hotspots, which are expected to increase in scale and intensity in the coming months, there is the distinct possibility that food insecurity will grow rapidly in countries, or in areas of countries that have not seen food crises in many years. Keeping food value chains functioning will remain among the highest policy priorities, but the range of support activities will require an ability to provide timely policy, technical and investment support at the regional, national and even territorial level.

FAO's Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 under an Umbrella Programme will be built around the 6+1 thematic areas of work, as follows:

1. Providing trade policy support, with a special focus on intra-regional trade and ensuring public confidence in food safety through targeted support for adherence to food safety standards;
2. Maintaining support for poverty reduction and economic inclusion, ensuring that social protection works for rural as well as urban residents;
3. Preventing pandemics of animal origin through an extended One Health approach;
4. Boosting the resilience of smallholders for COVID-19 recovery;
5. Collecting and analysing data and providing timely information to guide the policy response;
6. Seizing opportunities not only to address current food supply bottlenecks and vulnerabilities, but also to promote Food Systems Transformation; and
7. FAO Humanitarian Response, addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in Food Crisis contexts.

In all of these areas, FAO seeks to bring the best policy and technical support the Organization can provide where it is needed most and can be most effective – at country, subregional and global levels –

to help Members quickly and effectively address a complex and rapidly evolving challenge. The goal is to save lives and livelihoods, minimize development reversals in scope and time, and lay the foundation for an accelerated and transformative recovery.

CHAIRPERSON

The floor is open for Members' interventions. I would like to give the floor to Her Excellency, the Minister from South Africa first and then take all the other requests.

Ms Kwana KOMAPE (South Africa)

I am delivering the intervention on behalf of Her Excellency Ms Angela Thoko Didiza, in her capacity as Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development for South Africa, and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for providing sound leadership, breaking silos mentality and promoting sector collaboration. We are truly grateful for your unwavering commitment in fighting food insecurity.

We fully support Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI), an evidence-based, country-led and country-owned initiative to accelerate agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 of eradicating poverty, and SDG2 of ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition, in the 2030 Agenda.

South Africa strongly supports FAO's focus on sustainable food systems and expanding partnerships, including with private sector. I also support the focus on innovation, including sustainable and innovative approaches to use digitalization in agriculture and newer technologies. The new investments in digital technology and infrastructure are essential to uplift productivity and call for more to be done to reduce food loss and waste. In our quest to fight poverty and hunger, South Africa has persistently taken practical steps in addressing problems facing small-scale farmers, whom we categorize as smallholders and subsistence farmers between our farm producers. These producers are critical for ensuring food security at a household level, hence our focus on providing them with targeted support to increase their agricultural production.

The agricultural and agro-processing sector is important to the economy of our country, as noted by our President, His Excellency Mr Cyril Ramaphosa. The country has now developed an agricultural and agro-processing master plan to realize the goal of increasing production throughout the value chains, with the intention to include small-scaled producers.

The 164th Session of FAO Council happens at a time when the world is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic found the agricultural sector in most countries already struggling with crisis triggers, such as climate change, intermittent droughts, floods, cyclones, biodiversity matters such as transboundary diseases and pests, economic recession and technical barriers to trade. These triggers were already impacting and roughening agriculture's contribution towards achieving the SDGs, and in the case of African countries, also our aspirations towards attaining the goals as set in Agenda 2063, The Africa We Want and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

The advent of COVID-19 has precipitated us in an unprecedented economic crisis, and is likely to further the delay of our progress, unless we institute drastic measures to quell the erosion of past gains and ensure that global food security and food systems are responsive and resilient to the challenges they currently face. Our response is likely to face a plethora of other challenges, including increased food insecurity and malnutrition, as currencies are weakening. The issue of rural-urban migration and displacement of communities due to food security is also likely to happen.

Furthermore, the bottlenecks and delays that are experienced in different parts of the world will also affect food security and food systems while, at the onset of COVID-19, many countries experienced panic buying which has largely subsided. We are not out of the woods yet, as the supply for agricultural inputs needs to be secured to ensure continued agricultural production. The risk of experiencing labour shortage due to COVID-19 infections needs to be mitigated, as the role of labour within agricultural production cannot be underestimated.

Africa is already host to more than 167 million food insecure people without factoring in COVID-19. The effects of COVID-19 will further increase the number of people facing acute hunger. It is estimated that agricultural production is likely to contract between 2.6 percent in the optimistic scenario, and 7 percent in the scenario with trade blockages. This grim outlook is further exacerbated by considering that food imports into Africa can decline substantially from 15 to 25 percent. In considering this decline in imports, one has to realize that 59 African countries are net importers of basic foods. This painted scenario compels us to explore physically sustainable solutions to ensure food security, prevent a reverse in poverty reduction gains and further deterioration to grow.

It is noting these challenges that African Ministers of Agriculture convened under the umbrella of the AU STC on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment to consider the impact of COVID-19 in the Member States, and further craft a way forward to address this impact, together with re-imagining African agriculture post-COVID-19. The Ministers agreed on the following:

- The use of Crop Calendars. This will ensure that we minimize disruptions in the agricultural tasks and food systems during COVID-19 outbreak. Countries have to use Crop Calendars to manage security of supply in staple commodities in times of disaster. Planting and harvesting calendars will guide on the critical periods that activities need to take place for each commodity in every country as commanded by the local agro-ecological conditions.
- The social protection. In the short-term, access to critical predictable social assistance in a form of cash or in-kind transfers, as well as specific labour related guarantees, is key to mitigate the direct economic impact of the pandemic on households and communities. In the medium- and long-term, access to social protection enhances the ability of rural households to progressively rebuild their livelihoods, invest in economic activities and manage monetary risks.
- Support for domestic markets. Governments need to prioritise agro-food system functions as an essential service that will continue to operate during periods of lockdown, inclusive of formal and traditional, such as open markets and small stores, and informals, such as street vendors, that create critical roles in serving different markets and parts of the population. Helping to maintain a resilient food system is imperative to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on society. Prioritizing the agro-food system, the health containment measures, and the involvement of the private sector players and civil society is critical.
- Safeguarding inputs of supply chains for small agricultural producers. The biggest threat for Africa is its resilience on imported inputs. Local and regional input manufacturing is critical for the region.
- Inter-African trade. Many African countries depend on imports from outside the continent for their food security, making African economies vulnerable to both demand and supply side shocks. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) could play an important role in facilitating African regional trade in agri-food products and reducing dependency on imports. The Ministers also established a task force with its strategic partners, which include FAO.

I would like to pause here and extend our gratitude to FAO's Director-General and his staff for their commitment towards assisting African agriculture in addressing the challenges of COVID-19. The task force has already submitted its first report to the African Union (AU) Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment. This report is still to be shared and discussed with the Ministers later this month. I can only indicate it already shows good progress in the areas of advocacy, resource mobilization, alignment of new interventions to existing programmes and the identification of new food security hotspots.

Based on the report, it is important that we establish criteria to prioritize countries for lifesaving, livelihood and technical support that would contribute to economic stabilization, sustainable recovery and development. Furthermore, we need to intensify the identification of interventions that will ensure continuity of humanitarian livelihood assistance, including fostering the social protection system and improving basic services delivery.

As we are moving towards the new normal that COVID-19 will provide us, we also need to build resilience to economic shocks, climate change and other vulnerabilities. It is time to turn this crisis into an opportunity. The following areas are deemed worthy of consideration.

The first one is re-imagination of food security and food systems. Strengthening food production and distribution systems is key to fighting hunger, and intense helping tackle diseases wherever they emerge in humans, animals, climates or environment. In strengthening the systems, we need to rethink our policy space and ensure that our approaches are evidence-based and sustainable.

The policies should allow countries to anticipate and mitigate possible disruptions that may deteriorate the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable. The time is also ripe to also form agreements in the agricultural space, including in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to allow providing countries, especially the net food-importing developing countries and least developed countries with the policy space they need to support.

The second is farm labour health and safety. Food production is heavily reliant on labour, and any disturbance to the provision of services by labour may lead to detrimental disruptions in food systems and food security. It is important that at all times as they set out, there is adherence to COVID-19 management measures. The provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) is important too.

Thirdly, there is One Health approach. While there is ongoing research into potential animal origin of the new COVID-19, it is important and there is also a need to fund the One Health approach that the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO) and other entities are spearheading. It is important to explore the synergies in the control and management of diseases in food safety within the One Health approach, and to ensure integrity of the food supplies.

Fourthly, the use of technology in agriculture. COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of e-platforms in digital transformation. However, the digital divide both within and between countries still remains a factor to explore, as it may also impact on responsiveness towards COVID-19. Issues of e-certification in the plant and animal health areas are important during this time, and transitional measures to ensure that trade is not impacted during this time and beyond is important.

I wish this Session and the 164th Session of the FAO Council successful deliberations and look forward to great engagements on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and food systems.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

We welcome the broad assessment carried out by FAO. With global hunger on the rise already before the pandemic this crisis has further evidenced the need to make our food systems more sustainable, resilient and inclusive. The COVID-19 crisis and its economic and social fallout clearly require a global and coordinated approach. We share the view that especially in Africa health systems need to be strengthened and humanitarian crisis, including food crisis need to be addressed.

COVID-19 affects almost all countries. Reduced access to safe, healthy and nutritious food automatically impairs the health of populations, notably the most vulnerable. Worldwide children are particularly exposed due to the suspension of daily school meals.

Building resilient food systems is fundamental for keeping people healthy and active and to preserving livelihoods. Resilience includes keeping trade open, ensuring that smallholders and family farmers have access to markets, inputs and credits and adequately protecting workers in the food supply chain.

Food security and health protection systems are closely linked. This pandemic the clear need to strengthen food safety and the one health approach including combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and addressing the threat of zoonotic diseases.

There is also the need to reflect on the better regulation and enforcement of trade in wildlife and wildlife meat for human consumption. We call upon FAO to step up its work on zoonosis and to intensify its cooperation with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO) but also United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

We congratulate the entire FAO team for the role it has played so far in monitoring the effects of COVID-19 on food security and enhancing coordination. We welcome the establishment and work of FAO, African Union (AU) Taskforce on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition in Africa.

We call upon FAO to continue its impact assessment work in close coordination with others and involving, where possible, the Global Network Against Food Crisis. We recognise the role of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the policy response to the effects of the COVID-19 in food security and nutrition and we appreciate the active participation of FAO and the Committee on World Food Security as Member of its Advisory Group.

With regard to FAO's COVID-19 response Umbrella Programme we would like to suggest a slight change to the name of the plus one thematic area. In fact, we believe that calling this thematic area "Emergency Response" rather than "Humanitarian Response" would better correspond to FAO's mandate.

The European Union and its Member States have provided a significant global COVID-19 response package for international cooperation that is currently about EUR 36 billion, I repeat, about EUR 36 billion. This package mainly supports healthcare and general socioeconomic recovery, but it also supports small farmers and vulnerable people. It will accelerate support to address food prices and will also address Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus (HDPN) in food crisis hotspots with special emphasis on the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

To conclude let me reiterate the commitment from the EU and its Member States to working together to make our food systems more sustainable, resilient and inclusive.

Ms Hyo Joo KANG (Republic of Korea)

I would like to deliver the Asia Regional Group's joint statement followed by my country's national statement.

The Republic of Korea has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We take note of the document *CL 164/10* and appreciate the immediate response of FAO and all Regional Offices in assessing and delivering important messages to Members to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on food systems, food security and nutrition.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen the increasing number of people in hunger. The pandemic has the potential to further increase by more than 80 percent in the number of food insecure people due to considerable decrease in incomes, remittances and unemployment.

The Global Financial Institutions have already indicated the downward trends of almost every economy across the world and FAO estimates that 80.3 million people in 101 net food importing countries could become under-nourished compared with available estimates of prevalence of under nourishment in case of 10 percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth reduction.

The Asia region is one of global food suppliers. Smallholder and family farmers are the backbone of Asian agriculture and food supplies. Disruptive impacts caused by COVID-19 pandemic to food security, nutritional status and livelihoods of farmers, traders and consumers along the food supply chains are not only enormous but also extensive.

There is a need for the assessment of COVID-19's impact on food supply chains, food and labour markets, food security and livelihoods in the short, medium and long term, taking into consideration of both direct and indirect impacts in order to support Members in enhancing the resilience of their food systems and capacity to step out of this dire situation.

We believe that these daunting challenges require attentions from the highest of political level. In this regard we value the convening of the 2021 Food System Summit and consider it very timely.

While we recognise the necessity of addressing the issue urgently, it will be appropriate to hold a pre-Summit event dedicated to the mitigation of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and food systems. We believe pre-Summit may cover the 'specific-ness' of policies, concerns, or priorities which need to be urgently tackled to support sustainability and resilience of food systems.

Certainly, the outcomes of the pre-Summit will become a part of the outcomes of the Summit.

I will proceed to the national statement.

The Republic of Korea is fully aligned to Asia Regional Group's joint statement just delivered and we

would like to start out statement by sharing our experiences in responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

From the initial stage the Republic of Korea has taken openness, transparency and democracy as three core principles in dealing with COVID-19. Based on these principles, we contained further spread of the virus without any lockdown measure.

As a responsible Member of the international community with the title K-Quarantine, the Republic of Korea has provided medical supplies, such as testing kits and masks to 123 countries so far. Moreover, we have shared our knowledge and experiences to 86 countries and 39 international organizations. Since we are committed to work with partners all over the world, we will continuously seek for the possibility of cooperation in various ways.

The battle with the COVID-19 is still ongoing and my delegates insist collaboration in the food and agriculture sector as crucial because food and nutrition are fundamental to people's lives and good health. In this regard we cannot over emphasize FAO's role as a representative Organization of food and agricultural sector more than ever. Among various points raised in this document my delegation would like to particularly highlight maintaining food supply chains.

Since a lockdown was adopted as a key measure of blocking COVID-19 spread we clearly saw and experienced its negative cascading impacts. As mentioned in the document exporting bans on agricultural products mostly threatened vulnerable people. Furthermore, due to the border restriction many countries experienced economic recession, and this even worsens people's basic livelihood.

As mentioned earlier Republic of Korea takes openness as one of core principles, that is based on lessons learned and experiences we have to control COVID-19 but minimising border restrictions as much as possible.

In this regard we emphasize regional cooperation as a key element in terms of maintaining the trade. In order to make this happen every country has to transparently share their information with regard to crops, livestock and agricultural products.

My delegation also stresses the cooperation in areas of border inspection, quarantine measures and research and development (R&D). According to the statistics, around 60 percent of the transboundary and transmittable diseases, including COVID-19, are zoonosis.

We hear and face new emerging viruses more frequently than ever before. In this aspect we are looking forward to seeing valuable output, such as joint research and quarantine techniques on zoonotic diseases and sound policy recommendations from the FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) Centre which will be established after this Council.

To conclude, the Republic of Korea counts on global solidarity and collective wisdom with regard to the COVID-19 and we will work with FAO and other Member Countries more closely.

CHAIRPERSON

The time now is nearly 23:30 hours. We were supposed to adjourn at 23:00 hours. I will have to adjourn now, since the arrangements have come to an end and we have still got items on our Agenda.

We will meet again at 9:30 hours tomorrow morning, while the Drafting Committee would now meet at 14:00 hours.

The meeting rose at 23:25 hours

La séance est levée à 23 h 25

Se levanta la sesión a las 23.25

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session Cent soixante-quatrième session 164.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020 Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020 Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020
SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
9 July 2020

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:35 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 35
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 09.35
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 10. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems (*continued*)**Point 10. Impact de la pandémie de covid-19 sur la sécurité alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires (*suite*)****Tema 10. Repercusiones de la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) en la seguridad alimentaria y los sistemas alimentarios (*continuación*)***CL 164/10**CL 164/5 - Report of the Joint Meeting of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee and the 180th Session of the Finance Committee (paragraph 14)**CL 164/6 Rev.1 - Report of the 128th Session of the Programme Committee (paragraph 18)***CHAIRPERSON**

Goodmorning, we continue with Item 10 where we left off.

I have the list of speakers which was one the screen yesterday. Perhaps it would be best if I followed that. I will just read out the names so that you know what the list is.

The first country on the list is Malaysia, then Capo Verde, Canada, Myanmar, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Japan, Peru, the Russian Federation, Costa Rica, Finland, Angola, the Bahamas, Guinea, Mexico, Argentina and Australia. This was the list of speakers when we adjourned.

I see on the screen that there is a different request. What I will do is I will follow yesterday's list, and if there are any additional countries I will add them to that list.

Following that process, Malaysia is the first speaker. Malaysia you have the floor.

Mr Abdul Malik Melvin CASTELINO (Malaysia)

I hope you had a good rest following last night's Session; I will continue. Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We welcome this Report and appreciate FAO's timely response to COVID-19, including its involvement in various high-level meetings and platforms.

The COVID-19 in Malaysia, since it was first detected on 25 January 2020, has impacted our food systems, and the Government promptly responded to this situation by announcing economy assistance package to all affected sectors of the economy, including agriculture, to minimise the effect on food security and farmers' livelihoods.

To support the low-income groups, including farmers, the Government voided temporary income support and refrainment of loan repayment to ensure people's continuous affordability of access to food. The Government also provides incentives to the private sector to create more jobs in agriculture and employed those who are dismissed from other sectors of the economy. To minimise the affection to food production, the agriculture sector is one of the key sectors that have been facilitated to continue to operate during lockdowns.

The Government also works with the private sector to assist small farmers in the collection and storage of agriculture produce to minimise post-harvest losses and to ensure food availability. This addition of food products has also been centred to increase facilitation to logistic sectors during the lockdown. At the same time, the Government works together with the private sector to enhance and increase the use of digital platforms for the distribution of agricultural products.

Like other countries, Malaysia would also like to share experience with other countries in increasing this agriculture sector resilience during the pandemic. Malaysia also stresses the importance of policy briefs and data that will help countries' planning and actions to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture. We are pleased that FAO has stepped forward in doing this with the publication of various policy briefs for different regions.

We call for FAO to increase work in data analytics and data coverage at country-level to better analyse and reflect situations on the ground. FAO could make important interventions to guide countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and build the agricultural sector's resilience. We look forward to seeing what FAO can do including through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) to help vulnerable parts of the world to rebuild the affected food systems post COVID-19.

We also support for COVID-19 to be an integral consideration in the agenda deliberation and outcomes of the United Nations (UN) Agricultural Food Systems Summit (FSS) 2021, to exchange ideas and find ways on how we can improve the resilience of our food systems. Likewise, COVID-19's impact on food systems should also be an important consideration for us to other platforms such as the newly established Group of Friends and the COVID-19 Food Coalition to provide input in collaboration of the Summit.

Finally, we appreciate the regular briefings on this matter and encourage FAO to continue providing latest updates and data on COVID-19 and its impact to food security and nutrition in the food systems.

M. Jorge FIGUEIREDO GONÇALVES (Cabo Verde)

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de vous transmettre les salutations de Son Excellence le Ministre de l'agriculture et de l'environnement de Cabo Verde, Monsieur Gilberto Silva, qui aurait dû faire lui-même sa présentation mardi, mais le fait que le point 10 soit passé à jeudi a créé une petite difficulté dans son agenda. Il m'a donc chargé de présenter ce point à sa place.

Nous félicitons la FAO d'avoir inscrit cet important sujet à l'ordre du jour de cette 164^e session. Il est plus que consensuel que la pandémie de COVID-19 et la crise qu'elle engendre représentent une menace majeure pour la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle des pays mettant en cause les acquis enregistrés au cours de la dernière décennie dans la lutte contre la pauvreté et la réalisation de l'objectif de développement durable 2 (ODD 2) dans le monde.

Il semble évident que cette situation affecte dramatiquement les pays les plus vulnérables, en particulier ceux les plus touchés par la récession économique et la perte d'emplois et de revenus des ménages. Le Cabo Verde est un des pays insulaires en développement, fortement tributaire des importations alimentaires, où les données macroéconomiques estimées à la suite de la pandémie de COVID-19 démontrent cette grande vulnérabilité aux chocs exogènes.

En effet, le produit interne brut (PIB), qui pointait vers une croissance d'environ 5,5 pour cent en 2020, connaîtra cette année une contraction de 6,8 à 8,5 pour cent, impactant négativement les finances publiques. Le tourisme, qui est la principale activité économique du pays, est le plus touché. La demande touristique devrait diminuer de 58,8 pour cent et les recettes touristiques devraient diminuer de 61,6 pour cent cette année. Dans ce contexte, on estime que le taux de chômage passera de 11,3 à 19,2 pour cent.

Il convient de noter que, même avant la pandémie, le pays avait déjà subi l'impact de trois années de sécheresse successives, qui ont fortement affecté la production agricole, entraînant une baisse de la contribution du secteur au PIB de 8 à 3 pour cent, selon les estimations. La crise sanitaire et économique entraîne donc une perte importante d'emplois et de revenus, et cette réalité affectera principalement l'accès des familles à la nourriture.

C'est dans ce contexte que la situation de la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle risque de s'aggraver. Ainsi, si du fait de la sécheresse, on estimait que 2 pour cent des ménages seraient en situation de crise alimentaire, phase 3 du tableau harmonisé (Cadre harmonisé d'identification des zones à risque et des populations en insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest), dans le contexte de la pandémie, ce chiffre pourrait atteindre les 16 pour cent si des mesures concrètes d'atténuation ne sont pas prises. Une évaluation de l'impact de la pandémie sur la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle est en cours de préparation par le gouvernement de Cabo Verde, conjointement avec la FAO, pour appuyer la mise en œuvre de politiques publiques d'atténuation de la crise.

Nous saisissons cette occasion pour remercier encore une fois cette Organisation pour son soutien et son expertise.

Mesdames et Messieurs, nous exprimons notre satisfaction pour la contribution de la FAO aux mesures prises pour lutter contre la pandémie de COVID-19, en particulier pour atténuer son impact négatif sur la sécurité alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires. Nous nous référons aux documents d'orientation pour la formulation des politiques et stratégies nationales mis à disposition, à la gestion et à la fourniture de données d'analyse, à l'organisation de réunions de haut niveau qui ont contribué à d'importantes déclarations conjointes, en bref, à la synergie avec d'autres organisations du système des Nations Unies et à la mobilisation de ressources techniques et financières pour aider les pays.

Nous encourageons la FAO à continuer, avec ses partenaires internationaux et les pays, de soutenir la mise en œuvre de politiques plus efficaces en vue de renforcer la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle dans le contexte de la crise. Nous remercions également le Directeur général de la FAO et son équipe des efforts qu'ils ont déployés pour la réorganisation de l'Institution, afin de la rendre plus souple, plus efficace et axée sur les résultats sur le terrain

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Canada, and may I appeal to the Members to keep their interventions brief and focused because we should have finished this Agenda Item yesterday, and the Drafting Committee was supposed to meet this morning. Now the Drafting Committee is going to meet at 14:00 hours. Looking at my list of speakers, unless we are more focused and brief, I do not think the Drafting Committee will be able to meet at 14:00 hours if we proceed at this rate. I appeal once again to be brief and focused in your interventions. Canada, please.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I see that Eritrea, I think as an Observer, his hand is up. I would like your guidance to whether you want to give the floor first, and I stand ready to go after.

CHAIRPERSON

I did not quite understand Canada. Could you repeat?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I see that the Observer, Eritrea has flagged his hand on the screen, I do not know if he wants to raise a point of order, but I am in your hands as to whether you want to give the floor to him.

Mr Teclegiorghis ASMEROM KIDANE (Eritrea) (Observer)

I have been asked just to give a letter that I will also read on behalf of Africa on the impact of COVID-19 for you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Eritrea. We will put you on the list, thank you. Canada go ahead.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We very much appreciate and welcome the positive update on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, and food systems, and we really appreciate the need that FAO has shown since the start of the pandemic in hosting high-level meetings and producing joint statements, as well as reporting for evidence-based policymaking.

Our Minister of International Development was very pleased to collaborate with FAO and other orderlies who are co-convening — with other partners like Italy, Brazil and Egypt — high-level meetings in New York to raise the intention on the importance of preventing the health crisis becoming a food crisis in particular in vulnerable countries such as Least Developed Countries (LDC) and the Small Island Development States (SIDS).

As expressed in the meeting of the Programme Committee (PC), we have many lessons to learn from this pandemic on food systems and agriculture in order to be better prepared for next time, and we are pleased to see that lessons learned from the last food crisis in 2008 have been absorbed in that most have understood the dangers, for example, of resorting to export restrictions.

In Canada's view, open, transparent and predictable trade is critical to keeping food supply chains functioning during and after the COVID-19 pandemic emergency and beyond. We are pleased to see that this constitutes one of the six work areas of FAO's comprehensive response to COVID-19. We also support the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees recommendations that the Organization includes gender in its assessment of the COVID-19 crisis, and we would like to add that we believe that gender should be used across FAO's comprehensive response to COVID-19.

We also recognize that recovering from the pandemic in the upcoming sessions will likely affect livelihoods and access to food for the most vulnerable segments of the population, and we welcome

that one work area will be on social protection and economic inclusion, including women and migrant workers. We also continue to urge FAO to make sure that the analysis going forward is as fact-based and true as possible, and we remain ready and willing to continue to engage with FAO and other partners to respond appropriately to regional and country levels.

Finally, we look forward to future updates on a regular basis and in a transparent manner as has been the case impacting COVID-19 crisis, and we look forward to the briefing on Tuesday about the comprehensive response of FAO to this crisis.

Ms Hmway Hmway KHYNE (Myanmar)

My delegation aligns itself with the group statement delivered by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We must stress the concerns raised by other delegations on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems that has already reached alarming levels, in addition to the increasing number of people in hunger in recent years.

We are all worried that the trend might derail our common goals of achieving the Agenda 2030. We have all witnessed the direct impact of COVID-19 in areas of public health that is still posing a threat to human lives across the world. Its economic impact creates other daunting challenges to all countries and their population, especially to the people living with poverty.

Access to sufficient and nutritious diets has already been a fundamental issue even before the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen forecasts that the gross domestic product (GDP) of many countries are in a downturn trend, and FAO has estimated that it would result in the rise in undernourishment, especially in low-income, food-deficit in net food importing countries.

Countries depending on the impact of COVID-19 and their capacity have adopted stimulus measures in response to the economic consequences. However, we all are aware that the developing world needs more support from organizations like FAO in this time of emergency as the stimulus measures may not be sufficient to address the difficulties with respect to food systems. We, therefore, would like to see FAO in coordination with international, regional and financial institutions to find ways and means to support small scale farmers and struggling rural citizens in an urgent manner.

Myanmar shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, and we have already seen its consequences in our economies, especially on the food and agriculture sector. Unlike other areas, food is essential for survival of every child, woman and man. My delegation firmly believes that those who are working in the field of food and agriculture, like us, have the responsibility to bring out the important issue of the effects of COVID-19 to the attention of the highest political levels.

We all are very much looking forward to the Food System Summit 2021, and Myanmar considers it would be very timely to organize a pre-Summit event dedicated to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on food security and food systems, as part of the preparatory process that needs to be addressed immediately.

Sra. Liudmila KUZMICHEVA (República Dominicana)

Nuestra delegación agradece al Economista Jefe por la calidad de la información suministrada, tal como ya nos tiene acostumbrados. Como dijimos en el debate sobre los ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP), la pandemia constituye en adición a los conflictos armados y la crisis climática, así como a las migraciones que estas causan, una amenaza a la seguridad alimentaria global. Resulta de gran importancia que los países en desarrollo cuenten con el apoyo técnico y financiero de la FAO a fin de mejorar la asistencia alimentaria de emergencia.

En América Latina y el Caribe podemos tener un retroceso histórico en la lucha contra el hambre. Podemos perder lo que hemos logrado en 15 años en tan solo un par de meses. Millones de personas pueden caer en el hambre. Esa es la gravedad del problema actual, tal como lo ha asegurado el Representante Regional de la FAO, Julio A. Berdegú. En la región de América Latina y el Caribe, que engloba países que dependen de la importación de alimentos y en los que existe una gran cantidad de personas vulnerables, el impacto de esta crisis se pone de manifiesto de manera dramática, sobre todo para aquellos que tienen las peores condiciones de vida, agravándose así la situación de salud pero también la del hambre y la malnutrición.

Asimismo, recomendamos impulsar el comercio interregional, que se amplíe el número de países que se beneficien de la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano, que la FAO colabore con los países en las regiones para evitar que se impongan normativas que podrían convertirse en barreras no arancelarias al comercio. En este sentido, hacemos un llamado para que las vías del comercio mundial permanezcan abiertas con mercados transparente a los que los pequeños productores tengan acceso. Pedimos se tenga presente que para aprovechar las oportunidades de acelerar el comercio electrónico habrá que reducir la brecha digital de modo que la transformación sea rápida y equitativa.

En el caso de los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID), las exportaciones se han disminuido, el turismo se ha detenido y las remesas han caído. No se puede perder de vista las vulnerabilidades climáticas, sobre todo en el Caribe, donde se pronostica una temporada de huracanes más violenta de lo normal. Deseamos llamar la atención del Consejo de modo especial a la recomendación del párrafo 12 del documento *CL 164/9 Repercusiones de la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) en la seguridad alimentaria y los sistemas alimentarios*, en cuanto a ampliar los programas de protección social, que ha sido uno de nuestras prioridades como país.

Y, para concluir, sugerimos también tomar en cuenta los productos del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) que puedan contribuir a evitar que se agraven las situaciones de inseguridad alimentaria y malnutrición en el mundo.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

En el Informe del año 2019 sobre *El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición en el mundo* se indicaba que más de 820 millones de personas padecían hambre en todo el mundo. Un dato en proyecciones de crecimiento el cual representaba un inmenso reto en alcanzar el Objetivo de Desarrollo sostenible 2 (ODS 2) de Hambre Cero para el 2030.

Antes de la pandemia, el hambre estaba aumentando en casi todas las regiones del mundo. Sin duda alguna, la pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) tendrá repercusiones innegables en la economía mundial. En esta coyuntura, el multilateralismo reviste un papel fundamental para responder los retos que tenemos por adelante. La FAO, en este sentido, nos puede dar un cierto apoyo. Confiamos en que la FAO pueda prioritarizar el desarrollo a través de acuerdos de ejecución en multilateral.

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the joint statement made by Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We appreciate FAO for assisting COVID-19's ongoing impacts on food security and nutrition. Having said that, we have already pointed out at the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee (PC) and Finance Committee (FC) last month, that today's challenges are not only food access, but also food availability.

In the long term, we are likely to have a challenge of food availability such as food price increases. For example, FAO released a Food Price Index (FFPI) on 2 July. The Index increased in June representing the first month-on-month increase since the beginning of the year due to market uncertainties brought on by COVID-19. Therefore, special attention should be given to the impact of subsequent global recession on further demand to the supply chain and food prices.

Food is one of the most basic needs for humans. Therefore, based on human security and to leave no one behind, we have conducted and will conduct, together with FAO, improvement of nutrition, [XX] and strengthen food supplies especially for the most vulnerable people.

The Republic of Korea delivered the statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group taking into consideration the COVID-19 impact on food supply chains, food markets, labour market, food security, and [XX] in the short-term, medium-term and long-term we need to continue our cooperation with Members and relevant international organizations.

Japan believes that the Sustainable Developing Goals (SDGs) cannot be achieved without addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, in the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit (FSS) in 2021, measures to be taken during post-COVID-19 should be discussed, regarded with a holistic

approach on food systems, and we should accelerate our discussion for strengthening resilience of food systems.

We support Australia previously stating the need for strengthened tripartite relationships of FAO, World Health Organization (WHO), and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for controlling zoonotic diseases. Therefore, as we mentioned on Item 6, we request FAO to provide detailed explanation to Members about the scope with a new Centre sharing of responsibilities between relevant [XX] sections, such as animal production and the impact on ongoing activities.

Sr. Gustavo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

La delegación de Perú agradece la presentación del documento sobre las repercusiones de la pandemia en la seguridad alimentaria y los sistemas alimentarios. Coincidimos plenamente con lo señalado en el documento. La pandemia causada por el COVID-19 ha dejado al descubierto la fragilidad de los sistemas alimentarios y los países de renta media alta no estamos exentos de enfrentar esta grave problemática.

En América Latina y el Caribe, que hoy emerge como el nuevo epicentro de la pandemia y en el Perú, en particular, nos preocupa profundamente sus efectos que ineludiblemente agravarán la situación del hambre y la malnutrición ocasionando una grave desaceleración en los progresos alcanzados en materia de reducción de la pobreza en general. Conforme a las estimaciones del impacto de la pandemia, la contracción de las economías repercutirá indefectiblemente en la demanda de alimentos, agravada por la desigualdad en el acceso a dietas saludables causando así graves daños a la salud y la nutrición.

En este difícil contexto, valoramos el trabajo que la FAO ha efectuado y agradecemos por los esfuerzos del Director General y su personal, tanto en la sede como en el terreno, para prestar apoyo a nuestros países a través de orientaciones en materia de políticas, análisis y gestión de sistemas de información, así como en las acciones de alto nivel para aunar esfuerzos para el mantenimiento de su [inaudible 0:31:03]. El Perú cree que la respuesta a los desafíos sin precedentes que se presenta, requiere de una acción colectiva y colaborativa. A nivel regional bajo los auspicios de la FAO, 26 países suscribimos una declaración por la cual nos comprometimos a coordinar el abastecimiento de alimentos suficientes, inocuos, intuitivos durante la pandemia del COVID-19.

Consideramos que los esfuerzos, ahora más que nunca, deben concentrarse en proteger los medios de vida de las personas más vulnerables del sostenimiento de la cadena de suministro de alimentos sanos, seguros, accesibles y asequibles, fortaleciendo la cooperación y creando mecanismos para su producción y consumo. De allí la importancia de la FAO de proveer información basada en hechos comprobados, como las notas de orientación sobre políticas así como la recopilación y análisis de datos con información actualizada en tiempo real permitiendo a los países una acertada toma de decisiones para evitar una crisis alimentaria.

[XX] este concepto a brindar orientaciones, invocamos a la FAO que continúe apoyando los países de renta media y media alta para desarrollar y fortalecer sus capacidades productivas y comerciales con énfasis en el uso de la innovación y el avance tecnológico. A través de estas reforzadas capacidades nuestros países podrán mejorar la productividad y competitividad, principalmente en el ámbito de la agricultura familiar. Por ello, sugerimos a la FAO considerar la creación de una plataforma de servicios de asistencia técnica virtual de los diversos sectores productivos, que incorpore aspectos productivos, sanitarios, de servicios y cooperación, así como de mercado, como el comercio electrónico, para nuestro pequeños agricultores.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We share the FAO Secretariat's concern about the increase in hunger and poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also the new challenges posed by COVID-19 in relation to ensuring healthy, nutritious food. We agree that if there is a global economic recession, ensuring food security will face serious complications. In this connection, we hope FAO will continue to closely monitor the situation and coordinate multilateral efforts within its mandate to prevent this health crisis from turning into a food crisis.

We support FAO Management's recommendations on stimulating national economies to maintain food production at the required level. This involves supporting small and medium producers, who have appeared to be the most vulnerable when transport and logistics restrictions have been introduced because of the pandemic.

It is also important to draw attention to FAO's suggested social protection measures for vulnerable communities and people who have lost their jobs because of the epidemic in order to ensure they have access to food.

We agree with FAO Management's conclusions on the need for global trade channels to stay open so as to not hit countries which rely on food imports. We believe it is fair to also draw attention to negative consequences of unilateral economic sanctions in circumvention of international law; these sanctions worsen the negative consequences of COVID-19.

We would like FAO to, within its mandate, continue work on the implementation of the United Nations COVID-19 global humanitarian response plan including through partnerships with the additional efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Chair, last but not least, we would like to draw attention to the organization of work. We commend the FAO Director-General and the Secretariat for having regrouped so quickly and moved to virtual meetings. We fully understand the difficulties and challenges involved when postponing events and planning new dates for events; however, it is clear that we must ensure the high quality of our collective work, particularly when it comes to the preparation of outcome documents and the substantive content of discussions.

In this connection, we call on the FAO Secretariat, insofar as it is possible, to spread out events in terms of dates and times and to also circulate invitations to events early. By way of example, we are unfortunately forced to mention that for the high-level webinar on forestry and COVID-19, which was held from 22-23 June, the invitation arrived the day before the event began. For our part, we are open to engaging with dialogues with the Secretariat and all interested delegations in order to agree on mutually acceptable dates whether be for the Sessions of the Regional Conferences or the Technical Committees.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Agradecemos a la Secretaría por la presentación del documento CL 164/10. En el contexto de la COVID-19 y ante las amenazas que se presentan en nuestros países, considero oportuno meditar sobre las condiciones actuales por las que está atravesando el mundo entero.

En particular, deseo hacer hincapié en la situación de América Latina y el Caribe. Sabiendo que el panorama nos presenta una difícil situación a futuro. En razón de esto y sin pretender adjudicarme vocería alguna más que la de mi país, deseo llamar la atención sobre la realidad que transitamos muchos de los países de renta media.

Los números que nos facilita la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) nos indican que Latinoamérica presenta casi tres millones de contagios y más de 130 mil fallecimientos a este momento y creciendo exponencialmente; asunto que a todas luces nos vislumbra un escenario poco alentador.

Propiamente hablando de Centro América, los países de la subregión nos enfrentamos a la condición de emergencia que ya supone la crisis del COVID-19 pero incrementada con cuestiones complejas adicionales, tales como el corredor seco mesoamericano que alcanza la zona del pacífico norte de mi país y con impactos negativos recurrentes en la producción agrícola. Paradójicamente, los agricultores familiares, los que producen alimentos saludables y sostenibles, son los que menos acceso tienen a lo que ellos mismos producen.

En mi país, lamentablemente, esto no ha sido la excepción. Apoyar a los agricultores familiares es, precisamente, la razón de ser de iniciativas como la del Decenio de las Naciones Unidas de Agricultura Familiar surgida en el seno de la FAO y del FIDA, y en la que mi país ha tenido una activa participación.

En Costa Rica, nuestros productores agrícolas y trabajadores del campo están pasando tiempos difíciles con pérdidas en sus cosechas y su comercialización como resultado de los incrementos de la tasa de contagios precisamente en zonas rurales. También hemos retrocedido en nuestros logros contra la pobreza y el hambre, producto del desempleo que ha traído consigo la crisis del COVID-19. La zona norte del país es actualmente una de las más afectadas por la gran cantidad de nuevos casos y, en su mayoría, proveniente de trabajadoras y trabajadores que se dedican a labores agrícolas.

Conceptos como el de la pobreza multidimensional y al análisis de las brechas estructurales, hacen propicio que los esquemas de trabajo y colaboración a través de mecanismos como la cooperación sur-sur y triangular, sean algunos de los vínculos que consideramos puedan hacer más viable la situación de los países de renta media sin dejar de lado, por supuesto, a los países más vulnerables. Es claro que la única forma de superar los efectos de la pandemia pasa por tender lazos de solidaridad, de ayuda común y de cooperación de todos y, por ello, basado en el mandato de desarrollo de este organismo internacional, considero importante hacer hincapié en este tema.

En razón de estos comentarios y en concordancia con lo externado por los colegas de América Latina y el Caribe que me antecedieron, solicito que en las conclusiones sobre el presente punto de agenda quede reflejada la importancia de reconocer, en línea con las conclusiones del tema 3, las necesidades de asistencia y cooperación para los países de ingreso medio. Ello con la finalidad de visibilizarlos y que sean considerados en mayor medida como [XX] beneficiarios de asistencia técnica y económica en los esfuerzos por contrarrestar el impacto del COVID-19.

Destaco la importancia de la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano como en una forma coherente de movilizar los recursos de la FAO y sus socios, con la finalidad de crear el tipo de entornos necesarios para transformar los sistemas y las vidas de las personas, siempre en línea con los Objetivos de Desarrollo sostenible (ODS). Siendo así, considero que la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano debe, en pasos subsiguientes, abordar acciones que asistan la realidad que la pandemia ha impuesto no solo en los países más vulnerables sino también en los de ingreso medio. Como ya lo he dicho, mi delegación ve con muy buenos ojos la ayuda que se le está dando a los países más necesitados y nos satisface que estos se vean beneficiados cada vez más dadas sus condiciones. Sin embargo, para concluir, reitero mi llamado a este Consejo para que incluyamos a los países en desarrollo clasificados como de ingreso medio, dentro de la asistencia que está brindando la Organización por la emergencia del COVID-19. El impacto de la emergencia sanitaria requiere de la colaboración de todos y es este un llamado imperante a salir solidariamente de esta crisis que nos está golpeando a todos por igual.

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. The European Union (EU) countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the European Union (EU) statement, delivered by Germany.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to you, Director-General, and to the staff of FAO. Throughout this brink of the COVID-19 pandemic, FAO has provided leadership within the United Nations (UN) family in Rome, furnished us with frequent updates on the situation, organized thematic meetings, and provided analysis and information to support countries in making some policy decisions to avoid the COVID-19 crisis turning into a food crisis. The Nordic countries urge FAO to continue the work in close collaboration with other international organizations.

It is important to monitor closely, analyse the situation and address the acute food crisis, as well as thinking about the long-term challenges. FAO has an important role in helping to develop practices to prevent zoonosis or origin epidemics. We also need to link the lessons learned from COVID-19 to antimicrobial resistance (AMR), remembering the importance of working on One Health. Like Canada, we would also like to highlight the importance of addressing gender equality in their post-COVID-19 actions.

COVID-19 challenges us to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of our food systems. We have to seize the opportunity to build back better and greener in our efforts to recover from the pandemic.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

Est-il possible de permettre à l'Erythrée de parler maintenant au nom du Groupe Afrique et à l'Angola

plus tard?

Mr Tecleghiorghis ASMEROM KIDANE (Eritrea) (Observer)

Eritrea, together with Uganda, speaks on the Agenda Item *CL164/10* on behalf of the Africa Regional Group and has the pleasure to deliver this statement on the impact of the COVID-19.

First and foremost, the Africa Regional Group appreciates the Director-General for his very interactive involvement and for the works he has done in response to COVID-19 in Africa and other countries.

COVID-19 has reached almost all countries in the world in a remarkably short period of time, wreaking havoc in health systems and economies. While the impact of the pandemic on food systems will be felt globally, particularly by the 820 million people who are currently food insecure and, among those, 170 million persons who currently suffer acute food insecurity and are at highest risk to suffer extreme consequences.

The crisis has demonstrated the urgency and, so far, the effectiveness of lessons learned from previous food crises. Most important is the need to coordinate collective action at the global level to avoid precipitous actions that can compound the effects of the pandemic on food crises.

Our Regional Group welcomes document *CL164/10*. It is a comprehensive document and provides information on the Director-General's new direction and vision for attaining Zero Hunger and improving the livelihoods and well-being of people through better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life. The document highlights clearly FAO's effort to assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture across the world and support policy analysis.

FAO has convened high-level meetings to encourage Members to work in concert to overcome the challenges of the pandemic, working with the United Nations (UN) country teams and other agencies.

The Africa Regional Group takes note of the forecast on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will have an impact on most of FAO's areas of work. During this troubling COVID-19 pandemic period the economies of developing countries are projected to experience a sharp decline risking tens of millions of people falling back into extreme poverty.

In this context, the Africa Regional Group stresses the need for greater global solidarity and partnership to combat COVID-19 and enhance food and nutrition security. In this regard, we support the prevention and crisis response measures taken by FAO to address the impacts of COVID-19. It is important and useful that FAO has implemented an array of tools to assess the impact of COVID-19 on food and agriculture across the world and offers country-specific policy analysis and support.

We call on FAO to give more attention to making its expertise available to assist developing countries dealing with the impact of COVID-19.

M. Carlos Alberto AMARAL (Angola)

J'aimerais vous féliciter pour la façon dont vous conduisez les travaux de ce Conseil, ce premier Conseil virtuel. C'est grâce à votre expérience et votre patience que nous sommes arrivés avec succès à la fin des travaux. L'Angola estime que cette situation inquiétante, créée par la COVID-19 en matière de santé et d'alimentation, sera un défi et une opportunité pour profiter du grand sentiment de solidarité qui s'est créé dans le monde.

Nous demandons à la FAO de continuer à investir toutes ses capacités techniques et d'assistance pour aider les pays à améliorer la productivité agricole, les canaux de distribution, l'accès des petits et moyens agriculteurs aux marchés et à contribuer à améliorer les conditions de vie des agriculteurs. Comme l'indique le document au paragraphe 6, l'Angola, le Nigéria et d'autres producteurs africains de pétrole traversent une période difficile en raison de la forte baisse du prix du pétrole aggravée par la pandémie.

L'Angola fait face à ces difficultés et cherche à augmenter et à diversifier sa production pour le marché national, et à remplacer progressivement l'importation des aliments de base. L'Angola souscrit à la déclaration des pays africains et à l'intervention du délégué de l'Afrique du Sud. Nous encourageons la FAO à continuer à soutenir la recherche des solutions à d'autres problèmes qui

persistent à côté de la pandémie, tels l'invasion de criquets pèlerins et d'autres ravageurs, ainsi que le changement climatique; dans la région de l'Afrique australe, el niño, el niña, mettent en danger la sécurité alimentaire. Par exemple, il y a des pays d'Afrique australe qui n'ont pas demandé d'assistance du Programme alimentaire mondial (PAM) depuis 40 ans, mais ils ont commencé maintenant à le faire. La situation n'est pas facile et nous invitons la FAO à mobiliser des ressources pour aider les pays d'Afrique de l'Est à éliminer les criquets pèlerins.

Nous convenons avec le document qu'il est important que les voies du commerce international et interrégional restent ouvertes.

Nous notons avec satisfaction le travail conjoint de la FAO avec d'autres organisations des Nations Unies, telle que l'Organisation mondiale du commerce, le PAM, le Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA), la Banque Mondiale, ainsi que le G20 et d'autres. Nous l'encourageons à poursuivre cette collaboration, en particulier sur le terrain, en fonction des priorités locales et avec les autorités nationales afin qu'on puisse surmonter cette phase difficile de COVID-19 et relancer les économies.

Ms Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

In the interest of time, I will be brief and submit the detailed intervention for the record.

Bahamas wishes to state at the onset that these virtual platforms for meetings have been very effective, and we hope that they can continue even when we return to a semblance of normalcy.

We thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive report on the impact of COVID-19 on food and agricultural sector, and we commend FAO for the work that it has done to assist countries during the pandemic.

The Bahamas has suffered a major hurricane and the coronavirus pandemic in the past two years. The Government has been compelled to allocate additional resources to those in need. Bahamas is no different from any other States. This is a constant and present reality for the people of the Caribbean and other countries. Our story is the same. When we shut down the border during the pandemic, we experienced loss of tourism revenue and serious loss of jobs, not only in the tourism sector but also other sectors.

Our hospitality industry, which accounts for approximately 58 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) virtually shut down resulting in more than 10 000 jobs in a matter of months. Other sectors have common needs and experienced similarly devastating economic losses. We depend on foreign imports, which exceed 90 percent of what we consume in general, food in particular. We then found it necessary to put in place a series of social security nets to assist those in need. In the food and agricultural sector, the Government produced an emergency food production plan to strengthen food and nutrition security during the time of crisis. The details of the plan are in the statement that I will submit to the Secretariat.

While great tragedy and loss has resulted from the pandemic, we are also presented with an equally great opportunity. We need to give priority to the restoration of our economy to guide against external shocks such as this and to empower new categories of workers. Against this backdrop with COVID-19, we now have an opportunity to be creative and resolute and change fundamentally how we approach our national economy and where we position food security and non-food agricultural production. We have liaised with other Caribbean countries during the pandemic as well as the Caribbean Secretariat where FAO liaison officers are posted and provide invaluable advice and guidance.

Our countries' regional collaboration is guided by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) COVID-19 Agri-Food Action Plan. While we have good support from FAO in the region, we see many opportunities to deepen engagement with FAO and others as proposed in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) COVID-19 Agri-Food Action Plan. The details of this plan are also in the detailed statement.

M. Mohamed Cherif DIALLO (Guinée)

La République de Guinée s'associe à la déclaration prononcée par l'Erythrée au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le point 10 intitulé « *Impact de la pandémie de COVID-19 sur la sécurité alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires* ». Ma délégation se réjouit particulièrement de l'inscription de ce point à l'ordre du jour et félicite le Secrétariat pour l'élaboration du document *CL 164/10* à un moment particulièrement difficile pour le monde, frappé de plein fouet par un ennemi invisible, dont l'imprévisibilité n'a d'égal que sa férocité.

Nous partageons les observations du document, qui mettent en relief les conséquences en cours et à long terme de la crise de COVID-19 sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition. Nous saluons les efforts déployés par la FAO pour évaluer les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur l'alimentation et l'agriculture dans le monde, et pour contribuer à l'amélioration des politiques publiques en réponse à la crise.

Mon pays partage l'analyse selon laquelle les effets conjugués de la COVID -19, des mesures restrictives adoptées pour lutter contre la pandémie et de la crise économique mondiale consécutive aggraveront les problèmes de la faim et de la malnutrition en exposant davantage de personnes à la faim et à la pauvreté, en particulier dans les pays vulnérables fortement dépendants de l'importation des denrées alimentaires et des activités rurales, compromettant ainsi les progrès accomplis dans la lutte contre la pauvreté.

Nous apprécions le leadership de la FAO et son engagement dans la riposte anti- COVID -19, en vue d'atténuer les effets de cette pandémie sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale, notamment dans les régions où la vulnérabilité est structurelle et dont les populations sont plus exposées aux conséquences de la maladie. C'est notamment le cas de l'Afrique, où ses conséquences sur la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle risquent d'être encore plus dramatiques et d'exacerber la pauvreté et la malnutrition.

Il est donc impératif que des régions fragiles comme l'Afrique soient en mesure de garantir les activités de base nécessaires à la production, la commercialisation et la distribution de denrées alimentaires pour leur population. Nous avons favorablement accueilli la réunion virtuelle tenue le 16 avril 2020 au plus fort de la pandémie entre les ministres africains de l'agriculture avec l'appui du Département de l'économie rurale et de l'agriculture de l'Union africaine et la FAO.

Une réunion, qui a été sanctionnée par une Déclaration dans laquelle les parties prenantes se sont engagées à prendre des mesures pour soutenir la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition pour tous, en particulier pour les catégories de population les plus vulnérables, tout en atténuant les conséquences sur les systèmes alimentaires.

La fermeture des frontières et la suspension des marchés hebdomadaires et des marchés à ciel ouvert dans les pays de la région ont entraîné une réduction du commerce régional et empêché les agriculteurs de commercialiser normalement leurs produits, ce qui a parfois conduit à une pénurie alimentaire localisée et une augmentation des prix des produits alimentaires mais aussi à la perturbation des activités rurales et de la chaîne des valeurs, d'où la baisse des revenus et l'accroissement de la pauvreté en milieu rural.

Pour vous donner un exemple, Monsieur le Président, la fermeture des frontières entre la Guinée et le Sénégal pour cause d'urgence sanitaire dans les deux pays voisins, a sérieusement impacté la filière pommes de terre dans mon pays. Le Sénégal étant le principal marché d'exportation, plus de 5 000 tonnes de pommes de terre de la région du Fouta-Djalon qui n'ont pu trouver d'acheteurs, compte tenu de la nature périssable de ce produit, des dizaines de milliers de personnes qui vivent de cette filière ont accusé des pertes de proportions élevées.

Ce problème d'écoulement a aussi frappé les légumes, toujours au Fouta, et les ignames de Kankan en Haute-Guinée, ainsi que d'autres produits comme ceux de la pêche dans la région côtière, dont la commercialisation a été perturbée par les restrictions imposées aux déplacements des populations et par la fermeture des frontières avec le Mali.

Face à l'urgence, l'État a dû intervenir pour soutenir les producteurs menacés par les créances contractées dans le cadre de leurs activités afin de réduire l'impact de la crise. Ceci toutefois n'est pas suffisant au regard des limites des ressources publiques surtout dans le contexte d'une crise sanitaire d'une telle ampleur.

En conclusion, Monsieur le Président, en dépit des efforts fournis par la FAO et d'autres acteurs, la situation risque de confirmer les prévisions les plus pessimistes sur la question, d'où la préoccupation constante de mon pays sur les conséquences multiples de cette pandémie sur nos systèmes alimentaires.

C'est pourquoi nous encourageons la FAO à poursuivre ses activités d'évaluation et de surveillance des conséquences de la COVID-19, et de conseil également auprès des gouvernements, afin de renforcer les politiques de résilience mises en place aux niveaux international, régional et national.

Nous exhortons également l'Organisation à poursuivre ses activités de plaidoyer pour la mobilisation de la communauté internationale en faveur des actions de résilience au bénéfice des plus vulnérables.

Sr. Elias REYES BRAVO (México)

Tomamos nota de este informe que es fundamental por lo sensible del tema que aborda. Consideramos que es un tema en el que urge que la FAO siga centrando su atención y apoye a los Estados miembros, incluidos los países de renta media, de acuerdo con la situación específica de los mismos, así como que continúen compartiendo los conocimientos que ha acumulado hasta la fecha.

Al mismo tiempo es muy importante que los países tomemos medidas que minimicen los efectos de esta pandemia en el sector agropecuario y pesquero en todo lo posible. Así como, encontrar alternativas para una respuesta más inmediata a este tipo de pandemias o al rebrote de las mismas. Sin duda, la actual es una experiencia que debemos capitalizar en términos de brindar una atención más temprana a este tipo de circunstancias.

Para ello será esencial el trabajo de los investigadores en salud humana y en la salud de los animales en el marco del enfoque, una salud que ahora cobra todavía más relevancia. Tomamos nota de la importancia de contar con políticas basadas en datos, en observar la oferta, la demanda y el acceso a los alimentos por parte de la población, y en la adopción de medidas que hagan posible corregir cualquier desviación.

Reconocemos la valiosa labor que la FAO ha realizado en la evaluación de la amenaza de la COVID-19 para la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición, así como las medidas recomendadas, la respuesta que la FAO ha dado al tema de COVID-19 ha permitido no solo el análisis, la gestión de datos, sino también reuniones de alto nivel de ministros de agricultura con el propósito de alentar la cooperación internacional en este tema. Asimismo, la FAO ha promovido declaraciones conjuntas con organismos como la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC), o como la aprobada por los Ministros de Agricultura del G20 emitida el 21 de abril pasado.

Por la importancia del tema en estos días, México está suscribiendo un proyecto básico con la FAO en el marco del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT) de la Organización. Este proyecto está dirigido precisamente a la generación de información estratégica de acciones clave para garantizar la cadena de suministros alimentarios en México durante y después de la contingencia sanitaria generada por la pandemia de COVID-19.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Permítame, antes que nada, resaltar los excelentes aportes realizados por la Ministro de Sudáfrica el día de ayer y por el representante de Eritrea en nombre del grupo africano, cuya visión comparto y también lo expresado por mis amigos, colegas del Perú, de México, de la Federación de Rusia y de Costa Rica.

La pandemia del COVID-19 nos enfrenta a una situación sin precedentes, desconocida y altamente cambiante que tendrá impactos vertiginosos sobre la pobreza, el hambre y la malnutrición. Si bien las consecuencias sanitarias y socioeconómicas de la pandemia aún no pueden ser totalmente comprendidas ni pronosticadas, lo que es claro es que el COVID-19 vino a profundizar las crisis alimentarias ya existentes y ha acentuado los problemas estructurales que enfrentan muchos de nuestros países para alcanzar el objetivo del Hambre Cero (ODS 2).

Agradecemos los esfuerzos y la labor de la FAO en este acuciante contexto y destacamos la necesidad de que las acciones que se emprendan a nivel internacional contra esta pandemia sean coordinadas,

rápidas y efectivas. EL trabajo conjunto en coordinación con otros organismos internacionales es importante para sobrellevar esta situación, mientras procuramos seguir en la senda del desarrollo y el crecimiento sostenibles sin dejar a nadie atrás.

En estos meses la FAO ha desempeñado un rol de vital importancia proveyendo análisis de las repercusiones del virus en la agricultura y en la alimentación. Contar con datos sobre cómo el COVID-19 impacta sobre la producción, el comercio mundial, las cadenas de suministros y la distribución de alimentos permite a los países adoptar medidas más eficientes para morigerar los efectos negativos de esta pandemia en sus poblaciones, especialmente en los más vulnerables.

Debemos evitar que esta crisis sanitaria mundial se convierta en una crisis alimentaria. Para impedir la ruptura de las cadenas de suministro y garantizar que los alimentos estén disponibles para los consumidores, reiteramos la importancia de mantener los mercados abiertos y reafirmamos la relevancia de un comercio basado en reglas que asegure la estabilidad de los flujos de alimentos.

En este sentido, entendemos que este es un momento crítico que existe la remoción de los obstáculos innecesarios al comercio internacional, tanto arancelarios como no arancelarios. También, es central impulsar las inversiones en el sector agrícola, especialmente en infraestructura y tecnología en los países con alto potencial productivo y fortalecer la innovación en tanto permite desarrollar herramientas para incrementar la productividad de los cultivos, el valor nutricional de los alimentos, evitar las pérdidas y desperdicios y utilizar más eficientemente los recursos naturales.

Todo ello ayudará a aumentar de manera sostenible la producción y productividad de los sistemas alimentarios generando los alimentos que hoy, más que nunca, se requiere.

La pandemia del COVID-19 ha dejado claro que todos los países y todas las personas somos vulnerables. Todos veremos resentidas nuestras economías y nuestros mercados de trabajo en la postpandemia. Para que esta caída repercuta en la menor medida posible en las ya alarmantes cifras de inseguridad alimentaria, debemos ser conscientes de que existe una multiplicidad de factores que inciden en la seguridad alimentaria. Debemos comprender el carácter multidimensional de la pobreza y debemos velar porque la cooperación internacional, en respuesta a la crisis del COVID-19, contemple los múltiples motivos que nos han llevado a esta situación y que la pandemia solo ha exacerbado.

Crisis como esta, evidencian lo invisible del triple nexo entre la acción humanitaria, el desarrollo y la consolidación de la paz. Ello implica que no podemos abordar los desafíos que enfrenta el mundo para alcanzar los objetivos de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible sino desde un enfoque holístico y sistémico, que todas las agencias del sistema de las Naciones Unidas deben tener en cuenta a la hora de actuar en el terreno.

Hoy, el epicentro de la pandemia es la región de América Latina y el Caribe. Una región que, como muchas otras, contribuye enormemente a la seguridad alimentaria mundial pero que, a pesar de ello, enfrenta aún importantes desafíos para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS 1 y 2). Tal cual, lo expresó de manera excelente, mi amigo el Embajador de Costa Rica y cuya propuesta final sobre visibilizar la vulnerabilidad y necesidad de los países de ingresos medios apoyamos con firmeza.

Recordemos que para dar respuestas globales a desafíos globales no debemos dejar a nadie atrás. Como dijo mi Presidente, cuando encontró al Director General de la FAO el primero de febrero próximo pasado, “Comer no puede ser un privilegio.”

Con estos comentarios, la Argentina toma nota de los progresos realizados por la FAO y alienta a la Organización a continuar realizando esfuerzos en ese sentido. Y reiteramos, para que quede claro, siempre recordando lo indivisible del triple nexo entre la acción humanitaria, el desarrollo y la consolidación de la paz.

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

We appreciate FAO's continued work and adaptability during the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts made to assist Members to better understand and address its impacts on agriculture and food security.

We have particularly welcomed the strong advocacy role FAO has played in maintaining global trade in food and agricultural inputs, and the commitment FAO has given to supporting Small Island

Developing States (SIDS), in particular the Pacific, in response to the damaging impact of COVID-19 on these countries.

We look forward to receiving more information on the FAO's response to support the SIDS, including through the proposed conference specifically relating to the impact of COVID-19 on SIDS, which the Chief Economist advised us of during the recent Joint Meeting. We also look forward to working with the FAO to advance the priorities and address the unique challenges of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI).

We welcome the initiatives designed to help FAO address the challenges presented by COVID-19, such as the risk of zoonotic diseases, and we appreciate the confirmation that the work of the FAO/World Health Organization (WHO) and FAO/International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Centres integrally will involve the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Through the One Health approach, we would like to see FAO further build upon and maximize the longstanding tripartite relationship of FAO/WHO/OIE within the suite of its COVID-19 response activities.

In particular, we urge the FAO to use the tripartite approach to strengthen cross-sectoral mechanisms for monitoring, early warning preparedness, prevention, detection, response and control of zoonotic diseases and to develop science based international guidelines on stricter safety and hygiene measures for zoonosis control, including the wildlife wet markets.

Including, as it has already been flagged by my esteemed colleague [XX]. We consider that such an approach would demonstrate the FAO's commitment to the recent World Health Assembly resolution on the COVID-19 response, which reinforced the need for tripartite collaboration to function effectively in order to protect against and support global efforts in managing the risks of zoonotic diseases.

Mr Ade CANDRADIJAYA (Indonesia)

The Indonesia delegation appreciates the work by FAO to conduct this meeting at this unprecedented time for all of us. Indonesia aligns itself with the joint statement made by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Regional Group, particularly with regard to the idea to hold a freestanding event dedicated to the mitigating of the COVID-19 on food security and food systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting food systems in all the dimensions of food security across the world. Restrictions on mobility within and across countries has disrupted food production and distribution. The long dry season in 2020 will also affect some countries. To overcome the pandemic's impact across the food system and keep providing food for 267 million Indonesians, we have focused our effort on the following areas.

First, preserving the sustainability of supply chains by increasing food production capacity, strengthening food reserves at the national, regional and community levels, as well as improving our food logistics systems. In this critical situation, ensuring a steady supply of food is essential. It is critical for us [XX] to ensure smooth flow of food distribution from our producers to the end consumers.

Second, it is important to ensure that farmers, fishermen and fish farmers can continue their activity safely. We are committed to assist and protect them through the provisions the Sales Assistance Programme and carried in the Subsidy Programmes.

The main objective of these programmes is to ease the burden of our sole consumption costs, including for farmers and fishermen, as well as to provide the same rules for all [XX]. In addition, promoting local food diversification based on local wisdom is still considered fundamental to our efforts to help family farmers and their households, particularly through the utilization of home yard and marginal land. Producing local and nutritious healthy diets also contributes to the decade of family farming.

Finally, we encourage FAO to give more attention and use its expertise to assist developing countries in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on food systems in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

La délégation française s’aligne sur la déclaration de l’Union européenne prononcée par l’Allemagne. La France voudrait féliciter la FAO et la remercier pour les actions qu’elle a prises en réaction à la crise de COVID-19. Nous partageons son constat de la gravité de la situation, qui va avoir des effets profonds sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition.

Nous constatons à l’heure actuelle une progression inquiétante de l’épidémie dans plusieurs continents et des régions, parfois touchées par de nombreuses déstabilisations et qui ne disposent pas toujours des capacités sanitaires et de gouvernance nécessaires. Des répercussions économiques et sociales importantes sont à craindre. C’est pourquoi il est essentiel de pouvoir apporter un soutien aux agriculteurs familiaux, notamment pour leur garantir un accès aux intrants agricoles, afin que les prochaines campagnes puissent être assurées et éviter que les petits producteurs se voient contraints de décapitaliser. Cette situation montre aussi les bénéfices d’une approche territoriale.

La crise a montré également l’importance de l’approche « Un monde, une Santé », pilotée par la FAO, l’Organisation mondiale de la santé animale (OIE) et l’Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), comme l’ont d’ailleurs relevé plusieurs des intervenants. Cette approche envisage les problématiques à l’interphase de la santé animale, santé humaine et santé des écosystèmes de façon intégrée.

Au regard des liens notamment avec la dégradation environnementale et l’érosion accélérée de la biodiversité, il apparaît aujourd’hui essentiel d’allier davantage le Programme des Nations Unies pour l’environnement, le PNUE, aux travaux sur ces questions.

La complexité de la crise nous révèle aussi les besoins impérieux de plus d’inclusivité et de transparence. En ce sens, la France invite la FAO à continuer et à renforcer son travail avec le Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA). Nous relevons également l’excellent rapport produit par le Groupe d’experts de haut niveau sur la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition (HLPE) « Sécurité alimentaire et nutrition: exposé des faits global à l’horizon 2030 » (Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative towards 2030), présenté récemment et qui rappelle l’urgence d’une transition vers des systèmes alimentaires plus durables.

Permettez-moi enfin, en conclusion, de rappeler que mon pays s’est mobilisé à titre national et au sein de l’Union européenne, pour renforcer sa coopération internationale pour aider les pays à affronter cette crise et en particulier en Afrique.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

The work the United Nations (UN) is doing, in particular that of FAO, WFP (World Food Programme) and IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), is critical during this crisis. However, we face not only a pandemic that threatens to undermine the progress we have made, but also two additional threats: the underlying growth in conflict-related food insecurity over the past several years, as well as the rising threat of pests, such as the desert locust swarms in Africa, the Middle-East and parts of Asia, as well as the fall armyworm (FAW).

This triple threat of COVID-19, conflict and pests underscores the importance of resilient and sustainable agriculture and the need for food systems to adjust and adapt to similar and future crises. We firmly believe that agriculture and food production are fundamental drivers towards economic recovery and sustainable growth. All stakeholders should work to exchange knowledge, foster the use of innovative technologies, create the policy environments that are conducive to the use of new innovations, and enable practical solutions for resiliency in agriculture, within the context of all three pillars of environmental, social and economic sustainable development.

We must work together to expand evidence-based, scientifically proven options and opportunities to empower and assist farmers, communities and countries to surmount these challenges, including through the adoption and use of innovation and technology.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Egypt’s delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Eritrea on behalf of the Africa Regional Group and we would like to highlight on the following points.

Egypt supports both prevention and crisis response measures taken by FAO in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, including the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) and we encourage FAO to give more attention and use its expertise to assist the developing countries to mitigate the impacts of this pandemic on food supply chains, food systems and agricultural sector.

Since the outbreak of this crisis, Egypt has actively participated in all regional and international platforms and initiatives aimed at supporting economic recovery and mitigating the multiple challenges caused by this pandemic on food security and nutrition. Egypt has participated at the level of the African Union (AU), in our capacity as a member of the Office of the African Union (OAU), and at the level of United Nations (UN) in New York working with some partners like Canada and others.

We believe that strengthening international cooperation and holding constructive dialogue is a necessity to deal with the negative impacts of this pandemic on human health and its devastating social and economic effects, especially in the developing and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Furthermore, Egypt has been keen since the beginning of this crisis to provide medical and food assistance to help a number of countries mitigate its impact, as a demonstration of global solidarity. We are ready to share our expertise with other countries to effectively mitigate the huge consequences of this pandemic.

In conclusion, Egypt believes that addressing the current challenges of this health crisis and preventing it to be a food crisis necessitate a strengthening multilateralism, international solidarity and effective partnerships between governments, international and regional financial institutions, United Nations Agencies (UNAs), including Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), and the private sector to ensure the sustainability of rapid and necessary financial flows to effectively respond to food shortage and revitalize economic recession.

Ms Marie Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom supports FAO's response to COVID-19, in partnership with others and within the context of the United Nations (UN) System-Wide Plan. We also thank FAO for the way in which it has effectively shifted to remote ways of working and ensured the continued work of the Governing Bodies.

The policy advice that FAO provides with regard to ensuring continued access to food and uninterrupted food chains is of critical importance. We also encourage FAO in supporting the protection of livelihoods and building back better, for more sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The impacts of COVID-19 are compounding the situation for many countries tackling food insecurity, particularly those that were already affected by other crises such as desert locusts. We support FAO's work, in partnership with others, to provide as accurate data as possible, ensuring clarity between the figures published by different reports for needs analysis.

COVID-19 has highlighted priority areas of FAO's work, including on zoonosis and the fundamental importance of One Health, and we look forward to seeing this reflected in FAO's new Strategic Framework.

It has also emphasised the need to strengthen global food systems and the timeliness, therefore, of the Food Systems Summit (FSS). We look forward to working with FAO and all other partners in working towards an effective Summit that brings together all stakeholders in focusing all clear outcomes.

COVID-19 has increased risks, including on aid diversion, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment. Could FAO please provide an update on how the Organization is adjusting to this? Also, has FAO needed to amend any of its internal controls or due diligence processes to speed up the response to COVID-19? If there have been any changes, do they apply across the Organization and all partners?

We would also like to ask how the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), what impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their 2020 work plan in terms of carrying out internal audits and investigations,

and how they are dealing with operational constraints, such as travel restrictions, impacting on investigation processes

CHAIRPERSON

I have now got six more speakers, six observer countries to the Council.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO JR (Philippines) (Observer)

Philippines aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by the Republic of Korea. We applaud FAO's efforts in maintaining the Organization's safety and wellbeing and in assisting Members to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as outlined in the reference document. Indeed, the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities and gaps in our food systems, displacing millions of workers and threatening to push more people into poverty.

In the Philippines, COVID-19 restrained and slowed down the rate of regular production activities for food and agriculture. Through the Department of Agriculture, the Country has set its policy direction for post-COVID-19 food security, which includes improvement of agri-sector productivity and strengthening linkages to markets and the global value chains. Farm clustering and consolidation will be one of the key strategies to upgrade the Country's agriculture sector.

The Department earlier launched the "Plant, Plant, Plant Programme", an initiative to enhance food security amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. Partnership with the private sector, notably through [XX] an online marketing platform, promotes innovative technologies and sustainability. Aside from the private sector, there is a need for a close collaboration with United Nations (UN), other international organizations, civil society and other development partners in overcoming the challenges of the pandemic.

We appreciate the initiatives by FAO, including its regional and country offices, such as the Round Table Meeting on 24 June among FAO and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Senior Officials on COVID-19, who discussed concrete proposals for collaboration. We encourage FAO to continue assisting Members in adopting holistic approaches and technologies to mitigate food loss and waste during and post-COVID-19.

Finally, we reiterate the importance of considering family farmers, indigenous communities, fisher folk, pastoralists, women and youth, and a scaled-up implementation of the United Nations (UN) Decade of Family Farming, among FAO's responses to COVID-19.

Ms Ratchanok SANGPENCHAN (Thailand) (Observer)

Thailand aligns itself with the joint statement of Asia Regional Group in appreciating the response of FAO to carry out analysis on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and food systems. During the pandemic, Thailand has dedicated its efforts to ensure the national food security and social protection nets, as well as to avoid disruptions to the local and national food systems and to the global food supply chain.

In Thailand, smallholder farmers and their families are highly exposed to the impact, due to the labour shortage and limit of logistics and financial assets. However, in terms of food security, the farmers and people in rural areas have enough to meet their basic food needs, as they have implemented the principles of the sufficiency economy philosophy and new theories of agriculture, which are in line with sustainable food systems and agriculture, as well as broad ecological approaches.

We encourage FAO to further explore the role of local, informal indigenous food systems, to advise on measures to enhance their resilience, and to strengthen local food systems in preparation for the possible second wave of the pandemic.

In addition, we would like to express our appreciation to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for working in coordination with the Government and allocating resources to the [XX] to develop the rapid assessment project upon request and also for including emergency issues of COVID-19 into Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) pipelines for the region.

The outputs from this analytical project will be beneficial to understand the factors underlying the resilience of national food systems, guiding actions and policy recommendations for national, regional and international levels, embedded with care to similar challenges to come.

Mr Giorgio CAVALIERI (Italy) (Observer)

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by Germany on behalf of the European Union (EU) and would like to add its appreciation for a specific action undertaken in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

We refer to the establishment of the new programme called COVID-19 Food Coalition that aims at offering a concrete action plan for a medium- and long-term development response to the post-COVID-19 scenario. We are thankful to FAO Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, that from the very beginning supported the Italian proposal endorsed by the Italian Prime Minister to establish the Food Coalition, the new multilateral mechanism of cooperation. We are also thankful to the Deputy Director-General, Ms Beth Bechdol, for intensively cooperating with Italy in the practical designing of this new project.

Once operational, the Food Coalition will be able to prioritize FAO actions and to catalyze national efforts to avoid that the current health crisis becomes a food crisis. Not overlapping with other FAO activities, the Food Coalition will represent a comprehensive initiative that brings problems and knowledge together and makes it accessible to all countries and stakeholders.

As far as the next steps are concerned, we are elaborating with FAO a revised version of the concept note of the initiative that will be circulated very soon. Likewise, in the coming weeks, the first call of experts is expected to be launched by FAO for their involvement in the programme and in possible pilot projects in countries.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Netherlands) (Observer)

I speak today in my national capacity. It is great to see you chairing the last part of a long, but successful, Council.

In a press release this morning, several United Nations (UN) Agencies are warning that the COVID-19 pandemic, severe underfunding, conflict and disasters, as well as supply chain challenges, rising food prices and loss of income due to the COVID-19 crisis, threaten to leave millions of people worldwide, especially in Africa, without food. Millions of refugees through Africa are currently relying on regular aid to meet their food needs and around half of them are children who may develop long difficulties if the food [XX] for vital status in their development. So, they call for urgent action and, indeed urgent action is needed.

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (EU), but the Netherlands also aligns itself with the statements made by all colleagues this morning because urgent action is needed and we would like to applaud the Director-General, but also the whole FAO Organization for their early response to the COVID-19 pandemic and also for the continuous assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition.

We also would like to support and commend Italy for taking the initiative for the Food Coalition and certainly the Netherlands will be an active supporter also with extra budgetary funding for its Food Coalition because we have to support countries at country level and especially countries who are hit hardest, not only by the COVID-19 pandemic, but also by desert locust, climate change and conflicts.

We have to help them, support them to restore growth in food systems to maintain a current food system, reducing food losses, as well as try to establish more resilience systems. For that, we need action on the ground and, therefore, the Netherlands, as I said already on Monday, is giving extra budgetary resources to the Food Coalition, but also to FAO, to take action on the ground in those countries and it is not only at Government level.

I think, with this funding, we should also attract investment from the private sector, and I know from several Dutch companies, but also other companies, they stand ready to invest jointly in those countries, in those food systems to show that the world can be united and can help those countries who are hit hardest.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Israel) (Observer)

We appreciate the clear and informative Report and FAO efforts to analyze the situation and react quickly. We are indeed facing a global crisis in which the consequences of the economic downturn or the threat to nutrition and employment are no less than the actual disease.

We wish to call on FAO and the entire community to do their utmost to respond to such negative shocks and to try to minimize the devastating impacts on the most vulnerable parts of the world population. The Food Coalition, led by Italy, that Israel strongly supports, is a useful Platform to stay together and promote solutions for food systems and global collaboration, hoping for better and healthier times.

Ms Theresa TUMWET (Kenya) (Observer)

Kenya aligns with the statement that was read by Eritrea on this Item on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. The current pandemic of COVID-19 has had a lot of negative impact on the agriculture, social, health and economic sectors. This is in addition to several other issues affecting food security, including invasion of desert locusts, droughts, floods and climate change. All these have eroded past gains towards livelihood improvement and attainment of Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-2 on food security.

The Kenyan Government has formed various committees to coordinate efforts to avert food and nutrition insecurity. The Food Security Coordinating Committee is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives. The national and country Governments, together with the key sector Ministries and Council of Governors are working together to ensure that the agricultural sector continues its operations and that food is available, accessible, affordable and safe for all Kenyan households. Efforts are being put in place to ensure that the food supply chain, being an essential commodity, is not affected amid the restrictions which were just lifted the other day.

Millers and other private sector actors are encouraged to buy maize from farmers who have surplus, but shortfalls. The Ministry of Agriculture has enhanced vigilance through the relevant regulatory bodies to ensure farmers are not supplied with substandard inputs and unwarranted high prices. The Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, has developed and released nutrition guidelines focusing on healthy diets, as well as preservation of the stem for continuous availability of healthy foods within a household.

We have adopted the digital solutions. Use of mobile phones through messaging has been escalated to share information to all stakeholders, market management committees, farmers, processors and transporters on the status of food, especially the fresh produce.

Kenya appreciates the work that FAO is doing and encourages FAO to continue this good work in this area of COVID-19, which threatens to undo all the gains.

Mr Mohammad Hossein EMADI (Iran) (Observer)

Iran delegation thanks you for the inclusion of this Item on the Council Agenda. It was very crucial. Iran thanks the Director-General's leadership and the Chief Economist for their quick and responsive action during the lockdown, which was very efficient in terms of updating and saving the life of our colleagues in FAO.

It is very clear to all of us that now COVID-19, in all three dimensions, will stay with us much longer than you expected. We appreciate FAO in continuing its crucial role as a catalyst to assess and monitor the situation, provide us with a global view and insight based on the lessons learned and best experiences, formulate new international measures and norms for the food system based on the science, and also have a policy recommendation for Members who want to cope with an unpredictable complex situation.

I conclude that we encourage FAO to apply holistic inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to cope with the four twisted issues like COVID-19, conflicts, climate change and pests together.

Ms Wajiha QAZIZADAH (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan has been plagued with a rate of intensities, with coronavirus and the negative impression of the spreading of COVID-19 [XX] possibility of banning the Afghanistan agriculture products. If agriculture products are stopped during the early season, Afghanistan's agriculture and economy will suffer a huge loss.

The COVID-19 crisis has dramatically highlighted the need for a more systematic approach to development in Afghanistan and has compromised Afghanistan's abilities to both meet its [XX] objective and to achieve Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The crisis and ongoing peace process together provide a unique opportunity to reimagine what is possible for the farmer of Afghanistan. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, has highlighted the urgent need for further integrity approach to development, humanitarian work and human wellbeing.

Afghanistan fully appreciates the work of FAO in providing information on food availability, evidence-based policy, and easy to access to local markets. The long awaited peace agreement will give the Country the necessary opportunity to reduce conflict, poverty and vulnerability, and I would kindly request the international partners to concentrate in these areas.

Sra. Rebeca CUTIE CANCINO (Cuba) (Observer)

Agradecemos la presentación de este importante tema. La pandemia de la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19) ha impactado negativamente los sistemas alimentarios, en particular, en los países en desarrollo, azotados desde antes de la pandemia por la pobreza y la inseguridad alimentaria. La pandemia continúa su propagación en un escenario mundial caracterizado por la desigualdad socioeconómica entre los países y al interior de estos. Llamamos a la FAO a redoblar sus acciones para evitar una crisis alimentaria mundial que ya hoy afecta a millones de seres humanos, especial atención merecen los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo (PEID) por su característica de importadores netos de alimentos. La pandemia ha afectado el transporte internacional y también la cadena de suministros de alimentos.

Cuba ha tomado medidas para evitar la inseguridad alimentaria. Ante todo, se preserva la salud de la población, se plantan cultivos de ciclos cortos, pero estamos alerta porque la temporada ciclónica será fuerte y prevalece la sequía agrícola. En medio de esta situación climática y sanitaria, la población y el país tienen que enfrentar a diario la aplicación de sanciones y medidas unilaterales contrarias al derecho internacional. El bloqueo de los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba impide la llegada de alimentos, combustibles y donaciones al país y pone en riesgo la continuidad de los programas sociales y la entrega de la canasta básica de alimentos. En medio de la COVID-19, llamamos a no usar los alimentos como forma de presión política.

Apoyamos lo planteado por los miembros del Grupo de Países de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC) sobre la necesidad de la cooperación en la región. Agradecemos a la Representación de FAO en Cuba por acompañar al gobierno en su respuesta a esta compleja situación sin precedentes. Igualmente, llamamos a expresar la solidaridad y la cooperación y a fortalecer el multilateralismo y dejar a un lado las diferencias políticas.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of our list of speakers.

I now invite the Secretariat to respond to some of the issues and questions raised.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

I will start the response and then Mr Laurent Thomas will continue, as we did yesterday. Let me start first by thanking you for all of your kind comments and for all the interest shown in all our work and our presentations since the moment we started with the problem of the COVID-19.

We also want to thank the FAO team and the leadership for what has been a great work, and they have been working hard, despite the circumstances, from the first day, even during the lockdown, as the work intensified substantially.

All our work has been in full cooperation with all the Rome-based Agencies and with all levels of the United Nations. We have been working directly with the United Nations in New York, helping the Secretary-General prepare his brief on “The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition” and also on the UN Framework for the socio-economic response, as well as on the humanitarian and emergency work, as the Deputy Director-General (DDG) Laurent Thomas will explain.

We have also worked very actively with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). We have been in most of the meetings of the CFS related to COVID-19 and we are still working with them on the potential work on food safety guidelines, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the CGIAR system.

The COVID-19 affects all countries, but the responses of countries are different because of their level of resources and development, and that is something very important. Our strategy has been differentiated based on the needs and, for the most vulnerable countries, we need to help them on all dimensions, from emergency and humanitarian to policy and strategy, trying to resolve the specific problems that they face in their food systems. In the most advanced countries, we are supporting in a strategic way by giving them data and information so that they can optimize the decisions they are making. In all cases, we are working with the same level of effort and at the same velocity.

In all this work, trade is central and, as many of you have mentioned, the work on trade has been central to what we are doing. Let me just share with you the following slide. I hope you can see it. This slide focuses on one of the risks that we have been concerned with. Today the number of trade restrictions has been substantially reduced and trade is now working well. However, one of the major problems that we are tracking today is the crew-change requirements. This map shows, for example, the countries in red are the countries that are not allowing for crew change; those in yellow are the countries that are submitting to extreme screening; and only the green ones are the ones that are allowing for crew change.

This is essential because most of crews right now are at 11-months at sea, which is the maximum they can work. This is something I think we need to look at directly and work with you to try to resolve. It is important that you get information like this so you can report back to your countries and try to find solutions – like, for example, intensive testing in the ports – so that the crews can change and still protect the country against spreading the pandemic.

Data is also very important, it is data, especially on gender issues. Just to show you, here is the distribution of the labour force, according to gender and activities. Personal care, health-associated professionals, cleaners and helpers, health professionals, food preparation assistance, sales workers, food processing, construction/manufacturing. In the food systems, we know that many services, such as packaging, processing and so on, which are mostly done by females, are going to be substantially affected, losing around 60 percent of the jobs. We are looking extremely carefully at the data and trying to work with it to see how both jobs and workers can be protected.

We also have to accelerate our process with our big data lab to get real-time data, and we are aiming to develop a set of indicators that will allow us to bring together all the different risks of the different challenges that we are facing, which goes from pests and diseases to issues on prices and issues on stocks – all the different elements that we work in FAO – and bring them together in a kind of situation room that we can immediately deploy at the country level so that they can use it, and they can have some capacity of some predictive power.

That is our aim because we are bringing mechanisms of risk assessments to the work we do and to think differently so that we can make and think of decisions under uncertainty. This is the world we are moving. We are moving on a world under uncertainty and, therefore, we need to be prepared to be able to resolve and to come up with solutions even as we work under conditions of uncertainty.

We are also looking at the interlinkages with climate change and all the different elements that could affect the stability of prices because we are aiming to give stability to farmers, including price stability against the risks of climate change.

As you know, we are going to launch a platform within our COVID-19 page on digital tools, and this is in response to the request of Peru. We will bring it up together in our COVID-19 web platform, a set of digital tools that will help accelerate the process of diffusing knowledge.

The Coalition is a great support to us, and we thank the Government of Italy and all the countries that are supporting the coalition to shape how we prepare actions to transform food systems.

Let me just end with one important element, which is essential right now. We need to understand better – and this is linked to the quality of information that we are able to obtain and provide – the differences between what we call acute food insecurity and chronic undernourishment. Acute food insecurity is something sporadic, which we report jointly in the Global Food Crisis Report with WFP and others. The concept or condition of acute food insecurity is temporal. It is not permanent; it is something temporary. A person can move into a problem of food access in the short term.

However, normally, when we report in the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI), for example, it is chronic undernourishment, which is a long-term inability to meet food requirements. It is long-term.

That is very important to understand, so that we see the consistency across the numbers that you are seeing reported by the different agencies. We also report something called moderate food insecurity, which exists when people face uncertainties about their ability to obtain food and have been forced to compromise on the nutritional quality or quantity of the food.

Understanding these definitions will help to clarify the numbers that we are presenting so that we can assess them carefully. [XX] condition. With that, I have finished.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General)

Let me follow up on two points. The first is the question of the response to the situation in acute food insecurity situations, food crisis. As highlighted by the 2020 edition of the Global Report on Food Crisis, by the end of 2019 around 135 million people across 55 countries were experiencing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity, using the so-called International Food Insecurity Phase Classification, or IPC, phase 3 or above.

In addition, 183 million were in stressed acute food insecurity condition, with high risk of sliding into crisis-level acute food insecurity. With the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, we already see a further massive deterioration in some deeply concerning contexts. The IPC monitors indicate significant increases in crisis or worse in countries such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan and many others, as a result of COVID-19 and its related control measures.

I want to stress again that what was initially a food access issue is rapidly becoming a food production crisis with many people not able to access quality inputs or to appropriately attend to their livestock.

The humanitarian community, under the leadership of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), immediately launched into action, developing the global humanitarian response plan for COVID-19. FAO, as co-leader with the WFP of the humanitarian food security cluster, assessed the need for saving food on agriculture-based livelihoods to an order of approximately USD 350 million.

The appeal is going to be revised on 16 July, but I want to draw your attention to the fact that, as of today, only USD 53.7 million have been provided, just 15 percent of the need. While thanking all the resource partners for their generous contributions, we call on Members to scale up the support for immediate humanitarian response.

We are all convinced that, in this situation of COVID-19, like in all situation of crisis, saving food and agriculture-based livelihoods, in contexts where the vast majority of the victims of this crisis are living in rural areas, deriving their livelihood from food and agriculture means saving lives. This is truly important to highlight.

In view of the magnitude of needs, support to crop-, livestock-, and fisheries-based livelihoods is not only the most cost-effective means of delivering emergency assistance. It is also preserving the dignity of those in need, avoiding, as much as possible, displacement and facilitating recovery.

The last point I would like to make on this point is, FAO has been working over the last years providing livelihood saving support to over 25 million people. Last year, we reached a record of 35 million people assisted in crisis situations.

We need to continue. We need to upscale this assistance, now with the COVID-19, and all this has been possible because FAO teams on the ground have stayed and delivered in some of the most difficult circumstances. I would like to pay the possible strongest tribute, and I know that Members express this, to all the women and men, to FAO employees and partners on the ground, who day in, day out, from Afghanistan to Haiti, from Pakistan to the Democratic Republic of Congo, from Burkina Faso to Somalia and Yemen, and so many other countries, are delivering in extremely difficult situations right now with the COVID-19 crisis.

Many of our colleagues have been unable to leave their duty stations for months, to ensure that inputs are delivered on time, food systems are protected, livestock vaccinated, markets disinfected and, ultimately, that the people we serve have the means to keep producing, even in the worst of times of COVID-19.

The second point I want to raise is in response to the intervention of United Kingdom at the previous sessions, asking Management of FAO to provide information on the way we are managing risks to FAO's operations in COVID-19 context.

Let me be clear that the Director-General and the senior Management of FAO are totally committed to managing risks efficiently and responsibly, ensuring that significant risks are identified, assessed, controlled and reported in a way that enhances FAO's ability to meet its objectives and deliver the benefits and purpose expected by you—the Members—and our partners.

Over the past years, the Organization has engaged with working towards embedding risk management into existing practice and process and making it part of FAO culture. For your information, since 2019, FAO offices across all locations are required to prepare a risk log for their area of responsibility, identifying risk, scoring their severity and determining their mitigation measures.

So, while the strengthening of the enterprise risk management in FAO is work in progress, the work done so far has created a very solid basis for the management of the COVID-19 crisis related risks.

In fact, the COVID-19 outbreak has presented a test for the concrete application of our office management framework. In addition, with the pandemic declaration and the situation we have all observed worldwide, it was of paramount importance that all FAO offices be ready and able to ensure the wellbeing of employees, while maintaining the Organization's capacity to deliver under very rapidly changing circumstances.

Our risk management framework applied to COVID-19 response in operations proceeds on different levels: on compliance and showing compliance with guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the host governments, integrating and maintaining the integrity and flexibility of the work capacity and business continuity of FAO offices across all locations.

We need a lot of flexibility to put in place the adequate instrument for us to be able to adapt and maintain our capacity to respond to changing demands and expectations. You have seen and discussed it very much on the programmatic level, under the leadership of the Director-General and with the support of Deputy Director-General Beth Bechdol, the three Deputy Directors-General and the Chief Economist who have been working with the Director-General as one leadership team in response to COVID-19, liaising directly with all the units across the Organization to develop an integrated programme of response, working as one FAO.

A few points on the key risks. Risk number one is a risk about health, safety and security, for example that the risks that FAO personnel or visitors to FAO premises could contract or become vectors of the virus in their families and communities or to the beneficiaries. We have taken mitigation measures worldwide. We have seen the measures at Headquarters, but these measures apply also in our country offices.

We are also concerned to ensure that the general health and the wellbeing challenges – physical and mental – of our employees working from home for extended periods is maintained. A number of

mitigating measures have been taken to ensure tele-health services – for example, strengthening of staff counselling services. We are also looking at the risk of violence against FAO personnel in case of criminal activities or social riots. Here, again in line with the United Nations, some mitigation measures are being taken.

One of the major risks that emerged in this crisis was a set of risks related to data protection, information systems and connectivity, major increases of hacking attempts against our systems. We have developed systems to better protect the Organization's identities. For example, we are now putting in place a multi-factor identification system, starting with the high-risk accounts, to make sure that we minimize these risks.

We are also working to ensure that we minimize the risks of this “new normal” in remote working conditions. We are taking measures to ensure that staff is properly trained and supported so they can work in a remote fashion. In situations in the field, for example, in some parts of Africa, one of the big risks was that, working remotely, people had difficulties with electricity and internet connections. We developed some mitigation measures such as providing staff with solar power.

In terms of programme and project implementation, we are looking at the risk of reduced delivery or the non-achievement of our objectives due to difficulty in ensuring continuity of operation on the ground. I am pleased to report so far that the delivery has not been affected, and that we are delivering in some regions a record delivery on the ground. All of this reflects the many mitigation measures that we have put in place to address the challenges.

We have also had to look at the reputational and fiduciary risks related to procurement, as a consequence of restriction or closure of important borders. Here, again, a number of measures have been taken to ensure that we do not delay the delivery time.

I could continue like this, but maybe I would mention just two more points. One is the risk of disruption of key administrative actions requiring formal approval and signature. We have established an electronic signature system that is working very well and will continue after the COVID-19 cessation.

We are also looking at the adequacy of resources, particularly the risk that a global crisis could impact the timeliness of Members payment of assessed contribution and it is something that we have been discussing with you over the past two days. However, we are also closely monitoring and assessing the possible impact of reductions of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Finally, we have ensured that FAO maintains its strategic relevance that our programmes are adapted to the new context, and that governance continues to function. We do not want to reduce participation in governance and the oversight, and you have seen that. I think that what we are putting in place is a Council, Programme Committee, Finance Committee, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) arrangement that allows governance structures and processes to continue to function in the special circumstances we are facing.

To sum up, our risk management framework function, applied and adapted to the specific context of COVID-19, allows us to continue to manage risk in an appropriate fashion with appropriate internal control influences.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

Thank you very much for all of the strong support that you, as Members, have offered us, as relates to our response to COVID-19. It has clearly been stressful and a challenging time, as you have heard, for not only our efforts to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on all of our work, but also critically impacting the lives and the work of our colleagues as well.

It is obviously absolutely necessary for us to make sure that we do not let up in our assessments and our analysis of the impacts of COVID-19. It is critically important that we have in mind a comprehensive response and recovery programme. We have had the opportunity in previous sessions and informal briefings to touch on some of this development and resilience planning with you, but I would like to just also share that this programme, this comprehensive response and recovery programme to COVID-19 will be publically shared next Tuesday through a global dialogue, which the

Director-General will open. We will share details of our six plus one key priority response areas, followed by a discussion with our donors, our partners, our stakeholders and hopefully many of you, to focus on the ways that we can collectively step up our joint efforts to prevent a global food emergency.

These six plus one themes are the very direct culmination of our economic and policy-assessment work, combined with the urgent and engaged humanitarian work and coordination performed by our Organization, and also the full engagement and input from our colleagues in the country, subregional and regional offices. As Deputy Director-General Laurent Thomas has said, it has truly been a one FAO effort.

I would like to just very quickly touch on the six plus one themes. The six that are most focused on the medium- and longer-term response include: data for decision making; economic inclusion and social protection to reduce poverty; trade and food safety standards; boosting smallholder resilience for recovery; preventing the next zoonotic pandemic and strengthening and extending the One Health approach; and food systems transformation. These six are added to the plus one or the seventh key area of programming priority, which is a continued global humanitarian response plan for COVID-19 and how we address the impacts of COVID-19 to ensure that we safeguard the livelihoods of those in food crisis contexts.

I also want to make sure that I give special thanks to the representatives and the Ambassador of Italy, also the strong support that is being shown to us and others by the representatives from the Netherlands, Israel and many other countries. Some are very much stepping up in a very direct way to help us organize the Food Coalition.

This effort, in my estimation, is an incredibly opportune time to have a group of you and other partners act to meet the work that needs to be conducted around these six plus one key programmatic areas and needs, at the most ground level, country level, by areas of opportunity, and I thank all of you who have offered support in organizing the Food Coalition. We know that it has been a very important effort to help us further mobilize the political, the financial and the technical assistance in support of countries who are affected by the current crisis.

As you heard from the representative from Italy, we will very soon be transmitting to all of you a revised concept note on the Food Coalition when we hold our informal briefing. Over 25 Members voiced initial support to be engaged and to participate in the food coalition. We look forward to continuing to grow those numbers and to have many more, and we will be engaged in active work that is needed to ensure that we support this longer-term development plan and response plan to COVID-19.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

Several of the Members encourage FAO to work on the One Health approach and to the Tripartite. I just wanted to ensure that FAO has been working in the framework of the Tripartite FAO/World Health Organization (WHO)/World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), on the Tripartite plus with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and also with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We have been working with 64 countries to reinforce their capacity for rapid detection of the virus in animals and humans, and also to conduct surveillance of the circulation of viruses in the environment. We have also been providing training on biosafety and biosecurity, and we are working on a white paper on One Health and wildlife management and consumption. We received support to work in 30 countries on how to improve their risk management and their capacity for immediate detection of the virus.

With the establishment of the two centres, we will be continuing this work, working on early detection to avoid the next pandemics to arise. I believe the [XX] programme I referred to will provide us with science and scientific technology-based solutions needed to work on zoonotic diseases through the One Health approach.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings the discussions to an end. I will read out my conclusions and then I will give the floor to the Director-General for some remarks.

Item 10, Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Food Security and Food Systems.

1. The Council:

- a) expressed appreciation for the actions undertaken by the Organization to build international support for measures to contain the combined impacts of COVID-19, pandemic mitigation measures and the most severe global economic recession on food security and nutrition.
- b) welcomed FAO collaboration with global and regional *fora*, the United Nations Development System (UNDS), partner institutions, international financial institutions, the private sector, civil society and research institutions, while taking note of the contribution of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIHI) as a trigger an exemplar for more robust and dynamic partnership.
- c) expressed concern that multiple threats could combine to push hundreds of millions into hunger, poverty and acute food insecurity, reversing a decade or more of development progress.
- d) endorsed FAO's priority commitment to keeping food value chains operating as the best and most efficient way to combat hunger and malnutrition, and also protect jobs and livelihoods.
- e) stressed the importance of scaling up social protection to preserve or restore food access for many hundreds of millions of people, and highlighted the importance of social protection to protect public health and reinforce the health response.
- f) encouraged FAO leadership to consider ways that existing resources could be channeled to strengthen country-level support in the coming months.
- g) expressed support for the programme of action outlined in FAO's proposed umbrella programme for a comprehensive response to COVID-19.
- h) called on FAO Members to mobilize the required voluntary resources.

That is the end of my conclusions. I open the floor for any comments, and then I will give the floor to the Director-General.

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Sí, me llama poderosamente la atención que ni en las conclusiones ni en los comentarios de los DDG tomaron el cuenta la solicitud de Costa Rica porque nosotros en este momento, mi intervención fue levantando la mano, solicitando ayuda no que me ignoraran.

Entonces, bajo ese punto de vista, yo solicitaría agregar en las conclusiones después del subpárrafo (c), "Solicitó a la FAO que la cooperación técnica y económica como respuesta a la crisis del COVID-19 incluya a los países de renta media así como a los más vulnerables, desde una óptica que mejore los estándares de vida de las personas mediante procesos de crecimiento sostenibles e inclusivos, tomando en cuenta factores como la desigualdad social, las brechas estructurales..."

CHAIRPERSON

Costa Rica, could you please read your amendment at a slower speed?

Sr. Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Sí, claro. "Solicitó a la FAO que la cooperación técnica y económica como respuesta a la crisis del COVID-19 incluya a los países de renta media así como a los más vulnerables, desde una óptica que mejore los estándares de vida" --hasta allí vamos bien--, "de las personas mediante procesos de crecimiento sostenibles e inclusivos, tomando en cuenta factores como la desigualdad social, las brechas estructurales, y la heterogeneidad productiva."

Continues in English

I would just request that the text reads: "...that technical and economic cooperation."

“That” instead of “for”, yes.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I would like to suggest a new introductory subparagraph that would read: (a) “Stressed the link between food security and nutrition, food systems, socio-economic impacts, health and environment in connection to COVID-19.”

After sub-paragraph (b), I would like to suggest to introduce a new subparagraph that reads: “Appreciated FAO’s monitoring and coordination work on the effects of COVID-19 on food security.”

Then if we could go down a little bit after after subparagraph (f), a new subparagraph that reads: “Urged FAO to step up its work on zoonotic diseases in a One Health approach, including combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR), along with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).”

Ms Lynda HAYDEN (Australia)

I would like to propose some alternative text for consideration for sub-paragraph (g). The alternative text would read: “Emphasized the importance of the One Health approach to addressing zoonotic disease risks and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and encouraged FAO to strengthen Tripartite collaboration in line with the World Health Assembly resolution on the COVID-19 response.”

CHAIRPERSON

These two versions of practically the same aspect, so, Germany, would you go along with Australia’s suggestion?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Yes, no problem. We can go along with Australia’s suggestion.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Germany. Canada and then Argentina.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

For sub-paragraph (c), if we could add as well “evidence- and scientific- based analysis”. Then after sub-paragraph (f), include “gender [XX] or gender norms [XX].”

CHAIRPERSON

Canada, we do not hear you well. Can you switch off your video and perhaps that would make the sound clearer?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

“Requested FAO to include gender in its assessment of the COVID-19 crisis in its comprehensive response,” and again this is based on the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and Finance Committees recommendation, as well as interventions today, and I think I was showing how the effects of COVID-19 were unequal, and this is an opportunity to seize to build back equal. We support very much subparagraph (h).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Sí, gracias, Presidente, por concederme el uso de la palabra. Pediría por favor que con respecto al párrafo al subpárrafo (f) propuesto y sugerido por el Embajador de Costa Rica, queríamos confirmar y darle pleno respaldo. Además, no solamente fue la sugerencia del Embajador de Costa Rica sino también fue respaldada por la Argentina y por otros países en desarrollo. Así que, eso en primer lugar.

En segundo lugar, respecto de la sugerencia del distinguido colega de Alemania, quisiera sugerir en el subpárrafo (h) actual, voy a leer en inglés, Presidente. “*Supported FAO’s work on zoonotic diseases in the framework of the One Health approach.*”

Presidente, ¿me escucha? Okay. Actual subpárrafo (h), voy a hablar en inglés. Supported FAO’s work on zoonotic diseases in the framework of the One Health approach.’ No, estoy hablando del

subpárrafo (h). Eso. [XX]. Es un nuevo... “Supported FAO’s work on zoonotic diseases in the framework of the One Health approach.”

CHAIRPERSON

We cannot hear you, Argentina. There is no interpretation when you speak in Spanish.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Again, “Supporting FAO’s work on zoonotic diseases in the framework of the One Health approach and in collaboration with the tripartite partners, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

CHAIRPERSON

We have lost you again.

Mr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

That is right, “...and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).” Perfect. This is an alternative subparagraph, it has not to be part of the same subparagraph, it is an alternative subparagraph.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We would like to support the introduction of the new text on the One Health approach, zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We do not see the principle difference between all three proposals, so we can be flexible on this issue. The only thing we note is that the proposal from Argentina reads “...in collaboration with tripartite partners and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).” Originally there were just the tripartite partners FAO, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and World Health Organization (WHO), and now we have five partners.

On the new subparagraph (a), proposed by Germany, the interconnection between COVID-19 and environment, raises a concern. Yes, we all know that COVID-19 has its impact on health, food security and nutrition, food systems definitely, socio-economic impacts, but what about environment? We do not see any direct connection to the environment and do not see whether this is as negative or positive impact. We are ready to consider it, but at a later stage and after more discussion. We would prefer to delete “environment” from this context.

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

I have a suggestion regarding part I. The draft text reads, “...endorsed FAO’s priority commitment to keeping food value chains,” but if I am correct, many of our colleagues said not “food value chain” but “food supply chains”. Please replace “food value chains” with “food supply chains.”

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

In the discussion we had yesterday we agreed that the statement should reflect the discussion which took place. For this reason, I would prefer that, in this subparagraph on One Health, we use the first version.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Perhaps we could go up. In response to my distinguished Russian colleague, indeed we see an environmental aspect in connection to COVID-19, given the fact that it has been empirically proven that air pollution has aggravated or eased the spread of COVID-19.

Also, the fact that deforestation leads to a closer connection or contact between animal life and human life and, therefore, there is a certain link in this regard to the spread of COVID-19. I indeed would favour if we could, given that we have to look at it holistically as some of the colleagues rightly said before, we should not exclude any aspect that has relevance in this regard.

Then going down to, I do not know the subparagraph, perhaps subparagraph (f). There we had a long and expanded discussion in the Programme Committee and the consensus found there was a wise compromise. Therefore, I would suggest that we go back to the language of the conclusions of the Programme Committee and that is precisely under Roman II, number 6, subparagraph (s), where the

Programme Committee said, “emphasized the need to take into account priorities for all countries, in view of growing challenges to achieving food security and nutrition, recalling paragraph 70(k) of the Report of the 41st Conference.”

It is undisputable that we have old and new [XX] centres of this pandemic and they have disastrous effects on all countries, but on the other side it is also clear that we have to focus on the most vulnerable, wherever they are. I think that this language of the Programme Committee indeed would be a good language to reflect that.

As regards subparagraph (h), the first alternative or the first option is preferable because it is more specific. It refers specifically to the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution and to the tripartite collaboration and I think it would make sense to spell it out, “tripartite collaboration of World Health Organization (WHO), FAO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), or FAO in the first place, exactly, in line with WHA resolution on the COVID-19 response.

Of course, we could add a line with the suggestion of the Argentinian Ambassador, “and in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).” That would be perfectly fine and perhaps that could be a viable compromise.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We would be pleased to react on subparagraph (g), proposed by colleagues from Canada. In order to be in line with the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Programme Committees, we would propose to change “requested” to “encouraged”. It will be in line with the already agreed language.

Coming back to the subparagraph (a), I would like to express our position that under COVID-19 circumstances on this threat, the situation in many cases changed significantly under many aspects, and we can enumerate such kind of aspects on ten pages.

I am talking, for example, about the road safety. The situation improved, because people stayed at home and as the distinguished Ambassador told us about the air pollution, definitely, we understand that there is some improvement in this sphere. Maybe not in every country, we do not see any assessment, evidence proved and scientific-based assessment, in this regard. Because we are in FAO, we are not in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Probably in UNEP we will have such kind of documents.

I would repeat it again, there will be enough to mention food security, nutrition, food systems, and social economic impact. We can add something “with animal, human health”, if the distinguished Ambassador would like to make an emphasis on this aspect, but environmental issues should be examined on a different forum in the future.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not like to spend the afternoon arguing on one word. Can this matter be discussed in the Drafting Committee? As I mentioned yesterday, the Drafting Committee is not just a Committee of a few people, it represents each region.

Therefore, the representatives should go and reflect the views of the region. Otherwise, we are going to go to repeat what happened yesterday. We will be arguing over one word, and we are already behind. The Drafting Committee is supposed to meet in the afternoon, and we still got a few items to go.

I would like to appeal to the Members to let the wordings go to the Drafting Committee. We are not a Drafting Committee. This is the Session of the Council, the Plenary Session of the Council. Would I have your cooperation to send, if there is a difference in wording, to the Drafting Committee and argue it there? Your representatives are there. They should not be detached from you; they should follow your guidance. May I appeal to you to not get stuck on words?

When you argue on words, six other speakers put in a request for the floor. Before that, I had only one speaker. Now I have got about eight. When are we going to finish?

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

I do not want to get into that discussion. Good or bad for the environment, I think the Drafting Committee will look over that. I would like to add one subparagraph, we can do it at the end, “Encourage FAO to continue periodical global and regional assessment, monitoring, analysis and conduct webinars to disseminate the latest information among Member Countries with emphasis on exchange of success stories and lessons learnt to combat COVID-19.”

Sr. Fedérico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Me quiero referir de nuevo al párrafo (f). Con todo respeto al embajador de Alemania que propuso una enmienda a nuestra propuesta, me parece que son dos temas diferentes. Dos cosas que deben separarse. Nosotros en la propuesta dejamos bien claro que era incluir a los países de renta media, así como también los más vulnerables.

No estamos dejando por fuera a los más vulnerables, que obviamente requieren de muchísima ayuda. Me parece que, si el embajador de Alemania quiere sostener este otro tema que, efectivamente, se acordó en la Conferencia, podemos ponerlo en el párrafo (g). O sea, que quede en otro párrafo, así como él lo dijo y así estaríamos todos contentos.

Cuando yo hice la intervención, en su momento, que leí mi intervención y lejos de recibir oposiciones muchos países me refrendaron. Así que, por favor, solicitaría que se deje ese párrafo como lo solicité.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like to support the paragraph proposed by Kuwait, the Chair of Middle East Group, and I would also like to see a language here regarding the collaboration between FAO and the African Union in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19. Yesterday, we have received a fully detailed statement by South Africa, which is chairing right now the African Union, and the Technical Committee. We need to see a language here, so without due further delay, I would propose to add a subparagraph here.

CHAIRPERSON

Can I suggest this sort of subparagraph to be taken up at the Drafting Committee? As said by you, South Africa made the statement yesterday. I do not think this to be a controversial issue. Could this be taken up in the Drafting Committee?

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

I would like also to add it here, if you allow me.

CHAIRPERSON

I can allow you, but then we will need days and days. When do we finish?

Go ahead, please put your sentence.

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

“Noted the ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security, including the collaboration between the FAO and the African Union in the Taskforce of the impact of food security and nutrition in Africa.”

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Espero que este aporte colabore con su gestión. En particular, quisiera ir al párrafo que habla sobre One Health, que ya no sé cuál es el punto. Si usted puede, creo que es más abajo pero no lo veo. Sí, yo creo que con la sugerencia planteada por el embajador de Alemania y con una solución de compromiso y para evitar continuar con debates de sintonía muy fina, nosotros estaríamos de acuerdo con esa posición.

Después, quisiéramos volver al punto planteado por el embajador de Costa Rica sobre el tema de la vulnerabilidad de los países de ingresos medios. Si podemos ir hacia arriba, por favor. Okay. Es el subpárrafo (f), actual. A ver, con respecto al subpárrafo (f), me permito decir que lo que dice el embajador de Alemania sobre que esto está reflejado, su aporte, en las conclusiones del Comité del Programa, tiene razón. Lo que pasa es que se refiere a otro tema.

No se refiere al tema que estaba mencionando el embajador de Costa Rica respaldado por Argentina y por otros países. Por lo tanto, creo que lo que dice el embajador de Costa Rica tiene una especificidad que debería ser registrada y debería mantenerse ese subpárrafo (f). Y, honestamente lo digo, pero no para generar un debate adicional de todo lo que tuvimos, creo que el subpárrafo (g) en este texto realmente no es necesario. Así que sugerimos sea cancelado.

Mr Rodrigo ESTRELA DE CARVALHO (Brazil)

First, I would like to refer, with respect, to the role of the Drafting Committee. It seems that there is no clarity about its role. In some cases, it would only be to improve the wording and in others for substantial debates.

I think the comments made by the delegate from Russia, which we expressly support, refers to the substantial issues and we prefer that they be discussed here. The debate between Members cannot be restricted by the fact that we have a short agenda. We think that the Agenda for this Council was really short and we have foreseen the problems we are facing in debating the texts.

We support the paragraph proposed by Costa Rica with the observations, and we mimic the observations made by the distinguished Ambassador of Argentina.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Au sous-paragraphe (a), je vous renvoie aux nombreux travaux menés par le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE) concernant le lien entre la COVID-19 et l'environnement. La page du PNUE intitulée « Six faits qui soulignent le lien entre nature et Coronavirus » décrit des impacts; il serait donc tout à fait légitime de mentionner ce point dans le sous-paragraphe (a).

Pour le point (f), je comprends la demande des pays à revenu intermédiaire, il est clair qu'ils sont affectés, comme nous-mêmes, comme d'autres, mais je crois qu'il ne faut pas oublier deux choses. Premièrement, le mandat global de la FAO, car tout le monde est concerné par son action et doit bénéficier de son action. Deuxièmement, il est vrai que les pays les plus vulnérables et les pays à revenu faible ont plus besoin, même si les pays à revenu intermédiaire connaissent aussi de grandes difficultés; nous l'avons bien entendu et nous en sommes conscients.

Aussi peut-être pourrait-on reprendre le début de la phrase avec la formulation suivante: « *requested FAO about technical and economic cooperation in response to the COVID-19 include...* » « ...les pays à revenu faible... ». Donc commencer avec « *the low income countries and middle income countries* » et enlever « *as well as the most vulnerable* » puisqu'on les a pris en compte là. Par contre, je demanderais de s'arrêter à « *inclusiveness processes* » parce que ce qui est dit à la fin sont certes des facteurs, mais il y en aurait beaucoup d'autres à prendre en compte: des questions de santé, des questions environnementales, de production, de chaînes de valeurs... Plutôt que d'opter pour une énumération, il vaut mieux être moins spécifique pour éviter de passer beaucoup de temps à en discuter. Voilà une proposition de compromis, Monsieur le Président.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I think you already highlighted in the subparagraph (a), the questions that are basically under discussion, and I would suggest that this indeed will be then solved in the Drafting Committee. If we go down I wanted to make sure that 'environment' is included.

The suggestion of the French Ambassador then makes indeed subparagraph (g) redundant. Therefore, we can take that out and highlight the subparagraph (s) as the one that then should continue to be discussed in the Drafting Committee with this language.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom will be submitting our statement in writing to avoid taking up too much time. I just would request that we include a small subparagraph thanking Management for their update on their matters they have taken to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 to FAO operations. I do not want to propose any language, I am sure that the Drafting Committee could agree on a short subparagraph.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

With regard to what the representative from Kuwait added, that FAO should hold regular meetings, in particular to share the experience from the fight against COVID-19, China supports adding this. This is something that has been discussed in depth earlier. And let us go back to the beginning of the conclusions, to subparagraph (a).

With regard to the discussions here, China believes that COVID-19 has had a great impact on the environment, is not as evident as its impact on nutrition and on health. Therefore, we have not reached consensus on this. Therefore, we support the Deputy's point of view in not mentioning environment in this subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

This is an issue now which will go to the Drafting Committee.

Costa Rica.

Sr. Fedérico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Brevemente, nada más y vuelvo al subpárrafo (f). No entiendo, con todo respeto, al embajador de Alemania por qué está sugiriendo que esto lo vea el Comité de Redacción si está perfectamente claro. Creo que con las correcciones o la aclaración que hizo la delegación de Francia, me parece que queda bastante conciso y no veo por qué eso tendrá que ser revisado. Yo lo dejaría ya en firme porque es un acuerdo. Ha habido varios países que han avalado esta posición y no veo por qué eso tiene que ser revisado nuevamente en el Comité de Redacción.

Ms Agnes Rosaro DEWI (Indonesia)

I would like to support my colleague from Costa Rica for the subparagraph (f) and adding after "requested FAO to use its expertise in developing and..." Delete that, without "the..." In addition, on the last subparagraph, by our colleague from Kuwait, we would like to add on the last part, "with regards to food security and food supply chain."

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Yo pedí la palabra para respaldar lo expresado en la intervención del embajador de Costa Rica. También me parece positivo la sugerencia que planteó la representación de Indonesia. Creo que las facultades que tiene el Comité de Redacción son distintas de las que nosotros tenemos aquí en el Consejo.

Por lo tanto, no debemos dejar al Comité de Redacción responsabilidades que tiene que ver con una negociación política. Por lo tanto, sugiero mantener el subpárrafosugerido por el embajador de Costa Rica, incluso con la sugerencia de mi colega de Francia, la cual ya hemos acordado. Llegamos a una solución de compromiso. Y con lo sugerido por la representación indonesia.

Luego, si me permite, quisiera volver al subpárrafo (a). Allí, como ya expresado por mis colegas de Rusia, y China, yo no veo que sea posible evaluar el tema del impacto medioambiental del COVID-19 en esta dinámica, en este momento, absolutamente en el cual es todo muy impredecible. Yo no veo ningún documento, que tenga base científica para ser en este momento una evaluación.

Sugiero dos cosas: primero, prudencia. Creo que hay que ser muy prudentes en hacer aseveraciones que no tienen base científica. Segunda, que creo que hay que saldar esto aquí. No se puede llevar esto al Comité de Redacción. Todos tenemos ganas de terminar cuanto antes, Presidente, pero no me parece esta responsabilidad pueda ser delegada. Nuestra responsabilidad es la nuestra y la del Comité de Redacción es la del Comité de Redacción.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I tried to make it easier for you and to expedite our work. In principle, I am in full agreement with my Argentinian colleague that we have to discuss matters of substance here. Frankly, it is not, first of all, about the impact of environment, it is what caused COVID-19, and there are numerous reports, one just has to read them.

The French Ambassador referred to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reports, which are, frankly, evidence and empirically based. Therefore, we can lengthily quarrel about whether we support these reports or not, but there is a clear link to the environment and, therefore, we would indeed think that this is one of the numerous important factors that has to be taken into consideration. In addition, I think it was the Argentinian Ambassador himself who spoke before about the need to approach this issue holistically, and he is totally right.

Regarding subparagraph (f), I apologize, I anticipated that Costa Rica and Argentina would not be in agreement with the suggestion that the French Ambassador submitted. If they agree with that, then wonderful, then we are all on the same page and of course, that has not got to go to the Drafting Committee. Therefore, I would be really glad if we could move on now and do not, you know, quarrel about words.

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

In the past we suggested that in subparagraph (h), after “in Africa,” the following be inserted, - “discussed through the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) as a holistic issue”.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, could you propose a wording?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

After “in Africa” and, “it should be discussed through the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) as a holistic issue”.

Sra. Liudmila KUZMICHEVA (República Dominicana)

Me refiero al subpárrafo (f) apoyando lo expresado por los colegas de Argentina y Brasil. Nada más solicitar la inclusión de la referencia a los [XX] que también hemos reiterado en nuestra intervención, incluyendo los [XX]. Podría ser donde está los más vulnerables, incluyendo los [XX].

CHAIRPERSON

I think there is need for some supplementary information. Would the Secretariat be able to assist in providing further information on this issue, so that Members could come together? In the meantime, I give the floor to Canada.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

As regards subparagraph (a), I do support the linkages that are being made. However, I am just wondering if we really understand the concerns, given that we have stressed many times the importance of the One Health approach, which recognizes the interface and interconnection between animal, human and planet health.

We have seen such an approach in the recent months and events, even on the World Environment Day, where the *State of the World's Forests* (SOFO) was launched with FAO/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It was called “*Time for Nature, Animal, Humans and Environment Interface.*”

As long as we do not say that it has an impact, but there are just interconnections or linkages, I still fail to understand what the concerns would be, given that in other subparagraphs we do stress the importance of the One Health approach. I just wanted to say that I support it, and maybe we can find language that could be in line with what we have stressed in the past regarding these linkages.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you have a proposed language? You can give it thought.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Regarding this subparagraph (a), I see what the colleague from the Russian Federation and the distinguished colleague from Argentina said, regarding the link between the virus, COVID-19, and the environment. We can see that there is an effect, whether it is positive or negative, and in some reports, there is a positive effect directly linked to COVID-19.

Due to the lockdown, there was clear evidence on how the environment improved and changed throughout the world. You can agree or disagree; however, it would probably be better if we can remove the word ‘environment’ and put it at the end, in connection to COVID-19 and “its effect on the environment”.

We have to look at that from a different perspective, whether it is a positive or negative one, we will study it, and we can look at reports later on in the future.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We agree with your proposal to discuss this issue at the Drafting Committee. This could be solved by the Drafting Committee. Taking this opportunity for broader Membership of the Council, I would like to draw your attention and our colleagues to the fact that the background document prepared by FAO does not have a single word about the impact on the environment.

This is an expert publication, an FAO expert did not provide us with this evidence, and we understand why. We understand that the mandate of FAO is to establish the link between COVID-19 and food security and food systems, nutrition, and social economic impact.

However, the establishment of any other links, the links to road safety, the links to the criminal situation between COVID-19 and the criminal situation, the link to many other aspects, including on the environment, it is outside of the mandate of FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got a sort of compromise wording, which speaks about the potential link with enlargement concentrations. Would that be the wording that you could along with, Germany?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

That would be fine for us.

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, would this compromise wording saying, “potential links with environmental considerations”, would such a wording enable you to go along with it?

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

We reserve the right to open this question during the meeting of the Drafting Committee. At this stage, I cannot provide you with the clear answer.

CHAIRPERSON

I think there is a consensus, and this matter can go now to the Drafting Committee. Is that okay with Members?

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Juste pour vous soutenir, Monsieur le Président, dans cette suggestion.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Presidente, yo no voy a opinar en particular sobre el contenido de la propuesta del subpárrafo. Creo que hay un grave riesgo de que se llegue al Comité de Redacción y que en el Comité de Redacción no haya ningún tipo de posibilidad de llegar a un acuerdo, y tengamos que volver al Consejo. Ese es un riesgo real.

Por lo tanto, si queremos evitar esos riesgos, quizás lo más aconsejable es directamente no incluir este subpárrafo. Porque es lo único que va a garantizar que no tengamos esas situaciones. Pero es simplemente una sugerencia constructiva. No pretendo complicarle la vida a usted, Presidente, que ya ha hecho un gran esfuerzo. Le agradezco mucho.

Ms Jennifer HARRIGH (United States of America)

Could we change the subparagraph that mentioned “Africa”, where there was the insertion of language regarding the Food Systems Summit (FSS)? We would respectfully request the deletion of the phrase

“and should be discussed in 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit as a holistic issue.” The reason is because we do not feel that it is the place of the Council to specify what the Food Systems Summit should address at this time. We believe that the Special Envoy is having consultations ongoing, that the advisers in scientific communities will meet and we prefer to keep this language out of this document.

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

Thank you very much for the suggestion from the United States of America colleague. Are there any other opinions from other colleagues on this point?

CHAIRPERSON

Since we seem to have a situation, where consensus does not seem to be possible on subparagraph (a), would Members agree that, especially Germany, whether we can delete subparagraph (a), just to be able have a consensus situation?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

I think it would be regrettable, because the link between these different elements is extremely important to mention. Let me perhaps try to make a last effort. Some colleagues have a problem with the reference to “environment”, and I think it probably will not change whether you mention “environment” or “environmental considerations”.

Would it be acceptable to colleagues if we spoke about “eco-systems?” “Stress the link between food security and nutrition, food systems, socio-economic impacts and health, One Health approach,” or “One Health approach and eco-systems in connection to COVID-19”? I think that would take care of our concerns and perhaps could be the basis for a compromise?

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Russian Federation, followed by Argentina, to react to this revised wording proposed by Germany.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

I did not ask for the floor, but since you invited me, I have to say that, unfortunately, within FAO we did not see any evidence and scientific-based information on the direct linkage between the COVID-19 pandemic and a system degradation or improvement, or whatever. It is very difficult to discuss this question during the Drafting Committee. We did not discuss it at the debate stage.

We did not discuss during any informal meetings and again, the background document prepared by FAO did not provide us with such information. Therefore, it is something which appeared only at the drafting stage. This is quite a complicated issue that should be further discussed and again, we are ready to discuss it during the Drafting Committee, as proposed by you. Therefore, we are not blocking something, we just want to find a compromise for a consensus solution for this issue.

Ms Jennifer HARHIGH (United States of America)

I wanted to respond to our Japanese colleague and suggest a possible compromise on the subparagraph (h). I am wondering if Japan would be accepting a language such as: “and should be discussed in the lead-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit”?

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, United States. Japan, you can go along with this wording? Japan? Can you go along with the wording?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKI (Japan)

Thank you very much for the solution from the United States colleague. I have no problem with this.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

I wish to speak about subparagraph (a). Since we have had repetitive discussion on this paragraph and consensus could not be achieved, we feel that even as the Drafting Committee we may not see any

further progress. To save time we agree to remove subparagraph (a). Removing subparagraph (a) is an easier solution for this problem.

Mr Rodrigo ESTRELA DE CARVALHO (Brazil)

Going back to the subparagraph (a). We have to say that it looks like we are just going to push our work forward if we take it to the Drafting Committee. We know that its mandate is unclear. If we do not address these substantial issues in this section of the debate, we will likely have more work and a repetition of the amendments presented in the final section for deduction of the final Report. We substantially support Russia's position, but for the wording we would like to support the suggestion by Argentina of deleting this subparagraph. We do not think it will add to our discussion here.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

J'avoue être un peu étonnée de cette discussion parce que nous recevons des appels répétés à nous baser toujours sur des rapports scientifiques et je crois que la FAO est une organisation internationale scientifique réputée, de même que d'autres organisations comme le Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement (PNUE) ou la Convention sur la diversité biologique (CBD). Nous avons signé des actes de la CBD, qui montrent bien le lien entre la santé humaine, l'environnement et la biodiversité, donc je crois qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau là.

Cette question a été mise en exergue dans le cadre de la COVID-19, encore une fois basée sur des rapports qu'on trouve sur le site du PNUE. Le PNUE étant un programme des Nations Unies, je ne comprends pas cette difficulté à le mentionner dans un sous-paragraphe. Je crois qu'il est important de mentionner cette dimension inclusive, qui a été récurrente dans tous nos débats ce matin et hier soir.

On peut aussi mentionner les trois dimensions de l'approche « Un monde une santé », le lien entre la santé humaine, la santé animale et la santé de la planète; je crois donc qu'il est important que cette vision soit intégrée, comme elle a été reflétée par beaucoup d'interventions ce matin, pour le sous-paragraphe (a).

Ms Aulikki HULMI (Finland)

I do not want to draw out this discussion, but I would very much support what France has said. And just to point out that we have discussed a lot, and we have praised FAO for the collaboration with all ecosystems. This is such a complicated problem for which it is not possible to have siloed thinking—we really need a common approach.

Also, in FAO we have seen excellent work, for example, concerning the connections between forestry issues and COVID-19, and I think that FAO is the one organization to see these kinds of connections which other organizations are not always able to see. Therefore, we very much support keeping subparagraph 1(a).

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México)

Yo no quiero prolongar la discusión de esta tarde. Pero creo que hay algunos elementos de la COVID-19 que tienen impacto en el medio ambiente. Y lo hemos visto por los informes del uso de plástico para empaquetar alimentos y otras cosas que, obviamente, tiene un impacto en los sistemas alimentarios. Apoyamos la omisión del elemento del medio ambiente aquí pero, quizá, lo que podríamos proponer como compromiso es que el Consejo pida más información sobre los vínculos con el medio ambiente. Y la propuesta en concreto, voy a cambiar al canal en inglés.

Continues in English

“To ask for one further approach and to ask for more information on the links with the environment.”

CHAIRPERSON

I think this is an issue of which I feel that the discussion is going to on. We can also speak about the Drafting Committee, since some Members have suggested that they would be prepared to have the issue discussed in the Drafting Committee, while others have not shown any sort of enthusiasm for that course of action.

May I suggest that, for a short while, we put this discussion on hold? It will give Members a chance to

reflect and ask the Director-General to make his remarks as well, since he has another meeting to which he has to go.

We will put this on hold and give the floor to the Director-General for his views on some of these issues, and then we will come back to this one.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Dear brother you are 81 years old. Now I feel you are 18 years old. I should learn from you: you have big passion; you have a big patience. I really appreciate you. That is why I told my wife you could live as long as 120 years, because you are still built with so much psychological mitigation, resilience and others. You name it. I would say, I really followed the discussion during the past three days. Sometimes I did not show up, but I was listening in my room here.

First, I really appreciate all your engagement, deeply engagement, a lot of ambassadors, they are always on the front, and I have also found some of the young people very good. I also appreciate all the engagement. Through the deep discussion and it is a way of moving the business ahead. The Council meeting it is a decision-making meeting and also, it is a way to build more solidarity. I think that is really good. Of course, you get the strong support from the Chairpersons of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee (FC), and also the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), and others. I appreciate all of your contributions.

Second, for the COVID-19 response. We are still very early, in very early stages. Please FAO domain, FAO mandate. You are FAO Council. You are not the Council of the World Health Organization (WHO). You are not the Council of the others. You have to keep your record, your track, credit of your reputation. We are FAO. Even you are not the Executive Board of the World Food Programme. Each Organization has its own mandate. Otherwise if we cross borders, and because you are a decision-maker, and the people they will laugh at you. However, as an Organization it is very prudent, please. Any word, I said it in the FAO Basic Texts, don't pick out one sentence, one clause, in favour of my own interpretation. That is not the proper way. That is what I want to say. I appreciate all your understanding and your contributions and also take the FAO Basic Text as a holistic interpretation. Because each clause has a precondition and each provision has a meaning, a balanced meaning. If we take only one clause, one provision and say that. That is not good. It is wrong, misleading.

For COVID-19 I appreciate you now. You took that historical event virtually. Virtual is more inclusive, more open. Every word you say is not only recorded; it is expressed all over the world. I think that all of you, representatives of the 49 plus 1 and you are representing your countries. I respect it is the Membership, however, also, your performance gives an imagination of your countries.

As FAO's Director-General I appreciate all your cooperation during the lockdown, during this pandemic, all the meetings, teleworking. Especially the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC). You are 81 years old, but still you follow the fashion. That is adaption. That is evolution. I said that it is not a question of the meeting; it is a question of the evolution because if we bring all of you to the Red Room or Green Room or whatever auditorium, and they have a cluster infection in case. Then FAO will be the most famous Organization the world. In Italy, in Rome, they have several cluster infections. That is as FAO Director-General. I really consider any risk and I try to avoid it. Now I can tell you.

That is why I insisted to have the virtual meeting. It is not only changing the business model, it is changing way of thinking, changing way of modality, and on change of your own thinking and mind-set. This is because for years and years FAO is talking too much, with not so many actions, which is because everyone, edit one sentence, one word and keep a very balanced sentence. Then everyone comes to see me telling me "Hey you got a resolution. You have to follow the resolution. Everyone found the words.

Therefore, please make clear messages to me, to be implemented, to be really for the Members majority, not for each individually. Of course, for me I work through a different group, different views.

I have to go to another UN Meeting on Water, I appreciate all your contributions, and I am listening.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General.

We are stuck on this Item, and we have more than one or two issues. Since the Drafting Committee is scheduled to meet this afternoon, may I suggest that we take up the other items and we send even this Item to the Drafting Committee.

Argentina is perfectly correct, if there is no agreement in the Drafting Committee, the matter will come back to Plenary, and it will not be the first time. In the past years, there were occasions when this happened. It was not always that the Report was adopted *en bloc*.

What we could do, since some of the other items on our Agenda probably will not be as controversial, we send this Item and the ones before it to the meeting of the Drafting Committee. If the Drafting Committee manages to arrive at a consensus or propose a consensus on those one or two issues, well and good. If not, they would come back to this issue in the Plenary Session on Friday morning.

My suggestion is, we take the other items which are outstanding, and we should go through them pretty quickly, since I do not think there would be any controversies. We send what we have completed so far, including this Item although we still have not completed it because of a difference in views, as some Countries were agreeable to the Drafting Committee, and others were not. Let the Drafting Committee consider it, and if they cannot come to any consensus, we include it and take it up on Friday morning.

Does that meet with your agreement as a way forward? Consequently, the Drafting Committee can then meet this afternoon, at least going through their work as they are supposed to. Therefore, you still have the option of this matter coming back to Plenary, but on Friday, not as part of the Draft Report.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

You have noted; I have tried to make several suggestions in order to evoke a compromise. None of these suggestions were really supported, and the resistance against the subparagraph seems to be indeed strong by a few at least. I think under these conditions, it does really not make much sense to ask the Drafting Committee to find the solution.

If there is substantial opposition against such a chapeau paragraph, mentioning the different links and approaching the issue holistically, then I think we should indeed delete the subparagraph, and we do not have the consensus for that. That is very simple, and we should save our time and not coming back to the Council on Friday morning.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Agradezco especialmente el mensaje del embajador de Alemania. Nosotros hemos mantenido una actitud muy prudente respecto del contenido. No era una cuestión de estar de acuerdo o estar en desacuerdo. Hemos siempre dicho que había cosas que todavía eran muy difíciles de evaluar en este contexto del COVID-19 y que requeríamos de documentación científica para avanzar.

Creo que todos han hecho un enorme esfuerzo por buscar un consenso y me parece que la sugerencia del embajador de Alemania es de gran sabiduría y yo la acompaño; sobre todo por un principio fundamental, no podemos como principio hacia adelante dejar temas de sustancia a ser discutidos en el Comité de Redacción.

Así que, agradezco al embajador de Alemania y creo que si hay consenso podemos cancelar el artículo sugerido inicialmente.

CHAIRPERSON

It seems that once this subparagraph is deleted, we can conclude this Item, since there is consensus on the wording of the subparagraph. I thank Germany for showing the flexibility in order to achieve consensus, and I thank Argentina too.

Subparagraph (a) will be deleted.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (France)

Je me rallie au consensus parce que nous avons beaucoup de sujets à discuter et je crois que l'on attend de nous de l'action. Je voudrais rappeler quand même les textes fondamentaux de l'Organisation, notamment dans les fonctions de l'Organisation à l'Article 1, paragraphe 2 alinéa c où il est dit que l'Organisation encourage et, au besoin, recommande toute action de caractère national et international intéressant c) la conservation des ressources naturelles et l'adoption des méthodes améliorées de production agricole». Je crois donc que la question des ressources naturelles fait intégralement partie de nos systèmes agricoles et alimentaires, et qu'elle est au coeur du mandat de la FAO. Il ne s'agit donc pas de sortir du mandat de l'Organisation, mais ces questions environnementales doivent être prises en compte, sinon nos systèmes alimentaires courent de graves dangers pour l'avenir. Je tenais à faire cette précision pour nos discussions futures; ce n'est pas un hasard s'il existe une division des ressources naturelles au sein de la FAO et je vous invite à vous référer aux textes fondamentaux de l'Organisation.

CHAIRPERSON

With those interventions, we can conclude on Item 10 with the deletion of subparagraph (a).

Written Correspondence Procedure for Items 11, 12, 13, and 14

In light of the exceptional procedures in place for the virtual meetings of the 164th Session of the Council, it has been agreed to address some Agenda items through a written correspondence procedure. In this procedure, Members of the Council may submit written comments and questions on the related Agenda items, based on the related documentation and Secretariat introductions. The Secretariat will then provide written responses. Both the Members' submissions and the responses from the Secretariat can be found in the following pages. These will be updated as and when necessary throughout the 164th Session of the Council meeting.

Conformément aux procédures spéciales mises en place du fait de la tenue à distance des réunions de la cent soixante-quatrième session du Conseil, il a été décidé que certains points de l'ordre du jour seraient examinés suivant une procédure de correspondance écrite. Selon cette procédure, les Membres du Conseil sont invités à communiquer par écrit les questions et observations qu'ils souhaitent formuler au sujet des points de l'ordre du jour concernés, sur la base des documents correspondants et des textes d'introduction préparés par le Secrétariat. Le Secrétariat présentera ensuite des réponses écrites. Les contributions des Membres et les réponses du Secrétariat peuvent être consultées sur les pages suivantes. Celles-ci seront actualisées, selon qu'il conviendra, tout au long de la cent soixante-quatrième session du Conseil.

A la luz de los procedimientos excepcionales establecidos para las sesiones virtuales del 164.º período de sesiones del Consejo, se ha acordado tratar algunos temas del programa mediante un procedimiento de correspondencia. Con arreglo a este procedimiento, los miembros del Consejo pueden presentar por escrito observaciones y preguntas sobre los temas del programa pertinentes basándose en la documentación conexas y las introducciones facilitadas por la Secretaría. La Secretaría proporcionará a continuación respuestas escritas. Tanto las comunicaciones de los miembros como las respuestas de la Secretaría se reproducen en las páginas siguientes. Estas se actualizarán según sea necesario a lo largo del 164.º período de sesiones del Consejo.

CHAIRPERSON

These Items of the Agenda of the 164th Council Session are addressed to the written correspondence procedure.

All comments by Members and responses by the Secretariat can be viewed on the designated webpage of the 164th Session of the Council website. Therefore, we will address only the draft conclusions of these Items. There will be no discussion on the substance of these four Items. I have drafted my summary conclusions for these items in light of the written inputs of the Members and written responses from the Secretariat.

Item 11. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council (2-6 December 2019)**Point 11. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent soixante-troisième session (2-6 décembre 2019)****Tema 11. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 163.º período de sesiones (2-6 de diciembre de 2019)**

(CL 164/LIM/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now turn our attention to Item 11, *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council*. The relevant document is CL164/LIM/3. We will now address the draft conclusions.

I note that the Status of Implementation is a living document and the underlying process is a continuous one. Therefore, written comments received from Members on this Item will inform the follow-up process and the next Status document will be presented to the Council at its 165th Session.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday July 01 2020, at 13:23

Notified that it did not have any written feedback regarding this item.

AUSTRALIA – SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (SWP)

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 13:23

We welcome the update on the Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council and offer the following comments.

Item 1. In addition to this update, we welcome confirmation from Management that the additional resources allocated to FAO's work on the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the Joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme have been incorporated into the ongoing programme of work as requested by the 163rd Session of Council (*CL 164/7 paragraph 18 refers*). We look forward to continuing to working with FAO Management as well as the IPPC and Codex Secretariats to ensure that the benefits of this valuable resource is maximised and adequately sustains the execution of the important work these programmes undertake.

Item 2: In addition to this update, we welcome the information provided in *CL 164/3 - Information Note 2* regarding sustainable funding for the Office of the Inspector General, and we look forward to continuing to work with FAO Management and the Office of the Director-General to ensure adequate resources for the Office to complete its important work programme going forward.

Item 7. We have appreciated the information provided to date on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, including the most recent information presented in *CL 163/3 - Information Note 3* and look forward to ongoing transparency and accountability about the Initiative. We also look forward to continuing to work with the FAO through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative to advance the needs of the most vulnerable countries,

including those in the Indo-Pacific region.

Item 8. We welcome the FAO's engagement in the preparation of this important Summit and look forward to ongoing and active engagement, including through the GOFFSS. We emphasise the importance of engaging with all countries in the lead up to the Summit and to making sure everyone has a voice in the preparatory processes as well at the Summit itself. This is particularly true for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) who, due to their proximity to places like Rome and New York, are often constrained in their ability to physically attend meetings and ensure their needs are both heard and addressed. In this regard we welcome the confirmation that Fiji has a place on the Advisory Group.

Item 11. We welcome the inclusion of an outcome and output level indicator for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) document. In light of technical questions and suggestions made in the Programme Committee and Joint Committee to improve the indicator we look forward to further consultation with Members on the indicator before it is finalized.

Item 19. We welcome the update provided to Council and stress the importance of any solution addressing:

- How Members will be involved in developing the selection documentation.
- Whether all Members will be able to see the applications that would then allow Members to caucus on preferred candidates.
- How Members will be involved in the shortlisting of candidates.
- How the panel will have regional balance.
- How the process promotes/contributes to gender equality.

We look forward to contributing to the discussion via the Chairpersons of the respective Article XIV Bodies.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 16:25

The completed status of the decisions reflected in lines 2, 5 and 17 is incorrect. Please, would you revise these to ongoing and provide an update on progress with them at the 165th Session of FAO Council.

Line 2 is "The Council (...) looked forward to adequate funding for the Office of the Inspector General from within existing resources". The recent Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees did not consider that funding for the Office of the Inspector General was sustainable.

Line 5 is "The Council (...) looked forward to: a strengthened Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in the 2020-21 Results Framework; a related Employee Satisfaction Survey for all employees of FAO; and an analysis regarding the potential added value of making available for all three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) a common specialised expertise on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; paragraph 9(b)".

Please, can Management provide an update on when the analysis regarding a common specialised expertise will be completed and shared with Council?

Line 17 is "The Council (...) looked forward to receiving regular information on Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) implementation and performance in future reports on the financial position of the Organization to the Finance Committee". The recent Joint Meeting requested that more information be provided on the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

PERU

Presentado el viernes 03 julio 2020 a las 17.30

En relación al punto 1 sobre Ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto 2020-21, "el Consejo acogió con beneplácito la asignación de recursos adicionales a la Convención Internacional de Protección

Fitosanitaria – CIPF que permitan hacer frente al trabajo atrasado en esas áreas...”.

Esta Representación espera que el incremento de recursos a la CIPF y a la CODEX, permitan una labor más eficiente en ambas Comisiones, lo que contribuirá enormemente en el logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

ARGENTINA

Presentado el viernes 03 julio 2020 a las 17.48

La Argentina agradece a la Secretaría la elaboración del documento *CL 164/LIM/3*, en el que se exponen con claridad los progresos alcanzados en materia de cada una de las decisiones del 163° período de sesiones del Consejo.

Al respecto, la Delegación Argentina realiza las siguientes observaciones.

Con relación a la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano (página 5/párrafo 7 del documento) y los avances relativos al párrafo 9.d del Informe del 163° Consejo, la Argentina desearía obtener una aclaración respecto a los recursos destinados a la Iniciativa. En nuestro entendimiento, la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano se financiaría con recursos extrapresupuestarios; sin embargo, en las observaciones presentadas en el documento *CL 164/LIM/3*, se señala que “la Organización se compromete a apoyar, con sus propios recursos, solo a los 44 países de ingresos bajos y países con crisis prolongadas”.

Si la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano se financiará con recursos de la Organización, la Argentina desearía llamar la atención sobre la importancia de que, observando el principio de universalidad, todos los países puedan ser considerados como beneficiarios y no ser incluidos como “países beneficiarios” o “países de apoyo” en función de sus ingresos. Fue en este espíritu que se acordó el párrafo 9.d del Informe del 163° Consejo.

Asimismo, la Argentina desea reiterar la voluntad expresada por el Consejo de que la lista de 44 países no sea una lista cerrada –como podría interpretarse del documento– y pueda ser ampliada a todas las categorías de países.

En otro orden, en la *Nota Informativa 1* del documento *CL 163/3* (página 13 del documento), se informó que la FAO se encontraba examinando caso por caso solicitudes de otros países que habían requerido ser incorporados a la Iniciativa, incluyendo países de nuestra región que, a pesar de ser clasificados como países de renta media o alta, aún enfrentan niveles importantes de pobreza extremas y malnutrición. Al respecto, la Argentina desearía conocer el resultado de dichas evaluaciones.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 18:43

The European Union and its 27 Member States welcome the overview of the status of implementation of the Decisions taken at the 163rd Council session set out in document *CL 164/LIM/3*. We would like to make three specific comments and one general comment on this document.

The first specific comment is on point 2. We believe that the implementation of this decision is not completed but ongoing. The Council approved an additional amount of USD 400.000 for the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) in December 2019. Nonetheless, in the 2019 Annual Report of the Inspector General it is clearly stated that OIG needs two additional investigator positions as a minimum requirement. We understand that the additional funds approved in December 2019 will be used to fund one position while the other needed position remains unfinanced. Therefore, the implementation status should read “ongoing”.

Another specific comment concerns point 5. We note that no information is provided on the follow-up to the Council's request for an analysis of the potential added value of making available for all three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) a common specialised expertise on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This analysis seems to be still “ongoing” and therefore the whole of paragraph 9.(b) of the Council Report cannot be considered as “completed”.

The last specific comment is on point 19. According to the information provided on this point, the recommendations of the External Audit were reduced from 45 to 9. Hence, there are still 9 open issues. Therefore, the status of this point has to be considered “ongoing”. The general comment concerns the overall high number of actions which are marked as “ongoing” as compared to the ones marked as “completed” (14 against 11 - or even 17 against 8 if the above points are taken into account). We also note that some of the ongoing actions concern topics that have been on the table for quite some time already. This situation gives rise to concern, especially taking into account that the Organisation may undergo significant organisational changes in the near future. We would welcome a strong commitment from FAO Management to ensure that the ongoing actions will be concluded as soon as possible.

JAPAN

Submitted Saturday July 04 2020, at 13:34

While we will not block consensus on this matter, we think it is important to reflect the decisions and views of the respective Governing Bodies of the organizations under Article XIV as much as possible, in the selection of the respective Executive Secretaries, to ensure accountability to the respective Memberships of those Bodies.

Response from Secretariat Réponses du Secrétariat Respuestas de la Secretaría

1. The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for the comments received for the Document *CL 164/LIM/3 Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council*. The comments and inputs are duly noted, and these will be subsumed into future iterations of the document.
2. In response to questions regarding a common specialized expertise on investigative functions related to allegations of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (*CL 164/LIM 3, paragraph 5*), it is noted that the Investigation Services of the Rome-based Agencies collaborate closely, including, but not limited to investigating allegations of sexual harassment and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Mutual assistance is mainly required in cases: 1) which involve a Conflict of Interest situation for the Investigation Office concerned; 2) which require investigative tools or skills not available in each of the Agencies (e.g. related to digital forensics); or 3) which exceed the available in-house capacity (e.g. investigating simultaneously several high priority cases requiring similar skills).
3. With regard to allegations of sexual harassment, FAO generally has sufficient in-house capacity to address all such complaints, and therefore does not see an advantage in pooling such capacity at this point as this would not be cost and time efficient. With regard to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), FAO has not received any such complaints in 2019. FAO notes that the Office of the Inspector-General of WFP has dealt with a significant number of such cases and has developed specialized expertise in conducting such investigations. In case of future SEA complaints, which may require a full investigation, FAO will therefore consider seeking assistance from WFP.
4. In response to questions regarding paragraph 7 of document *CL 164/LIM/3*, the Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HHI) prioritizes beneficiary countries where large numbers of people are at risk of being left behind, where hunger and extreme poverty is increasing, as stated in document *CL 164/3 Information Note 3*. The list of priority countries evolves based on changing circumstances and needs, and includes Least Developed Land-Locked Countries, Least Developed Small Island Developing States, countries in food crisis or highly populated countries, but also countries seeking support to manage the impact of COVID-19 with the HHI approach. Therefore, the list of priority countries is not a closed list.
5. The initiative is funded as explained in detail in document *CL 164/3 Information Note 3*. The initiative has the following four core activities described in document *CL 164/ 3 Information Note 3*: (a) Big data lab; (b) HHI) Geospatial Platform; (c) HHI country task forces; and (d) investment

plans for HHI activities. Activities (a) and (b) are fully funded by extra budgetary resources and benefit the entire Membership and not only the priority countries under HHI. Activities (c) and (d) are specific for the priority countries but are funded as explained in document *CL 164/3 Information Note 3*. Specifically, Members of the Task Force carry out these duties within their existing overall terms of reference without need for any additional funding (i.e. productivity gains); and the investment plans are funded by three sources: (i) extra budgetary resources, in line with agreements with the relevant resource partners; (ii) the World Bank partnership agreement with the Investment Centre whereby existing activities will now be directly coordinated and prioritized based on the HHI; and (iii) Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) requested by governments.

CHAIRPERSON

Colleagues, my conclusions for Item 11 are as follows.

Item 11: Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 163rd Session of the Council

1. The Council took note of the Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at its 163rd Session.

The floor is open for any comments. I see none, so this Item is completed.

Item 12. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21

Point 12. Calendrier 2020-2021 des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO et des autres réunions principales

Tema 12. Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO y otras reuniones importantes en 2020-21

(CL 164/LIM/1)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 12, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and Other Main Sessions*.

The document before the Council is *CL 164/LIM/1*.

In light of the COVID-19 global pandemic, significant changes have been necessary to the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions for 2020-21, both in terms of the dates of the meetings and the modalities by which they are held. Such changes are undertaken, on a rolling basis, by means of consultations by the Director-General with relevant stakeholders including Members, host country governments and the Chairpersons and bureaux of various bodies.

In this regard, I had extensive discussions with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups over the past few months.

According to the schedule presented in the document *CL 164/LIM/1* in front of you a tentative one, and Members will be updated continuously as and when changes are made. Members may wish to note in particular that the 165th Session of the Council is scheduled to take place from 30 November to 4 December 2020.

Finally, it is useful to note that this calendar is drawn up in close consultation with IFAD and WFP, in order to avoid overlap of meetings between FAO and the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). The changes made since the last Session, when the Calendar was presented, for information are indicated with an asterisk. The Council is requested to note the updated proposed calendar of meetings for 2020-21.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

COSTA RICA

Presentado el miércoles 01 julio 2020 a las 09.00

Sobre el documento CL 164/LIM/1 “Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores”, Costa Rica desea manifestar lo siguiente.

Costa Rica agradece a la Secretaría la preparación del documento CL 164/LIM/1, que ha sido modificado debido a los trastornos que la pandemia por COVID-19 ha causado en la ejecución de las actividades de la Organización.

Respecto del texto propuesto, deseamos subrayar el carácter provisional del calendario. Esta Delegación entiende que las fechas de las reuniones incluidas en el Apéndice A pueden ser modificadas nuevamente de acuerdo con la evolución de la situación sanitaria de los lugares donde se llevarán a cabo, o bien podrían ser realizadas bajo modalidades distintas a las presenciales si existe voluntad y acuerdo por parte de los Estados miembro.

Finalmente, con respecto de la calendarización de las conferencias regionales, quisiéramos recordar de la manera más atenta que la Organización no debe solicitar criterio de manera directa a los ministerios de Agricultura, sino que la solicitud se transmita por medio de los ministerios de Relaciones Exteriores, dada la importancia jerárquica y el nivel que revisten estos encuentros.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday July 01 2020, at 13:23

Notified that it did not have any written feedback regarding this item.

KUWAIT

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 14:56

We would like to draw your kind attention to the discrepancies of the date set for the Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC) from 24 to 26 August 2020 as indicated in the Council document *CL164/LIM/1*, whereas the document *CL164/INF/2* has proposed another date for NERC from 2 to 4 November 2020.

As you may know, the ongoing consultations among the concerned parties have not yet reached a consensus on the convenient date to hold the NERC. Therefore, you are kindly requested to inform us in advance of the deadline for the convening of the said conference.

Furthermore, we invite the Secretariat to take into consideration, the eventual postponement of NERC before the Council can take its decision on Agenda Item 12.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 16:28

In general, we agree with the revised Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions for 2020-2021 (document *CL 164/LIM/1*) with the understanding that all new dates are proposed tentatively in light of the ongoing uncertainties around the COVID-19 situation. It is obvious that these new dates may be subject to change as a result of consultation processes with the relevant stakeholders.

However, we have noticed the tight concentration of the upcoming sessions, especially for the next September and October. In this regard we kindly request FAO Secretariat to make all necessary steps to avoid overlaps of FAO, IFAD and WFP main meetings which are definitely of interest to Member States. It is also crucial to distribute the workload evenly throughout the period 2020-2021.

Considering the format of upcoming events, particularly those that require decision-making processes on the issues of substance, our strong preference is to have «face-to-face» in person meetings to the extent possible. That is why we welcome the «hybrid» proposal to postpone the official decision-making 47 Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 47) until February 2021, while using the October's time slot for informal CFS high-level special events. In the same vein, we would be pleased to get more clarity on the dates, format and venue of the 43rd session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC 43), (according to *CL 164/LIM/1*, it is divided in two segments: one 24-25 September 2020, second 12 October 2020).

AUSTRALIA – SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (SWP)

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 17:09

We welcome the FAO's strong, flexible and agile response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recognise

that FAO Management have worked hard to minimise the impact of the pandemic on the 2020-2021 calendar as much as possible while ensuring the safety of everyone.

We remain flexible to the working methods employed to progress these important meetings under these extenuating circumstances which include ongoing lock down measures and travel restrictions across the globe.

To the best extent practicable, we ask that decisions about dates and modalities be made and communicated to Members in a timely manner, particularly in relation to Regional Conferences. This will allow appropriate arrangements to be made to maximise attendance including by Ministerial-level delegates.

BRAZIL

Submitted Friday July 02 2020, at 15:43

Brazil believes the Technical Committees are extremely important decision-making fora, which bring together national experts and high-level authorities on each area in order to provide specialized advice to FAO. We understand the pandemic is unfolding in a quite unpredictable way and that convening those meetings is crucial to the continuity of FAO's work. However, we have noted very different approaches in rescheduling Committee on Forestry (COFO), Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP). While the first one was rescheduled to the beginning of October, right after Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the others have been postponed to 2021.

We would like to ask for clarification on the rationale behind that. Assuming both COAG e COFO are going to meet virtually, we propose considering reducing their agenda to urgent items, adopting written correspondence in some cases and sharing all presentations beforehand, as it has been done for this session of the Council. The same could be considered regarding the procedures for Regional Conferences, which have been rescheduled for September and October.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 16:25

Please, can Management confirm that the calendar presented in *CL164/LIM/1* is the latest version.

PERU

Presentado el viernes 03 julio 2020 a las 17.23

El documento propone que el Consejo en su 164° periodo de sesiones apruebe las modificaciones realizadas en el calendario desde su último periodo de sesiones. Al respecto, deseamos precisar que esta aprobación sería con carácter provisional, considerando la evolución de la situación relativa a la pandemia de la COVID-19. Asimismo, se observa que el 47° periodo de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria se celebraría del 8 al 12 de febrero de 2021, no obstante se mantiene una reunión del CSA (sin numeración) en octubre de 2020.

Finalmente, no se aprecia la programación del 15° periodo de sesiones de la Comisión de Medidas Fitosanitarias, cuya reunión estaba prevista para abril del 2020.

INDONESIA

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 20:58

Indonesia welcomes the changes made to the calendar as it is inevitable due to COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia requests further information on consultation process for the new dates and also modalities, specifically for Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) which is planned for 1-4 September 2020 and Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) on 10 – 12 March 2021

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 18:43

The European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States thank FAO for the updated calendar for 2020 and 2021 set out in document *CL 164/LIM/1*, to take account of the COVID-19 crisis.

Regarding the 32nd Session of the European Regional Conference, which has been tentatively rescheduled for 21 to 23 September, we would like to draw attention to the fact that these dates partly coincide with the dates of the September session of the 'Agriculture and Fisheries' Council of the European Union in Brussels.

The EU and its Member States would therefore have a strong preference for holding the 32nd Session of the European Regional Conference at a later stage, from 2 to 4 November 2020.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

1. The Secretariat would like to express appreciation for the comments received from Members on Item 12 of the Agenda-Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21. All comments are well noted.
2. The unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic situation and related public health concerns have affected the scheduling of meetings at FAO and other Rome-based Agencies, including those of its Governing Bodies.
3. The Director-General is in the process of carrying out inclusive consultations with all relevant stakeholders in determining the dates as well as the modality for FAO's Governing Body meetings and other main sessions.
4. The proposed rescheduled dates presented to the Council in Appendix A of document CL 164/LIM/1, in particular the dates for the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees of the Council, are necessarily tentative in light of ongoing consultations. Accordingly, Council endorsement of Appendix A will need to be modulated with allowance for adjustments to the schedule arising from such consultations.
5. The scheduling and modalities of meetings of the Technical Committees will be decided upon in close coordination with the Chairpersons of these Committees as well as their Bureaux, responding therefore to the individual requirements of each Technical Committee, without prejudice to the integrity of the governance role of all Committees.
6. The same consultation process will apply to the meetings of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which has been tentatively scheduled for a series of virtual meetings during "World Food Week" in October 2020 and a plenary Session in February 2021.
7. The organization of the Regional Conferences, and the finalization of the dates of these important Governing Body meetings, will involve a broader consultation process including the respective Host Governments, the Regional Groups and the Organization. Where the respective needs and circumstances of each region may differ, the Regional Conferences may be held in a variety of formats, depending upon the needs and availability of Members, as well as the conditions in each of the regions.
8. The present status of dates for the Regional Conference is as follows:
 - 32nd Regional Conference for Europe - the Government of Uzbekistan, as well as the Europe Regional Group, have agreed upon 2 – 4 November 2020
 - 36th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean - the Government of Nicaragua has agreed to new dates of 19-21 October 2020
 - Other Regional Conferences - consultations with host governments and other stakeholders are ongoing
9. With regard to the modality of forthcoming meetings, the continuation of virtual formats cannot be excluded and may represent the most likely scenario for the second half of 2020. Meeting hosts and secretariats should be prepared for a worst-case scenario presenting itself in the following

months, in terms of prevailing pandemic conditions as well as applicable travel restrictions that may hinder physical participation of delegates. Consultations are ongoing to consider options and emerging best practices with a view to streamlining virtual meetings, where necessary.

10. In relation to the 43rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, its work would be based on the results of the 79th Session of the Codex Executive Committee, to be held virtually from 13 to 20 July 2020. The virtual Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission would take place on 24 and 25 September 2020. Its Report would subsequently be discussed and adopted on 12 October 2020, also virtually.
11. The Bureau of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) has agreed to hold its 73rd Session from 10 to 12 March 2021, as indicated in Document *CL 164/LIM/1*, Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21.
12. The sessions of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) are not normally included in the Calendar of Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions. The 15th Session of the CPM was postponed from its original dates in April 2020, and consultations will be held shortly with the CPM Bureau on rescheduled dates.
13. The Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions is developed and maintained in consultation with the other Rome-based Agencies, and any adjustments to the schedule of meetings in Appendix A will be undertaken on the basis of said consultation inter alia to avoid overlap of meetings at FAO, IFAD and WFP.
14. The Organization will pursue its ongoing consultations with all stakeholders to ensure that dates as well as formats for upcoming meetings are confirmed as quickly as possible. Members will be kept updated on the schedule and/or modalities of meetings of Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions in a timely manner through the established channels of communication.

CHAIRPERSON

My conclusion of this Item is the following:

Item 12: Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and Other Main Sessions 2020-21,

1. The Council noted the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies through 2020-21 as reproduced in Appendix D to this Report.

The floor is open for any comment.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

My apologies, but you did not see me on the screen. I asked actually for the floor at Agenda Item 11 and I would like to go back to Agenda Item 11 because we need an explanation from you.

We expected that after this first sentence there would be more to come, and you would explain how you would respond to the comments that were submitted by us and others. I have not seen any explanation and I have not heard anything so could you please enlighten us? We made three specific and one general comment and we indeed would like to hear what you say to this regard.

Sorry, we expected that this would follow after this first sentence, but apparently that was it. Perhaps you could help us and enlighten us.

CHAIRPERSON

We will respond to your query on Item 11. I will give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Council and he will provide the information that you have asked for.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, in line with the procedure that was agreed upon by the Council for dealing with the items to be considered by written correspondence, there were a number of comments received from the Members and in response to that, there was a note with the Secretariat's reply to those specific comments and all

of these, the comments from the Members that we received, as well as the Secretariat's response to the substantive aspects of the comments that required clarifications have been posted on the website of the *164th Session of the Council*.

The draft conclusions of the Independent Chair reflect the established practice for this Item but as the Chair said, this document itself, the Status of Implementation, is a living document which is sub-dated and then presented at every Council Session, but the underlying process of follow-up is a continuous one which is carried out by the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) with support from the Secretariat.

Those comments that were received have been duly noted and the process of follow-up and adjustment, for example, to the taking on the status of specific actions as to whether they are being completed or they are ongoing, these will be reflected in the next version of the document but they will be immediately taken into account in the underlying follow-up process.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

If I believe my colleagues, we cannot see it on the website. I just hear we have just covered it now so thank you for the explanation.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Regarding the calendar here, I would just like to note we already sent a correspondent to your office as well but the dates of the original conferences and how that are still not set already as we are still in discussion with the host country and her organizational Members.

One question I raised; is there a deadline to hold these Regional Conferences? Do we have to hold these Regional Conferences by a certain date by the end of this year or can we do it at the beginning of next year? How does that fit in the calendar here or with other meetings?

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Council to give you that clarification.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed the schedule of Governing Bodies that were postponed from the first half of this year due to the extraordinary circumstances of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic means that there has to be a case by case approach to rescheduling of Governing Bodies, especially the Regional Conferences, as per ongoing consultations by the Director-General with stakeholders including those country governments and Regional Groups. The ambition is to reschedule the Regional Conferences to within 2020 or as soon as possible in 2021, conditions permitting.

Naturally, in terms of the governing process, there is an imperative which one has an ambition to meet and that is specifically the inputs into a number of governments processing, including the development of the next Strategic Framework.

However, these are the ambitions and they need to be visible if we are trying to meet within the evolving context of the circumstances which none of us can predict.

Ms Renata NEGRELLY NOGUEIRA (Brazil)

Brazil has submitted a comment under this Item, but we believe the response of the Secretariat was not detailed enough.

Our question was about what kind of factors were taken into account to decide, for instance, that Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) should be postponed to the next year, which means that we hope probably they will take place in a live meeting, in person I mean, while all the dates of Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and Committee on Forestry (COFO), probably in light that both will happen virtually.

Referring to Committee on Forestry (COFO) specifically, we would like to know what stakeholders are being consulted about, if the Regional Conference on forests are being consulted, for instance.

And finally, taking into account that probably COAG and COFO will have to take place virtually, we would like to know if FAO is considering to take some measures regarding the adaptation to the virtual reality as it was done concerning the Council for instance reducing agenda, determining some agenda items that will be debated in written form, *et cetera*.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Council.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Indeed, just to build up on what I have said earlier, and it is a very good question from Brazil, that the individual instances of Governing Bodies and Statutory Bodies and other important meetings are being tackled on a case by case basis, because every meeting has different constituents and modalities that may be applicable given their nature.

In the case of the Technical Committees that we mentioned, there are ongoing discussions with the Chairpersons, with the bureaus, as applicable and the Membership at large, considering all for example, the type of participants that come to these individual meetings.

There is not a one size fits all. There is not any reason other than the specific needs of those Governing Bodies that are taken into account when these consultations take place. This means that there is no prescription for the modality as well as the scheduling of an a priori. There is no prejudicial approach to that and of course given the circumstances involved, should the specific stakeholders or individual Governing Bodies feel that the meetings need to take place in virtual form, then we have seen that we are at the ready as a Secretariat to be able to support that successfully.

Now, on the specific question of exactly the stakeholders of the Committee on Forestry (COFO), I will have to come back to you bilaterally on that later. I do not have that information at hand.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests for the floor. Item 12 is concluded.

Item 13. Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Point 13. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO

Tema 13. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO

(CL 164/LIM/4)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 13, *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*, which is presented to the Council for information only. The relevant document is *CL164/INF/4* and *CL164/INF/4* Web Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

In light of the amended modalities for this virtual Session, the related Web Annexes were produced in view of Secretariat presentations which are usually delivered in Plenary. My draft conclusions for this Item are in the same format as in previous sessions. However, a rich exchange has taken place between Members and Management through written correspondence procedures.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday July 01 2020, at 13:23

Notified that it did not have any written feedback regarding this Item.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 16:28

We took note the information contained in the documents *CL 164/INF/4*; *CL 164/INF/4 WAI*; *CL 164/INF/4 WA2*; *CL 164/INF/4 WA3*.

AUSTRALIA – SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (SWP)

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 17:09

We note the *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*.

PERU

Presentado el viernes 03 julio 2020 a las 17.23

No se tiene comentarios sobre el documento *CL 164/INF/4 Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO*.

INDONESIA

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 20:58

Indonesia thanks FAO Secretariat for providing information regarding *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO* as outlined in document *CL 164/INF/4*. Indonesia supports the active role played by the FAO in the three fora as mentioned in the document.

With regard to the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy, we would like to seek further information on the issue of data collection from the ground on real time basis. How this Strategy will cooperate with countries and other stakeholders in gathering real time data from the ground and what role that FAO can play in this?

With regard to the issue of the year 2020 as a "super year for nature," we appreciate the active role of FAO Management in providing contribution to the five events as mentioned in the document. We encourage the Management to keep its inclusive approach and consulting closely with stakeholders, particularly Member States in Rome.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Submitted Saturday July 04 2020, at 15:42

We note from the Annex that:

"In this year's report, the most recent estimate of the prevalence of undernourishment, the indicator to monitor Target 2.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is based on new data on population, food supply, and more importantly, new household survey data that enabled the revision of the inequality of food consumption for 13 countries, including China.

The last three editions of this report have presented evidence that the decades-long decline in hunger in the world had unfortunately ended..."

The United Kingdom looks forward to the launch of the annual *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (SOFI) report, coming out at a critical time as decision-makers consider food insecurity in the world and the impacts of COVID-19, compounding other challenges, including desert locusts and the effects of climate change, for example.

We welcome further efforts to ensure the reliability of data. We understand from paragraph 4 of the Annex that the figures in the report will be revised to reflect new data, including from China, and note that this is likely to have a significant impact on the headline figure reported in comparison to last year's SOFI report.

We strongly urge FAO, together with the other partner agencies of the SOFI report, to ensure that the communications provided on this, which will catch the news headlines upon the launch, are clear that:

- The SOFI reports a continued negative trend, with increased figures (despite a possible lower overall number).
- 1 in 2 people in the world who are food insecure are in Africa, which is also the continent with the greatest unexploited potential to feed itself and feed the world, as well as to contribute to reducing fragility, conflict and migration in the world.
- COVID-19 is likely to aggravate the negative food security trend much more, and to hit the most vulnerable most. There is an urgent need to reverse this trend.

We note also that paragraph 7 highlights that:

“...this year the report looks closely at the cost and affordability of healthy diets. Diet quality is a critical link between food security and nutrition outcomes that is often overlooked, but needs to be present as part of all efforts to achieve the hunger, food security and nutrition targets of SDG 2.”

We encourage FAO also to underscore that:

- Food insecure people suffer poor health. They become more easily infected with a virus such as COVID-19, and suffer more. Mortality rates are higher. Unless the world rapidly brings down food insecurity and malnutrition, it may never be rid of virus pandemics such as COVID-19.
- Healthy nutrition and healthy diets cost money. Today only xy % of people in the world can afford it, underlining the importance of ensuring the nutrition of the poorest, balancing this together with progress towards the world’s climate targets.

It will also be important for FAO to clearly explain how acute and chronic food insecurity and related figures fit together; again highlighting, also for those who may not have the time to read the full report, the key messages of the report so that focus is not diverted to an overarching figure.

We look forward to the launch on Monday 13 July and to FAO, together with the other agencies, effectively using this opportunity to raise the profile on the need to step up to do more to address food and nutrition insecurity, particularly in the poorest countries where the situation is also likely to be exacerbated further by COVID-19.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

1. The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for the comments received for document *CL 164/INF/4, Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*. It has taken due note of the comments and inputs.
2. In response to a question raised regarding the UN Secretary-General’s Data Strategy adopted by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the implications for FAO (*CL 164/INF/4 WAI*), please note that scaling up the generation of real-time statistics underpins the UN Secretary-General’s Data Strategy and, in particular, its new key “capabilities” of data analytics and data access. Real-time statistics can provide up-to-date and actionable information not only about what is happening, but also on the main reasons why it is happening and on what the response could be (data analytics). At the same time, they also ensure that everyone, and in every institution, it operates, can discover, access, integrate and share the data they need (data access).
3. However, producing real-time statistical information requires the development and use of new statistical methods to:
 - a) gather and process alternative data sources, including administrative data and earth observation data, to produce current fit-for-purpose statistics;
 - b) nowcast and/or forecast the estimates of key variables (e.g. crop production, crop yields, etc.) using all current information readily available.
4. In implementing this new approach, FAO will collaborate with Members in several ways:
 - a) Members will be involved in the development of these innovative statistical methods. Indeed, under the umbrella of the UN Statistical Commission, FAO is leading the work of the Committee of Experts on food security, agricultural and rural statistics (formerly known as the Inter-Agency Expert Group on food security, agricultural and rural statistics). This Committee, formed by experts from national statistical offices, ministries of agriculture and international organizations, has

approved, in March 2020, an ambitious programme of work for the 2020-2023 period³, which includes the development, testing and dissemination of statistical methods to produce real-time statistics at national level. Once finalized, these methods will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission and FAO Governing Bodies for endorsement, ensuring therefore a global consensus on the proposed methodologies.

- b) FAO will provide support to national statistical systems on the adoption of these methods through transfer of know-how and capacity development activities. By assisting countries in the production of their own real-time statistical information, FAO will then be able to integrate these official estimates in its data production process.
- c) National statistical systems will always be the first point of contact to collect the information necessary to produce FAO real-time statistical information (e.g. to collect the necessary ground truth information to validate and calibrate the crop area and crop yield estimates generated from earth observation data).
- d) In case official up-to-date and ground information is not available and collaboration with national statistical systems is constrained for different reasons, FAO may use alternative/non-official data sources in the compilation of real-time data estimates. In such cases, FAO will implement data validation procedures to inform Members on the data and methodologies used in the compilation of real-time statistics and seek their approval prior to their release.

CHAIRPERSON

I will now present my draft conclusion for this Item.

Item 13: Developments in Fora of Importance for the mandate of FAO.

1. The Council received concept notes on the following topics for information only. The United Nations Secretary-General's Data Strategy adopted by the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the implications for FAO.
2. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020: Transforming food systems to deliver affordable healthy diets to all.
3. The year 2020 as a "super year for nature" and preparations for FAO's participation in the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG)'s Biodiversity Summit 2020 (New York, 22-23 September 2020).

That completes the conclusions. The floor is open for any comments. I see no requests for the floor. This Item is completed.

Item 14. Tentative Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (30 November-4 December 2020)

Point 14. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent soixante-cinquième session du Conseil (30 novembre - 4 décembre 2020)

Tema 14. Programa provisional del 165.º período de sesiones del Consejo (30 de noviembre - 4 diciembre de 2020)

(CL 164/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

Our next Item is Item 14, *Provisional Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (30 November 2020 to 4 December 2020)*, which is set out in document *CL 164/INF/2*.

Written comments received by Members on this Item have been well noted, and will inform the construction of the Agenda of the 165th Session of the Council, which will be undertaken according to

³ ¹ UN Statistical Commission (2020). Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on recent developments in agricultural and rural statistics. E/CN.3/2020/13
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/2020-13-AgriculturalStats-E.pdf>

established process, that will include consultations with the Director-General and informal meetings with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Wednesday July 01 2020, at 13:23

Notified that it did not have any written feedback regarding this item.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 16:28

At this stage we have no any objections to the the Provisional Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (document *CL 164/INF/2*). At the same time we believe that the FAO Council Members would probably have the opportunity to revise it at later stage in case of a possible “virtual” format of the 165th Session of the Council.

AUSTRALIA – SOUTHWEST PACIFIC (SWP)

Submitted Thursday July 02 2020, at 17:09

We note the tentative agenda for the 165th Session of the Council.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Submitted Saturday July 03 2020, at 16:25

Please would you include in the Agenda for the 165th Session of FAO Council the following items:

Update FAO’s action plan to prevent and respond to Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse, in response to the findings of the 2019-2020 Employee Satisfaction Survey staff satisfaction survey, as requested by the recent Joint Meeting. We would like this to be a standing Item on the Council Agenda.

As part of Item 9, Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration, please will Management also include an update on FAO implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General’s (UNSG) repositioning of the UN Development System.

As part of Item 12, Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 164th Session of the Council. Please can Management also include an update on the status of decisions taken at the 163rd Session of Council that were ongoing at the 164th Session of the Council.

The United Kingdom would also support a stand-alone agenda Item on FAO’s gender equality strategy.

PERU

Presentado el viernes 03 julio 2020 a las 17.23

Al respecto, en los párrafos 6 y 8, debería incluirse el 183.º periodo de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas dada la fecha de su realización en octubre de 2020.

INDONESIA

Submitted Friday July 03 2020, at 20:58

To keep the momentum ongoing from the current Session of the Council which discusses the impact of the pandemic, it may be valuable for the Council to continue discussing on this issue, especially in addressing best practices, lessons learned, the potential challenges as well as opportunities in food system transformation. In this regard, an additional Agenda Item on the impact of post COVID-19 pandemic to food systems and FAO’s response may be considered by the Council Members to be included in the tentative agenda for the next Council Session.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

1. The Secretariat expresses its appreciation for the comments received for the document *CL 164/INF/2, Tentative Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (30 November – 4 December 2020)*. The comments are duly noted and will be taken up in the established process for development of said agenda prior to the 165th Session.

CHAIRPERSON

I concluded with the following.

Item 14: Tentative Agenda for the 165th Session of the Council (30 November 2020 to 4 December 2020).

1. The Council endorsed the Tentative Agenda of its 165th Session (30 November 2020 to 4 December 2020) and contained in *CL 164/INF/2*.

The floor is open for any comments.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Not specifically to Item 14 but to Items 11-14. Could I suggest that we annex all the notes that were submitted in response to Items 11, 12, 13 and 14, that we annex these responses to the Council Report?

CHAIRPERSON

I will give the floor to the Secretary-General for some clarification.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Very good question from Germany.

As a matter of fact, the process of written correspondence is mirroring that of items that have been considered in full discussion in the Council, and accordingly the exchanges, the comments received and the clarifications provided by the Secretariat will be placed on record in the verbatim records of the Council, just as the exchanges that happen in actual virtual discussion.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Russian Federation)

With regard to the request from our colleague from Germany, it would not be appropriate to make all these responses of the Secretariat as Annex to the Report because if we annex any documents, it means that it should go to the Drafting Committee to discuss each and every paragraph.

We can propose to make links to these documents as usual with numbers, to reflect all the responses in the verbatim. The idea from Germany is clear and we support this idea, but technically it would not be the best way to annex it to the Report.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Then, perhaps, it could be a solution to annex to this one sentence that you suggested for Egypt based on the Item. Can I just see one of them? I do not really remember the wording. Let us go to Item 11 for instance. Could you just show me please the wording for Item 11?

Perhaps to add the explanations given by Management on the comments made by Members. “Took note of the status of implementation of decisions and of the explanations by Management given to the comments of Members.”

CHAIRPERSON

Germany, is this okay for you?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Thank you, Chairperson for your flexibility. I would perhaps just suggest to say, “any explanations given by Management regarding the comments made by Members”.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you.

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

Could we just perhaps go on also to Items 12, 13 and 14 whether that can possibly be [XX].

CHAIRPERSON

You have done all of them?

Mr Ulrich SEIDENBERGER (Germany)

No addition needed from our point of view at Item 13.

CHAIRPERSON

That completes Item 14.

We can move on to Item 15.1.

Item 15. Any Other Matters – virtual discussion

Point 15. Questions diverses – examen virtuel

Tema 15. Asuntos varios – examen virtual

Item 15.1. Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee

Point 15.1. Nomination d'un représentant de la Conférence de la FAO au Comité des pensions du personnel

Tema 15.1. Nombramiento de un representante de la Conferencia de la FAO en el Comité de Pensiones del Personal

(CL 164/LIM/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Members are reminded that sub-Item 15.1, *Appointment of a Representative of the FAO Conference to the Staff Pension Committee* was included under this Item when the Agenda was adopted on Monday morning. The document before Council is *CL 164/LIM/4*.

Given that Ms Maria Cristina Boldorini has vacated her position from the Staff Pension Committee, the Council is invited to consider the candidature of Mr Guillermo Valentín Rodolico, Deputy Permanent Representative of Argentina to FAO, to replace and complete the term of office of Ms Maria Christina Boldorini as member until 31 December 2020 and as a member from 1 January 2021 until December 2023.

Can I take it that the Council has no objection to the proposed nomination? The floor is open.

I take it the Council has no objection. Therefore, sub-Item 15.1 is now closed.

Item 15.2. Statement by a Representative of the FAO Staff Bodies

Point 15.2. Déclaration d'un représentant des associations du personnel de la FAO

Tema 15.2. Declaración de un representante de los órganos de representación del personal de la FAO

CHAIRPERSON

Item 15.2 is *Statement to Council on behalf of the Staff Representative Bodies*.

As agreed at the start of the meeting, a *Statement to Council on behalf of the Staff Representative Bodies* will be made.

I invite Ms Susan Murray to deliver the statement.

Ms Susan MURRAY (General Secretary, Union of the General Service Staff of FAO and WFP)

Mr Independent Chairman of the Council, Mr Director-General, Mr Secretary-General of the Conference and Council, distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

The Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) are grateful once again for being given the opportunity to address the Council. This time it happens in unusual circumstances, in virtual mode, but as always, we are honoured to be able to share with you the perceptions and concerns of the staff we represent.

Almost a year has elapsed since the Director-General took office. From the address in December last year, we emphasised that we had already seen considerable improvements in relations between the Management and the Staff Representative Bodies and a new recognition of the importance of a motivated and satisfied workforce.

We also welcomed the new spirit of cooperation and dialogue in the Staff Management Consultative Committee, which is the main forum where we engage regularly with the Management of the Organization. Today we can confirm these positive developments with our conflict changes to improve conditions of service and staff wellbeing are still largely to occur.

We also welcome the arrival of the new Director of Human Resources. We are convinced that this can provide new impetus to the development of improving human resources policies to the benefit of both the Organization and staff.

In terms of the numerous issues that in our view need to be addressed, we have so far only scratched the surface. This is not surprising since we also admitted in our address to the Council in December, everything cannot be done overnight.

In addition, and unfortunately, the last months have been heavily dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which has significantly affected FAO and the way we work and has at least temporarily reshuffled the priorities of us all.

However, during this period we have worked closely with FAO Management to ensure that the concerns of the employees are addressed in its decentralized offices as well as in Headquarters. We appreciate that the wellbeing, health and safety of staff has been a primary concern of the Director-General and the FAO senior management throughout.

We believe staff have responded very well to the challenge of working in the middle of a lockdown. However, it has not been easy for everybody. We have continuously stressed the importance of managers and supervisors at all levels showing maximum flexibility and providing support to employees working in difficult conditions, not least staff members with children who face the challenge of reconciling work and family obligations in the home.

The situation is different in each country, but we know that many colleagues working from home are faced with issues such as electricity shortage and poor access to internet, closure of schools and transport restrictions.

In some countries, hopefully, the worst is behind us in terms of the COVID-19 crisis but in others, the worst may be to come. Plans to return to the office, once restrictions are lifted by each national government, must continue to give priority to the safety and wellbeing of employees. We applaud the cautious safety-first approach being followed in Headquarters and encourage a similarly cautious approach in all the decentralized offices.

The priority for some time has been the COVID-19 emergency but we look forward to engaging with Management on other topics important to the revitalization of FAO. The Staff Representative Bodies have recently shared with Management a paper highlighting the main issues in terms of staff-management relations and human resources (HR) policies that we would like to see addressed as a high priority.

These include appointment and career development, mobility, internal justice and conflict resolution, flexible working arrangements, and the abuse of short-term staff and non-staff human resources.

The results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey represent a major opportunity to start addressing some of these issues just mentioned. We welcome the constructive approach taken by Management and the appointment for the Deputy Director-General Ms Beth Bechdol [XX] to spearhead efforts to develop a corporate action plan to follow up on the survey and the decision to establish a task force for this purpose.

We know that the Finance Committee has “underlined that the importance of including the Staff Representative Bodies in the analysis of the results of the Employee Satisfaction Survey and in the decision on the actions to be taken thereon.” We, therefore, expect to be an integral part of the Task Force and look forward to participating constructively in this process.

Mobility is a critical area for professional staff. We have taken note of the summary report of the Inspector General to the 180th Session of the Finance Committee on the audit of the geographic mobility programme. Regrettably the Staff Representative Bodies were not invited to comment on the draft audit report before it was finalised, even though many professional staff members have been heavily affected by what we consider a seriously flawed and badly implemented programme.

The Association of Professionals have nevertheless provided comprehensive comment to Management and to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) on the summary report. We hope these comments can serve as constructive input to shaping a future mobility programme that meets the needs of staff and the Organization at the same time.

This Session of the Council has been charged with discussing proposals for adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) put forward by the Director-General. Some staff members will inevitably be affected by such changes, when some posts are abolished as functions change.

We have taken note with satisfaction of the clear message contained in the proposal submitted to the Council that “staff whose posts will be abolished “are expected to be accommodated through redeployment to vacant or new posts in the budgeted establishment, which should allow the adjustments to take place without loss of jobs and hardship to staff members”. We have also received confirmation from Management that a redeployment task force will be established to identify alternative positions for staff members on positions for which the functions will be abolished. We will follow the situation very carefully in order to ensure that all redeployment cases are dealt with in a fair and effective manner.

We firmly believe in strong and good relationships between FAO Management and the Staff Representative Bodies, and in effective consultations and negotiations between us on matters of concerns to staff. We are convinced that the current leadership of FAO shares this belief. We are particularly happy that the importance of effective consultative processes has been confirmed in an important recent judgement by the Administrative Tribunal, the International Labour Organization (ILO).

You might remember that on 6 March 2015, the previous administration unilaterally established a 55-month limit to short term employment, a limit that was implemented retroactively. This had a devastating impact on several long serving General Service Staff in the Temporary Assistance Pool who from one day to another found themselves without employment.

The Union of General Service Staff lodged an appeal which went all the way to the ILO Administrative Tribunal, and on the 10 February 2020, the Tribunal delivered its judgement which stated that the consultative process had been breached and that the relevant Administrative Circular was therefore set aside and was in other words to be considered invalid.

We appreciate that the FAO Management recognised the validity of the judgement without hesitation but were disappointed that the Administrative Circular considered invalid by the Tribunal has only this week been withdrawn from the list of Administrative Circulars currently in force. However, we are now awaiting proposals for a revised policy regarding short term appointments.

We would like to conclude by saying that we remain confident that we will be able to work together with the new FAO Management to make FAO a better place to work in the interests both of staff and the Organization, as well as the many countries whom we serve.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your kind attention.

CHAIRPERSON

Item 15.2 is now closed.

We have now concluded the substantive work of the Council. The Drafting Committee will convene its first meeting at 15:30 hours this afternoon. The designated private zoom meeting link as well as the documentation will be provided shortly.

I wish to remind Members that the Draft Council Report will be transmitted through the password protected area of the Members Gateway. We will reconvene on Friday for the adoption of the Report.

The timing for the adoption will be communicated to Members after the Drafting Committee has finished its work. I thank you all for your cooperation and your work in arriving at a consensus position, and I wish you all a good afternoon.

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 14:24 hours

La séance est levée à 14 h 24

Se levanta la sesión a las 14.24

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Sixty-Fourth Session Cent soixante-quatrième session 164.º período de sesiones
Virtual Meeting, 6-10 July 2020 Réunion virtuelle, 6-10 juillet 2020 Reunión virtual, 6-10 de julio de 2020
EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA
10 July 2020

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 15:01 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 15 h 01
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 15.01
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Portions marked as [XX] were inaudible due to technical reasons. Please submit all corrections
to: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Les parties signalées par [XX], pour des raisons techniques, étaient inaudibles. Veuillez communiquer
toute correction à: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

**ADOPTION OF REPORT
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME**

CHAIRPERSON

We can now proceed with the adoption of the Report. The relevant document is *CL 164/Report for Adoption*, which was made available through the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway.

I will now invite the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Benito Jimenez Sauma, to address the Council.

Sr. Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (México) (Presidente del Comité de Redacción)

Tuve el honor de haber sido elegido para presidir el Comité de Redacción de este 164 Período de Sesiones del Consejo celebrado en modo virtual, el primero en la historia del Consejo de la FAO. Creo que la calidad de las discusiones fue similar al de una reunión presencial con un buen ambiente en las negociaciones y un espíritu constructivo.

Agradezco la colaboración de los estimados miembros de este Comité de Redacción, es decir, Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Egipto, Finlandia, Alemania, India, la Federación de Rusa, Sudán del Sur y los Estados Unidos de América.

Señor Presidente, este buen espíritu de trabajo y flexibilidad nos pidió cumplir nuestra labor y se refleja, señor Presidente, en este resultado positivo que tienen ante ustedes. Quisiera apuntar a un error, un typo, que está en el Informe y es en el párrafo 18(q). Al final, en la penúltima línea. Lo voy a leer en inglés. Es una pequeña omisión que discutimos allá [XX].

Continues in English

I will switch to English.

In the penultimate line, it says “Sustainably manage forests, including through reducing and reversing,” and here it is a missing word. It should be “deforestation.” It should read, “Sustainably manage forests, including thought reducing and reversing deforestation, and access funding from platforms such as the Green Climate Fund”.

I will switch to Spanish again.

Continúa en Español

Señor Presidente, cumplimos con nuestra labor. Recomendaría a los miembros del Consejo que adoptaran este informe en bloque.

CHAIRPERSON

It appears that the Report of this Session may be approved *en bloc*. Any linguistic observations should be communicated in writing to the Secretariat for inclusion in the final Report.

Does the Council wish to adopt the Report *en bloc*?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKO (Japan)

May I say something now or later?

CHAIRPERSON

Is it to do with the adopting of the Report or some other remarks?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKO (Japan)

Japan would like to request to replace paragraph 22, subparagraph (g), starting “Noted the ongoing...” with the sentence, “agreed at the discussion of Item 10.” The reason is that the originally agreed sentence is for all Member Countries, including African countries, and therefore Japan proposed. The

current sentence is for only African countries. Our opinion is to use the originally agreed sentence, which is for all countries.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to give the floor to the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee for any comment they have.

Mr Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico) (Chairperson of the Drafting Committee)

I kindly ask Japan to repeat the paragraph because I missed it in my papers.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, could you kindly repeat your intervention again?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKO (Japan)

Japan would like to request to replace paragraph 22, subparagraph (g). It starts with “Noted the ongoing collaboration with African Union (AU) and FAO...” Japan would like to request to replace paragraph 22, subparagraph (g) with the sentence, “agreed at the discussion of Item 10.” It is because the originally agreed sentence is for all Member Countries, including African countries, and therefore Japan proposed. The current sentence is for African countries only. Our opinion is to use the originally agreed sentence “at the discussion of Item 10,” so that it is for all countries.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, would you be able to give a formulation?

Mr Yasuro FUNAKO (Japan)

The agreed sentence is the following, “Noted the ongoing efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on food security, including the collaboration of FAO with the African Union (AU) in the task force on the impacts of food security and nutrition in Africa, and should be discussed in the lead-up to the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) as a holistic issue”.

CHAIRPERSON

Chair of the Drafting Committee?

Mr Benito JIMENEZ SAUMA (Mexico) (Chairperson of the Drafting Committee)

We discussed that last night and I remember that phrase. [XX] current phrase was because of the collaboration between FAO and the African Union (AU) [XX]. The phrase that was presented to us was a little bit confusing, since it referred to FAO a couple of times. It mentioned something like the collaboration between FAO and the AU task force health. That is the reason that the phrase remains as it is presented, for consideration of the Council today, and we also made other adjustments to this paragraph.

If the Council wants to decide otherwise, then we are up for that, we are flexible. I remember that we discussed that the Council cannot decide on the health of the task force. That is the reason it is drafted in this way.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, you have heard the clarification by the Chair of the Drafting Committee? Would you go along with the wording as suggested by the Drafting Committee?

Mr Yasuro FUNANKO (Japan)

Our concern is that this sentence should be for all Member Countries, of course including African countries, but not only for African countries. If the sentence is going to the right way, it will be no problem. At the moment it is not our intention.

CHAIRPERSON

I think I will ask for the sentence to be put on the screen. Colleagues, you have subparagraph (g) as amended by the suggestion made by Japan.

Egypt?

Mr Haitham ABDELHADY ELSAYED ELSHAHAT (Egypt)

Egypt proposed this language to be included in the Report during our deliberation in the Council and, with all my respect to my colleague from Japan, I can accept if there is a kind of consensus within the Council, but I have to correct the name of the task force. It should be including the collaboration of the “African Union (AU) and FAO” and delete “and the.” It is the “African Union/FAO Task Force”.

CHAIRPERSON

I put it to the Members of the Council. Is this paragraph acceptable? This is my first question. The second is, if so, can we adopt the Report *en bloc*?

I see there is no request for the floor. With this amendment, can we adopt the Report *en bloc*? I see there is consensus to do so.

The Report is adopted *en bloc*.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

It is your work which has resulted in this unanimous support for the Report.

I now would like to invite the Director-General to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you, Independent Chairperson of the Council,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are at the end of this historic Session of the Council, the first virtual Session.

My appreciation goes to all delegations for their contributions, for their hard work in day and night, and active engagement during this week from South to North and from East to West.

As I said at the opening, the thorough discussions and vivid exchanges that took place in preparing this Council are unprecedented.

I am pleased that the Council approved the proposed *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2020-21*, and for its recognition of the tremendous efforts FAO has made to continue delivering and improving in the past months. This is a strong sign of trust in my efforts to translate our common vision of a new dynamic, inclusive, results-focused FAO into reality.

I also thank the staff body representatives for their positive interventions, sharing the same goal of ensuring staff safety and well-being. Solidarity is accumulating to build up. Our responsibilities are more focusing and compulsory.

We will maintain this open and collaborative working relation with you. I hope that you will see more new results of our silo-busting, our increased teamwork and our strengthened collaboration with partner agencies.

By improving the working methods and instilling transparency and accountability, the reformed FAO will increase and improve its delivery to the vulnerable, all Members, the farmers and the consumers.

We will continue supporting our Members in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on food security and food systems. We need to go beyond that: Now that we learned how to live with the virus, we need to focus on the recovery phase.

Building back better is a challenge that FAO is prepared for, with the Hand-in-Hand Initiative that more and more Members are joining. The Hand-in-Hand Initiative offers a ready-made coordination structure for an integrated COVID-19 response for food and nutrition security.

Our assistance to Members combating the desert locust, fall armyworm (FAW) and others will also continue to speed-up and scale-up. Saving livelihoods and strengthening resilience in the most affected areas remains crucial.

We will work hard to make our cooperation with sister agencies in Rome and abroad even more results-oriented and concrete. Our efforts to push for transforming the agri-food systems worldwide should be and will be step up.

As the major UN Agency focusing on the issue of food systems, we will continue supporting the UN Secretary General's Food Systems Summit with our technical expertise; as platform for Members to interact; and by hosting the Secretariat in Rome. With a series of events we are organizing, FAO should be champion and promoter of agri-food transformation.

The FAO Regional Conferences that we plan to hold soon will be crucial in that respect, but also to identify regional champions for the agri-food system transformation and make sure that regional perspectives are included in the Strategic Framework. We will focus on issues highlighted in our exchanges this week, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPs) and the multilingual character of FAO.

Distinguished Delegates,

This Council was a very special one. A special time, special moment, and special mode with special task to make it a historical one. We entered uncharted waters and faced numerous logistical and technical challenges.

Today we can say: We managed to successfully hold a supreme Governing Body meeting in a virtual mode.

Special thanks to you, Mr Khalid Mehboob, Independent Chairperson of the Council. I also thank all our employees, who worked very hard, so that we have a smooth first virtual Session of the Council in history. In particular, my appreciation goes to the technicians and interpreters. Thank you for your extra efforts.

In closing, I wish you all a good summer break and restful holidays. I will stay here in Rome and guide the work that is ahead of us. From think-tank to action-tank and from chief designer to chief engineer now.

Fulfilling FAO's mandate, as agreed upon 75 years ago and written down in FAO's Basic Texts.

The hard work lays ahead of us and we will make sure that the world sees the fruits of our hard work. Action leads to change, and history is made by, recorded by and evaluated by the people.

I thank you all, once more, for your attendance and your active participation!

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Before I bring the 164th Session of the Council to a close, please allow me to share some of my thoughts.

I should like to begin by thanking the Director-General, Dr Qu Dongyu, for his active participation and steady engagement with Members during the meetings of the Council throughout this week. Your personal interaction and availability help promote open dialogue between the Membership and the Management, and this is much appreciated. Director-General, with your personal commitment and the readiness of your senior leadership to respond to questions and queries from Members, FAO's governance is now more transparent and inclusive than before. I think I can certify this fact, as I have participated in over 100 Council Sessions.

I would also like to congratulate the Members of the Council for fulfilling the important governance role of Council, as the executive Governing Body of FAO. Your efforts this week to engage in lively discussion, sometimes over long hours, in a challenging new modality, have yielded substantial success. You managed to achieve consensus in providing guidance on a number of important matters for the Organization. This includes the *Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21* and the establishment of a Platform for Digital Food and Agriculture.

As I have always said, consensus decision-making strengthens the Organization, because it unites the Membership. This 164th Session of the Council has fallen at the mid-point of the first biennium of the Director-General's mandate. It is also the starting point of a chain of meetings of Governing Bodies which will culminate in the 42nd Session of the Conference, consolidating firmly a vision and direction for a relevant, dynamic and better FAO.

This week's Council has planted the seeds of discussion for the meetings of the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees, which will enable next year's Conference to consider for approval a new Strategic Framework and the PWB for 2022-2023, within the context of twin challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

This week was also another historic first in the governance of FAO, the first time the Council has been held in a fully virtual modality. I would like to commend the Director-General for his approach of dialogue and consultation with Members in the lead-up to this Council, while prioritizing the health and wellbeing of FAO Members and staff.

At the same time, I applaud Members for agreeing to a number of innovations in the method of work for this Council and then navigating them successfully during this week. This included streamlining of the Agenda, a new written correspondence procedure and conducting important and complex debates through an online platform.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Council and his team for their meticulous planning and relentless efforts, which have led to a smooth and successful virtual Council. In particular, interpreters on the frontline, and translators behind the scenes, have provided the highest standard of language products at the point of delivery, and the audio-visual technicians in the Conference, Council and Protocol Affairs Division (CPA) worked tirelessly to ensure that we had no glitches this week.

I can proudly attest to the success of the 164th Session of the Council, despite the numerous challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend you all for successfully participating in the first ever virtual Session of the FAO Council, and with this I conclude the 164th Session of the FAO Council.

I wish you all good health and a restful weekend.

The Council is closed.

The meeting rose at 15:31 hours

La séance est levée à 15 h 31

Se levanta la sesión a las 15.31