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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session - Cent cinquante-neuvième session -
session - 159.º período de sesiones**

Rome, 4-8 June 2018

VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

Rome, 4-8 juin 2018

PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL

Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018

**ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
CONSEJO**

Table of Contents – Table des matières – Índice

FIRST PLENARY MEETING PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA (4 June 2018)

Page

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.....5 (CL 159/1; CL 159/INF/1 Rev.2; CL 159/INF/3)	5
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.....7	7
Item 4.	Regional Conferences	
Point 4.	Conférences régionales	
Tema 4.	Conferencias regionales..... 9 (CL 159/LIM/4 Rev.1)	9
4.1	<i>Report of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa (Khartoum, the Sudan, 19-23 February 2018)</i>	
4.1	<i>Rapport de la trentième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique (Khartoum [Soudan], 19-23 février 2018)</i>	
4.1	<i>Informe del 30.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para África (Jartum [Sudán], 19-23 de febrero de 2018)..... 9 (C 2019/14)</i>	9
4.2	<i>Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (Nadi, Fiji, 9-13 April 2018)</i>	
4.2	<i>Rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Asie et le Pacifique (Nadi [Fidji], 9-13 avril 2018)</i>	
4.2	<i>Informe del 34.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para Asia y el Pacífico (Nadi [Fiji], 9-13 de abril de 2018).....14 (C 2019/15)</i>	14
4.3	<i>Report of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018)</i>	
4.3	<i>Rapport de la trente et unième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Europe (Voronezh [Fédération de Russie], 16-18 mai 2018)</i>	
4.3	<i>Informe del 31.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para Europa (Vorónezh [Federación de Rusia], 16-18 de mayo de 2018).....23 (C 2019/16)</i>	23

**SECOND PLENARY MEETING
DEUXIEME SÉANCE PLENIERE
SUGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(4 June 2018)**

Page

Item 4.	Regional Conferences (continued)	
Point 4.	Conférences régionales (suite)	
Tema 4.	Conferencias regionales (continuación)	
	<i>(CL 159/LIM/4 Rev.1)</i>	
4.4	<i>Report of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Montego Bay, Jamaica, 5-8 March 2018)</i>	
4.4	<i>Rapport de la trente-cinquième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes (Montego Bay [Jamaïque], 5-8 mars 2018)</i>	
4.4	<i>Informe del 35.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (Montego Bay [Jamaica], 5-8 de marzo de 2018).....</i>	<i>31</i>
	<i>(C 2019/17)</i>	
4.5	<i>Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Rome, Italy, 7-11 May 2018)</i>	
4.5	<i>Rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale pour le Proche-Orient (Rome [Italie], 7-11 mai 2018)</i>	
4.5	<i>Informe del 34.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para el Cercano Oriente (Roma [Italia], 7-11 de mayo de 2018).....</i>	<i>41</i>
	<i>(C 2019/18)</i>	
4.6	<i>Input from the Informal Regional Conference for North America</i>	
4.6	<i>Contribution de la Conférence régionale informelle pour l'Amérique du Nord</i>	
4.6	<i>Aportación de la Conferencia Regional Oficiosa para América del Norte.....</i>	<i>46</i>
	<i>(C 2019/LIM/1)</i>	
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.....	<i>51</i>
	<i>(CL 159/INF/4)</i>	

**THIRD PLENARY MEETING
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(5 June 2018)**

Page

Item 11.	Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse	
Point 11.	Politiques, procédures et mesures mises en place par l'Organisation en matière de prévention du harcèlement, du harcèlement sexuel et de l'abus de pouvoir	
Tema 11.	Política, procesos y medidas institucionales relativos a la prevención del acoso, el acoso sexual y el abuso de autoridad.....	<i>69</i>
	<i>(CL 159/8)</i>	
Item 3.	Programme Implementation Report 2016-17	
Point 3.	Rapport sur l'exécution du Programme 2016-2017	
Tema 3.	Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2016-17.....	<i>89</i>
	<i>(C 2019/8)</i>	

**FOURTH PLENARY MEETING
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(5 June 2018)**

Page

Item 3.	Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 (continued)	
Point 3.	Rapport sur l'exécution du Programme 2016-2017 (suite)	
Tema 3.	Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2016-17 (continuación).....	99
	(C 2019/8)	
Item 5.	Report of the Joint Meeting of the 124 th Session of the Programme Committee and 170 th Session of the Finance Committee (May 2018)	
Point 5.	Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent vingt-quatrième session) et du Comité financier (cent soixante-dixième session) (mai 2018)	
Tema 5.	Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 124.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 170.º período de sesiones (mayo de 2018).....	114
	(CL 159/5)	
Item 6.	Report of the 124 th Session of the Programme Committee (21-25 May 2018)	
Point 6.	Rapport de la cent vingt-quatrième session du Comité du Programme (21-25 mai 2018)	
Tema 6.	Informe del 124.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (21-25 de mayo de 2018).....	117
	(CL 159/3)	
Item 7.	Reports of the 170 th (21-25 May 2018) and 171 st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee	
Point 7.	Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier	
Tema 7.	Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas.....	129
	(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)	
	<i>Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears</i>	
	<i>Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés</i>	
	<i>Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos.....</i>	<i>129</i>
	<i>(CL 159/LIM/2)</i>	

**FIFTH PLENARY MEETING
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(6 June 2018)**

Page

Item 7.	Reports of the 170 th (21-25 May 2018) and 171 st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)	
Point 7.	Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)	
Tema 7.	Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)	135
	(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)	
	<i>Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears</i>	
	<i>Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés</i>	
	<i>Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos.....</i>	<i>135</i>
	<i>(CL 159/LIM/2)</i>	

**SIXTH PLENARY MEETING
SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(6 June 2018)**

	Page
Item 7. Reports of the 170 th (21-25 May 2018) and 171 st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)	
Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)	
Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación).....	163
<i>(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)</i>	
<i>Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears</i>	
<i>Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés</i>	
<i>Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos.....</i>	163
<i>(CL 159/LIM/2)</i>	
Item 8. Report of the 106 th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (12-14 March 2018)	
Point 8. Rapport de la cent-sixième session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (12-14 mars 2018)	
Tema 8. Informe del 106.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (12-14 de marzo de 2018).....	166
<i>(CL 159/2)</i>	
Item 9. Dates for submission of nominations for the Office of Director-General	
Point 9. Date de présentation des candidatures au poste de Directeur général	
Tema 9. Plazo para la presentación de candidaturas al cargo de Director General.....	176
<i>(CL 159/6)</i>	
Item 10. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 158 th Session of the Council (4-8 December 2017)	
Point 10. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent cinquante-huitième session (4-8 décembre 2017)	
Tema 10. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 158.º período de sesiones (4-8 de diciembre de 2017).....	177
<i>(CL 159/LIM/3 Rev.2; CL 159/INF/6)</i>	

**SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION
SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(7 June 2018)**

	Page
Item 7. Reports of the 170 th (21-25 May 2018) and 171 st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)	
Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)	
Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación).....	187
<i>(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)</i>	
<i>Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears</i>	
<i>Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés</i>	
<i>Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos.....</i>	187
<i>(CL 159/LIM/2)</i>	

	Page
Item 12. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2018-19	
Point 12. Calendrier 2018-2019 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 2018-19.....	187
<i>(CL 159/LIM/1 Rev.2)</i>	
Item 14. Provisional Agenda for the 160 th Session of the Council (December 2018)	
Point 14. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent soixantième session du Conseil (décembre 2018)	
Tema 14. Programa provisional del 160.º período de sesiones del Consejo (diciembre de 2018).....	188
<i>(CL 159/INF/2)</i>	
Item 15. Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation	
Point 15. Date d'entrée en vigueur de la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'âge élémentaire de départ à la retraite	
Tema 15. Fecha de aplicación de la resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio.....	189
<i>(CL 159/4; CL 159/5; JM 2018.1/2 Information Notes 1, 2, 3; Information Note 4)</i>	

**EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION
HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(8 June 2018)**

	Page
Item 15. Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation (continued)	
Point 15. Date d'entrée en vigueur de la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'âge élémentaire de départ à la retraite (suite)	
Tema 15. Fecha de aplicación de la resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio (continuación).....	197
<i>(CL 159/4; CL 159/5; JM 2018.1/2 Information Notes 1, 2, 3; Information Note 4)</i>	
Item 16. Any Other Matters	
Point 16. Questions diverses	
Tema 16. Asuntos varios.....	201

**NINTH PLENARY SESSION
NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
NOVENA SESIÓN PLENARIA
(8 June 2018)**

ADOPTION OF REPORT ADOPTION DU RAPPORT APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME.....	211
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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**FIRST PLENARY SESSION
PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

4 June 2018

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.40 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 40
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 9.40
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the first meeting of the 159th Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to welcome Council Members and Observers to this session, especially those of you who have travelled to be here today.

I wish to inform the Council that Venezuela 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.

Before proceeding, I would like to ask the Secretary-General of the Council to make a short announcement. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I 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.

I have been asked to inform you that the declaration made by the European Union and its Member States is contained in information document CL 159/INF/3. I wish to draw the attention of the meeting to this declaration.

CHAIRPERSON

I now wish to extend a warm welcome to the Director-General, who has joined us and I invite him to address the Council. Mr Graziano, you have the floor.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

It is an honour to open this Session of the Council and welcome all of you to FAO, mainly those who came especially for this event from their capitals. Allow me to highlight the presence of several Ministers from: Cameroon, Fiji, Burkina Faso, the Sudan, Jamaica, Zambia and the Syrian Arab Republic, and also the Under-Secretary of the Philippines. It is always important for us at headquarters to have direct contact with representatives of governments coming from their capitals.

I would like to start by saying that this Council Session concludes a very intense semester of activities for FAO's work.

As you know, we organized here at FAO headquarters three major events to put forward sustainable food systems and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In April, we held the Second International Symposium on Agroecology and also the First High-Level Event on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

We just had last week the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors.

Also last week, I participated in two very productive events. The first one in France was the Inter-Agency Coordinating Group Meeting on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). During the meeting, FAO's role and work in dealing with AMR was widely highlighted, not only in relation to the use of antimicrobials in animals but also in plants.

As you may know, antimicrobials have been increasingly used on crops as biocides and we have noticed that some crop funguses are becoming more and more resistant to the usual treatment.

During the meeting in France, I also signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the heads of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

We are reinforcing our tripartite agreement and the "One Health" approach, especially in relation to antimicrobial resistance.

Let me also say that, in April 2019, FAO and WHO agreed to jointly organize a Conference on Food Safety. It will be hosted at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva.

This Conference on Food Safety will also be part of FAO's efforts to assist the WTO in the ongoing agriculture trade negotiations providing scientific-based standards.

The second event that I attended last week was the third foodFIRST Conference, organized by Rabobank, the Government of the Netherlands and other partners. In the agenda, the challenge of how to empower young entrepreneurs in Africa, particularly in the agriculture value chain.

It was very useful also to discuss new approaches with representatives of the private sector, the President of IFAD and civil society organizations.

We signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with Rabobank as part of our strategy to improve partnership with the private sector. Now FAO will collaborate not only with the Rabobank Foundation, but also with the bank itself in projects that are being implemented in Africa. This opens the door to support rural communities in terms of financial credit and insurance against the impacts of climate change.

In this first semester, we concluded another cycle of FAO Regional Conferences as will be reported by the Chairpersons of the different regions during the Council. Let me summarize the main results and repeat what I already said in the Programme Committee a few days ago.

First, all Regional Conferences stressed the importance of transforming food systems in a way that we can deliver sufficient, affordable and healthy food for all, while preserving the environment and biodiversity.

Second, the Regional Conferences also agreed that it was imperative to build the resilience of rural livelihoods, especially regarding conflicts and the impacts of climate change. Otherwise, many people in the world will continue to be left behind, with a huge impact on the numbers of forced and distress migration.

Third, the Regional Conferences highlighted that hunger cannot be our only concern. SDG 2 calls for the eradication of all forms of malnutrition, and we are facing nowadays a global epidemic of overweight and obesity.

Today it is crucial to produce and consume food that is healthy and nutritious, while facing the increasing impacts of climate change.

For that, we cannot focus predominantly only on the production side, but on the food systems as a whole. It is not by chance that the word food comes before agriculture in the name of this Organization.

In the Regional Conferences, member countries also voiced their priorities for the next couple of years, and expressed their satisfaction with the close alignment between FAO's work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2016-17 is for me one of the most important agenda items in this Council Session. The report not only shows FAO's performance in the last biennium; it also gives us inputs and opens a new opportunity to discuss our priorities for the years to come.

This is the second PIR since the reviewed Strategic Framework that Management presents to member countries. The first one was in 2016 and was related to the biennium 2014-15.

As I have explained before to Members of the Programme Committee, now FAO is adopting a more rigorous measure of performance compared with the first report.

In the last biennium 2016-17, FAO achieved 82 percent of its Output indicator targets. If we had applied the previous measure of performance, FAO would have met 96 percent of the targets. This would represent an increase compared with 88 percent registered in 2014-15.

FAO, WFP and IFAD will sign during this Council Session a new Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce even more our joint collaboration in order to alleviate the suffering of rural people affected by conflicts and the impacts of climate change.

But countries should bear in mind that sustained peace and the end of conflicts are fundamental to bring the number of hungry people down again.

As head of a UN Organization, allow me to say that it is indeed very frustrating to see that FAO's regular budget has been flat for the last seven years, while we see global military expenditure continue to rise. In the last biennium, FAO was able to compensate in part this flat regular budget with an increase in the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources by 16 percent, up to USD 2.1 billion.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the increased support received from our donors. Let me say that 80 percent of this amount was mobilized to country, sub-regional and regional projects. This is a direct result of our decentralization effort to bring FAO increasingly closer to member countries.

Let me also say that FAO found in the last biennium an additional USD 37 million in savings, mainly due to low inflation levels and a favourable exchange rate.

Since 2012, FAO has managed to find USD 145 million in savings (USD 71 million in the biennium 2012-2013, USD 36.6 million in the biennium 2014-15, plus USD 37 million now in the last biennium).

Let me stress that FAO continues to be highly committed to increasing efficiency and giving value for money. But please bear in mind that it will be difficult to do more and more with the zero nominal growth affecting our regular budget.

I would also like to mention that the UN General Assembly adopted last week a resolution on repositioning the United Nations Development System to better assist Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

There are some challenges in the implementation of the UN Reform that may influence our work, especially in our decentralized offices. We fear that we will be asked to increase the contribution paid by FAO to be part of the Resident Coordinator system.

As requested by the Secretary-General, we will publish on FAO's intranet and on the Permanent Representatives webpage, all documents received in order to clarify most of the aspects of the Resolution.

There are other important items in the agenda of this Council Session. Let me refer to two of them.

The first one is about sexual harassment. I will participate in the discussions on this issue tomorrow morning, when I will provide comments about it.

The second item is the date of implementation of the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that requests to raise the retirement age of staff recruited before 2014, from 62 to 65 years old.

This Council should decide the best date for FAO to start implementing this Resolution. This same process happened in the governing bodies of other specialized agencies, namely the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

More recently, the Executive Board of IFAD supported 1 January 2020 as the date to start implementing this Resolution. Many countries that are members of this Council participated in the decision-making in IFAD, supporting the Resolution by consensus.

As you can see, different UN specialized agencies set different starting dates for implementing the Resolution, considering their needs, priorities and specific circumstances.

I have made a proposal to the Programme and Finance Committees for the date of 1 January 2021 as an optimal effective date for FAO. As I have already explained, this date was chosen mainly based on two reasons.

First, because it would allow us to hire new staff in some new and emerging areas that FAO still has to reinforce, especially climate change impacts and biodiversity. By 1 January 2021, 124 professional staff members are expected to retire under the current mandatory age of separation of 62 years.

The second reason to choose 1 January 2021 was that it would allow us to find USD 8.6 million in savings.

The Information Notes 1, 2 and 3 that we have provided explain these reasons and also explore different scenarios considering different dates for implementation.

Unfortunately, the members of the Programme and Finance Committees were not able to achieve consensus in order to make a recommendation for this Council.

Some members accepted Management's proposal of January 2021; some members asked for immediate implementation; and others showed flexibility, stating that a date between 2018 and 2021 could serve as a compromise.

The fact is that this Council Session has to find a solution for this issue.

In order to attend to additional requests made by the Joint Meeting, Management has elaborated Information Note 4. It presents some additional legal information, and answers some questions raised during the discussions.

Let me take this opportunity to compliment FAO's Legal Counsel, Antonio Tavares, for the great effort and work he is doing. Antonio has been in constant close contact with the legal offices of other UN organizations to give us the most accurate and precise information.

As Information Note 4 shows, there is a legal obligation to implement the UN Resolution. But the governing bodies of each specialized UN agency can decide the best date to start the implementation.

As I have said, this was already done by the governing bodies of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and IFAD.

In these organizations, the legal question of the authority of the governing bodies of specialized agencies to decide on an implementation date was not even an issue for the same Members that are present here in this Council.

We have not yet seen any legal appeals or questions raised on those decisions taken in other organizations.

I am still convinced that for FAO, the best date is 1 January 2021, for all the reasons that I have exhaustively explained before.

However, I understand that a different date could be considered in order to find a consensus.

Over the last days, I have had several bilateral meetings with Permanent Representatives to help find a compromise as we could not agree what we believe is the best option for the Organization.

So I would like to present what I consider the second best date; this is 1 January 2020, as it was agreed in IFAD.

According to Information Notes 2 and 3, the second best option will give FAO the possibility of replacing 85 professional staff members out of the 124 that I mentioned before. It will also allow us to have USD 6.9 million in savings (64 percent of the total of USD 8.6 million of expected savings).

The next Director-General could also decide to start the implementation of the UN Resolution at the beginning of his or her mandate in August 2019, if he or she wants to do so.

Furthermore, let me say that I do not see any reason for FAO to be punished with a date before 1 January 2020 by the same countries that supported the adoption of this date in IFAD.

So I urge Members of the Council to address this issue in a very constructive way in order to find a consensus solution that can be acceptable for everyone, as it was done in other UN specialized agencies.

It is very important that we preserve the consensus in our decision-making process in the last year of my mandate. Consensus among Members, and also between Management and Members, has been fundamental for us to work more closely together to make FAO a better organization.

Let me recall that, since I took office, I have been working to achieve consensus based on a clear division of responsibilities between the prerogatives of Management and the guidance of Membership.

Let me also recall that the FAO Constitution states very clearly that, and I quote: “subject to the general supervision of the Conference and the Council, the Director-General shall have full power and authority to direct the work of the Organization.”

So I kindly request Members to avoid the temptation of stepping into micro-managing issues or any proposal for co-management arrangements.

Maintaining a consensus will also help us to have more time to focus on our work on more substantive matters to implement the 2030 Agenda and face the challenges ahead towards a more sustainable development.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General, for giving us an overall perspective of the discussions and conclusions at the Regional Conferences, as well as for referring to some other issues and items which *inter alia* will be the subject of discussions during this Council session, such as PIR, sexual harassment, and mandatory age of separation (MAS). Your comments on MAS, particularly on putting forward another option will be the subject of discussion at the Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before continuing, in the interest of the safety of all of us, I request your attention for a short video presentation on fire safety.

Video Presentation
Présentation vidéo
Videopresentación

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the Secretary-General to explain the procedure for asking the floor, and to provide us with an overview of document delivery for this session. Mr Gagnon, you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind delegates that in order to ask for the floor, they simply need to press the red button located by their microphone. The light will flash until the delegate has spoken. The order of speakers will be automatically noted and displayed on the screen above the podium.

With regard to document delivery for this session, I wish to inform that out of 14 Main documents, three were published by or before the deadline of 7 May, four documents during the same week and one was published one week later. Six documents were reports of Regional Conferences and Council Committees that took place after this deadline and were published shortly after the end of their Session.

Finally, in line with the UN-wide “PaperSmart” initiative, I wish to inform Members that hard copies of Council documents are available on a print-on-demand basis and can be requested at the Documents Desk, if required. The Draft Council Report will also be transmitted through the FAO Members Gateway, in the password-protected area of the portal, as soon as available.

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 159/1; CL 159/INF/1 Rev.2; CL 159/INF/3)

CHAIRPERSON

The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable as set out in documents CL 159/1, CL 159/INF/1 Rev.2 and CL 159/INF/3. Document CL 159/1 contains the Provisional Agenda which was sent to Members on 4 April 2018, together with the invitation to this Session.

With regard to the Provisional Agenda, following discussions with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups, I wish to propose that the matter of the *Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation* not be discussed under item 5, nor under item 7, but as a separate item on the agenda. This would allow for focused discussions on this matter, which was the subject of extended deliberations during the 170th Session of the Finance Committee, as well as the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and 170th Session of the Finance Committee. Does this proposed amendment to the Provisional Agenda meet with the approval of the Council?

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country Finland.

When the Council last met in December 2017, the Nordic countries highlighted the need to improve the Council working methods. We would like to thank you for the following up on this issue in consultation with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups.

The Nordic Countries welcome the practical steps already taken towards that direction as well as the informal, very useful seminar with the Strategic Programme leaders on 28 May.

We are very happy that you are committed to continue the dialogue with the Regional Groups to improve the Council working methods. With these remarks, the Nordic countries are ready to adopt the proposed agenda.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

First of all, I would like to echo the thanks of my Finnish colleague for the improvements to the working methods of the Council and we look forward to that work continuing.

I would also like to ask a brief question. Will there be a statement from Staff Representatives Body at this Council meeting and if so, could you let us know when that will be?

CHAIRPERSON

I am told that the process for delivering the statement from the Staff Representative Body involves the Staff Representatives to first request permission from Management to make such a statement. I am told that such a request has not been received so far.

I see no other request for the floor, so we adopt the Provisional Agenda.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

With respect to the Provisional Timetable, set out in document CL 159/INF/1 Rev.2, I should like to point out that the items on the Provisional Agenda have been scheduled to allow the Drafting Committee to convene its first meeting in the afternoon of Wednesday, 6 June. This, in turn, should enable the Report to be adopted by the Council on Friday morning.

With regard to the addition of new item 15, *Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation*, this item would be scheduled for Wednesday morning immediately before item 16, *Any Other Matters*.

Furthermore, as you will note the standing item on “*Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*”, is tabled for this afternoon following the conclusion of item 4.

Does this Provisional Timetable, with the proposed amendment, meet with the approval of the Council?

Thank you, the Timetable is approved.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

With regard to new item 15, *Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation*, I wish to inform Council that, following informal discussions with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups, it is proposed that a Group of Friends of the Chair be convened to facilitate discussions on this item, also taking into account time constraints in plenary for comprehensive deliberations.

With the Council's agreement, I propose that the Group of Friends of the Chair be composed of two representatives from each of the Regional Groups, who are Members of the Council, plus up to two silent observers, who may also not be Members of the Council.

In addition, the Chairpersons of the Programme and Finance Committees will also be invited to participate in the discussions.

In this regard, I have received the following nominations from the Regional Groups: for Europe the members are Germany and the United Kingdom and the silent observers would be Romania and the Russian Federation; for GRULAC the members are Argentina and Mexico and the silent observers are Cuba and Panama; for Near East the members are Egypt and Sudan and the silent observers are the Islamic Republic of Iran and Yemen; for North America the members are Canada and the United States of America; for Southwest Pacific the Member is Australia and the silent observer is New Zealand; for Asia the members are China and Japan and the silent observers are Bangladesh and Thailand.

We still await the names for the Africa Regional Group.

Are there any objections to proceeding in this manner and the nominations received so far?

M. Carlos AMARAL (Observateur de l'Angola)

En ce qui concerne l'Afrique, les Membres du Groupe qui seront les Amis du Président seront représentés par le Cameroun et le Congo, et les Observateurs par le Président actuel du Groupe Afrique, l'Angola. et par le Zimbabwe.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Angola, we have taken note of the information provided by the Africa Regional Group: Cameroon and Congo as members and Angola and Zimbabwe as silent observers.

If there are no objections, we can proceed in this manner with the membership that I have just read out.

That is approved.

The first meeting of the Friends of the Chair will take place today from 13.00 to 14.30 hours in the King Faisal Room. Additional meetings will be convened as required. I look forward to fruitful discussions in a spirit of collaboration and consensus-building which has always prevailed at the Council.

I would now like to draw the Council's attention to my pre-session letter of 30 May, proposing that, as per previous sessions whereby an item considered by the Programme and Finance Committees or their Joint Meeting is a stand-alone on the Council Agenda, it will not be discussed under the respective Reports, but be deliberated upon as a separate item.

In this regard, the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 will be considered under item 3. This approach will assist in keeping our deliberations focused and avoid repetition.

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 now move on to item 2, *Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee*. Following consultations amongst the Regional Groups, the

following proposals for the three posts of Vice-Chairperson have been received: Mr Seydou Cissé of Côte d'Ivoire, Ms Anna Gebremedhin of Finland, and Mr Yousef Juhail of Kuwait.

The three Vice-Chairpersons are elected and my congratulations to them.

For the Drafting Committee, the Regional Groups have proposed Mr Marc Mankoussou of the Congo as Chairperson, and the following countries as members: Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Finland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Nicaragua, Romania, Sudan, Thailand, United States of America and Zambia. Are there any objections?

I see none.

As mentioned in my pre-session letter, I wish to reiterate the need for interventions to be kept as brief and focused as possible, and that preference be given to interventions by representatives of regions whenever feasible, rather than single countries repeating comments already made. I will now hand over the floor to the Secretary-General for some further information regarding submission of statements. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members that if you wish to make a statement during the meeting a copy of the text be provided to the Secretariat in advance. This will allow the interpreters to convey your ideas as clearly as possible. The email address for submission of statements will be projected on the screen behind the podium and is also given in the Order of the Day. Timely submission of texts is also of considerable assistance for the verbatim reporters and ensures greater accuracy.

Finally, I wish to remind Members to speak slowly when delivering statements to ensure accurate interpretation.

CHAIRPERSON

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, as Members may be aware, during my informal meetings with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups, since our last Council in December 2017, there have been discussions on improvements to the Methods of Work of the Council, including the process for the adoption of my conclusions at the end of each agenda item. The discussions reflected Members' preference for the draft conclusions to be displayed onscreen in order to facilitate a better understanding of the proposed text.

Having taken into account the need for Members to be able to react to the conclusions in an informed manner prior to adoption, while bearing in mind the need to avoid as far as possible protracted discussions in plenary, I have agreed that my draft conclusions be projected on the screen behind the podium, in English, after the close of discussions on each item. 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.

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that the conclusions should be concise and focus on decisions made by Council, with some flexibility afforded to the Drafting Committee in finalizing the draft report, while not reopening substantive discussions which remains the prerogative of the plenary meeting.

Furthermore, as agreed by the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups during our informal meetings, this proposed revised format will be tested on a trial basis at this session of Council, as part of the ongoing effort to improve our working methods.

Finally, may I remind you that in the interest of good time management, it is important that we start each meeting punctually. Please ensure that you are in the Red Room at the times indicated in the Order of the Day.

Item 4. Regional Conferences

Point 4. Conférences régionales

Tema 4. Conferencias regionales

(CL 159/LIM/4)

*4.1 Report of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa
(Khartoum, the Sudan, 19-23 February 2018)*

*4.1 Rapport de la trentième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique
(Khartoum [Soudan], 19-23 février 2018)*

*4.1 Informe del 30.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para África
(Jartum [Sudán], 19-23 de febrero de 2018)*

(C 2019/14)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now start this morning's work with item 4, *Regional Conferences*. The first item is sub-item 4.1, *Report of the 30th Regional Conference for Africa*, which was held in Khartoum, the Sudan, from 9 to 23 February 2018. Please ensure that you have documents C 2019/14 and CL 159/LIM/4 before you.

I will now give the floor to His Excellency Abdalla Suliman Abdalla Suliman, Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forests of the Republic of the Sudan to come to the podium to deliver the report on the 30th Regional Conference for Africa. Excellency, you have the floor.

Mr Abdalla Suliman Abdalla SULIMAN (Sudan)

The 30th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Africa was held from 19 to 23 February 2018 in Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan. This Regional Conference, as an opinion shared by all, was considered a historic moment for the Organization for the scale and quality of participation. In fact, the Conference was attended by 358 delegates from 47 Members of which 48 Ministers and Deputy-Ministers/Undersecretaries as well as other partner institutions or organizations that were represented at the highest level, such as the African Union Commission.

In this regard, I particularly welcome the mutual assistance and effective partnership between FAO and my country, the Sudan, in the preparations before and during the Regional Conference.

As Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa, I am pleased to confirm to the Members of the FAO Council that the adopted and presented Final Report clearly expresses the conclusions of the Regional Conference. The report also includes the declaration of the Civil Society Organizations whose participation in the Regional Conference was particularly relevant and noted. In addition, the Report also presents the Sudan Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Food Systems in Africa.

The Regional Conference highlighted the trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and the triple burden of undernourishment and malnutrition, and discussed the underlying drivers including adverse climatic conditions, conflict and a difficult global economic environment.

The Members were given the opportunity to discuss the negative impact of climate change on food security, nutrition and livelihoods, and considered innovative approaches for climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for the Africa region.

Key interventions were made with regard to leveraging Youth Employment Opportunities in Agriculture in Rural Sectors in Africa, with specific attention to youth engagement in agrifood systems.

The Regional Conference also put emphasis on the importance of achieving food security and nutrition through mainstreaming biodiversity across agriculture, fisheries and forestry, and welcomed the engagement of an FAO dedicated programme in addressing the needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Regional Conference called on African countries to step up their support and contribution to the capitalization of the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF), and called also for a wide participation in the Resource Mobilization Forum that will take place in the second semester of 2018.

I will present the recommendations from these exchanges at the next FAO Conference.

I am submitting to the Council the main recommendations concerning the other relevant points of the Regional Conference.

On Results and Priorities for FAO in the Africa region, it is important to note that the Regional Conference considered the “*Results and Priorities for FAO in the Africa Region*” covering achievements in the biennium 2016-17 as well as proposals for 2018-19 and beyond. It also recognized the importance of the Strategic Framework in providing direction for FAO’s technical work to address priorities in the region and ensuring effective delivery of results at country level.

The Regional Conference underscored the relevance of the three Regional Initiatives and supported their continuation in the 2018-19 biennium to help focus and guide FAO actions on priorities of the region, namely: Africa’s commitment to end hunger by 2025, sustainable production intensification and value chain development in Africa, and building resilience in Africa’s drylands.

The Regional Conference recommended that FAO continue to build on the results and impacts of its programmes, including in food security and nutrition, improved productivity and value chain development, as well as resilience building for effective management of risks and also to enhance its support to countries in the important areas of agribusiness development, youth employment, effective water and soil management, and control of plant and animal pests and diseases.

On the Decentralized Offices Network, the Regional Conference expressed its satisfaction with the implementation of the decisions of the 29th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa and the progress made in the decentralization of the FAO country office network. It also supported the principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO’s decentralized network coverage through the adoption of flexible arrangements as agreed by the 29th Session of the Regional Conference and the 154th Session of the FAO Council and recognized the need to review FAO’s work to provide effective support to Members according to needs, in a manner that is commensurate with, *inter alia*, their income status and in consultation with governments of concerned countries.

The Regional Conference noted the review of country office staffing models to increase adequate representation with adjustment to the emerging needs of countries and welcomed further review in light of criteria adopted by other UN agencies. The Regional Conference highlighted the importance of having adequate representation enabling the presence, high-level engagement and resource mobilization capacity to sustain and develop FAO’s field programme and requested further consideration of this matter.

Furthermore, the Regional Conference acknowledged the efforts made by FAO to strengthen national and international partnerships with key stakeholders for more effective field support and also appreciated the strong focus and work of the Organization at country level through achievements highlighted during the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of many FAO Representations in the region, and welcomed the 40th Anniversary initiative as an opportunity to renew the Organization’s commitment to its long-term presence in the field.

The Regional Conference recommended FAO to continue to prioritize partnerships and increase resource mobilization at the decentralized level, with emphasis on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and still keeping close collaboration with the different Rome-based and other UN agencies.

The Regional Conference took note of the “*Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016-19 for the FAO Regional Conference for Africa*”, presented to the conference for information.

On the basis of deliberations which resulted from the sub-regional consultations, the Regional Conference considered suggested topics and requested the Africa Group of Permanent Representatives, the Secretariat of the Regional Conference and the Chairperson of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa to examine the four consolidated proposals in order to make a final decision on the theme for the 31st Session of the Regional Conference.

Regarding the next venue of the Regional Conference, it was actually agreed to hold the 31st Session in the Republic of Zimbabwe in 2020. The exact date will be agreed upon jointly by the selected host country and the Secretariat of the Regional Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my firm commitment, as Chair of the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa, to regularly follow up on the responses to the recommendations and actions planned until the next Regional Conference.

Members peacefully remain mobilized to continue their efforts and contribute more and more to the realization of the joint ambitions they share with FAO.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

M. Henri EYEBE AYISSI (Cameroun)

Le Cameroun prend la parole sur ce point de l'ordre du jour au nom du Groupe régional Afrique.

Il me revient de rappeler que la trentième Conférence régionale de la FAO pour l'Afrique, dont le rapport vient d'être présenté, s'est déroulée à Khartoum, au Soudan, du 19 au 23 février 2018 avec pour thème «*Le Programme 2030 et ses Objectifs de développement durable (ODD): croissance durable de l'agriculture et transformation rurale en Afrique*». Cette Conférence a été une occasion pour tous les Membres africains de la FAO de discuter des questions de développement du continent en général, de celles des communautés sous-régionales et aussi des pays.

À travers ma voix, le Groupe régional Afrique voudrait, à titre liminaire, féliciter le Gouvernement soudanais pour les efforts qu'il a consentis, efforts qui ont fait de cette Conférence un grand succès, aussi bien au plan de l'organisation matérielle qu'au plan du contenu des travaux.

Le document C 2019/14 fournit une indication des points qui sont soumis à l'examen du Conseil. Ils sont quatre: les Activités prioritaires de la FAO en Afrique; la Décentralisation et réseau de bureaux décentralisés; le Programme de travail pluriannuel de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique; le Projet de liste des questions qui pourraient être examinées à la trente et unième Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique.

S'agissant des activités prioritaires en Afrique, il est important que les programmes stratégiques de la FAO dans le continent puissent continuer à s'arrimer sur la vision 2063 de l'Union africaine, sur la Déclaration de Malabo de 2014 sur l'agriculture et les priorités sous-régionales en matière d'agriculture. Les défis auxquels est confronté notre continent, notamment le changement climatique, l'emploi des jeunes, les spécificités des petits États insulaires en développement et des pays sans littoral, nous imposent la mise en œuvre d'actions concrètes en matière d'intensification durable de la production, de développement des chaînes de valeur, d'adaptation au changement climatique, ainsi que de renforcement de la résilience dans les zones arides, de développement de programmes qui ciblent les jeunes, et de mise en œuvre de l'Initiative interrégionale sur les petits États insulaires en développement de l'océan Atlantique et de l'océan Indien, mais aussi les États sans littoral en général; ces défis doivent être relevés pour matérialiser notre volonté commune d'atteindre les ODD du Programme 2030.

Concernant la décentralisation et le réseau des bureaux décentralisés, nous encourageons les efforts de densification des bureaux de la FAO en Afrique et leur dotation en ressources humaines et financières conséquentes, susceptibles de soutenir les efforts des pays pour le développement de l'agriculture. Par ailleurs, dans le cadre de la réforme du système des Nations Unies en cours, notamment le rôle du Coordonnateur résident dans les pays, il nous paraît tout à fait justifié que les Représentants de la FAO dans les pays soient placés à un niveau de représentativité et de hiérarchie professionnelle tout au moins équivalent à celui de leurs collègues des autres Organisations spécialisées. Il s'agit de leur conférer la respectabilité nécessaire pour influencer le dialogue politique en matière de développement des programmes stratégiques dans leur pays d'accréditation.

Concernant le point suivant, le Groupe régional Afrique demande au Conseil de prendre note du Programme de travail pluriannuel 2016-2019 pour l'Afrique, qui avait été approuvé par la vingt-

neuvième Conférence régionale qui s'est tenue à Abidjan en 2016, ainsi que de la liste des questions qui pourraient être examinées lors de la trente et unième Conférence en 2020.

Sur un plan spécifique en tant qu'État, le Cameroun tient à informer le Conseil que la mise en œuvre progressive des accords pour le fonctionnement du Bureau de liaison et de partenariat en République du Cameroun est effective. La FAO, depuis le premier trimestre 2018, a intégré à Yaoundé les nouveaux locaux que le Gouvernement a mis à sa disposition pour abriter son siège. Le déblocage de la première tranche du financement de programmes conjointement identifiés est également effectif. Nous nous réjouissons par ailleurs que le Cameroun ait été choisi pour la visite de terrain 2018 que vont effectuer les Représentants permanents de la FAO basés à Rome. Nous voulons faire savoir que les préparatifs de cette visite sont en cours et en bonne voie pour la période retenue du 27 au 30 juin courant.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

We would like to express our support and welcome the report that was presented concerning the Regional Conference for Africa. We do appreciate and attach great importance to the issues that were discussed therein, especially with regard to climate change and its repercussions on agriculture and biodiversity in this region, in addition to the need to reinforce employment for young people in the agricultural and rural sectors, and the need to, of course, mainstream biological diversity everywhere, including in the sectors of aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, and so on.

In regard to climate change, we would like to invite the Organization to reinforce its policies with a view to achieving strategic goals in order to strengthen the resilience of the various countries affected by these changes. As for youth employment, we do wish to encourage the Organization to find and define methods that will allow young people to carry out their role in the agricultural sector of this region. We express hope for support from FAO for biological diversity. And, when it comes to mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, we were saying that we encourage FAO to rely on local resources in this work in order to enhance food security through the conservation of the region's biodiversity.

In addition, we wish to point out that the discussions on the issues at the Conference were important and useful. Given the historical and geographical interdependence between the countries of the Africa Region and the Near East countries, there are common needs and challenges, most notably the scarcity of water, pests and transboundary plant and animal diseases. We thus call upon FAO to further coordinate with relevant Regional Offices on common needs and problems and appropriate solutions, particularly with regard to water scarcity and climate change and their impact on food security, the environment, natural resources, and any other issues of common interest. We would like to take this opportunity to invite the Organization to coordinate and interact more broadly with regional organizations and bodies in both regions.

The third Arab Water Conference was held recently in Kuwait under the patronage of the League of Arab States where water resources management was discussed along with water policies and strategies and the impact of climate change on such resources. Therefore, we call upon FAO to consider the recommendations that were made at that conference and the possibility of integrating them into the Organization's initiatives, action plans, and policies on water scarcity in both regions.

Finally, the Near East Group would like to express its support of the report on the Regional Conference for Africa.

Mr Dun NIU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China welcomes the successful session of the Regional Conference for Africa and appreciates the results obtained during the Conference.

We have taken note of the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration of Khartoum. We are persuaded that with our joint efforts the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will certainly be achieved in Africa. Also, through South-South cooperation and through responsible investments in agriculture and fair trade, China will continue as always to provide its contribution to African countries.

M. Bonaventure KOUAKANOU (Bénin)

Le Bénin se réjouit d'avoir pris part activement à la trentième Conférence régionale de la FAO pour l'Afrique, tenue à Khartoum, et adhère parfaitement au contenu du rapport qui vient d'être présenté.

Nous soutenons également la déclaration du Groupe régional Afrique, représenté par le Cameroun. Il nous paraît juste utile d'insister sur la problématique de l'emploi des jeunes dans l'agriculture, qui est un sujet de haute importance aussi bien pour le Bénin que pour la plupart des pays. Ce sujet a fait l'objet de grandes discussions au cours de la trentième Conférence régionale. En effet, nous nous sommes accordés à reconnaître que le secteur agricole demeure celui dont les potentialités pourraient permettre de résorber en grande partie et de façon durable, le chômage des jeunes dans nos pays respectifs.

Le Bénin pour sa part a initié de nombreux projets et programmes pour essayer d'essaimer dans le pays une nouvelle catégorie de jeunes exploitants, d'entrepreneurs capables de vivre décemment de leurs activités. Il s'agit là d'un défi majeur, pour lequel le bout du tunnel paraît encore lointain, les initiatives menées n'ayant pas encore permis de disposer d'une masse critique de ces jeunes exploitants agricoles de type nouveau.

De nombreuses questions restent ainsi posées dans la plupart de nos pays, en termes d'efficacité des stratégies opérationnelles, de pertinence des mesures d'accompagnement et de coordination, et d'interventions ciblées en faveur des jeunes désireux de s'installer dans l'agriculture.

Il est donc plus que jamais nécessaire d'apporter des réponses à ces questions.

La FAO a été interpellée et des recommandations ont été formulées à son endroit.

Nous pensons, tout au moins il s'agit de la position du Bénin, que la FAO, de par sa position à la croisée d'expériences diverses et multiformes, devrait pouvoir susciter davantage d'échanges et de partage d'expériences, afin d'aider les pays à mieux assurer l'intégration des jeunes dans les schémas d'amélioration de la productivité, de structuration des chaînes de valeur agricoles et de l'accès au marché, ainsi que dans les mécanismes de financement agricole.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Egypt would like to align itself with the statement delivered by Kuwait on behalf of the Near East Group.

We would like to congratulate the Government of Sudan for a very successful Regional Conference.

We also take this opportunity to support what the Regional Conference report underlined regarding the continuing need to prioritize partnerships and increase resource mobilization at the decentralized level, with emphasis on South-South and Triangular cooperation.

In this regard, we call on FAO to continue to make use of the available opportunities for South-South cooperation, especially between African countries. Egypt, through its MOU signed with FAO in 2014 for collaboration in Africa, is willing to strengthen its contribution to the priorities of the Region.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

First of all, I would like to thank the Government and the people of the Sudan, through the Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, for hosting a successful Regional Conference.

As mentioned in the introduction, this was an historic Regional Conference with record participation of Ministers, leading to a very rich and positive discussion during the Conference. This is an opinion shared by all.

Suite en français

Je voudrais aussi réagir à l'intervention et aux conseils de Son Excellence le Ministre de l'agriculture du Cameroun, au nom du Groupe Afrique, pour réaffirmer que nous prenons le rapport de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique comme notre feuille de route pour mettre en œuvre les recommandations des pays membres, que ce soit en termes d'orientation programmatique ou

d'organisation de l'appui aux pays, en particulier en ce qui concerne le renforcement de la décentralisation.

Nous avons pris bonne note à cet égard de vos recommandations quant à la nécessité d'assurer un bon niveau de représentation avec des représentants capables de mobiliser les ressources et d'être des interlocuteurs de qualité pour leurs homologues au sein du gouvernement.

Cela est d'autant plus important dans le cadre de la participation active de la FAO dans l'exercice de réforme des Nations Unies qui va démarrer et aura un impact important au niveau des bureaux de pays. Nous vous tiendrons au courant des progrès à ce sujet.

Continues in English

We took note of the comments by Kuwait regarding the similarities of some programmatic priorities between regions and the need for better interactions between different regions on challenges such as water scarcity. It is, in fact, one of the regional initiatives that we consider very powerful and we will come back to this when we discuss the Report of the Regional Conference for the Near East. Many lessons from this regional initiative in the Near East could be applied to Africa which suffers from water scarcity in many places.

Regarding the comments of both China and Egypt on South-South cooperation, I would also like to applaud the efforts made by these two countries: for China with regard to a major programme of South-South cooperation which is now being expanded, and for Egypt in development in line with the agreement signed in 2013.

Suite en français

Finalement, en ce qui concerne les commentaires du Bénin, l'emploi des jeunes est une priorité absolue, très clairement soulignée dans le Rapport de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique, pour s'assurer que la jeunesse rurale puisse trouver des emplois décents et ne soit pas tentée de quitter les zones rurales.

CHAIRPERSON

Are there any further comments from Members? I see none, so I thank you. Sub-item 4.1 is now concluded.

4.2 Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (Nadi, Fiji, 9-13 April 2018)

4.2 Rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Asie et le Pacifique (Nadi [Fidji], 9-13 avril 2018)

4.2 Informe del 34.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para Asia y el Pacífico (Nadi [Fiji], 9-13 de abril de 2018)

(C 2019/15)

CHAIRPERSON

The next item is sub-item 4.2, *Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific*, which was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 9 to 13 April 2018. Please ensure that you have documents C 2019/15 and CL 159/LIM/4 before you.

I will now give the floor to The Honourable Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services of the Republic of Fiji, who will report on the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

Mr Inia Batikoto SERUIRATU (Fiji)

On behalf of the countries of Asia and the Pacific, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to be here today and to have the opportunity to address the Council regarding the outcomes of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 9 to 13 April 2018.

The Regional Conference was attended by 140 delegates, including 10 Ministers and 45 Vice-Ministers and other high-level delegates representing 35 Member Country delegations plus 36 Observers.

The Final Report includes a Summary of the Main Recommendations on programme and budget matters “*for the attention of the FAO Council*” and another on regulatory and policy matters “*for the attention of the FAO Conference*”.

With reference to the agenda item on the Results and Priorities for FAO Activities in the Region, the Regional Conference:

- recognized the importance of the Strategic Framework in providing direction for FAO’s technical work to address priorities in the region and in ensuring effective delivery of results at country level;
- welcomed the actions taken and the results achieved in 2016-2017 in addressing regional challenges, through more focused Country Programming Frameworks and through the Regional Initiatives contributing to the achievement of FAO’s Strategic Objectives and supporting Members to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- supported the important contribution of the Strategic Programmes to the delivery of normative products and services, such as standards, voluntary guidelines and legal instruments, at country and regional levels;
- welcomed FAO’s adoption of a food system approach when addressing the food security and nutrition challenges in the region;
- acknowledged the activities implemented through programmatic and multi-sectoral approaches and their impact on tackling complex nutrition and food security matters;
- underlined the need for continuity in the strategic direction of the Organization and welcomed the alignment of FAO’s Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda indicators;
- urged countries to take over key regional platforms such as Dairy Asia and the Soil Partnership that are currently being sustained through FAO’s assistance.

Regarding the agenda item on Decentralized Offices Network, the Regional Conference:

- supported the principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO’s decentralized network coverage through the adoption of flexible arrangements as agreed by the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific and the 154th Session of the Council;
- recognized the need to review FAO’s global coverage to provide effective support to Members according to needs and in consultation with governments of concerned countries, recognizing the specific concerns of the Pacific and allowing sufficient time for consultations;
- welcomed the review of country office staffing models to ensure adequate flexibility with adjustments to the emerging needs of countries;
- noted an interest in addressing the language requirements that were in place for the recruitment of consultants;
- welcomed strengthening of the internal control systems and expressed appreciation for Management’s efforts in this respect;
- welcomed the efforts to seek efficiencies and savings, including in the area of administration and travel costs, and welcomed Management’s commitment to continue to pursue such efforts;
- acknowledged the efforts made to strengthen national and international partnerships with key stakeholders for more effective field support;
- underlined the ongoing need to prioritize partnerships and increase resource mobilization at the decentralized level, with emphasis on South-South and Triangular cooperation, and to continue close collaboration with Rome-based and other UN agencies.

With regard to the Prioritization of Country and Regional Needs, the Regional Conference:

- underscored that food security and nutrition are fundamental requisites for national and global stability and the sustainable socio-economic development of every country. Ministers noted the role of traditional food systems and balanced diets and their importance for indigenous communities;

- emphasized the importance of the SDGs, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sendai Framework in guiding future actions in agriculture, food security and nutrition, and welcomed alignment of FAO's Strategic Objectives with the SDGs;
- recognized progress made in implementing the five Regional Initiatives in the 2016-17 biennium and expressed strong support for the Regional Initiatives on Zero Hunger; Blue Growth; the Interregional Initiative on Small Island Developing States for the Pacific; Climate Change; and One Health in the 2018-19 biennium;
- appreciated the steps taken to decentralize roles, responsibilities, authorities and resources, and urged FAO to continue such decentralization efforts, whilst improving the technical capacity of the Organization.

Regarding the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) 2016-2019 for the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Conference reviewed the MYPOW; and endorsed it for the 2016-2019 period to frame the work of the Regional Conference, encouraged a regular and systematic review of the performance and efficiency of the conference, and looked forward to receiving a report at its next session.

On the date and place of the 35th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Conference recommended the acceptance of the offer of the Royal Government of Bhutan to host its 35th Session in 2020.

Before I conclude, once again I would like to thank the FAO Regional Office for its support in ensuring the success of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference held in Fiji.

On behalf of the Government of Fiji, I wish to thank again all Member Countries and all the Representatives for their support and all those who came to Nadi for accepting our invitation and spending a few days with us.

Last but not least, I wish to thank you, Mr Chairperson, for conducting this Council today and wish you every success in the deliberations.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

First of all, we would like to express our sincere thank and appreciation once again to the people and the Government of Fiji for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements in hosting the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific in Nadi, Fiji from 9 to 13 April 2018. We also wish to thank FAO for efficient preparation and organization of this meeting and informative report.

In this regard, the Asia Regional Group would like to highlight and give some recommendations to FAO to follow-up on the following points which were concluded during the Regional Conference.

We note the results and achievements of FAO activities in Asia and the Pacific in 2016-17 and the proposed actions in 2018-19. We also recommended FAO to accelerate the implementation of the five Regional Initiatives on Zero Hunger; Blue Growth, Interregional Initiative on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for the Pacific, Climate Change, and One Health in order to improve better food security and nutrition, the reduction of rural poverty, and sustainable agriculture and food system in the Region for the biennium 2018-19.

We also encourage FAO to support countries in the Region in other identified priority areas, for instance, the agricultural productivity and diversification, ecosystem and biodiversity, risk reduction and resilience building, GIAHS, sustainable soil and water management, empowerment of rural women and girls, capacity development for statistics collection, SDG monitoring and reporting, the Port State Measures Agreement, and the combating of IUU for sustainable fisheries.

We recognize the review of FAO's decentralized network coverage through adoption of flexible arrangements and encourage strengthening of internal control systems. We also support the ongoing need to prioritize partnerships and increase resource mobilization at the decentralized level through

South-South and Triangular cooperation. We appreciate steps taken to decentralize roles, responsibilities, authorities and resources to FAO Regional and Sub-regional Offices.

We are pleased with FAO's support in prioritization of country and regional needs. The Regional Conference emphasized that food security and nutrition are fundamental requisites for national and global stability and the sustainable socio-economic development. In addition, the roles of traditional foods and balanced diets and their importance for indigenous communities were noted.

The needs to increase sustainable agricultural production and productivity, to reduce food loss and waste, and to facilitate efficient trade of food towards food security and nutrition in the Region were highlighted. We are aware and deeply concerned about the challenges posed by adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, and the need to uplift quality of life in rural areas.

We recognize that Asia and the Pacific Region had achieved rapid growth in food production. We appreciate the significant progress made in the region in reducing hunger and malnutrition in the last three decades. However, we also expressed concern over continued high level of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies as well as the rising incidence of obesity and overweight. We note that a key challenge for the countries in the region is to bring better sustainable agriculture in order to feed the growing population in this region.

In this regard, we shall strengthen and improve agro-ecological methods, agricultural diversification, reduction of food loss and waste, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the use of information and communication technologies in order to ending hunger and malnutrition in the Region. Therefore, we recommend FAO to support the governments in strengthening comprehensive policies for family farming and assist countries in identifying and enhancing public-private partnership opportunities, through South-South cooperation and other methodologies of collaboration.

We recognize the importance of enhanced climate action in the agricultural sector. The actions were prioritized including disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture sector and implementation plans under the 2030 Agenda.

We acknowledge FAO's initial programme support under the Interregional Initiative for the Pacific Small Island Developing States and we encourage FAO to sustain the momentum built through this initial support.

The challenges of food safety in Asia and the Pacific Region were reviewed with its strong links to nutrition, trade, and the Regional Initiative on One Health. We also support the FAO's programme assistance to strengthen national food safety and international trade.

Last but not least, we would like to congratulate FAO for the achievements at the country level highlighted in the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of FAO Representations in the Region.

Mr Dun NIU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China participated in the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

First of all, we would like to thank Fiji for their contribution to a successful meeting. At the same time, we would like to thank FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for their excellent organization.

We deeply felt the purpose and determination of the countries and peoples of Asia and the Pacific in realizing the goals to reach zero hunger. This year marks the fortieth year of China's reform and opening up. During forty years, China has stabilized food production at 600 million tons and has effectively fed 1.38 billion people.

The Chinese Government has always given great importance to the issue of rural areas and farmers. We would like underline that the Chinese Government has built up and based the economy, provided incentives to farmers, and committed to strengthening the agricultural cooperation assistance with other developing countries through different channels and methods, including the cooperation with FAO.

Through FAO, China will continue to develop a multilateral agricultural South-South cooperation and will send experts and technical personnel to host countries into the field. We will develop agricultural

production, together with the farmers of the host countries. China also wishes to expand the agricultural investment in Asia and the Pacific Region and we aim to obtain a favourable result so that we may achieve SDGs.

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Fiji for hosting a very successful conference in their country and fully support the recommendations emerging therefrom as well as the underpinning role of the FAO regional office. I also give the commitment of India to engage proactively in fulfilling these objectives.

The Strategic Objective (SO) 2 in the regional reports is "*Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable*" but the mention of forestry *per se* needs to be in the actionable points. India, as many other countries, gives a simultaneous emphasis on improving forest cover as well as trees outside forests with a strong emphasis on agroforestry, which has multi-fold benefits of contributing to nutrition security, livelihoods (enhanced incomes for the farmers), and also for combating climate change (Objective 6).

Correlation between forestry and sustainable agriculture, especially in forest fringe areas, is inseparable. Hence the importance of natural resource management. Conservation of biodiversity including agri-biodiversity, and ecosystem services for sustainable land use and climate resilient agriculture is imperative.

Thus while on one hand it is important that protection, conservation and sustainable use of forests is promoted, on the other hand, importance of agroforestry on farmlands and culturable wastelands, as an important component of Integrated Farming Systems (IFS), which is especially important for the rainfed areas, may be underscored for the utility in supplementing farm incomes and as a tool to building resilience of farmers and rural people against threats of climate change and natural calamities, and as source of food, nutrition, fodder and energy.

Agricultural practices are often the primary drivers of reduced ecosystem services; undermining long term sustainability of agriculture (agrobiodiversity loss, soil and water quality) and are often incompatible with the long-term conservation objectives of high ecological landscapes. Best practices from India on natural and traditional farming (food systems) emerging in small holders agricultural landscapes, along with research and development in these issues, can be replicated and scaled in additional geographies to reduce vulnerabilities to climate change impact, both within the region as well as through South-South cooperation. In India it rests with promotion of pulses and minor millets cultivation, which are largely grown in rainfed areas under soil moisture stress conditions.

With appropriate research and development, India has had record production in pulses, fruits and vegetables in the past couple of years. Experiences of which can be shared to boost the sector in the countries in the Region.

We believe that with FAO spearheading these efforts, and with cooperation of countries within the Region as well as other countries with which India already has strong cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors, food and nutrition security even in the face of the challenges being posed by climate change will be ensured.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We thank His Excellency, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services of the Republic of Fiji and the Chairperson of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) for introducing the report. Afghanistan is honoured to make this intervention on behalf of the Near East Group, but before commenting on the report, it is important to mention a few facts about the Region of Asia and the Pacific.

Despite good progress in recent years, the region with a population of 4.4 billion is home to 60 percent of the world's poor. Nearly 520 million people do not have enough food to eat and the region is most disaster prone in the world.

Therefore, the challenge of zero hunger and improving nutrition, especially for the vulnerable populations and people living in remote areas remains high.

The Near East Group welcomes the Report of the APRC 34. The topics reviewed reflected the challenges facing the Asia and the Pacific and we value the relevance, focus of the recommendations of the report, including the special attention given to collaboration and to partnership with other stakeholders.

As requested, the Near East Group will address only matters of concern to the Council and these include the following.

Firstly, on the results achieved in 2016-17, the Near East Group welcome the conclusions as spelled out in paragraph 28 of the Report, especially the role played by the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs), the five regional initiatives, and the need for continuity in the strategic direction of FAO.

Secondly, as for the priorities for 2018-19 biennium, the APRC has recommended concrete proposals as stated in paragraph 29 of the Report. The Near East Group is impressed by the specificity of the priorities and wishes to underline in particular: acceleration in the implementation of the regional initiatives, monitoring of the progress of SDGs implementation in the Region, support to Globally Important Agriculture Heritage Systems (GIAHS) in addressing triple burden of nutrition and the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in Small Islands Developing States (SIDS).

Thirdly, the Near East Group is pleased to note that APRC continues to give support to flexible arrangements in FAO's decentralized network in Asia and the Pacific, and which FAO emphasizes partnership with regional institutions, South-South and Triangular cooperation, as well as RBAs collaboration to deliver efficient programme implementation at country and regional levels.

The fruitful experience gained in the Region with respect to food security and agriculture provides ample volume of food literature, which could be effectively disseminated through South-South cooperation worldwide.

Fourthly, the Near East Group supports section C of the Report, especially paragraph 36 on prioritization of country and regional needs, namely food security and nutrition adaptations to the adverse effects of climate.

We also defend the principle of raising agricultural productivity, especially of smallholders and family farms, reducing food losses, building institution and human capacity, and mainstreaming gender equality.

Fifthly, the Near East Group supports MYPOW 2016-19 for the APRC with these three outcomes and each result of the transferred set of targets, outputs, activities, and working methods.

That said, the Near East Group notes that the structure of MYPOWs for all FAO regional conferences is more or less the same. Why should it be so?

The Near East Group wishes to thank the Government of Bhutan for accepting to host the 35th Session of the APRC. Therefore, with these comments the Near East Group supports the report of the APRC.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

On behalf of the Region, I would like to thank FAO and the Government of Fiji for hosting a successful Asia Pacific Regional Conference. The Conference was held under difficult circumstances with two cyclones striking Fiji, causing significant impact to the local community and providing a real-time demonstration for FAO officials and delegates of some of the challenges faced by Pacific Island Countries.

As we heard from the Minister of Fiji, the Conference focused its attention on the triple burden of malnutrition and the importance of adopting a nutrition sensitive food systems approach.

It recognized the importance of enhanced climate action to strengthen the resilience of food systems and committed to accelerated implementation of the Global Action Programme on Food Security and Nutrition in SIDS in the Pacific.

The Conference also highlighted that food safety is essential for safeguarding public health, improving nutrition, and is also vital for the wellbeing and productivity of people in the Region. Australia welcomes FAO's support to address challenges in this Region.

FAO plays an important role in contributing to the economic prosperity of the Asia Pacific.

One example is the standard setting work in plant health and food safety standards. This work is important to facilitate agricultural trade, strengthen biosecurity, and underpin food security across the Region.

We, as a country, are committed to working with countries in the Pacific to help address plant, pests, and animal diseases. With increases in transboundary movements, there are increases in plant and animal health diseases and biosecurity risks. The fact of addressing these risks helps to maintain open markets and manage economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Food safety and the international food standards work of Codex remains very important. We encourage FAO to provide additional resources to support improvements in food safety standards across Asia and the Pacific Region.

Climate change also poses challenges for all sectors of the economy, but particularly for agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. For the South-West Pacific members, climate change represents a significant risk to their economies and to their societies.

Climate change requires all countries to contribute to the solution and necessitates significant effort from international organizations, including FAO, to help vulnerable countries.

Fisheries also are a very important source of income and food security in the Region. We strongly support existing regional plans for fisheries improvement, such as the Blue Growth Initiative as well as the regional roadmap for sustainable Pacific fisheries and a new plan for coastal fisheries pathways to change. We encourage FAO to ensure its fisheries work aligns with these programmes.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing is a serious threat to sustainable fisheries, so we strongly support regional and international measures to combat it wherever it occurs. We are a party to the Port State Measures Agreement and support the use of the Port State Measures Agreement as part of the suite of tools to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

We welcome FAO's efforts in the global action plan on food security and nutrition in small island developing states as well as the finalization of the Pacific Multi Country Programming Framework.

We also welcome development of the regional framework for accelerating action on food security and nutrition in Pacific SIDS. Together, these documents provide a key framework for shaping FAO's engagement in the Pacific and addressing priority issues across the Region.

They also provide guidance to other partners and stakeholders on FAO activities and will provide a platform for developing more effective partnerships in the region. Hence, we encourage FAO to continue strengthening its partnerships, particularly with the Pacific community.

If FAO is to be effective in the Pacific, it is vital that assistance programmes are tailored to its unique circumstances. It is also important that Pacific island countries be empowered to lead their own development path and that international organizations, donors, and other partners are engaged on the ground and have the capacity to support local priorities as they emerge and evolve.

While Australia encourages FAO to allocate more resources to the South-West Pacific, we also encourage FAO to carefully consider any structural changes that may negatively impact sub-regional coherence, coordination, and accountability.

In 2015, all UN Member States committed to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We see the work of FAO as central to achieving them and we thank it for its ongoing efforts.

Ms Harriet M. NDUMA (Kenya)

Kenya presents this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. Let me take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the report presented by the Distinguished Minister of Fiji.

The Africa Group notes that the various issues discussed during the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific region held in Nadi Fiji from 9 to 13 April are relevant and important to the developing countries and especially Africa.

We welcome and align ourselves to the recommendations reached by the conference. We note that the agriculture sector is under threat from climate shocks, emerging pests and diseases as well as depletion of natural resources.

The Africa Group believes that climate change is a key issue that is affecting agriculture production and productivity globally and we therefore need to continue developing and implementing climate smart agricultural innovations and technologies.

We note the significant progress made by Asia and the Pacific Region in dramatically reducing extreme poverty and hunger. However, we also note that the challenges of malnutrition, still remain with increasing cases of micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity. We welcome the support offered by FAO to the Region to improve the state of food and agriculture. We observe that this has been achieved through gender- and nutrition- sensitive agriculture programmes and technical support.

The Africa Regional Group supports the recommendation for FAO to provide leadership and support in the use of “One Health” Strategy to reduce food-borne illnesses, transboundary animal and plant diseases, AMR and chemical residues to foster an enabling environment for voluntary standards and codes of practice.

Indeed, such leadership by FAO will expand food safety interventions and “One Health” approaches in the Pacific and the world over towards food safety certification for improved market access.

The Africa Regional Group also welcomes the programmatic approach of FAO in which implementation of regional priorities are accelerated and enhanced through the decentralized units. Indeed the Member States are able to align individual priorities to FAO’s programming framework and build synergy in addressing pertinent issues.

In conclusion, the Africa Regional Group recommends the Report on the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific to the Council.

Mr Agung HENDRIADI (Indonesia)

We would like to congratulate Fiji for hosting the successful 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

Indonesia aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group statement, delivered by Thailand and also other countries this morning, and we would like to add some comments supporting the Asia Regional Group statement.

As highlighted by the Director-General during the opening of the Conference, all forms of malnutrition need to be eradicated. The Director-General also emphasized the importance of development in rural areas as poverty is heavily concentrated in rural communities. We agree with the Director-General’s observation on this matter. In this regard, Indonesia would like to highlight some observations as follows:

First, with regard to paragraph 29.iv, the need for equitable geographical representation of technical experts to refresh FAO works in achieving FAO Strategic Objectives. It is very much welcome in order to increase national experts of member countries.

Second, regarding the analytical work to address the challenges of the triple burden of malnutrition in the Asia-Pacific, Indonesia supports the analytical work by FAO as member countries will get benefit from the work. Indonesia established a national team from cross-sector institutions to address food security and nutrition issues and believes that the analytical work of FAO will improve the performance of the team once the result is published.

Third, in line with the important roles of smallholders, family farmers and fishers, Indonesia supports the family farming concept as smallholder farmers are included in the concept. Poverty is indeed concentrated in rural areas. Thus, much attention should be given to small-scale farmers. It is based on this spirit that the Indonesian Government hosted a side event during the Conference, with the theme

“Improving Small-Scale Farmers’ Welfare” on the margins of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific. This side event is aimed at raising the awareness and the importance of giving proper attention to small-scale farmers in order to eradicate poverty. This is certainly consistent with our commitments under the 2030 Agenda. The Indonesian Government believes that by giving proper focus towards small-scale farmers, the international community can eradicate poverty in all its forms as agreed under the 2030 Agenda.

Fourth, referring to items 29.iii and 40 of the Report, and as previously highlighted by the Asia Regional Group, Indonesia strongly supports any ideas to improve rural livelihoods, particularly by promoting GIAHS. We are of the view that GIAHS is a sustainable solution to develop rural areas in either rural income earning or environment conservation from agricultural activities.

As the Conference recognized, Asia Pacific has significantly reduced hunger and malnutrition in the last three decades. But the region is witnessing rapid population growth and thus we should not loosen our efforts and maintain our resilience in meeting food security for the Region. In this regard, we would like to underline Conference’s recommendation to FAO to provide assistance to smallholders and family farmers to enhance their wellbeing. We think it is very urgent for FAO to take this recommendation into account and take concrete steps in order to provide the necessary assistance to smallholders and family farmers.

With these comments, Indonesia endorses the report and is ready to adopt it as it is.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

I would like to thank His Excellency Inia Batikoto Seruiratu, Minister for Agriculture, Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management and Meteorological Services of the Republic of Fiji, for traveling from very far to present this report.

I would like also to highlight, as already mentioned by the Representative of Australia, that this Regional Conference will be remembered as a Regional Conference with two major cyclones, Josie and Keni. Keni took place at the time of the Regional Conference. It allowed participants to acknowledge first-hand the terrible impact of these extreme weather events, but also the state of preparedness of the Government of Fiji that allowed the Conference to take place in normal conditions. Accurate meteorological services were particularly impressive that allowed us in all locations to monitor the evolving of the cyclone and ultimately to arrive safely to the Regional Conference. That is one important point.

As for the comments made by Thailand on behalf of the Asia Regional Group, we take note of the request to FAO to accelerate the implementation of the regional initiatives, and we also acknowledge many thematic priorities that have been highlighted in a very detailed Report of the Regional Conference. Many of you intervened. I think we have all the range of expertise available in FAO from Codex, food safety, climate-smart agriculture, “One Health”, sustainable production, and sustainable fisheries.

India reminded us of the importance of keeping forestry in the forefront when we speak of SO 2 on sustainable production. A major programme of work for the region as underlined in this Report not only in the Report C 2019/15, but also in the Report provided by the Secretariat that summarised for all the Regional Conferences the priorities that you have defined for the work of FAO in the coming years. It is document CL 159/LIM/4, to which I would like to draw your attention

China reminded us of the progress of the last 40 years since the partnership with FAO started and the willingness of China to continue and to expand the South-South cooperation programme, which is excellent news. I have been personally involved in this programme and see what China can offer to the world. I believe that we can do much more than what has been done so far. It was also positive to hear India offering to share more of its incredible expertise in many domains through South-South cooperation and the partnership programme, so we will follow up bilaterally in this regard.

Afghanistan reminded us that the region is hosting 60 percent of the hungry people and is prone to natural disasters. The regional initiatives that have been agreed and defined for the region will help address this challenge. It is also important to continue to improve the performance of what has been supported and guided by this Council and the Programme Committee, the performance of the Country

Programming Framework. The Country Programming Framework will become even more relevant with the United Nations Reform whereby organizations like FAO will be requested to have even more focus and well-defined contributions to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to allow better support of the United Nations as a whole to the countries to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. We will continue to work on these to improve the overall performance.

Besides, we take due note of comments made by Australia regarding the specific need in terms of the decentralized office support. Particularly, the suggestions on the Pacific Region, and to make sure that whatever is proposed in terms of transformation, change, adjustment is strengthening rather than weakening the capacities, knowing that the resources remain limited.

The recommendation made by Kenya on behalf of the Africa Regional Group for FAO to give priorities to a number of items that were emphasized in the Report of the Regional Conference, is well received.

Finally, Indonesia reminded us about the need for the FAO Secretariat to continue to broaden its base of expertise on a geographic basis to ensure that we recruit the available expertise in all countries of the world. We will work in this direction with the Human Resource Division.

Among all the regional priorities, GIAHS, support to smallholders, and family farming will remain on top of the agenda.

CHAIRPERSON

I see there are no other requests from the floor, so we can consider item 4.2 closed.

- 4.3 Report of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe
(Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018)*
- 4.3 Rapport de la trente et unième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Europe
(Voronège [Fédération de Russie], 16-18 mai 2018)*
- 4.3 Informe del 31.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para Europa
(Vorónezh [Federación de Rusia], 16-18 de mayo de 2018)
(C 2019/16)*

CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to sub-item 4.3, *Report of the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe*, which was held in Voronezh, Russian Federation, from 16 to 18 May 2018.

Please ensure that you have documents C 2019/16 and CL 159/LIM/4 before you. I will now give the floor to Mr Spyridon Ellinas of Cyprus, Vice-Chairperson of the Regional Conference for Europe, who will report on its recently concluded 31st Session.

Mr Spyridon ELLINAS (Cyprus)

Firstly, allow me to extend greetings and wishes for the full success for this Council from the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

On behalf of the European and Central Asian countries, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Russian Federation for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization and meaningful 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC).

It is my pleasure today to address the Council and present the outcomes of the ERC. The ERC was attended by 44 Members from the Region, along with three observer Members, one United Nations organization, one intergovernmental organization, two international nongovernmental organizations, and two civil society organizations, as well as two representatives from the private sector and one from the research and academic sector.

The ERC Report is available as document C 2019/16 which outlines in particular those recommendations that require the Council's attention related to the Global and Regional Policy and Regulatory Matters as well as other matters. I will therefore limit myself to actions and presentation of some of the highlights of the debates of the ERC.

On the first day of the Ministerial Roundtable discussion, the delegates debated sustainable agriculture and food systems in Europe and Central Asia in its changing climate. The ERC asked FAO to support a food system approach in rural and urban policies and planning to incorporate agroecological approaches and diversification into the three regional initiatives as well as to further develop its work on agroecology, for example, in the context of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-28.

At the debates on e-agriculture, the use of information and communication technologies for the development of sustainable and inclusive food systems and trade integration, the ERC requested that FAO continue assisting the countries in Europe and Central Asia in transforming their agricultural sectors and leveraging the livelihoods of farmers, both women and men, through e-agriculture and fostering its responsible use through the three regional initiatives. FAO was also asked to develop an inclusive capacity development framework and strategy in e-agriculture and to provide a neutral regional platform on which to share knowledge and support the implementation of national e-agriculture strategies for countries in Europe and Central Asia.

Regarding the Decentralized Offices Network, the ERC reiterated the support of the proposed principles and general criteria for reviewing FAO's Decentralized Network coverage and highlighted the need for special emphasis on countries with lower income and taking due account of the principle of cost neutrality. The need to review FAO's coverage to direct more effective support to Members by enhancing the capacity of decentralized locations while maintaining the technical capacity at FAO's headquarters was also recognized by the Members. The Members further underlined the continuing need to prioritize partnerships at the decentralized level, as well as the importance of even closer collaboration of FAO with RBAs and other United Nations agencies, and of taking into account the future outcome of the ongoing discussion in relation to the United Nations Development System.

In addition, the ERC noted the review of Country Office staffing models to increase flexibility and to adjust to the emerging needs of the countries and acknowledged the efforts made by FAO in the region to strengthen national and international partnerships with key stakeholders for more effective, normative, and field support.

Finally, FAO's strengthening of internal control systems was encouraged by the Members. With regard to the results and priorities of FAO in the region, the ERC recognized the importance of the Strategic Framework in providing direction for FAO's technical work to address priorities in the region and welcomed the alignment of the FAO Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ERC also requested that FAO continue the implementation of the two regional initiatives, the first one being Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms for Improved Rural Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction, the second being Improving Agrifood Trade and Market Integration, and to implement the third regional initiative entitled Sustainable Natural Resource Management under Changing Climate, ensuring linkages between the first regional initiative and the third regarding sustainable agriculture and food systems.

FAO was further asked to support Members in applying voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries, and forests, the voluntary guidelines on the right to food, and principles for responsible investment in agricultural and food systems, and to ensure that the cross-cutting issues of gender, governance, climate change, and nutrition be addressed. FAO's support to countries in the design and implementation of trade-related policies and strategies, in line with the World Trade Organization agreements, with a neutral and balanced approach, was also requested.

Furthermore, the ERC had the chance to review the reports of the Regional Commissions. In relation to the 40th Session of the European Commission on Agriculture, the ERC called upon FAO to further promote the prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials, the monitoring of such use, and the surveillance of AMR, and stressed the need to phase out the use of antibiotics as growth promoters.

Reviewing the outcome of the debate of the Joint Session of the 39th European Forestry Commission and the 75th UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, the ERC encouraged FAO to pursue and further enhance its forestry work and supported the joint activities of FAO and UNECE in the field of forestry, welcoming also the adoption of the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work for 2018-21.

With regard to the report of the 29th Session of the European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission, the ERC called upon FAO to provide sufficient resources and encouraged Members to make voluntary contributions to that effect.

Turning to the 5th Session of the Central Asian and Caucasus Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Commission, the ERC noted the importance of increasing the level of fish consumption in the diets of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Chairing the ERC has made something clearer to me and that is that we are all together on this journey to reach our common goals, which are fully underscored through FAO's motto, fiat panis.

Losers say that they really enjoyed the journey. They say that it may be possible but it is too difficult. Well we, all of us here, I believe that we regard ourselves as winners and we say that it may be difficult but it is possible to achieve zero hunger, to improve nutrition, to achieve food security and nutrition and to leave no one behind.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

I would first like to thank the Russian Federation for the excellent organization of this Regional Conference in Voronezh.

We appreciate the interesting exchanges that took place during this Conference and particularly the panel on "*Sustainable food and agricultural systems*" and "*e-Agriculture*". We look forward to seeing the conclusions of our Regional Conference on further enhancing the work of FAO.

We take note however of the weak participation at Ministerial level and we encourage a more interactive programme and side events at future conferences. The active participation of civil society, the private sector and academia in future conferences would provide more stimulation for discussion and make the debates more interactive.

We take note of the importance of the FAO's decentralised offices, and recognise the need to review global coverage, in order to provide more effective support to member states, particularly low-income countries, by strengthening the capacity of the decentralized offices, taking into account RBA collaboration and UN reform, maintaining technical capacity at the Organization's headquarters and keeping the financial envelope for the decentralised offices at the current level.

We also appreciated the opportunity to discuss the FAO's results in our region. Many of the actions that have been led during the last biennium, for instance on AMR, plant and animal health, food security, and Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), demonstrate that the FAO can make a difference in the region when promoting the outcome of its normative and technical work at country level. However we also observed that the FAO's achievements in the region were often presented in the form of activities undertaken, rather than results achieved. Subsequently, we highlight the importance of reporting FAO's results in our region at future sessions.

Finally, we support the FAO's priorities and the three regional initiatives for the Region.

Ms Kampamba MULENGA (Zambia)

I wish to take this opportunity to thank FAO for the successful organization of the 159th Session of the Council. Allow me to take this rare privilege to comment on behalf of Africa on the Report of the 31st Regional Conference for Europe.

The Africa Regional Group notes that the various issues discussed during the 31st FAO Regional Conference for Europe are relevant and important to the Africa Region. We welcome the recommendation on the report from the outcome of the debate of the 29th Session of the European

Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) as one of the matter requiring attention of the FAO Council and Conference.

Inland fisheries and aquaculture are extremely important for the Africa Region for people's livelihoods, food security, and environmental sustainability.

We note that high-seas illegal fishing and depleted marine fish stocks have grabbed headlines for years, sparking public concern and prompting governments to cooperate and take action, culminating in SDG 14 on oceans and seas. But what about fish and aquatic resources in lakes, rivers and freshwater fish farms? We urge FAO to enhance aquaculture development projects in Africa so as to increase fish availability on domestic markets and provide a vital source of micronutrients to vulnerable populations. Alongside agriculture, inland fishing and aquaculture holds the key to food security and job creation.

The Africa Regional Group also notes that the Regional Conference for Europe highlighted the importance of reducing food losses and wastage throughout the supply chain. The Africa Regional Group aligns itself with the concern in agriculture and food system because it helps remind us why we should be interested in reducing food loss and wastage, improve food security and food safety, reduce wastage of resources and increase profits along the food supply chain.

Apart from the above concerns, it helps identify gaps in knowledge on drivers of food loss and waste as there is little reliable data on the magnitude of food losses beyond the farm gate particularly for the nutritious and highly perishable foods. Further, it highlights gaps in action most current interventions are on farm, directed at storage, and there are very few efforts focused on broad based investment areas that may deliver reductions in food loss and food wastage that would also deliver broader based benefits, for example, in infrastructure, rural finance and warehouse receipt systems.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

We welcome that as many as 43 countries from the region were represented at the Conference. We are grateful to the Russian Federation for hosting the meeting under such generous and excellent conditions, and the regional and Moscow offices of FAO for the smooth implementation of the programme.

We appreciate the substantial thematic discussions that took place. Especially the ones on sustainable agriculture, where agroecology was recognized as one of several different approaches that can be used to achieve food systems that are environmentally, socially, and not least, economically sustainable. We also appreciate the discussion on e-agriculture. E-agriculture is a topic of relevance for agriculture in the whole region, independent of the scale and type of production. E-technology can be used to make value chains more economic, and more sustainable. E-technology can also widen the gap between small-scale farmers and agroindustry. We need to pay attention to all these different aspects when making policy.

We welcome the participation from civil society, but regret that the Secretariat had not been able to attract participation from the private sector or from farmers. We look forward to welcoming a wider representation at future Regional Conferences to broaden the discussions with additional valuable input. We would welcome comments from the Secretariat as to how this concern will be addressed in the planning of the 2020 conferences.

The Nordic countries are strong and generous supporters of the multilateral system and are wholeheartedly committed to the Secretary General's reform agenda for the UN development system. The Nordic countries call upon FAO to implement relevant elements of the reform in accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution adopted last week. In the context of the decentralized offices network, this includes respecting agreements reached on a system-wide level on, for instance, the financing of the revamped resident coordinator function.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur général adjoint, Opérations)

Nous remercions le Gouvernement de la Fédération de Russie pour l'organisation de cette 31^{ème} session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Europe. Nous remercions aussi M. Spyridon Ellinas de Chypre, Vice-Président de la Conférence, pour avoir présenté le rapport en l'absence du Président Alexey Gordeev, qui n'a pu se joindre à nous aujourd'hui.

La Conférence régionale pour l'Europe nous donne une fois de plus des orientations très claires sur les priorités que les pays membres de la région ont définies et sur ce que ces pays attendent de l'Organisation pour les prochaines années, et nous les suivrons rigoureusement.

Je voudrais commenter l'intervention de la Bulgarie au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 28 membres. Nous avons pris note des commentaires et de la nécessité pour la prochaine Conférence régionale d'avoir une plus grande participation au niveau ministériel, mais aussi du secteur privé et de la société civile. C'est un travail partagé et la leçon à en tirer est peut-être dans la préparation, il faudra travailler ensemble plus tôt pour assurer une meilleure participation.

Nous avons pris bonne note de la nécessité pour le Secrétariat de bien s'assurer que, lorsque nous travaillons sur la transformation des bureaux décentralisés, cela soit fait dans le cadre des partenariats existants avec les organisations romaines, mais aussi dans le cadre de la réforme des Nations Unies, lancée avec la résolution de l'Assemblée générale qui vient d'être approuvée. Je peux vous assurer que telle est l'intention et que cela sera scrupuleusement suivi.

Bonne note a été prise de l'importance de la valeur ajoutée de la FAO dans son appui aux pays pour les aider à mieux appliquer au niveau national les décisions d'ordre normatif prises au niveau global, et ce pour tous les domaines. C'est en effet, je pense, un des avantages comparatifs très forts de l'Organisation.

Nous avons pris bonne note aussi des commentaires sur l'amélioration des rapports et le souhait des pays de la région que la FAO poursuive, voire accélère les progrès dans le cadre des trois initiatives régionales.

Bonne note a été prise également des recommandations de la Zambie, au nom du Groupe Afrique, en particulier sur les similarités existant entre certaines priorités programmatiques, sur l'importance de l'appui à l'aquaculture et aux pêches intérieures; sur toutes les questions relatives aux pertes et gaspillages, qui sont un problème global et non pas le monopole d'une seule région.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne les commentaires de la Finlande au nom du Groupe des pays nordiques, nous avons pris bonne note des recommandations sur l'agro-écologie comme étant l'un des systèmes susceptible d'améliorer la production durable en agriculture. L'agriculture électronique, avec l'e-agriculture comme élément fondamental d'innovation, sera un des très importants sujets qui sera développé lors du forum sur l'innovation devant se tenir à la FAO à la fin de l'année. Il s'agit d'un domaine où le secteur privé est en position de fer de lance, et je pense qu'à cette réunion, nous bénéficierons d'interventions très riches du secteur privé, avec lequel nous sommes en partenariat sur cette question.

La Finlande nous demande ce que nous allons faire pour obtenir, lors de la prochaine Conférence régionale, une meilleure participation du secteur privé et des organisations représentatives des producteurs agricoles. Je dirais que ce fut une faiblesse, soulignée par plusieurs représentants, probablement due à des problèmes d'organisation qui ont amené à une participation moindre que ce qu'elle aurait dû être. Nous pouvons vous assurer qu'en termes de vision, d'orientation, tout sera fait pour améliorer l'organisation en vue d'une meilleure participation.

Enfin, nous sommes tout à fait d'accord sur le fait que la FAO doit mettre en œuvre maintenant, de concert avec les autres entités du système des Nations Unies, avec le Secrétaire général comme chef d'orchestre, les recommandations relatives à la réforme des Nations Unies; et cela comprend tout le travail à faire au niveau des pays en vue d'une meilleure coordination entre les organisations des Nations Unies afin qu'elles utilisent mieux leurs ressources limitées pour appuyer les pays dans la mise en œuvre du Programme 2030. Cela implique en particulier le renforcement du système des coordonnateurs résidents et la nécessité probablement, par rapport à notre budget, d'augmenter le

niveau des ressources à allouer au financement du nouveau système de coordonnateurs résidents dans les pays.

CHAIRPERSON

Before we close this morning session, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for an announcement. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members of the side event on “*FAO’s role in social protection: Innovation to achieve zero hunger, reduce poverty and build resilient communities*” which will take place in the Sheikh Zayed Centre during the lunch break from 13.00 to 14.30 hours.

Members of the Group of the Friends of the Chair are invited to make their way to the King Faisal Room, room D263 on the second floor of Building D).

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Mr Gagnon. Council will resume this afternoon at 14.30 hours sharp.

The meeting rose at 12.30 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 30

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.30

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**SECOND PLENARY SESSION
DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

4 June 2018

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14.45 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 45
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.45
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 4. Regional Conferences (continued)**Point 4. Conférences régionales (suite)****Tema 4. Conferencias regionales (continuación)***(CL 159/LIM/4 Rev.1)**4.4 Report of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (Montego Bay, Jamaica, 5-8 March 2018)**4.4 Rapport de la trente-cinquième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Amérique latine et les Caraïbes (Montego Bay [Jamaïque], 5-8 mars 2018)**4.4 Informe del 35.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (Montego Bay [Jamaica], 5-8 de marzo de 2018)**(C 2019/17)***CHAIRPERSON**

We start this afternoon's session with sub-item 4.4, *Report of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean*, which was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 5 to 8 March 2018. Please ensure that you have documents C 2019/17 and CL 159/LIM/4 before you.

I will now give the floor to The Honourable Audley Fitz-Albert Shaw, Minister for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica, who will report on the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr Audley Fitz-Albert SHAW (Jamaica)

It is an honour to address the Council today in representation of the countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region to present a summary of the recommendations of the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean which we had the honour to host in Jamaica in March 2018. I wish to thank the former Minister in Jamaica for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, the Honourable Karl Semuda for his chairmanship of that Conference. Since that time I have taken over that position from Mr Semuda.

For the attention of Council, I will make reference specifically to items pertaining to Programme and Budgetary Matters, not without first mentioning that the Regional Conference was attended by 280 participants from 33 member countries including 40 Ministers and Vice-Ministers, 13 Ambassadors, one Observer Nation, 50 non-national Observers, seven UN Organizations, 22 Civil Society Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations, nine Private Sector Organizations and 14 Intergovernmental Organizations who confirmed their commitment to continue to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty and to promote sustainable development in the region with the support of FAO.

The Regional Conference considered the following issues as relevant policy challenges for the region: a) ending hunger and eradicating all forms of malnutrition; b) working towards a transformative agenda for sustainable rural development; and c) promoting a more sustainable agriculture resilient to climate change.

In the framework of these three themes, the Conference emphasized the need to work, as well, on the increasingly important issues of overweight and obesity, migration, biodiversity and green financing.

The Regional Conference recognized the alignment between SDGs and FAO's Strategic Objectives and results framework and urged the Organization to continue to focus the implementation of its work programme on country priorities. It commended the region on its regional initiatives and strategic programmes and encouraged it to continue to use them as an efficient and effective means of directing the Organization's technical capacities to the service of Member Countries.

Within the aforementioned policy context and in relation to Programme and Budget Matters, the Regional Conference invited this Council to examine and endorse the following points.

Welcomed the action taken and the results achieved in 2016 and 2017 in addressing regional challenges, in particular through the three regional initiatives supported by the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Concentrate on activities with a clear potential for generating tangible large-scale results for sustainable development and achieving the SDGs.

Develop a strategy focused on accelerating national efforts to achieve the SDGs in territories that have lagged behind in reducing hunger and rural poverty, and that are more vulnerable to climate change.

Mobilize the extensive and rich capabilities and expertise in the region to achieve solutions to the various challenges, through mechanisms such as South-South and Triangular cooperation, the Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger, engagement with civil society and the private sector, as well as other partnerships.

All these actions are fundamental for the eradication of hunger, extreme poverty and for the sustainable development of our Region.

Of particular importance to the Caribbean sub-region is the conference pledge to assist in accessing funding for climate change adaptation, particularly the Green Climate Fund, which will be essential if the sub-region is to respond effectively to the impacts of climate change, manifested in violent hurricanes and intense and prolonged droughts, seriously eroding its capacity for production, reducing a substantial portion of its GDP, and impairing its capacity to meet SDGs targets.

The Regional Conference supported the strategic work programme for the biennium 2018-19, namely, a hunger free Latin America and the Caribbean; family farming and inclusive food systems; and sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management, as well as the adjustments made to the Regional Initiatives to work in these areas.

The Regional Conference also recommended that FAO:

- Strengthen the implementation of the Regional Initiatives taking into consideration the recommendations of the forestry, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture subsectors approved by the Regional Technical Commissions (LACFC, CLDLAC, WECAFC and COPESCAALC), and the Working Group on Agricultural and Livestock Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Promote the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct for the reduction of food losses and waste, and the proposal of a future International Year of Fruits and Vegetables. In Jamaica, I have announced that over the next five years we are going to have a five million fruit tree planting programme in Jamaica.
- Emphasize the importance of Rome-based Agencies collaboration and partnership and welcome the progress FAO has made in forging alliances with other UN Agencies and regional institutions, including the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA).

The Conference recognized the need to review FAO's global coverage in order to provide more effective support to member countries, paying particular attention to countries facing major economic, environmental and social challenges, and endorsed the proposed general principles and criteria for reviewing the coverage of the FAO Decentralized Network by adopting flexible mechanisms, and consequently noted the revision of staffing models of country offices.

The Regional Conference appreciated FAO's commitment to review FAO's network of Decentralized Offices in the Caribbean with the goal of increasing decentralization and flexibility through optimization of the allocation and use of FAO's existing resources and capacities.

It also recommended that FAO update its technical expertise in accordance with the need to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve FAO's Strategic Objectives and re-profile its workforce in terms of skills, gender parity and geographical diversity targets.

Finally, the Regional Conference adopted a Special Declaration on the 40th Anniversary of FAO Country Representations in Latin America and the Caribbean that appreciated FAO's contribution and support to the Member Countries through its network of Decentralized Offices. The Special Declaration also highlighted the initiative of the Director-General of FAO, José Graziano Da Silva, to organize the programmes of work through five Strategic Objectives has helped the Organization improve the quality of political and technical dialogue with the countries in the region. The Ministers appreciated the vision and leadership of the Director-General throughout his tenure to move forward

the reforms he undertook in the Organization to achieve its mandate to establish a world without hunger

In the name of the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica, and in my capacity as Chairperson of the FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean for the next two years, I wish to thank the member countries once again for the trust placed in my country. I am pleased to reiterate before the Council our satisfaction with FAO's strategic direction at the global and regional levels and the need to continue to count on the Organization's technical cooperation and resource mobilization in order to implement the Regional Conference recommendations and attain the proposed targets of achieving sustainable development and eradicating hunger and all forms of malnutrition, as well as extreme poverty in our region.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Sr. Mateo Nsogo NGUERE MICUE (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial hace esta alocución conjuntamente con la República de Cabo Verde en nombre de los Países del Grupo Africano, los cuales acogen con satisfacción el Informe del 35° período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe.

La Delegación de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial en nombre del Grupo Africano felicita al Excmo. Sr. Karl Samuda, Ministro de Industria, Comercio, Agricultura, Ganadería y Pesca de la República de Jamaica y Presidente en ejercicio de la Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe, por su brillante presentación que nos acaba de hacer sobre las conclusiones de los trabajos de la aludida Conferencia.

Extendemos nuestras felicitaciones al Gobierno de la República de Jamaica por la excelente organización de dicha Conferencia; así como a todos los Países Latinoamericanos y el Caribe por las importantes prioridades que han planteado a la FAO, recogidos en el informe que se nos acaban de presentar; los cuales se alinean efectivamente con la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, al igual que ha sucedido en las demás Conferencias Regionales de la FAO.

Reconocemos y valoramos en muy alto los esfuerzos que están desplegando los Gobiernos latinoamericanos y del Caribe en aras de la lucha contra el hambre y la pobreza, así como los considerables avances conocidos en los últimos años sobre la consecución de la seguridad alimentaria en esta región del mundo.

Ms Jiani TIAN (China) (Original language Chinese)

We congratulate the Government of Jamaica for its contribution to the Regional Conference and we also thank the various results achieved by the Conference, especially to place GIAHS into a priority list supported by the region.

We will work together with the countries in this region through South-South and Triangular cooperation work together to achieve SDGs, especially in the area of eradication of poverty. We are also willing to work with the countries of this region to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Sr. Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brasil)

Tengo el honor de hacer esta intervención a nombre de los países de América Latina y del Caribe aquí representados.

En primer lugar, me complace agradecerle a Su Excelencia Sr. Karl Samuda, Presidente de la 35ª Conferencia Regional de la FAO, por su presentación de los resultados de nuestra Conferencia, así como al Pueblo y al Gobierno de Jamaica por su magnífica hospitalidad e impecable organización. Por primera vez participaron los 33 países de la región. sin embargo es la primera vez que Jamaica organiza nuestra conferencia regional, puesto que lo hizo también en 1968. Se ve que repetir la experiencia perfecciona la capacidad para bien organizarla.

Tuve el honor de haber sido el relator del evento. Ahora me toca resaltar algunos puntos que hemos tratado en Montego Bay.

La 35ª Conferencia Regional ofreció la oportunidad para que hiciéramos un balance de las actividades de la FAO en la región desde la anterior 34ª Conferencia Regional, realizada en la Ciudad de México, en febrero de 2016. Pudimos igualmente hacer seguimiento de los impactos de los resultados de la 40ª Conferencia de la FAO en la región y escuchar de los Estados Miembros cuáles deberían ser las prioridades de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe hasta la próxima Conferencia Regional, prevista para 2020, en Nicaragua.

Como dijo Doña Margarita Cedeño, Vice-Presidente de la República Dominicana, quién estuvo presente en la ceremonia inaugural, citando a Su Santidad, el Papa Francisco, “el hambre es el escándalo social de nuestros tiempos”. El hecho de que 815 millones de personas sufran hambre en el mundo a la vez que se despilfarran casi 1,3 millones de toneladas de alimentos son dos caras de esa triste situación. Por encima, vemos en nuestra región el aumento de la prevalencia de otras formas de malnutrición, como la obesidad y sobrepeso. Según constató el Director General, una de cada dos personas en América Latina y el Caribe es considerada obesa, lo que coloca a la región en segundo lugar en el mundo en términos de obesidad y sobrepeso. A pesar del progreso obtenido en décadas recientes, nuestra región ha experimentado un aumento en la inseguridad alimentaria y alarmante incremento de los niveles de obesidad, sobrepeso y déficit de micronutrientes.

Frente a esa calamidad, nuestra región ha elaborado el Plan de Seguridad Alimentaria, Nutrición y Erradicación del Hambre, CELAC 2025, que nos brinda mecanismos que auxilian en la coordinación de las acciones con la Agenda 2030, en el empoderamiento de las mujeres rurales, en la consolidación de la cooperación regional con la inclusión de la agricultura familiar, así como en la elaboración de una estrategia de reducción del riesgo de catástrofes en la agricultura.

Esperamos que la FAO siga apoyando a los países de la región en el desarrollo de políticas de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, incluidas las destinadas a promover el derecho a la alimentación, de modo a transformar los sistemas alimentarios para combatir la malnutrición, incluido el sobrepeso, obesidad y déficit de micronutrientes. En el ámbito del Decenio de Acción en Nutrición de las Naciones Unidas, reconocemos la importancia de elaborar políticas específicas para mujeres rurales, pueblos indígenas, afrodescendientes y otros grupos vulnerables; y la necesidad de prevenir las pérdidas y desperdicios de alimentos.

Frente a la persistencia de la pobreza y la desigualdad en las zonas rurales, queda claro el valor económico, social, ambiental y cultural de la agricultura familiar. En Montego Bay coincidimos en adoptar instrumentos para el fortalecimiento de la agricultura familiar, que incluyan el uso de tecnologías y el intercambio de conocimientos, para fomentar el desarrollo rural sostenible. Necesitamos mejorar las oportunidades para participación de la agricultura familiar, así como de los jóvenes, con la ampliación de la oferta de productos comercialmente viables y el fomento de pequeñas y medianas empresas rurales.

Hemos notado con preocupación el aumento de la migración del campo a la ciudad, resultante de la inseguridad alimentaria, de la falta de acceso a oportunidades, recursos y servicios, así como de la violencia en el campo. La Conferencia solicitó a la FAO que apoye la adopción de políticas para el desarrollo rural, teniendo en cuenta los componentes de género, edad y étnico, con miras a la revitalización económica y social de las zonas rurales. Esperamos que la FAO facilite intercambios de innovación agrícola, incluyendo la agroecología, la biotecnología y otros avances tecnológicos, con miras al fortalecimiento del desarrollo rural sostenible.

La Conferencia solicitó a la FAO apoyo en el desarrollo de políticas y estrategias para la conservación y recuperación de bosques y suelos degradados. La Organización fue instada a fortalecer la cooperación y la coordinación en el manejo de recursos hídricos entre los países del corredor seco centroamericano. El apoyo de la FAO a los países de la región se hace también necesario en la implantación de la Agenda 2030, del Marco de Sendai para la Reducción del Riesgo de Desastres, de los Convenios sobre la Desertificación (UNCCD) y el Cambio Climático (UNFCCC), así como en la preparación e implementación de las Contribuciones Nacionales Determinadas y de los Planes Nacionales de Adaptación. Hacemos especial hincapié en la necesidad de fortalecer y ejecutar

programas nacionales y globales de uso sostenible de la biodiversidad y de los recursos naturales, teniendo en cuenta la importancia de las estrategias de mitigación.

Son muchos los retos a enfrentar en nuestra región, para lo cual la cooperación y el apoyo de la FAO es esencial. Para concluir, el GRULAC desea hacer constar nuestro agradecimiento al Director-General, por haber participado en nuestra conferencia y por su dedicación y respaldo a nuestros países en la lucha contra el hambre y la malnutrición. El GRULAC reafirma su apoyo al Director-General para que concluya su mandato de manera exitosa, con un legado de reformas para tornar más eficiente y eficaz esta Organización.

Mr Winston RUDDER (Trinidad and Tobago)

Trinidad and Tobago intervenes on Agenda item 4.4 on behalf of the 15 Member States of the CARICOM sub-region of Latin America and the Caribbean, to congratulate the Government of Jamaica for hosting, with support of FAO, a very successful 35th Session of the Regional Conference. The felicitous combination of efficient organizational arrangements infused with the generous hospitality and warmth of the host country ensured that productive deliberations took place in an amenable environment.

But more than that, we underscore the unqualified endorsement of FAO's strategic framework and strategic objectives, in particular their alignment with SDG Indicators. The adoption of this approach provides an invaluable template which countries may follow. It allows for effecting coherence when developing and delivering sectoral strategies and actions to accelerate progress on sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry and undergirding their linkages to the interconnected complex issues of food and nutrition security, hunger, poverty and vulnerability to climate change. This also provides useful guidance for overall national development planning; eschewing the typical isolation soloization and highlighting the advantage of horizontal planning.

CARICOM states like those of the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean are members of that critical, vulnerable community of SIDS, which continue to depend heavily on policy advice and support and technical services of FAO to navigate the increasingly rough waters and uncertainty of the times. And this is as it should be, if FAO is to remain a credible development partner, committed to the 2030 Agenda which espouses the noble ideal: "no one must be left behind". Yet we, in CARICOM, remain sensitive to, and understanding of the need for FAO to adopt flexible approaches in its institutional and staffing arrangements, as it balances pursuit of a demanding mandate and development agenda with optimizing allocation and use of its resources and capacities.

However, we take the opportunity to request, as indicated in the Report, that FAO make every effort to incorporate young professionals from the Caribbean into its technical cooperation teams. Among other things, this is not only an excellent investment in capacity-building but also takes advantage of local knowledge and expertise.

Finally, we commend the Director-General for his commitment to continuing the collaborative dialogue and broad consultative engagement with CARICOM as he seeks to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of FAO operations in the Caribbean sub-region. In this regard, we look forward to the further developments.

Sra. Silvina KHATCHERIAN (Argentina)

Quisiéramos agregar algunos comentarios a los ya realizados por Brasil en nombre del GRULAC. En primer lugar, la Argentina desea agradecer la organización de esta Conferencia Regional, que ha permitido a los países de analizar los desafíos que la región les presenta, a fin de encontrar soluciones que podrían ser beneficiosas, tanto para ellos como para otros Estados fuera de la región.

Un ejemplo de ello es el consenso que se logró en la Conferencia sobre la propuesta de elaborar y adoptar un Código de Conducta Internacional Voluntario para prevenir y reducir las pérdidas y desperdicios de alimentos.

En el marco de los compromisos sobre este tema, asumidos por los países en la Meta 12.3 de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, y el Marco Decenal de las Naciones Unidas de Programas sobre Modalidades de Consumo y Producción Sostenibles, adoptados por los Jefes de Estados en la

Conferencia de la Rio+20 y en el contexto del aumento de cantidad de personas subnutridas en el mundo según el último SOFI 2017, la Argentina estima que sería muy propicio adoptar medidas de carácter voluntario que permita a los Estados reducir y prevenir la pérdida y desperdicio de alimentos.

Estas medidas producían beneficios en los tres ámbitos: el social, pues como permitiría mejorar la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición de la población; el ámbito económico, pues una mayor eficiencia en todas las etapas del proceso productivo mejorará, sin dudas, los ingresos de los campesinos, las empresas, y permitirá ahorrar dinero a las familias; y en el medio ambiental pues reducirá la presión sobre el cambio climático y sobre los recursos naturales. La elaboración de un Código de Conducta como el mencionado será en sí mismo un proceso muy enriquecedor para los estados, toda vez que permitirá fomentar el conocimiento y el intercambio de experiencias exitosas en la prevención y reducción de las pérdidas y desperdicios de alimentos.

Esta problemática es un desafío que ha afectado a países desarrollados y a los en desarrollo en similar medida. Ante la perspectiva de un incremento a la población mundial, la FAO, como Organismo especializado de las Naciones Unidas, podría realizar un aporte sustancial en pos de la recuperación de todos los alimentos que hoy en día se pierden o se dañan en la cadena de producción y para esta forma contribuir con los estados en el logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible 1, 2 y 12 de la Agenda 2030.

Por otro lado, quisiéramos mencionar que en el Informe final de la 35 periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, ésta recomendó a la FAO que continuara aplicando las tres iniciativas regionales aprobadas en el anterior periodo de sesiones, teniendo en cuenta cuestiones de creciente importancia, como el financiamiento verde. En este sentido, la Argentina quiere destacar que el concepto de financiación verde no cuenta con consenso multilateral. Teniendo en consideración que esta falta de consenso respecto a su definición y ante la posibilidad que el mismo sea entendido como dando preminencia al aspecto medioambiental, la Argentina quiere señalar que debería utilizar en su lugar el término 'financiamiento sostenible', que comprende de manera equilibrada y balanceada las tres dimensiones del desarrollo sostenible, la económica, la social y la medioambiental.

Finalmente, agradecemos a la República de Nicaragua por su ofrecimiento de hospedar el 36.º periodo de sesiones de la próxima Conferencia Regional para América Latina y el Caribe, así como respaldamos la propuesta de Chile de celebrar el Año Internacional de Frutas y Hortalizas.

Con estos comentarios, apoyamos el informe de la Conferencia Regional.

Sr. Danilo Xavier ALIAGA SANCHO (Ecuador)

La Delegación del Ecuador se suma a la declaración hecha por Brasil a nombre de los países del GRULAC y reitera el agradecimiento al Sr. Ministro de la Agricultura de Jamaica, Presidente de la 35ª Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe, por la presentación de los resultados de la misma. Al mismo tiempo agradecemos y felicitamos al Gobierno de Jamaica por la excelente organización de esta cita regional.

La 35ª Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe fue un espacio propicio para la discusión y el análisis de los desafíos que enfrenta nuestra región en materia de la lucha contra el hambre y la malnutrición. La Conferencia Regional se convirtió también en un escenario de propuestas y lineamientos del camino a seguir de manera conjunta.

El Ecuador confía en que la FAO continúe apoyando a los Estados Miembros en el desarrollo y aplicación de políticas destinadas a combatir el hambre y la malnutrición tanto a nivel regional como a nivel de país. En este sentido, nos sumamos al reconocimiento hecho por la Conferencia Regional al apoyo brindado por la Organización al Plan para la Seguridad Alimentaria, Nutrición y Erradicación del Hambre de la CELAC (Plan SAN-CELAC 2025).

Así mismo, la Delegación del Ecuador desea destacar con mucho agrado que el pasado 29 de mayo de 2018, se suscribió en la ciudad de Quito, el Marco de Programación País entre la FAO y el Gobierno ecuatoriano para el período 2018-2021, el cual constituye una guía orientadora para la formulación de programas y proyectos de cooperación entre la FAO y nuestro país.

El Ecuador considera necesario que FAO continúe también colaborando en el seguimiento de la aplicación del Marco de acción de la Segunda Conferencia Internacional sobre Nutrición (CIN2) y respalde redes e iniciativas regionales con miras a la consecución de los Objetivos del Decenio de las Naciones Unidas de Acción sobre la Nutrición. Cabe destacar que en este tema la región de América Latina y el Caribe ha mantenido un importante nivel de liderazgo siendo Brasil y Ecuador los primeros países en establecer compromisos SMART en el marco de la década.

El Ecuador saluda también los diálogos de la Conferencia Regional relativos al establecimiento de una agenda transformadora del desarrollo rural sostenible. En este tema el Ecuador desea subrayar la necesidad de que los Estados en colaboración con la FAO impulsen políticas y acciones de desarrollo rural que tomen en cuenta los componentes socio-culturales, así como de género, edad y étnico.

El Ecuador destaca también la importancia de establecer políticas y marcos regulatorios que promuevan el acceso de las comunidades rurales, y particularmente de los pequeños productores de la economía familiar y campesina a servicios financieros y no financieros que impacten positivamente en temas de productividad, promoción, asociatividad y comercialización.

Estas políticas han sido incluidas dentro de un programa impulsado por el Gobierno del Ecuador llamado “La gran Minga Agropecuaria” que esperamos sea fortalecida con el apoyo de la cooperación técnica de la FAO y a través de nuevos mecanismos de cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular.

Finalmente, el Ecuador destaca las conversaciones mantenidas durante la Conferencia Regional sobre agricultura sostenible y resiliente al cambio climático. El Ecuador reconoce la labor desarrollada por FAO en esta materia y considera necesario que la Organización continúe prestando apoyo técnico y financiero a los países de la región con el fin de implementar la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático (CMNUCC), las contribuciones determinadas a nivel nacional (CDN) y los planes nacionales de adaptación (PNAD).

El Ecuador valora positivamente el desarrollo y resultados de la 35ª Conferencia Regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe y confía en que los retos que enfrenta nuestra región serán aplacados por medio de un trabajo conjunto y mancomunado entre los Estados y los distintos actores locales, regionales y globales. Ecuador confía que el apoyo de la FAO será determinante en el trabajo que la región lleva adelante en pos de la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio y concretamente en aras de la seguridad alimentaria y la agricultura sostenible de nuestros países.

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

India would like to congratulate the countries of the Caribbean and Latin America for the recommendations emerging from the Conference and the holistic presentation of the Report just now. India has had historical cultural ties with the countries of the Caribbean which includes our love for cricket, agriculture and allied sectors, and we would like to strengthen this further.

I would like to concentrate on climate change which is of special relevance to the island countries of this Region. Agriculture in most other countries, including India, is faced with a number of challenges including low per capita and fragmented land holdings. For us 85 percent of farmers are in the small and marginal category. 51 percent of the cropped area is still rainfed and hence more susceptible to the vagaries of weather as seen by declining trends of average rainfall and increasing number of drought events. While climate change is a major threat in the long term, currently, seasonal climate variability is a key factor determining the performance of agriculture. Hence these countries face the twin challenges of natural resources degradation and climate change for which sustainable agriculture is the only tool to ensure food and livelihood security for our people. The need of the hour is, therefore, to synergize modern agriculture research with indigenous wisdom of farmers and enhance resilience of agriculture to climate change.

India recognizing that for ensuring country's food security both in the short and long terms, and making agriculture sustainable and climate-resilient, has developed appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The country has initiated timely action to address the problems of climate change. These efforts have provided valuable inputs in terms of the regional and national level impacts of climate variability and climate change on crops, horticulture, livestock and fishery. Through its

programmes and schemes, focus on climate resilient agriculture, appropriate adaptation strategies have been devised for ensuring food security, enhanced livelihood opportunities and economic stability.

As many as ten key dimensions for adaptation namely improved crop seeds, livestock and fish culture; water use efficiency; pest management; improved farm practices; improved nutrient management; agricultural insurance; credit support; markets; access to information and livelihood diversification are being emphasised. Much investment has been made for identifying new and suitable climate resilient varieties. Climate resilient practices include demonstration of drought tolerant and short duration varieties to cope with drought, flood tolerant varieties in paddy, resource conservation practices, crop diversification and integrated farming systems to enhance the food and livelihood security of farmers across 151 climatically vulnerable districts in the country.

We welcome the importance given by the countries of the region to planting of trees, including the targets for the horticulture trees and would like to partner in this as an important component of Integrated Farming Systems (with a combination of crops, livestock, fishery and trees, both agroforestry and horticulture) for improved risk management and climate resilience and holistic rural development.

India commits to working together with the Caribbean and Latin American countries in moving from a business as usual mode to full preparedness to address the challenges being posed by climate change to our Mother Earth. The continued overarching role and expertise of FAO in synergising initiatives of different regions is gratefully acknowledged.

Sra. Marta BARCENA COQUI (México)

La Delegación de México se quiere sumar a las felicitaciones al Gobierno de Jamaica y al Ministro Audley Shaw por la espléndida organización de la 35a Conferencia Regional de la FAO en América Latina y el Caribe. Nos sentimos en nuestra casa todo el tiempo que estuvimos en Montego Bay. La Delegación de México se suma también a la intervención de Brasil a nombre del GRULAC y quisiera destacar además la importante participación de los Sectores Privado y de la Sociedad Civil en la Conferencia Regional, en particular, los representantes de los pueblos indígenas. Asimismo, el relevante mensaje que transmitieron a la Conferencia los frentes parlamentarios contra el hambre de América Latina y el Caribe, una iniciativa que sin lugar a dudas ha dado grandes frutos.

La Delegación de México quisiera destacar solamente cuatro puntos adicionales de particular interés en la Conferencia Regional. El primero, que la Conferencia cogió con satisfacción la firma de la carta de intención concluida por México y la FAO con miras a reforzar la capacidad de los pequeños estados insulares en desarrollo que son miembros de la comunidad del Caribe CARICOM, para acceder a la financiación de actividades relativas al cambio climático, integrando esta propuesta en la Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular. Tengo el honor de comunicar a este Consejo que en unos días más suscribiremos el memorándum de entendimiento para establecer un fondo especial con este propósito, con una contribución semilla del Gobierno de México, al que sabemos se sumarán en fechas próximas otros gobiernos.

En segundo lugar, en el ámbito de Mesoamérica, quisiera subrayar la solicitud de apoyo de la FAO para identificar, en colaboración con los gobiernos, los territorios con los niveles más altos de inseguridad alimentaria y sus causas, a fin de concentrar los esfuerzos de la FAO en dichos territorios.

En tercer lugar, quisiera destacar que la Conferencia instó a la FAO aprovechar al máximo los instrumentos existentes para acceder a la financiación relacionada con el clima e identificó a la FAO como un aliado natural para la formulación de proyectos y la movilización de recursos.

En este sentido, en el marco del proyecto de Mesoamérica sin Hambre, el principal proyecto de Cooperación Sur-Sur de México con la FAO en fechas recientes, la semana pasada, se llevó a cabo un seminario con los países de Mesoamérica justamente para desarrollar capacidades en la formulación de proyectos para el combate al cambio climático.

Por último, quisiera subrayar la importancia del seguimiento al exitoso desarrollo del primer diálogo de múltiples partes interesadas en la integración de la biodiversidad en todos los sectores agrícolas, que tuvo lugar aquí en la sede de la FAO la semana pasada. La Conferencia, previendo el éxito de este

diálogo, instó a la FAO a llevar a cabo un diálogo regional para el seguimiento de las conclusiones del diálogo global, a fin de elaborar la estrategia de la FAO sobre biodiversidad para antes del 2020.

Con esta intervención, con los puntos que destacó el Señor Ministro Shaw, la Delegación del Brasil y estos puntos, así como lo que han destacado nuestros colegas de Ecuador, Trinidad y Tobago y Argentina, no podemos más que congratularnos por el éxito de la 35a Conferencia Regional de la FAO en América Latina y el Caribe. De nuevo, muchas gracias Jamaica.

Mr John Ronald Deep FORD (Observer for Guyana)

Guyana associates itself with the statement made by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the fifteen CARICOM states. Guyana was honored to take part in the Regional Conference in Jamaica and was particularly pleased with the outcomes, especially those related to the Caribbean region.

We congratulate Jamaica in hosting and delivering a very well organized and successful regional conference and for the excellent report made by the Minister here today.

Guyana would like to take the opportunity to underline a few of the recommendations made at the Conference. Since the Conference, the global trading environment has deteriorated and it has become even more important that FAO's support should be increased, specifically targeted to help countries to promote and benefit from an open, fair, transparent, and rules-based multilateral agricultural trading system with a view to facilitating domestic and international market access and increased commercialization of value added agricultural products.

In this regard, it is essential that FAO's assistance pay particular attention to increasing participation of small and medium sized farmers in global agriculture value chains and facilitate business opportunities that include youth entrepreneurship, investment, incentives, and innovation.

Secondly, given the risks to global fishing stocks, especially to countries that live with one foot on the land and one foot in the sea, it is important that FAO increases its support toward the resolution of issues related to fishery subsidies which lead to over fishing and over capacity, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The threat and impacts of climate change on Caribbean countries cannot be overstated. Thus we call on FAO again to assist governments in accessing global climate funding through developing local and regional capacities with the ultimate efforts being directed to ensure improved governance and sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation and disaster risk mitigation, including the establishment of green economies and green states, a concept which Guyana is diligently working toward.

The commitments made in Jamaica during the Regional Conference to consult, clarify, and consolidate the coordination and management of the Decentralized Offices in the Caribbean remains a high priority and critical to the delivery of FAO's assistance to the sub-region, including the incorporation of young professionals into technical and management cooperation teams.

Finally, Guyana would like to recognize and thank the FAO and the Director-General for the continued positive engagement and assistance to the Caribbean.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

On behalf of the Secretariat, I would like to join the Member Countries to thank the people and the Government of Jamaica through the Honourable Audley Shaw, Minister for Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries, and Chairperson of the 35th Regional Conference for their hospitality and the organization of a successful Regional Conference.

We would like to highlight, as previously mentioned by FAO Member Countries, it was the first time in the history of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean that we had such a record high participation.

As Brazil noted, I think all countries of the Region participated, and a large number of Ministers took part in the Conference. As Mexico mentioned, private sector, farmers' organizations, and indigenous groups were very well represented. So, from this perspective, it was a superb representation.

I want to highlight also an innovation that was brought for the first time in this Regional Conference that will be expanded to all of the Regional Conferences in the future: the use of webcasting. Beyond the hundreds of participants to the Regional Conference, the webcasting allowed thousands of FAO staff and partners to listen and follow the debate of the Regional Conference.

This will have a major impact on the follow-up of the discussion and the decisions taken so this is an innovation that worked well and will be expanded to all Regional Conferences in the future.

The Regional Conference reaffirmed support to FAO's strategic direction at global and regional levels and particularly all of the initiatives undertaken: zero hunger, family farming, inclusive food systems for sustainable rural development, as well as sustainable use of natural resources, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management.

All of these themes were highlighted by different delegations who intervened today and reaffirmed the selection of priorities for supporting the Region with limited resources available.

As Argentina mentioned, the challenges of climate change should be well placed into all regional initiatives. We have also taken due note of the support of the Regional Conference to review the country coverage according to the evolving needs and economic situation of the countries in the Region.

Brazil, on behalf of the Regional Group, highlighted the importance of FAO's continuous support towards the work at the policy level in the priority areas agreed by the Regional Conference, particularly the support to family farming, addressing the causes of malnutrition, and sustainable food systems.

We have a number of well-defined priorities. Migration and climate change have been reiterated in the majority of interventions.

With regard to the other Regional Conferences, on behalf of the Secretariat, I would like to reaffirm that the priorities agreed by the Regional Conference gave us the direction we need and the marching order to support countries and regional organizations in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

We have taken note also of the appreciation and support to the directions and reform led by the Director-General since his appointment.

The Representative of Trinidad on behalf of 15 Member Countries of the CARICOM Region highlighted challenges of SIDS and the role of FAO to support them in a context of increased vulnerability.

In this regard, we took note of the need for flexibility, adapting the technical expertise of FAO to the specific needs of the Region and the need to integrate more qualified, talented youth of the Region in FAO's programme to better support them in the Region.

Food loss and waste, priority and consensus were mentioned by Argentina. We have taken note of the recommendation for the need to develop a code of conduct in this regard and we have taken note also of Ecuador's recommendation for FAO to continue and intensify its support to select plants for food security and nutrition in line with the broader directions defined under ICN2.

We express appreciation for the signature of the CPF in Ecuador that will allow us to support government priorities where FAO can make a bigger difference with limited resources.

Several countries including Mexico, India, and China reaffirmed the wish to strengthen South-South cooperation and this was raised particularly in support of the Caribbean Region. We welcome the decision of Mexico towards this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the special fund to support the Caribbean Region. We welcome also the offer of China to continue to support the region through South-South cooperation and also the wish of India to support areas of common interest particularly with regard to climate change adaptation and deviation.

We thank Guyana for highlighting the challenges of a fair trade system for agricultural commodities in support of the region and we note the deterioration of the situation. We thank Guyana for its leadership and the work it is conducting as a Chair of a working group in the World Trade Organization.

So that is what I can say on behalf of the Secretariat. We have taken due note of your guidance and will be here to follow-up now.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. This brings us to the end of sub-item 4.4.

4.5 Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East (Rome, Italy, 7-11 May 2018)

4.5 Rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale pour le Proche-Orient (Rome [Italie], 7-11 mai 2018)

4.5 Informe del 34.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia Regional para el Cercano Oriente (Roma [Italia], 7-11 de mayo de 2018)

(C 2019/18)

CHAIRPERSON

We shall continue with sub-item 4.5, *Report of the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East*, which was held at FAO headquarters in Rome from 7 to 11 May 2018. Please ensure that you have documents C 2019/18 and CL 159/LIM/4 Rev.1 before you.

I will now give the floor to Ms Wafaa Al Dika-Hamzeh, Senior Adviser to His Excellency the Minister for Agriculture of Lebanon, who will report on the 34th Session of the Regional Conference for the Near East.

Mme. Wafaa AL DIKA-HAMZEH (Liban) (Langue originale arabe)

Je vais vous présenter les conclusions de notre Conférence régionale pour le Proche-Orient, qui s'est tenue à Rome du 7 au 11 mai 2018, et ce au nom de Son Excellence le Ministre de l'agriculture du Liban, qui n'a pu être des nôtres aujourd'hui.

La Conférence régionale a rassemblé 144 représentants de 25 pays de la région, dont 19 ministres et différents observateurs, ainsi que des représentants d'organisations du secteur onusien ou d'autres organismes, cinq organisations intergouvernementales, une institution non-gouvernementale, un institut de recherche et six organisations de la société civile.

La Conférence régionale a noté avec préoccupation la dégradation de la sécurité alimentaire dans la région en raison de nombreux conflits et des crises prolongées qui perdurent encore. Nous avons discuté de toute une série de défis pressants et des stratégies proposées pour y remédier, notamment l'agroécologie, qui est un moyen de nous adapter aux changements climatiques et d'en atténuer les retombées. Par ailleurs, nous souhaitons également trouver des solutions aux problèmes de l'emploi et des migrations. N'oublions pas non plus le rôle que nous pouvons jouer dans la lutte contre les maladies transfrontalières et les ravageurs.

La Conférence régionale a adopté une Déclaration ministérielle appelant la FAO et les pays membres à redoubler d'efforts afin de permettre la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable (ODD) pour éliminer la faim, améliorer la nutrition et promouvoir l'agriculture durable. Par ailleurs, la Conférence régionale a voulu aussi mettre l'accent sur les pays souffrant de conflits.

La Déclaration ministérielle a souligné le rôle que la FAO pourrait jouer pour appuyer les pays membres. La Conférence régionale a également décidé de soutenir la vision du Directeur général de la FAO qu'il a présentée au cours de son mandat, ainsi que les réformes qu'il a lancées afin que nous puissions parvenir à un monde libéré de la faim, ce pourquoi nous le remercions.

Mon rapport, aujourd'hui, sera axé sur les points à l'ordre du jour qui concernent les questions relatives au budget et au Programme.

S'agissant des résultats et des priorités de la FAO au Proche-Orient et en Afrique du Nord, la Conférence régionale a examiné le rapport sur les activités de la FAO dans la région, notamment ses réalisations en 2016-2017, de même que les propositions portant sur l'exercice 2018-2019 et au-delà. La Conférence a salué le travail et les réalisations des bureaux de la FAO dans la région.

La Conférence a salué le Cadre stratégique régissant les interventions de la FAO dans la région afin de remédier à ces problèmes et de garantir de véritables résultats au niveau national. La Conférence a également salué les programmes stratégiques et les résultats obtenus par la FAO en 2016-2017 dans le cadre des initiatives régionales.

La Conférence a également souligné les résultats obtenus dans les grands domaines de travail afin de répondre aux grandes priorités identifiées lors de la 33^{ème} Session de la Conférence régionale. La Conférence a insisté sur l'importance des trois initiatives régionales et a considéré qu'il fallait assurer leur suivi en 2018-2019 afin de mettre l'accent sur les priorités dépendant de la situation dans la région, par exemple, l'initiative sur la pénurie d'eau, la petite agriculture, l'agriculture de petite échelle, ainsi que le renforcement de la résilience pour la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition.

Le Fonds spécial pour les activités de financement du développement a été considéré comme étant particulièrement capital aux côtés de différents fonds et différentes banques pour fournir l'assistance nécessaire aux pays. La Conférence a également souligné la nécessité d'aligner l'expertise technique de la FAO par rapport aux objectifs de développement durable et au Programme à l'horizon 2030, ce qui permettra à l'Organisation d'atteindre ses objectifs stratégiques.

La Conférence a souligné qu'il fallait également rajeunir le personnel, qu'il fallait parvenir à l'égalité entre les sexes et améliorer la représentation géographique équitable.

S'agissant à présent du réseau des bureaux décentralisés, la Conférence régionale a insisté sur la nécessité d'examiner le réseau de bureaux afin de formuler des orientations appropriées aux pays de la région, en se concentrant avant tout sur les pays qui se heurtent à des problèmes sociaux ou économiques ou à des situations de conflit.

La Conférence a également insisté sur la nécessité de garantir une certaine souplesse quant au soutien fourni par ces bureaux aux différents pays. Nous appelons à une plus grande flexibilité pour pouvoir répondre aux besoins des pays de la région. Nous avons insisté sur la nécessité d'avoir suffisamment d'expérience à tous les niveaux, au niveau régional et sous-régional.

Nous avons également souligné l'importance de la représentation géographique dans les processus de nomination. Nous nous sommes félicités des efforts de la FAO, qui souhaite coopérer avec les grandes parties prenantes afin de renforcer l'appui fourni à la région. Nous avons également insisté sur la nécessité de mettre en place un bon contrôle interne et avons souligné les efforts actuellement déployés dans le but d'obtenir davantage d'économies ou de gains d'efficacité.

Nous nous sommes félicités du travail abattu par l'Organisation au niveau national. La Conférence régionale a souligné les résultats qui ont été notés lors de la célébration du 40^{ème} anniversaire de la présence de la FAO sur le terrain dans la région et nous avons insisté sur la présence de l'Organisation dans la région, sur son savoir-faire technique et ses capacités.

Nous soulignons qu'il faut mettre l'accent sur les partenariats et la mobilisation de ressources. Il convient également de mettre l'accent sur la coopération Sud-Sud, la coopération triangulaire. Nous devons coopérer avec les organisations des Nations Unies, qu'elles soient sises à Rome ou qu'il s'agisse d'autres organismes spécialisés. Nous nous sommes dès lors félicités des efforts déployés par le Bureau régional du Caire et de la création d'un Bureau sous-régional au Liban. Nous avons appelé le Bureau régional à fournir davantage d'assistance aux pays et à mieux répondre aux différents besoins identifiés.

En ce qui concerne le programme de travail pluriannuel pour la Conférence régionale pour le Proche-Orient, nous avons pris note du document NERC/18/7 et la Conférence a approuvé le programme de travail pluriannuel pour la période 2018-2021.

Au nom du Liban, premier pays à avoir signé un accord de bureau de pays avec la FAO en 1977, permettez-moi de féliciter l'Organisation à l'occasion du 40^{ème} anniversaire de l'établissement de ces bureaux. Ce réseau de bureaux de pays dans notre région a joué un rôle de première importance, qui a permis d'introduire, au fil des années, de nombreuses recommandations de notre Conférence régionale dans le programme de travail de la FAO.

De même, au nom de la Conférence régionale pour le Proche-Orient, permettez-moi de féliciter la FAO, sa direction stratégique et les membres du personnel, pour l'appui fourni afin de répondre aux besoins des États Membres de la région.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

M. Abdennour GOUGAM (Algérie)

L'Algérie intervient au nom du Groupe Afrique sur le point relatif au rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale de la FAO pour le Proche-Orient, tenue à Rome du 7 au 11 mai 2018.

Le Groupe Afrique se félicite de l'importance accordée aux questions stratégiques, notamment en ce qui concerne les quatre thématiques retenues, à savoir, la contribution de l'agroécologie aux efforts d'adaptation au changement climatique dans les zones semi-arides, ainsi qu'à la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition, la transformation agricole, les défis posés par l'emploi des jeunes et les migrations.

Le Groupe régional Afrique salue le cadre de travail stratégique et les initiatives régionales de la FAO, reconnaissant le rôle de l'Organisation pour faire face aux défis de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition, de la pénurie d'eau, du changement climatique et du développement agricole.

Il demande à la FAO d'intensifier et d'actualiser ses programmes dans la région pour soutenir la mise en œuvre et la réalisation de l'Objectif 2 de développement durable, à savoir l'Objectif Faim Zéro, et d'accorder la priorité à l'éradication de la faim et de la malnutrition dans les pays touchés par des conflits.

Le Groupe Afrique soutient également les efforts des membres de la région et leur engagement à œuvrer aux côtés de la FAO dans la réalisation des objectifs communs de développement durable dans la région et à l'échelle globale.

Les efforts déployés, en outre, pour l'exploitation maximale des mécanismes de financement du développement international, y compris le Fonds vert pour le climat, afin d'aider les pays membres à faire face aux conséquences du changement climatique, sont à saluer et à encourager dans ce contexte.

Le Groupe régional Afrique apporte également son soutien à l'élan de la coopération Sud-Sud et triangulaire dans la région en appelant au renforcement de la collaboration de la FAO avec les autres organismes des Nations Unies ayant leur siège à Rome, et ce, au niveau national et régional, pour la réalisation des objectifs du Programme 2030.

Enfin, le Groupe Afrique s'inscrit en faveur des recommandations issues de la Conférence régionale, notamment celles concernant l'incorporation de l'agroécologie dans les initiatives régionales, ainsi que le renforcement des actions concrètes de la FAO dans ce domaine.

Nous encourageons également l'aide aux pays à s'appuyer sur les résultats atteints dans le cadre des mécanismes prometteurs qu'offre la coopération Sud-Sud et triangulaire, et soutenons l'adoption et la mise en œuvre de stratégies pertinentes visant la transformation agricole et la promotion de l'investissement public et privé.

Avec ces commentaires, le Groupe régional Afrique recommande l'adoption du Rapport de la trente-quatrième session de la Conférence régionale de la FAO pour le Proche-Orient.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

On behalf of the Near East Group, we would like to extend our thanks to the Secretariat for its report on the recent Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa which broadly reflects the important topics on the agenda.

The three main themes are: (i) Agroecology: adapting to climatic change in semi-arid areas for a sustainable agricultural development; (ii) Agricultural transformation in the Near East and North Africa Region and the challenge of youth employment and migration; (iii) "One Health": addressing transboundary plant, animal, and fish pests and diseases: a case for regional cooperation.

However, we do encourage the Regional Office to discuss with the Members in greater depth issues related to the Conference before holding to the different sessions of the Conference. This would help create a more interactive discussion during the Conference sessions.

In addition, we hope that the common issues of the Africa Region would be addressed since there are common challenges and needs that are closely linked by geography and history between the countries of the two regions. Among the most important of these challenges, we mentioned water scarcity, transboundary plant, animal, and fish pests and diseases, and this is not to mention serious climate changes and their impacts on the environment and resources of both regions.

We would like to commend the recommendations made by the recent Regional Conference because they have identified the most important issues of interest to our region. Therefore, the outcome of the Conference could be the impetus for concrete and effective steps by the Organization.

In light of this report, we would like to share with you the following observations: first, we look forward to greater coordination on the themes in order to ensure active and efficient participation by Member Countries during the Conference; second, to discuss and summarize the Conference reports with Member States during the Regional Conference in the context of preparing the final report; to follow up on the recommendations of the latest Regional Conference and to develop a clear plan of action on these recommendations to inform the Near East Group at a later date; four, we would also like to reiterate the need to provide periodic reports on the achievements, actions, and projects of the Regional and sub-Regional Offices; five, the need to work with the relevant countries based on a clear timetable. I repeat, a clear timetable for the implementation of the strategy for the control of transboundary plant, animal and fish pests and diseases, particularly red palm weevil, and subsequent position and follow-up in countries facing hunger and conflicts; six, to monitor climate change in our region and its impacts on our natural resources, mentioning in particular fisheries.

One more final observation is that the paragraph below has been omitted from the draft final report and we had agreed to include it in the text before the draft report was adopted. We would like you to reconsider this. The text reads as follows: *“The Conference requested that the Near East Group be regularly briefed on the work of the Organization in Regional and Sub-regional Offices”* end of quote.

Finally, our Group would like to support the report on the Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

We congratulate Lebanon for the excellent chairmanship of the Regional Conference for the Near East, held in Rome.

We stress the importance of the recommendations arising from this Conference which comes at a time of increasing the rates of hunger and malnutrition in some of the Near East Members.

In particular call attention to the following points.

The need to expedite the implementation of the three regional initiatives to support national efforts to achieve SDGs and especially SDG2.

Support countries in the Near East in developing a regional cooperation programme in line with the “One Health” approach.

The need to further strengthen the Regional Office of the Near East to be able to face its increasing demands.

The importance of increasing the share of the Near East Region from the technical cooperation programme, especially that the region remains the least beneficiary of the TCP funding among all regions with only 8 percent of the approved budget.

Encourage FAO to make use of the opportunities generated by the establishment of the Special Development Fund for development of finance projects in the region that help adapt to the negative effects of climate change.

And finally, the importance of presenting a progress report on the implementation of the 2018 Regional Conference and relevant recommendations from previous conferences.

Mr Sid Ahmed M. Alamain Hamid ALAMAIN (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to congratulate Lebanon for chairing the Regional Conference for the Near East. Further, I would like to support the statement made by the Delegate of Kuwait on behalf of the Near East Group, as well as the statement made by our colleague, a delegate of Egypt.

I would like to draw the attention of the Secretariat to the need to take into particular account what came last in the statement made by the Delegate of Kuwait, namely the omitted part of the text from the recommendations in the draft final report.

Unfortunately, although I had requested to have a copy of the draft final report, I did not receive it from the Secretariat. It would have been possible to avoid this omission.

I would like to conclude my statement.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

I would like to thank her Excellency Wafaa Dikah, the Senior Adviser to His Excellency, the Minister of Agriculture of Lebanon, for presenting the report of the Conference. And I would like to thank the Government of Lebanon for the very able leadership and chairmanship of the Regional Conference.

60 percent of the people experiencing hunger in the region are from countries that were affected by conflict in the period of 2014-16. In the last two years, FAO and its partners reached two million persons who were affected by conflicts in the region. This work is undertaken in partnership with World Food Programme with joint leadership of the food security cluster, but also with United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Programme.

The Regional Conference confirms the pertinence of the regional initiatives on water scarcity, small-scale family farming and food security and nutrition, and the need not only to continue but, as Egypt mentioned, to accelerate progress and expand partnerships.

In this regard, to be noted that the regional initiative on water scarcity was endorsed by the League of Arab States, and to be noted for all regional initiatives the excellent partnership work with ESCWA, WFP, ICARDA, ICBA, AOAD, but also with UNICEF and WHO, in support for implementation of SDG2.

Suite en français

L'Algérie, au nom du Groupe Afrique, nous a demandé de poursuivre les efforts pour aider les pays à réaliser l'objectif de développement durable numéro 2, en particulier dans les pays en situation de conflit. Le message est clair et nous ferons le nécessaire.

L'Algérie nous demande aussi, au nom du Groupe Afrique, d'intensifier la mobilisation des ressources, en particulier avec le Fonds vert, mais aussi au travers de la coopération Sud-Sud et triangulaire et la mobilisation d'investissements du secteur privé.

Continues in English

We took note of the guidance of Kuwait on behalf of the Near East Group highlighting agri-priorities and the six points made. We note the wish to have more interaction between each Regional Conference on the implementation of the strategic directions and also periodic reporting on the work of the sub-regional office and the regional office.

We apologize for not having included the important sentence that was noted in the Report. It was due to the pressure of work. It is a mistake that happens. We will make sure, and I think, Ms Amaral will confirm, that we will make the necessary amendments so it is put on the record. We will follow up in this regard with the Near East Group after the Council to make sure that we operationalize this important recommendation.

Egypt, we have taken note also of the five recommendations and these will be part of the follow-up discussion with the Near East Group after this Council.

Sudan, I can just repeat what I have just said. We will make sure that the addendum is included to fully reflect the recommendation of the Regional Conference for the Near East and North Africa.

Ms Cristina AMARAL (Director, Office of Support to Decentralized Offices)

In fact during the discussions, it was highlighted and between different versions it became shortened between the end of the Regional Conference and the Programme and Finance Committee. It would be possible now to correct this with an amendment to the report with the understanding that this is not a new reporting mechanism. This will be reporting through the normal functioning and existing bodies and reporting mechanisms on the work of the office in the Region of North Africa and Near East.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of the discussions under this sub-item.

4.6 *Input from the Informal Regional Conference for North America*

4.6 *Contribution de la Conférence régionale informelle pour l'Amérique du Nord*

4.6 *Aportación de la Conferencia Regional Oficiosa para América del Norte*

(C 2019/LIM/1)

CHAIRPERSON

The last item is sub-item 4.6, *Input from the Fifth Informal Regional Conference for North America*. The document before Council is C 2019/LIM/1 and CL 159/LIM/4 Rev.1.

I will now give the floor to Mr Daryl Nearing, Deputy Director of the Multilateral Relations Division, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, who will speak on behalf of the co-chairs, Mr Robert Macke of the United States of America and Mr Doug Forsyth of Canada, to present the report of the Fifth Informal Regional Conference for North America, held in Washington D.C. on 18 and 19 April 2018.

Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)

As mentioned, the Fifth Informal Regional Conference for North America was held in Washington in mid-April. The Regional Conference expresses our views on the FAO's work, budget and governance, and expectation that a report will be given equal consideration as reports of other Regional Conferences in the FAO's planning, work, and reporting.

The Fifth Informal Regional Conference for North America led to some very fruitful discussions and we wish to thank our American colleagues for hosting this meeting and facilitating such outcomes. In addition to convening representatives from Canada and the United States, senior FAO officials joined via videoconference. The Director of the FAO's Liaison Office in Washington DC and several of his staff also participated in person.

Canada and the United States also each solicited input from our stakeholders as part of the priority setting process. This was a new approach for our countries. Views from civil society, academics, and the private sector were received and informed our deliberations. This was quite helpful. Our Regional Conference considered a variety of issues concerning FAO, and in particular called on FAO to increase its support for normative work, agricultural innovations, and strengthening its technical capacity.

The written report of the Informal Regional Conference for North America details views on all of the FAO's strategic objectives. In my intervention, I would like to highlight a few significant points.

First and foremost, the North American region continues to fully support the FAO's goal which is a world free from hunger and malnutrition. Second, FAO should maintain a focus on its ultimate value added and strongest comparative advantage as a knowledge organization, working in partnership to leverage resources, skills, and expertise.

Also North America advocated that FAO systematically mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls in its work and advocacy at a global, regional, and national level.

North America is of the view that the FAO should develop an action plan to implement the minimum standards of the FAO's own policy on gender equality, measure progress both quantitatively and qualitatively and report on a regular basis on results and lessons learned.

In more detail, there were three key messages on the FAO's results that were identified by the Regional Conference for North America. First, FAO should increase its support for its normative work such as technical support to develop and adopt international standards established by the Codex and the International Plant Protection Convention, in addition, guidelines for practices in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry and the provision of other information that enables countries and rural peoples to make smart and informed choices.

This work is critical to increasing productivity, improving resilience to multiple shocks, and reducing environmental impacts and it will help farmers to access markets and earn better incomes, ensure a safer food supply, and strengthen global food security.

Our second key message is that FAO should do more to support the adoption and implementation of agricultural innovations. Innovation is essential to simultaneously increase productivity, reduce impacts on the environment, adapt to changing climate, and enable poor farmers and fishers and foresters to earn better income.

Building resilient food systems means enabling people to access the entire toolbox of innovations.

Our third key message is that the FAO should strengthen its capacity to deliver impartial, science-based analysis and guidance for members. As a knowledge organization, the FAO has a unique responsibility to provide all countries with information and analysis. We call on the FAO to increase its technical capacities to deliver this work and to support members in this regard.

Let me conclude by saying that the North American region believes the world needs more of FAO's work as a knowledge organization. Food insecurity is rising for the first time in many years. The world will not achieve zero hunger or zero poverty if farmers, fishers, and foresters who account for the majority of the world's poor and undernourished cannot earn better incomes and lift themselves out of poverty.

We need FAO's impartial and science-based expertise. We need FAO to help people around the world to find tools that they can use that best suit their situation and needs.

North America is a strong supporter of FAO. Civil society and private sector organizations from both Canada and the United States of America participate and engage with FAO.

On behalf of both Canada and the United States of America, we would like to thank FAO officials for their cooperation and participation in the Fifth Informal Regional Conference for North America. We look forward to working with the Secretariat and other Member States to advance the points we have raised and the North American Region will convene again in Canada in 2020.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We thank this very brief, solid and concise introduction.

I just have one question to raise. You raised three points FAO should do, more normative work of high quality, agricultural innovation, and then guidance to countries. Did you discuss during your Conference the role of FAO in delivering at a country and regional level?

Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)

The question was, if I have heard it correctly, whether we discussed the role of FAO at a country level? We definitely discussed the role of FAO at an international level. Country level discussions were raised during our dialogue. However, we did not specifically concentrate on the role of FAO at a country level.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

I would like to thank Daryl Nearing, Deputy Director of Multilateral Relations of Canada, for the presentation of the Fifth Informal Regional Conference Report for North America. The Secretariat would also like to thank the Members of the Informal Regional Conference for North America for this very useful guidance.

As mentioned earlier this morning, the synthesis of priorities and the regional initiatives endorsed by the Regional Conferences, including this Informal Regional Conference for North America, are presented in a very useful, concise document CL 159/LIM/4.

The guidance received from the different Regional Conferences shows many common points but also differences according to the specificities of the regions, their relative level of development, and what the membership expects from FAO.

This makes the Regional Conferences a true foundation of the governance of FAO and, together with the upcoming Report of the Technical Committees, will provide the guidance needed by the Secretariat for the work of FAO in the coming years, as it will be ultimately endorsed by the Conference in 2019 and specifically for the PWB 2020-21.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

The Africa Regional Group takes note of the outcomes of the Informal Regional Conference for North America that was held from 18 to 19 April 2018 in Washington D.C.

The Africa Regional Group is cognizant of the fact that FAO does not implement programmes in the United States and Canada, and, as a result, the recent regional meeting is considered to be “informal”. However, it is noteworthy that the two countries in question did provide about 25 percent of FAO’s assessed contributions and over 16 percent of FAO’s voluntary contributions in 2017.

The Africa Regional Group particularly noted one of the key messages emanating from the Conference, namely “FAO’s priorities should be driven by the three global goals established by its Members, which are eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; elimination of poverty; and sustainable management of natural resources.

These three goals are also the essential ingredients that constitute Africa we want, with the means and resources to drive its own development, with sustainable and long-term stewardship of its own resources, and where modern agriculture for increased production, productivity and value-addition contribute to farmer and national prosperity and Africa’s collective security.

We also welcome the recommendation that FAO should systematically mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls throughout its work, at all levels. In case of Africa, women constitute a large portion of the agriculture labour force and a large percentage of that group considers agriculture as its primary source of livelihood. These women often have the least access to land and other resources and are often the most affected by food insecurity. We therefore support the recommendation emanating from the North American Region that FAO should develop an Action Plan to implement the minimum standards of FAO’s Policy on Gender Equality. An active and well-supported labour force can contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty that Africa is so often associated with.

We all have to make sure that the 2030 Agenda with the Malabo Declaration of ending hunger by 2025 are achieved. We are all, developed and developing countries, responsible for its success or failure. Together we can achieve more.

Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)

My thanks to the Representative from South Africa for your useful remarks.

One thing I did want to highlight that is detailed in our written report but I did not speak about, is a topic of particular interest for Africa. During our session in the Informal North American Regional Conference on the voluntary contributions for emergencies, we spent a significant amount of time focusing on Fall Army Worm, which is a particular pest that is rapidly expanding in Africa. FAO

officials spoke via video conference to this effect. It was a very useful conversation and, again, a strong connection to the last speaker and the remarks that he shared.

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings up to the end of item 4. As agreed, before I read out my conclusions, the text will be projected on the screen behind me.

1. The Council reviewed and endorsed the conclusions and regional priorities expressed by the five Regional Conferences, as well as the Informal Regional Conference for North America, held between February and May 2018, as contained in their respective reports, and in particular supported:

- a) sustainable and inclusive food systems;
- b) the development of monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes for tracking progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including agroecology and e-agriculture;
- c) assisting countries to build resilience to combat climate change, including water scarcity, and through the sustainable use of forests;
- d) addressing the triple burden of malnutrition;
- e) the One Health initiative, including transboundary pests and diseases and antimicrobial resistance;
- f) combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, including progress on the adoption of the Port State Measures Agreement;
- g) assistance to smallholders, family farmers and fishers, with greater recognition of the role of GIAHS, women and rural youth, and noting the importance of Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security and other international instruments such as Codex Alimentarius;
- h) assistance to Small Island Developing States;
- i) prioritization of partnerships for resource mobilization at the decentralized level, in particular with the Rome-based Agencies, and through South-South and Triangular cooperation, noting the importance of increased participation of partners in future Regional Conferences; and
- j) strengthening of the technical capacity of the Organization, including through the review of FAO's decentralized network coverage.

2. The Council also took note of the proposal by Chile for an International Year of Fruits and Vegetables, as endorsed by the 35th Session of the Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the information provided by Estonia to the 31st Session of the Regional Conference for Europe regarding an International Year of Rye, and looked forward to further information in this regard.

3. The Council acknowledged that the Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) framed the work of the Regional Conferences and encouraged regular and systematic review of their performance and efficiency.

That's the end of the conclusions. The floor is open for any comments.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

Can we look at point g), which says "*assistance to smallholders, family farmers, and fishers with greater recognition...*" I think we have to go further than recognition – to promote. I think it should read "*...greater recognition and promotion of the role...*" I do not think it is enough to just recognize. I think we have to actively promote the role.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Thank you for your summary. We do not want to transform this into a Drafting Committee but— just to make sure that we will have enough time to reflect on these items in the Drafting Committee. This is my understanding. Is this correct?

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

In paragraph 1 (c), if we could probably reword “*water scarcity*” as “*water productivity*” and also add soil health: “...*including water productivity and soil health*”.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Could you go please to point 1 h) on SIDS? I think just to say “assistance to Small Island Developing States” is too general. We have to specify what this assistance means. Usually it was climate change and food insecurity, these are the two issues. Please specify.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

In our statement as well as at the Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference, both plant health and food safety were discussed as important issues, so I would like to ask that paragraph 1 g), which currently refers to Codex, could also mention the International Plant Protection Convention?

I will not go into drafting because I am also on the Drafting Committee. I think paragraph 1 g) as it is currently drafted confuses two issues but I think that is something we can deal with in the Drafting Committee.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to support the comments just made by the Representative of Afghanistan. [*in English*] “*Assistance to Small Island Developing States*” means everything and nothing at the same time. It is too general.

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE-MABUSELA (Lesotho)

In the statement of the Africa Regional Group on agenda item 4.1, alongside the SIDS, landlocked food deficit countries is one of the issues that was raised, which appeared in the Report of the Regional Conference for Africa held in Khartoum. We would like that to be reflected in the report.

CHAIRPERSON

Afghanistan, your amendment was in paragraph 1 h)?

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

“*To address the challenges of climate change and food insecurity*”. Thank you.

Ms Jennifer FELLOWS (Canada)

I just had one comment on point b). At the end of the sentence there is a couple of approaches that are highlighted, like e-agriculture. I heard throughout the Regional Conferences, quite a range of approaches being discussed, from biotechnology in GRULAC, through sort of innovative approaches more generally in the iNARC. So I would suggest we try to broaden that reference to the different approaches being taken to achieve SDGs.

CHAIRPERSON

Would you have a suggested text?

Ms Jennifer FELLOWS (Canada)

I guess you could replace the final with something quite general and “including the range of approaches available to assist with agricultural productivity” or something along those lines.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We are on point b). I do not think the word “*development*” is the proper word. We would say “*improving the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes for tracking progress in the achievement of SDGs*”. The rest is redundant.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I suggest the addition of some wording in paragraph 1 c): [*in English*] “*Assisting countries to build resilience to combat poverty and malnutrition challenges, as well as climate changes*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Kuwait, the reference to malnutrition is in paragraph 1 d).

Mr Pierfrancesco SACCO (Italy)

In point b) we would like to keep the reference to agroecology and e-agriculture. Maybe putting something like “including through agroecology and e-agriculture”.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Also to propose what Italy just advanced, including biotechnology.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

In point b), we would keep the first “including” with agricultural productivity, but eliminate the second “including” and replace it with “as well as through”.

Now coming again to the proposition that was made by Kuwait on food productivity and malnutrition, I think on point c), “*assisting countries to build resilience to combat—*”. I’m not very comfortable with “poverty” but I would be more comfortable with “food”, “to combat food insecurity and climate change”, not “poverty”.

CHAIRPERSON

So with these amendments can we go ahead and adopt the conclusions?

I see there is no request for comments so we move to the next item.

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 159/INF/4)

CHAIRPERSON

We now take up item 13, *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*, which is presented to Council for information only. The relevant document is CL 159/INF/4.

The Council will be given presentations on FAO’s participation and contribution in other international fora which are of relevance to FAO’s mandate. I should like to ask the Secretary-General to read the list of presentations.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council will be given five presentations on:

- Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR);
- The Global Parliamentary Summit against hunger and Malnutrition, scheduled to take place in Madrid from 29 to 30 October 2018;
- Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation (Buenos Aires regarding the Action Plan for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries +40);
- Report of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition to the UN General Assembly; and
- FAO and the Work on Migration in Global Fora.

CHAIRPERSON

Following the delivery of all the presentations I will open the floor for questions.

The first topic on the “*Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance*” will be presented by Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

I am very pleased to inform you on the recent activities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG) on AMR.

We all know that AMR is a threat to our lives and livelihoods. It is not a problem that will be solved in a few years. It needs continuing and continued action. FAO has been an active player in the call for bold action to AMR and is committed to join forces with all actors along the Global Action Plan on AMR. Considering the multifaceted and collaborative activities that are needed to address AMR, it is necessary that we act together, pool resources and expertise to secure the necessary mandate and support from our respective Membership.

In 2016, as you may recall, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) issued a Resolution calling for convening an *ad hoc* IACG in consultation with Tripartite – WHO, OIE, and FAO. The group was leading all the efforts towards the establishment of the Resolution and establishment of the Inter-Agency Group. The IACG is chaired by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Ms Amina Mohammed, and the Director-General of WHO as a co-chair. It has also three co-conveners: China, Ghana, and the UK. And more recently in May 2018 this month, a civil society from the United States, ReAct, joined the Group.

Within “One Health” approach, the IACG mandate is to ensure sustainable effective global action to address AMR, including options to improve coordination, taking into account the Global Action Plan on AMR. WHO serves as the IACG Secretariat with OIE and FAO is contributing to the functioning of the Secretariat. For the effective functioning of the Secretariat, we need a budget of a total of USD 2 million. So far, WHO with the support of the other agencies has been able to mobilize USD 1.5 million. Meaning that we have a gap of USD 500,000 to achieve the amount of USD 2 million.

As of today, the IACG consists of 15 UN and other agencies, 12 specialized agencies, technical institutes, and civil society, and is balanced by geographical and gender distribution. Since its inception, IACG has met regularly and FAO has been an active participant. I am serving as FAO representative to the IACG.

IACG is constituted by six working groups. The first one is communication and behaviour change; the second one is on National Action Plans; the third one is reduce need optimize use; the fourth one is on research and development and access; the fifth one is on SDGs, role of UN, Post-2019 Governance, and the last one is on global surveillance. FAO is a member of each of the six groups.

The IACG so far has done an excellent job in mapping all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to reduce AMR. And the final report of the activities will be presented to the General Assembly in September 2019, where we think we will be able to conclude the work and move to the next level, because as I have said before, it is a continuing work.

FAO, as I have said, has been very active in this process, and we are in a unique place because we are the only ones connecting food and nutrition security, health, sustainable development, and environment together. On a global level, FAO provides the platform where actors across the agricultural sectors meet and discuss AMR. For many years, FAO has collaborated with OIE and WHO, as I mentioned, in a partnership called the Tripartite.

I am pleased to inform that last week on Wednesday the three Heads of the Tripartite signed an MoU to further strengthen our cooperation to combat health risk at the animal-human ecosystem interface in the context of “One Health” approach, including antimicrobial resistance. So far, FAO had an MoU with WHO, an MoU with OIE, and the same with WHO and OIE, but we did not have an MoU where the three were together and agreed to strengthen further collaboration. This was done last week at the last meeting of IACG. This marks, as I was saying, a new phase in our cooperation and provides a clear results-based framework towards a sustainable governance and action structure of AMR.

The Tripartite through this MoU is strongly committed to strengthen its collaboration to tackle the emerging, re-emerging, and neglected infectious diseases of the animal-human ecosystem interface. Therefore, while the MoU principally addresses AMR, it also recognizes the need for the three Organizations to reinforce health systems as a whole and deal with the disease threats at their source.

By addressing “One Health” issues, including AMR, at their root causes, the Tripartite will impact most, if not all, Sustainable Development Goals. This work is also very important to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda and its 17 SDGs.

Now it is important to reach out to other partners, most importantly the private sector and civil society, to tackle AMR together. They have been very much involved since the beginning, but we need more private sector. We need more civil society. The IACG is a necessary bridge towards a real multi-sectoral approach and will require continued work at a country level to ensure safe food systems and sustainability of production.

Ladies and Gentlemen, rest assured that FAO remains engaged at all levels and looks forward to our continued collaboration. Finally, to tackle AMR, we need to act together and we need your support. Your support is crucial.

CHAIRPERSON

Our next speaker is Ms Marcela Villarreal, Director of the Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division, who will make a presentation on “*The Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition, scheduled to take place in Madrid from 29 to 30 October 2018*”, and thereafter on the “*Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation (Buenos Aires Action Plan for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries +40)*”.

Ms Marcela VILLARREAL (Director, Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division)

The Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition

Let me start just by making a little point on how important the role of parliamentarians is in development. They have a really central role, yet this role has not been fully appreciated in the development process. They help very importantly to create political will. Political will is fundamental, if we want to eradicate hunger, and all the more so between now and 2030.

Let us just remember that the only aspect that all the countries who reached MDG 1 about cutting in half hunger in the previous Development Agenda, all the countries higher/lower income, the only thing they had in common was political will. Political will is fundamental for eradicating hunger.

Second role, of course the budget. Parliamentarians allocate the budget, and without budget, you may have a lot of political will, but if there is no money, it is difficult to attain these targets. Very importantly also is a role of oversight. Parliamentarians exercise the role of oversight of the government. They also create the legal framework, the enabling environment, all laws that are necessary to be in place for countries to be able to reach these targets. And finally, they are central in terms of involving their own constituencies in creating awareness, dialogue, discussion, exchanging views with constituencies that represent all the broad of the political spectrum.

The experience of working with parliamentarians and parliamentary fronts against hunger is already bearing fruit very importantly, very significantly in Latin America. Latin America has put up to now 19 regional or national parliamentary fronts against hunger and malnutrition. Through these fronts created throughout the continent, there has already been the creation of four framework laws. Here you have an example. For example, the Framework Law on Family Farming.

There are four of these done at the regional level, the Parlatino, and then these laws are worked at the national level. Up to now, there are more than 20 laws that have been passed on food and nutrition security. For example, feeding programmes, right to food, nutrition laws that have been passed throughout the continent. Evidently the parliamentarians have a quite important role to play.

What FAO has been doing to support this important role is of sharing good practices, lessons learned on these legal frameworks that have been developed. We have been providing the technical information and helping build the capacities that are needed by the Parliamentarians and their staff in terms of addressing issues related to hunger and malnutrition.

We are also facilitating linkages among parliamentarians and parliamentary bodies through South-South cooperation. The good experience in one country is easily shared and adopted at another country

just by talking to each other, and sometimes it costs as little as just paying the flight and the accommodations. It is a very effective way of having this experience shared.

There are a lot of examples of where we are supporting these parliamentary fronts against hunger and malnutrition. You will see most of them are now in Latin America and the Caribbean because the activities there started 7-8 years ago. But there are also parliamentary fronts created or in the process of being created in Africa, you see them there, in Europe, in the European Parliament, and also in Asia.

So this leads us to the Global Parliamentary Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition that will take place in October, end of October in Madrid. The objectives of this Summit are to highlight the role of parliaments in achieving SDG 2 specifically, what exactly parliamentarians can do towards our common goal of eradicating hunger, and also to identify and share political experiences, legislation, good practices. It has been organized by the Spanish Parliament. It is actually going to take place within the Spanish Parliament, Las Cortes Generales, the Parliamentary Front against Hunger of Latin America and the Caribbean, FAO, and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development (AECID).

The target audience is Parliamentarians from all over the world and with a very specific focus on legislators from low and lower middle income countries. The expected output is to enhance this role to see what is needed, what we need to make sure that parliamentarians can and are able to contribute in a very effective way to eradicating hunger and malnutrition throughout the world. We expect to create a network of parliamentary alliances that are contributing actively and effectively to the achievement of SDG 2.

I would like to end this first presentation with a call to you to help us promote this Global Summit with your own National Parliaments. I wish to thank you for your attention.

Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation

Now I have the privilege of having a second presentation to you. As we put it up on the screen, it is my pleasure now to go to the second important Global Meeting, which is the Second High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation. It is called BAPA +40. I will tell you in a minute why it has this name, BAPA +40.

BAPA +40 actually stands for the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), and it is + 40 because it is 40 years later. Because the first Conferences was back in 1978, or should I say probably it should be called "BAPA +41" because it is going to be in March next year. It is technically going to be 41, but it is called "BAPA +40". The first Conference was on promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries. After that, in 2009 we had a High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Nairobi. The outcome was in the Nairobi Outcome Document. In 2019, this second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation is going to try to align South-South cooperation and the developments ever since the first Conference to what is going on today in the developing world, the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement.

We are happy that South-South cooperation is becoming more and more relevant and more and more present in the development discourse. I was really happy to hear from many of the reports of the Regional Conferences how important South-South cooperation is considered to be. Now the United Nations System Reform, the Secretary-General has identified two mechanisms that will help the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and therefore are considered central to the future of what the United Nations does in terms of development. One of them is partnerships, and I think we can see it all over the 2030 Agenda, specifically multistakeholder partnerships. And the other mechanism that is identified in the United Nations Reform is South-South cooperation. It has been identified as a main mechanism to achieve this 2030 Agenda, specifically around climate change. There is right now in implementation and preparation the South-South cooperation Action for the Climate Change Engagement Strategy.

Now South-South cooperation is not new to FAO. Since back already in 1996, FAO started working and proposing a model of South-South cooperation. Since then, we have mobilized around USD 370 million, there have been almost 200 MoUs and other kinds of agreements, and more than

2,000 cooperates have been mobilized from and to different parts of the developing world. Today there are around 40 on-going projects. There are more than 30 countries that are providing solutions whereas 90 countries are hosting these South-South Cooperation exchanges.

Within FAO, South-South cooperation is being more and more of a priority. Its priority has been increasing. You will recall that during the last conference, at the 40th Session of the FAO Conference, the Division for Partnerships and South-South Cooperation was created and approved by all of you.

There is an increasing demand, as we have also heard it from different regional conferences, mostly and with very strong support from G77 and China whom we thank for this support. And, obviously, as I said before, within the United Nations Reform there are many opportunities that are developing and we hope that will be evolving also, always increasing for South-South cooperation.

On the way to the second Conference, the BAPA +40, RBAs have developed a joint road map on collaboration. It is my pleasure that Ashwani Muthoo who is the Director-in-charge of South-South Cooperation at IFAD is here with us today and he has kindly agreed to answer any questions you may have on IFAD's role in South-South cooperation or on the work that we are doing together with IFAD. Our counterpart from the World Food Programme unfortunately could not be here with us today as she is traveling, but we just wanted to make it very clear that we are working very closely together as a Rome-based agency approach to South-South cooperation.

Now the joint road map was presented at the end of last year at the Global South-South Development Expo in Turkey. There were a number of joint events, knowledge products, and operational collaboration within this joint plan. I take the opportunity to invite all of you to the UN South-South Cooperation Day, which is going to take place next September on the topic of climate change.

You may recall that last year is the first time that this day was celebrated. It was celebrated at IFAD, beautifully organized by IFAD. This year, as this is a joint celebration, it will be here in FAO, and next year it will be in the World Food Programme. It is going to be rotated among the three Rome-based Agencies. This road map also has monitoring and evaluation frameworks in the context of SDGs. And we have also proposed a joint session to take place at the conference BAPA +40.

Now we are not starting from scratch. There is quite a bit of activity that has already taken place or is going to take place from now until when this international conference takes place, IFAD Ministerial South-South and Triangular Cooperation Meeting that took place last November in Brazil and with the outcome of the Brasilia Declaration and Action Agenda. Later this year we are going to have the High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation in support of the SDGs in China towards October - November.

We are also working on the action plan on South-South cooperation for the Secretary-General's Climate Change Engagement Strategy. FAO has been identified as one of the key implementing partners. We are developing a document, an intellectual contribution in terms of southern climate solution serious on food and nutrition security and climate change, and we are also working together with our Rome-based Agency sisters towards including South-South cooperation and climate change in the COP-24. BAPA +40 regional and thematic consultations have already started. They will continue. And we will be helping all of our Member Countries in terms of their negotiations for the outcome document of this Conference.

Finally, BAPA +40, as we have mentioned before, is going to take place in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019. It is going to be a high-level Conference at the level of the Heads of State. The objectives are to review the trends, address challenges and opportunities, and discuss the contribution of South-South and Triangular cooperation to the 2030 Agenda. The consultation process has recently started. What is going to come out of this is a forward-looking action-oriented agreed outcome. While I thank you, I take the opportunity to call on your active participation in this process towards BAPA +40.

CHAIRPERSON

I now call upon Ms Anna Lartey, Director of the Nutrition and Food Systems Division, who will present "*Report of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition to the UN General Assembly*".

Ms Anna LARTEY (Director, Nutrition and Food Systems Division)

This presentation will give Council an update on the report of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition Report to the UN General Assembly.

If you recall, we had the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN 2) in FAO headquarters in 2014. We had two outcome documents, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and then the Framework for Action. The Rome Declaration clearly requested the General Assembly to consider declaring a Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025. Now the Decade is meant to actually accelerate the implementation of ICN 2 commitments and also contribute to SDGs by 2030. The Declaration also invites the Secretary-General to inform the General Assembly about the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition on the basis of biennial reports jointly prepared by FAO and WHO.

I am happy to say that the first report on the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition has been released and this can be accessed on this website. The report provides an overview of the progress made in the implementation of the Nutrition Decade, reflecting key developments at the international, regional, and country levels.

Now this slide highlights some areas that are covered in the report, basically looking at some of the key developments at international, regional, and country level. We also mentioned that the work programme that was developed with six cross-cutting areas where we encouraged countries to work around, and then also the nutrition targets which are yet to be achieved, but the fact that some progress has been made in implementing some of these commitments.

Also, the report highlights the fact that almost all countries have policies relating to nutrition, specifically all forms of malnutrition, yet nutrition is not always a stated objective in national development plans. On the whole, the report highlights the fact that implementation should be scaled up, investments in nutrition should be increased, and there is a need to increase national commitments to nutrition.

The Nutrition Decade has triggered certain actions, and they are summarized here. Commitments for action by governments. Brazil and Ecuador were the first two countries to come up with concrete commitments on what they are going to do under the Decade. We have also received other commitments from other countries through the Global Nutrition Summit that was held in Milan 2017.

Other UN agencies have also come out clearly to show how they are going to contribute to the Decade, their contribution to the Decade, and these reports from the UN agencies have been published by the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition on its website.

Civil society organizations and social movements have also submitted a collective position which is the manifesto to highlight the principles on which they will engage with the decade and how it should evolve.

We also have other commitments on how to engage with the decade from the SUN Movement and other groups.

Another important development is the formation of action networks. Norway is committed to establish a leader global action network on sustainable foods from the ocean and inland waters for food security and nutrition and the first official meeting is scheduled on 5 July 2018 in FAO headquarter.

Also Brazil has shown it is also considering setting up two action networks, one related to food-based dietary guidelines and another on salt reduction. Chile has shown interest in establishing a region-wide action network on healthy food environments. France and Australia are joining forces to lead a network on nutrition labeling. So, there is a lot of room for countries to come on board with a Decade.

In terms of the way forward, efforts to implement the Decade have been actively pursued. However, the implementation should be scaled up. Investment in nutrition should be increased. We need more policy coherence, being enhanced, and the number of national commitments raised. The Decade offers a unique opportunity to accelerate progress on all fronts.

We want to build synergies with the other International Decades like water for sustainable development, the UN Decade for family farming. We want to build synergies going forward between

the Nutrition Decade and other decades. I am happy to inform you that we have an official website for the Nutrition Decade. It has been launched this year and there you can access this website for all information on the Decade.

I would like to add that this is a wonderful opportunity. The world has to do something about nutrition. We may not have a Decade of Action on Nutrition for a long time, certainly not in our lifetime, and we must do all we can to make this Decade of Nutrition a success.

CHAIRPERSON

Our last speaker today is, Ms Junko Sasaki, Director of the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division, who will make a presentation on “*FAO and the Work on Migration in Global Fora*”.

Ms Junko SAZAKI (Director, Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division)

I will talk about FAO and our work on migration in global fora. Why does FAO work on migration? The reasons are that migration is linked with FAO’s global goals.

One is fighting hunger and achieving food security, and the second reason is reducing rural poverty and third, promoting a sustainable use of natural resources.

The work on migration is a part of our Strategic Framework, especially Strategic Objective 3, which is reducing rural poverty, Strategic Objective 5, increasing resilience to threats and crises.

You may have heard FAO has been working as a co-chair of a Global Migration Group (GMG) which supports the development of a Global Compact on Migration in 2018. The government is working on the formulation of this global compact. In this regard, 2018 is a crucial year for migration and this is for the first time in history, all of the countries are developing the migration framework together. And in this process, Mexico and Switzerland are co-facilitating it.

Where we are, we have the intergovernmental negotiations, from four to five days, six rounds. Currently we are in the fifth round. It will be ongoing very soon and then it will be adopted at the International Conference on Migration to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco on December this year.

With regard to FAO and migration, and the work in GMG, as I have said, FAO is the co-chair of the GMG together with IOM. IOM is the International Migration Organization and then usually we take turns. FAO co-chairs the Group in 2018.

GMG consists of twenty-two UN agencies. It was established in 2006. The first function is to promote the instruments and norms related to migration. The second, more effective approaches for coordinated response to migration. UN speaks with one voice.

The global migration role is well recognized in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in the process of leading to Global Compact on Migration. It was declared at the Migration Conference in New York in 2006.

Since 2017, GMG technically supports the process towards the adaptation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). This is a very important process and also that FAO being a co-chair, it has a significant meaning. We consider as an excellent opportunity for us to raise global attention on issues related to migration, food security, and rural development.

The following one is GMG and then GCM. We had to reiterate in February this year among 22 UN agencies. We have agreed on a number of key actions we should take towards adoption of GCM:

The first one is to support the facilitators, Mexico and Switzerland, when it is needed through the Office of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on migration, Ms Louise Arbour, with technical inputs and data evidence. The second one is the language on migration, and the third one is the side event on the issue briefing.

The second key function is to contribute to Secretary-General’s internal consultation. It is leading to the period April 2018. Secretary-General intended to conclude his consultation on internal UN migration structures and GMG has contributed to the discussion.

And then another function is building up the momentum towards the Conference, the final Conference adaptation of the GCM. There we are planning to have an event to raise awareness on this issue.

This will be coordinated with the Office of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and other partners. The future of GMG, what will happen in GMG, Office of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General was consulted for the future of the UN's role in migration and the Executive Committee of the Secretary-General decided to create the UN Migration Network which will be coordinated by IOM.

Then this will be announced by Deputy Secretary-General. A general briefing will be provided to Member States on the configuration of the UN Migration Network. In autumn 2018, a framing conference will take place, which will determine what each agency would do, what we would do in a consolidated manner.

Another platform is the Global Forum on Migration Development. FAO is involved at the global level and is an observer to this Forum.

Other than GMG, FAO is also active in global cooperation mechanisms such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), UN DESA Annual Coordination Meeting on International Migration and the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD).

We have a partnership with IOM. We have a Memorandum of Understanding signed in January 2018. We also strongly collaborate with RBAs; FAO, IFAD and WFP technically supported G20 and G7 discussions by jointly developing a paper on the links among migration, food security, agriculture and rural development. In the context of the GCM negotiations, RBAs have also produced a joint advocacy note to convey common priorities and key messages on migration, agriculture and rural development.

Ms Jiani TIAN (China) (Original language Chinese)

First of all, please allow China to thank the four outstanding female speakers for their presentations. China would like to speak under two presentations. First, we would like to thank Ms Semedo on her briefing on AMR. China has joined the AMR Global Action, especially under the FAO framework. We are looking forward to close cooperation with all parties.

Secondly, we thank Ms Marcela for her presentation. China appreciates FAO for keeping its attention and support to South-South cooperation which is crucial for many developing countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda and for ensuring food security. China hopes that FAO would maintain its leading role in the global South-South cooperation on agriculture.

China has been a firm advocator and supporter of South-South cooperation. As Ms Marcela said, this October, China would host the second South-South Cooperation High-level Forum in Changsha, Hunan Province. We would like to invite FAO and its Member Countries to participate in this event.

We would like to invite all of you to visit China to discuss jointly about the global agriculture South-South cooperation strategy. We also hope that FAO would update its Members on the BAPA+40.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

I have two questions on two presentations, the one on the Global Parliamentarian Summit against Hunger and Malnutrition. The other one is on GMG to better understand how FAO really factors into the on-going intergovernmental negotiations in New York. I know that IOM provides that technical support. If you could elaborate on the relationship between GMG and GCM.

On the parliamentarians, you did mention that you have organized kind of a platform for parliamentarians in Latin America but you also mentioned that there was some arrows pointing to Africa.

In this regard, I am not too sure whether you are talking about Africa as a continent, and in this sense an African Parliament, or you are referring to the national parliaments of the African countries?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The EU and its Member States would like to thank the FAO Secretariat for its presentation on Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO. Collaboration and partnership are indeed key to the fulfilment of FAO's objectives. That is why we welcome the decision to take this standing agenda item at the beginning of our Council session rather than leaving it for the last day. We would like to make the following points.

First of all we would like to commend, in particular, the work achieved jointly by FAO with OIE and WHO on the critical issue of AMR. We are very pleased with the signing by the three Organizations last week of a new Memorandum of Understanding on AMR. This confirms their full commitment to meeting this challenge under the 'One Health' approach.

We call on FAO to further promote the careful and responsible use of antimicrobials, the monitoring of the use of antimicrobials and the surveillance of AMR. In this regard, we wish to underline that the careful and responsible use of antimicrobials does not include their use for growth promotion.

Another important point which we would like to highlight is the adoption of the UNGA Resolution on the UNDS reform on 31 May. From the outset, the EU and its Member States have fully supported the Secretary General's reform efforts and his aim to reposition the UN Development System.

We encourage all Members and the FAO to proactively engage and provide strong support to the Secretary-General.

The UN Development System (UNDS) needs a complete reorientation to support the 2030 Agenda, including increased integration and accountability. The UNDS Reform Resolution adopted last week is an important first step towards a more efficient UNDS, in line with the 2030 Agenda. In the implementation phase, the members of the UNDS, including FAO, will be key actors. We trust that FAO will proactively engage in a constructive dialogue with the General Secretariat, and will fully implement the operational paragraphs of the Reform Resolution. We therefore expect that FAO will increase its contribution to the resident coordinator, in accordance with the renewed cost-sharing agreement.

We are indeed convinced that it is in the interest of each UNDS entity to constructively work jointly on a strong system-wide strategic document which clearly stipulates the comparative advantages of the respective UNDS entities, and which identifies those areas where other partners are better positioned to lead.

We call upon FAO management to present, for deliberation by the Council at its December session, a plan which sets out in detail how FAO intends to implement the reforms as guided by the UNGA Resolution. We will come back to this point under Agenda 14 in relation to the provisional agenda of the December Council. In addition, the joint meeting of the three Rome-based Agencies on 14 September could provide a further opportunity to discuss the implementation of the reform.

One last point which we would like to highlight is the Resolution adopted by the UN Security Council last week to tackle the link between hunger and conflict. We all know that conflict is a major cause for the recent worsening of global hunger and food insecurity, and we call on FAO - along with WFP and other UN agencies - to take decisive action in implementing the Resolution. The EU and its Member States are fully committed to continue working with our partners to meet this challenge.

Sr. Antonio FLORES LORENZO (Spain)

En primer lugar, agradecemos por las interesantes ponencias que nos han explicado esta tarde, que nos parece que tratan de asuntos decisivos para nuestro futuro. También, queremos unirnos y agradecerlo a la convocatoria de Doña Marcela Villarreal para la participación en la Conferencia de Madrid de los frentes parlamentarios para la lucha contra el hambre. Esta importante convocatoria, que tendrá lugar en noviembre de este año, y de la que el parlamentario español será el anfitrión, puede ser un elemento importante en la profundización de esta tarea fundamental, como es el combate para acabar con el hambre y para mejorar lo más posible la seguridad alimentaria.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

Brazil welcomes the information provided on the Development in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO. I would like to refer to other issues of relevance in which FAO has an important role to play.

Biodiversity is essential for all agricultural sectors, helping to achieve food security in rural development. In that sense, we value FAO's collaboration with CBD and this work cannot be overstated.

I congratulate FAO for the successful convening of the multi-stakeholder dialogue on diversity mainstreaming last week, which provided insightful elements for the implementation of the biodiversity mainstreaming platform.

It is paramount to address the challenges of climate change and the risks that climate change poses to agriculture. The Koronivia decisions adopted in UNFCCC COP 23 recognized the need to work further in that sense.

Brazil believes FAO can contribute with its expertise to help countries fight climate change and most of all, adapt to its consequences, taking into account the need to ensure food security and promote development in its three dimensions.

In our country, we relentlessly pursue innovative ways to cope with deforestation and at the same time, promote sustainable agricultural practices. Illegal deforestation in the Amazon has dropped 20 percent in the past six months, confirming that long-term trend of curbing encroachment of arable lands into this ecosystem.

Brazil congratulates FAO for its contribution in the debate of the United Nations Forum on Forests. My delegation expects that FAO continues to be engaged in this fruitful sharing of experience in this field.

The fifth round of negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, GCM, has started this week in New York. We appreciate FAO's efforts in strengthening its collaboration with other agencies in this area as well as its fundamental role in co-chairing the Global Migration Group. FAO has an important role to play in addressing the drivers of migration such as hunger and rural poverty so as to make migration a choice, not a necessity.

On the other hand, considering that human mobility is in itself a powerful tool of development, we believe FAO should increasingly focus its work in harnessing the benefits of migration and promoting adequate immigration channels so as to turn migration not only into a choice but also an option that brings benefit both for the countries of origin and destination.

We also commend FAO for participating in the ongoing work of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Work Group in the Human Rights Council on the United Nations Declarations on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council Resolution 36/22.

Despite the huge contribution of peasants for food security, they are faced with increasing levels of vulnerability. Thus there is a need to reinforce their protection.

In a meeting last April, a statement was delivered by a representative of FAO in which the importance of peasants is a key actor for sustainable and healthy production was highlighted. It was rightly underscored that the declarations linked to the global goals of achieving zero hunger and SDGs.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic EU Member States, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

First of all, thank you for having this item discussed today. Thank you also for this comprehensive and interesting overview, which was very informative and enlightening. This diverse information clearly shows the broadness and relevance of FAO's technical expertise in many fields.

I would just like to pick up on one issue that we find particularly important, that is AMR.

We value the work of FAO in this sector, both in terms of expertise at headquarters and operationally in the field and we believe that FAO is uniquely well positioned to address AMR in the agricultural and food production areas.

When it comes to the multilateral relations and the UN system, AMR is relevant to several organizations. This work is coordinated partly through the Inter Agency Coordination Group (IACG). We would value if FAO stepped up its efforts in terms of time and seniority in attending the IACG.

Having said that, it is our opinion that the IACG shall be a means of coordinating and effectively moving the joint UN agenda forward, but the substantive work, both in terms of normative and in operations, should stem from the Tripartite cooperation between FAO, WHO and OIE.

We look forward to receiving regular updates on the progress and the outcomes of the Tripartite work, as well as FAO's strong commitment to the Tripartite work on AMR.

Ms Susanne SCHLAACK (Germany)

Germany fully aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union and wishes to make the following additional remarks.

Resolution Res. A/72/L.52 adopted by the General Assembly on 31 May 2018 on the UNDS Reform is an important first step towards a more efficient UNDS, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Germany supports the measures foreseen in the Resolution, especially those aimed at strengthening the resident coordinator system, including its funding, as well as the establishment of a new generation of country teams.

Now that the reform Resolution has been accepted, the implementation phase will begin. During this phase, the entities of the UNDS, including the specialized agencies, will be key players. They therefore have a special responsibility. All parts of the system should aim at making the reform efforts a success.

Shortly, the Secretary-General will engage with the specialized agencies in order to elaborate an implementation plan before the end of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly. We put our trust in the members of the system, including FAO, that they will engage in a constructive dialogue with the Secretariat of the Secretary-General.

For example, we will need to pass decisions that will double FAO's contribution to the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system cost-sharing agreement with UNDG. The financial implications for FAO and governments should be made transparent and comprehensible, so that the budget can be better calculated.

At a country level, activities will need to be adapted in the light of the new generation of country teams, the cost saving through shared services and infrastructure, and the guiding role of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). FAO will need to reassess its country presence in the light of the realignment of the UN country teams.

We trust that FAO will support the UNDS Reform and contribute to making the system "*fit for purpose*" to achieve SDGs.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

First of all, I would like to congratulate for the excellent presentations of our four women-speakers which is reflecting the role of women in the Organizations. Also, Thailand would like to address some points.

Regarding AMR, Thailand would like to congratulate FAO and other Organizations like WHO and OIE to continue the Tripartite cooperations to confirm the commitment of the three Organizations to fight against AMR through "One Health" approach.

At the end of May 2018, during the General Session of the OIE in Paris, I had an opportunity to attend the meetings. I would like to stress that all the Member Countries continue to support the OIE to work closely with WHO and FAO regarding the AMR issues.

Thailand would like to invite all of the countries also to attend the Joint Global Symposium of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on Ending Hunger and Undernutrition which will be organized in November 2018.

As Bangkok is the home-base of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Thailand will continue to work with FAO and the Member Countries to strengthen the South-South cooperation in the region.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

Thank you for all the statements supporting the work FAO is doing within the framework of the Tripartite in order to support the IACG.

I would like to respond to the comments of the European Union. The Director-General said this morning, and it was also said last week in Devon, that FAO does not support the use of antibiotics as a growth promotion. I think we are completely in line with what you are saying and what FAO is doing.

Without a doubt, a part of the work plan of the IACG is increased surveillance. I think it is what we have to do. Without a doubt, this work has to be done in a step-wise approach. We cannot overnight say that we are stopping the use of antibiotics for growth promotion. We support that it has to be a step-wise approach to reduce the use step-by-step and to reach the zero use. This is what we aim, and I think all of us agreed upon. We have had good examples, examples of the Netherlands and other countries that have done so. This is what we are advising to the Members. The Director-General stated clearly in his opening remarks this morning.

Regarding the European Union and the United Nations Reform, I think again the Director-General said this morning in his opening statement that FAO has actively participated in the United Nations Development System Reform process. We welcome the Reform. We feel part of the Reform. And we will be also part on the implementation of this Reform. The Reform will come with additional cost to FAO regarding our contribution to the United Nations Resident Coordination Group, but it will be discussed internally. We will negotiate the calculation. But we are fully committed to make this Reform a success.

I think also we took note on the proposals coming from Germany in this regard. This is only to confirm that we will work at all levels - global, regional, and country levels to implement and to support the transition team. The Secretary-General will establish a transition team. We hope FAO will be part of the transition team and to see how we can be adopting and adjusting our presence at country level in line with the new decisions regarding the Reform.

Finally, regarding the statement of the Nordic countries with the request to FAO to reinforce its effort in terms of time and seniority attending the IACG meeting. I have been attending some of the meetings. Mr Ren Wang attended before retiring. Mr Árni Mathiesen attended a meeting some days ago. We believe this is appropriate level. One of the decisions was to organize the meeting of the IACG in Rome, Paris, and Geneva because they were organized all over the world which makes it difficult to participate at a high-level. We hope, if these recommendations will be taken forward, FAO will be more present at the highest level as is required and is already committed by the Director-General.

Thank you for the support from Thailand and China. They have also been active members in the IACG, especially China as a co-convenor. We look forward to continuing our work on AMR.

Ms Marcela VILLARREAL (Director, Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division)

I would like to start by referring to the comments done regarding the Global Parliamentary Summit to take place in Madrid this year and, in particular the question from South Africa. I would just like to let you know that with the support of the parliamentary fronts against hunger from Latin America, in 2016 the Pan-African Parliamentary Front against Hunger in the Pan-African Parliament was created. That is a regional body. And at the regional bodies, what we give support is for these framework laws that afterwards can be, if so desired, put into place at the national level through national parliaments.

Framework laws at the regional level, and in this case specifically in the Pan-African Parliament, afterwards followed up with work at the national level, national parliaments, translating those much faster to use a framework law to enact a national law than to start from scratch. That is the way it has been happening in Latin America. This is the way through South-South cooperation that we supported the creation of this Parliamentary front in the Pan-African Parliament.

Actually, we just flew in some of the parliamentarians that have taken active roles in Latin American Parliamentary in Johannesburg. There was an exchange of ideas of experiences, lessons learned. The parliamentary front was much faster to be developed. It has those two levels, regional and then what actually is meaningful is what happens at the national level.

We are also working in different countries in Africa, including South Africa, to develop these national parliamentary fronts against hunger. The beauty of these fronts is that they bring together different views and different political views. We have heard some of our friends saying, we can fight on everything else, but when it comes to hunger, we have a joint position because this is something we all believe in.

So those two levels. In terms of the comments from Spain

Continúa en español

...yo quisiera tomar la oportunidad para agradecerle a España, agradecerle el liderazgo que ha tomado en este tema y sobre todo agradecerle la generosa contribución para que tenga lugar esta Cumbre Mundial de Parlamentarios, y estamos seguros de que va a contribuir muy fuertemente a apoyar el rol de los parlamentarios y por lo tanto alcanzar el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible número 2.

Continues in English

I would like to go to the next topic which is on South-South cooperation and specifically on the road to the Conference BAPA+40.

China, you hope that FAO will maintain the leading role in terms of South-South cooperation in the agricultural area. You can take this as a promise. We promise to do so together with IFAD and together with WFP with whom we are working very closely together.

And I would like to take the opportunity to underline China's role because China has been leading the work in South-South cooperation through the world in the agriculture field in rural development throughout many years. FAO has benefitted from China's generous support in a trust fund that has USD 18 million that have been put to a good use. And we are happy that this work is going to be expanded in the future as well.

I would like to refer to Brazil's comment in terms of how FAO can help countries in the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Well, here South-South cooperation has very effective means of doing so. Just to make an example, for example flood resistant variety that has been adapted in one country could be used very easily in another country of the same agroecological zone. So, South-South cooperation comes in as a very effective means, for example a drought resistant variety, flood resistant variety.

This is not only what we believe. It is that UN Office of South-South cooperation has identified climate change as a priority for this year and hence we are going to have the UN South-South Cooperation Day on the topic of climate change and we hope to be able to continue to collaborate with you and Brazil has been a very active supporter of South-South cooperation.

And just one last comment, regarding the EU's comment in the link between hunger and conflict. I just would like to remind you that this is something we take very much to heart and this is why we launched the Alliance with Nobel Peace Laureates to precisely look into this relationship, how peace is essential for food security and food security is essential for peace and we have a number of Nobel Price Laureates around the world working to understand better this relationship and to advocate for action that will address that specific relation between food security and peace.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

I would like to thank Brazil for the comments. They are not directly linked to the items discussed. I put it in another paper but I also would like to thank Brazil for all of the support given to the work FAO is doing on biodiversity, agroecology, and climate change. I believe the meeting we had last week on the biodiversity platform needs the consolidation of our efforts in implementing the recommendations.

The platform on the meeting was the first step. We need to implement the recommendations and we need to take all of the recommendations to COP 14. I am confident it is a joint work we need to do together.

The next one is on the Koronivia decision. I think it was a historic decision on how agriculture was given importance on the climate negotiation. FAO's first step is to organize a meeting here in FAO with the climate negotiators to see how we can help them to better increase their knowledge on agriculture and the linkage between agriculture and climate change.

We are working with the countries to help them to implement this decision at country level as well as we are working with Poland who will be the Chair of COP 24 in November.

Thank you for all of the support provided by Brazil and we will continue working on those very important elements not included in this discussion.

Ms Anna LARTEY (Director of the Nutrition and Food System Division)

Since we did not get much comments on the Decade, we take it that this was to give you information on where we are going and where we are with the Decade. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our members for the support for the Decade, and at the same time we call on other countries to come forth and form action networks.

I am sure some countries are really making positive progress in some areas and you would want to share your policies around your progress. We call upon you to form action networks for other countries to join you or you join other action networks to really make the Decade a success.

Ms Junko SAZAKI (Director, Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division)

Responding to the question on FAO's role and how GMG is contributing to the Global Compact on Migration process, we are working, through the Office of Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on Migration and as you may know, this is a co-chairmanship. It has been always IOM. It is a regular co-chair and other UN Organizations take turns.

For example, in 2016, it was UNWomen; in 2017 - UN University; and in 2018, it is FAO. Next year, 2019, it will be UN Network on Migration. And as you know that migration is very much multifaceted and multi-sectoral. FAO can contribute on the nexus of the agriculture, food security, and migration issues that the investment further on rural development and agriculture would make it possible for the rural migrants to make a decision. It is not distressed migration.

UNICEF looks at the migrant goals and WHO health issues. ILO, pull and push factors of labor issues. In UNWomen, they are looking at, together with UNFPA, on the feminization of migration and protection of them from human rights issues, sexual harassment and abuse. They look at the smuggling of girl children.

So we work together. You can look at also the data. It is very important that all UN agencies work in coordination, so this is a very effective mechanism. The support we have is the definition and the languages of this global compact, what should be the common definition. We contribute quite a lot and also the technical inputs, data and evidences, we provide and then we are planning to have the side event to promote the final approval of the Global Compact on Migration.

In 2019, UN Network on Migration is expected to support the country – Member Countries to implement the Global Compact on Migration from a multifaceted manner through UN Country Teams.

Responding to the issues raised by Brazil, yes, migration is a very strong, powerful tool for economic and social development. We are fully aware of that. For example, from FAO we are looking at the admittance of the fact that 40 percent of immigrants ascend to rural areas? What does it mean? But we do not know if these are used for the further investment, agricultural growth, economic growth, or it would be probably used for consumption. That is kind of lack of data.

We are looking into what is the reality with other agencies, how we can make sure that migration becomes also a choice and then development tools for rural development, agriculture, and also we are looking at seasonal agricultural migrants.

Sometimes the information is not accurate, so also that means that the migrants suffer from the wrong information. They do not really get the ways or the work there so it has to be – migration has to be safe, orderly, regulated, and an informed choice. That is the way we work. This is in line with SDGs.

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes item 13 of the Agenda. This item was presented to Council for information only. The list of presentations will be included in the draft Report.

In addition, the Power Point presentations we have just seen will be posted on the FAO Members Gateway.

So this brings us to the end of this afternoon's meeting. The Council will resume its work tomorrow morning at 09.30 sharp. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 18.12 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 12

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.12

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**THIRD PLENARY SESSION
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 June 2018

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.45 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 45
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 9.45
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 11. Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse

Point 11. Politiques, procédures et mesures mises en place par l'Organisation en matière de prévention du harcèlement, du harcèlement sexuel et de l'abus de pouvoir

Tema 11. Política, procesos y medidas institucionales relativos a la prevención del acoso, el acoso sexual y el abuso de autoridad

(CL 159/8)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the Third Meeting of the 159th Session of the FAO Council to order.

Before we move on to our agenda item, I would like to make an announcement that the Friends of the Chair will be at 13.00 hours in the King Faisal room today.

The first item on the agenda is Item 11, *Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse*. The documents before Council are CL 159/8 and the related Information Note.

I wish to welcome the Director-General who has joined us this morning. I will now give him the floor before we move on.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would like to start by reaffirming that I am highly committed to making FAO an Organization free from any form of harassment, in particular sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse.

FAO has already in place a Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority; also a Policy on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse; and also a Whistle-blower Protection Policy. All these policies were updated between 2013 and 2015.

Early in 2018, I requested the Inspector General, Mr Thierry Rajaobelina, to send me an update on the status of application of these policies that I have just mentioned. By the way, I just met Thierry now. I will refer to a memorandum that he sent to me confidentially on 16 February this year that highlighted the possibility of existing under-reporting of sexual harassment.

The Inspector General stated the following and I quote: *“based on these figures and the extent of FAO operations, it appears consistent with the data from other UN entities, that there may be an under-reporting of Sexual Exploitation or Abuse and Sexual Harassment matters”*.

However, I was very surprised to see that the expression *“there may be”* had disappeared from the annual report of the Inspector General, and Thierry just clarified to me that it is only in the English version because, in the French version that he reviewed, it is still there. So someone edited it afterwards.

Let me remind you about what is called *“the cat dilemma”* in investigation matters: I think many of you have a cat or know someone who has. If you enter a room and see a broken jar and a cat, should you start to blame the cat, or would it be appropriate to find additional evidence as to who broke the jar? That is why investigation is needed.

I wanted to say that we need to move forward on this issue with determination, but I would also be very cautious before making general accusations, or even accusing individuals. Let me repeat that sexual harassment cannot be, and will not be, tolerated in FAO. We need to have a mechanism that allows us to have a quick assessment of the reported cases and assure that we will implement it.

And for that, we need to also have in place a reinforced capacity of our investigation team. So, in agreement with Thierry, we have just created a new professional post, in February this year, to reinforce the investigative capacity of the Office of the Inspector General and this post is in the process of being filled.

We have identified a candidate who is specialized in investigations of harassment and the process of recruitment is in place.

I also have to say that I sent out in February, three months ago, an Administrative Circular emphasizing to all our staff that FAO has a policy of zero tolerance in relation to sexual harassment and sexual abuse. This circular calls on all employees, in particular senior managers and heads of units, to promote a work environment that prevents sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

Let me also say that, at the beginning of May, I participated in the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) in London. Sexual harassment was on the agenda and some decisions recommended to all agencies were adopted to strengthen reporting, investigation, outreach and support in relation to any situation of sexual harassment.

Most of the measures agreed to be implemented in London were already put in place in FAO in 2015, and those that were not yet in place are now being implemented, as Mr Serván will tell you later. It was also agreed during the CEB meeting that each UN specialized agency should promote an internal survey, based on a common methodology, in order to provide numbers and data that can be compared across the system. We are working on this now.

Let me also say a few words with regard to possible cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of recipients and stakeholders in our decentralized offices. Let us remember that FAO is very different from other humanitarian or peacekeeping agencies.

FAO has a stable staff work force, recruited by a thorough process, and who usually work together for a long time. We do not have hundreds or thousands of contracted or temporary workers delivering directly food aid or inputs in very conflictive environments on the ground. Therefore, it is a big mistake to compare FAO with these other agencies, especially when it comes to speculation on under-reporting of sexual harassment.

Furthermore, I have to say that all our facilities are equipped with cameras and security support in order to create a safe environment for workers. Let me conclude by saying that actions to avoid sexual harassment and exploitation must be carried out in accordance with the existing policies, rules and practices of the UN system. If they are not strong enough, we need to strengthen them, and we are open to hear your suggestions for that.

Management will also be happy to regularly report on our actions through the governing bodies. Let me repeat what I said yesterday in the opening session of this Council. We have been able to work together and build a better FAO based on a clear division of responsibilities between the prerogatives of Management and the guidance provided by Membership.

So I kindly request that you avoid the temptation of stepping into micro-management and co-management. I think this is the best way to work together for a strong Organization. I would now ask Mr Serván to tell you about our plan of action.

Mr Fernando SERVÁN (Director, Office of Human Resources)

El Director General ha mencionado ya muchos de los puntos que presenta el documento ante Ustedes. Quiero solo agregar que el Plan de acción que estamos trabajando está alineado al equipo de tareas de la Junta de Jefes Ejecutivos del Sistema de Naciones Unidas para coordinación, (CEB) y la Organización está activamente trabajando en ese equipo de tareas para hacer compatible nuestra acción con el resto del sistema.

En lo que resguarda a la implementación en la FAO, hemos presentado como nota informativa el Plan de Acción. Hay un equipo interno conformado por diferentes unidades, entre ellas la Oficina del Inspector General (OIG), la Oficina Legal y la Oficina del Oficial de Ética y los Servicios Médicos, que es responsable de implementar el Plan de acción.

Como pueden Ustedes notar, la nota informativa contiene una serie de acciones en tres áreas de prioridad. La primera es sobre notificación; en este sentido estamos siguiendo el esquema propuesto por el CEB, en el área de notificación, el área de investigación y tomas de decisiones, difusión y apoyo. Actividades como, por ejemplo, la encuesta al personal se marcan entre ellas y estamos trabajando para implementarlo lo antes posible en coordinación con el CEB. Otra área importante es que en el Sistema de Evaluación 2018 para el personal (PEMS) se ha incluido a todos los funcionarios,

como curso obligatorio, los cursos que tienen que ver con la prevención de la explotación y abuso sexuales y el acoso sexual.

Hemos desarrollado un curso interno que está ahora ya disponible en nuestro sistema, que es específico a la FAO en cuanto presenta los instrumentos internos. Al mismo tiempo, estamos coordinando con el resto del sistema para utilizar un curso que está estandarizado para todas las organizaciones, que está en proceso de actualización en esta plataforma, que está ya disponible en Naciones Unidas, pero estamos coordinando la disponibilidad en otros idiomas.

Dicho esto, quiero mencionar que nuestro plan interno es muy ambicioso en términos de las fechas de implementación. Hay muchas acciones que ya se han hecho, como ha mencionado el Director General, pero hay otras que todavía están en curso. Algunas de ellas requieren coordinación con el sistema, mientras otras están en capacidad interna de desarrollarlas. Y estamos trabajando en conjunto, sobre todo reforzando la comunicación del personal y a los empleados y al mismo tiempo, como ha mencionado el Director General, reforzando capacidades en las unidades que tienen que ver con el tema, entre ellas la Oficina del Inspector General.

Creo que con esto sea todo y quedamos disponibles a cualquier ulterior necesidad de clarificación sobre el documento y el Plan de Acción.

Ms Marta BARCENA COQUI (Mexico)

As one of the co-Chairs of the Gender Network in Rome, I am reading this statement on behalf of the Asian, African, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Near East and European Regional Groups, as well as Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

Harassment in all its forms, notably racial, moral and sexual, abuse of power, exploitation and violence destroy the lives and dignity of their victims; they undermine human relationships wherever they are; they impair the ability of teams to work, and they threaten organizations' abilities to carry out their mission. These kinds of acts can no longer be tolerated.

Mindful that this topic concerns us all, we welcome the paper on FAO's "*Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse*". We underline the importance of FAO's commitment to zero-tolerance to any forms of harassment, whether in the headquarters or the field.

We note the call from the UN Chief Executives Board for cultural change "*to ensure a workplace where sexual harassment is never tolerated, abusers are held accountable and staff feel safe to report incidents*". And we welcome the Inspector General's confirmation, in his annual report (FC 170/11, paragraph 10), that FAO Management is committed to an "*action plan to strengthen FAO's approach to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment*".

We recognize that FAO already has a complaint system, whistle-blowing procedures and disciplinary procedures. We commend the efforts already put in place by FAO in this regard, such as the adoption in 2015 of the Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority, as well as Administrative Circular 2018/02, which reiterated that at FAO, "*complaints of harassment, in particular sexual harassment, and of sexual exploitation or abuse, are taken very seriously and may be made in strict confidence*".

We also welcome the participation of FAO, since November 2017, upon its establishment, in the UN System Chief Executive Board (CEB) Task Force on Sexual Harassment. We look forward to reviewing the results of these discussions.

While recognizing the actions already taken by FAO, more needs to be done in terms of due implementation of the existing policies and mechanisms. Unfortunately, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse continues in the UN system and beyond. Much more must be done to root it out, with a focus on prevention, ensuring accountability through timely investigations and appropriate judicial proceedings as well as supporting victims.

We are especially concerned about the findings of the 2017 Annual Report of the Inspector General regarding the under-reporting of sexual harassment, and of sexual exploitation or abuse, consistent with data from other UN entities.

We urge FAO to continue to work towards fully responding to the UN Secretary General's call on immediate action in three key areas: reporting; investigation and decision-making; and outreach and support.

Only by establishing effective reporting and investigating mechanisms and by penalising and removing perpetrators of harassment can an organization protect victims and its own credibility from the corrosive work culture they represent. Moreover, victims must be provided with adequate social and psychological support and protection, and wherever possible spared the agony of prolonged administrative processes.

It is of particular importance to ensure that sexual exploitation and abuse obligations and risk mitigation are integrated into all FAO operations. A credible and well-functioning system for preventing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse is not only where there are zero incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse, but a system where all incidents are reported and effectively addressed.

Creating an environment where victims feel safe to come forward requires institutional and cultural change. In order to identify areas of improvement and to ensure continued monitoring of the situation, we encourage FAO to undertake an anonymous sexual exploitation and abuse survey amongst its staff so that well-informed measures can be developed.

On this basis, and with full respect for the principles of due process and privacy, we call on FAO to be uncompromising in its effort to root out sexual harassment and violence in all its forms and to nurture a culture in which all employees regardless of gender can unfold their full professional potential. A sober systemic review must be undertaken to inform appropriate institutional changes.

In this regard, we request FAO to keep the Council informed on serious misconduct wherever it is uncovered, and to build a system of vigilance, encouraging reporting on power abuse and harassment in all its forms (racial, moral, sexual) to uncover cases, protecting whistle-blowers or defining feedback loops. Perpetrators must be held accountable in order to tackle the prevailing culture of impunity. Resolute communication and sensitisation that such infractions will no longer be tolerated and will be heavily sanctioned are crucial to achieve a lasting and measurable change in work culture.

Existing training modules on gender, support services, work safety and corporate governance, should be rolled out and refined to deliver this message in no uncertain terms to all parts of the Organization including field locations. Emphasis must be placed on designing and implementing preventative measures and ensuring that everyone working in FAO is aware of the proper code of conduct towards colleagues. FAO should continue to seek convergence with other UN bodies on the basis of the UN Secretary-General's special measure report and interagency reporting mechanisms.

We recognize the challenges ahead: more reporting of incidents will require us all to continue strengthening the effectiveness of existing safeguards. In this respect, we would like to ask what action FAO is planning to take to ensure that also beneficiaries of FAO projects will be better protected from sexual exploitation and abuse?

We need the multilateral system to step up, in a joined up way. We encourage FAO therefore to show leadership in working collaboratively and collectively across the UN, including with the other Rome based agencies, to step up efforts to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse.

Furthermore, let me refer also to the UN Secretary-General's "System-wide strategy on gender parity", launched in mid-September 2017. That Strategy includes recommended actions to reach gender parity by 2028. It covers, among others, targets and accountability, special measures, enabling environment, senior appointments, and mission settings. The United Nations, as the principal intergovernmental standard-setting institution, bears a special responsibility to lead by example and leave no one behind. Moreover, it has a pivotal role in supporting the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

While seeking rapid and measurable progress, the FAO Council should be informed periodically, and the issue retained on the agenda until the implementation of all agreed upon measures.

Finally, we thank FAO for sharing its action plan and look forward to its implementation. As Member States of FAO we would also like to stress the shared responsibility to react promptly and without delay to all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

Ms Kampamba MULENGA (Zambia)

Zambia speaks on behalf of the Africa Group and would like to thank the Secretariat for document CL 159/8 on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse.

Pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 57/306 and 70/286, section 2 of general principles, and I quote: *“In accordance with the provisions of article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and the core values set out in staff Regulation and Staff Rules, every staff member has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Consequently, any form of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority is prohibited”*.

The Africa Group, therefore, welcomes the amended revised policy and related procedures for resolving harassment cases as outlined in FAO’s Administrative Circular dated 23 January 2007 no. 2007/05 and supports a zero tolerance policy for any form of workplace discrimination, including sexual harassment. We also support a fair and legal process that is expedite, consistent and transparent.

We urge FAO to continue to work towards responding to the UN Secretary General’s call on three key areas: reporting; investigation and decision-making; as well as outreach and support.

Only by establishing effective reporting and investigating mechanisms and by penalising and removing perpetrators of harassment can an organization protect victims and its own credibility from the corrosive work culture they represent. Moreover, victims must be provided with adequate social and psychological support and protection, and wherever possible investigations and decisions making should be expedite.

The Africa Group is delighted with the fact that FAO reiterates its firm commitment to fight discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse. The Council document CL 159/8 would reinforce the FAO’s implemented programmes in a manner that ensures both dignity and respect to their staff and the populations they seek help.

We also welcome the participation of FAO, since November 2017, upon its establishment, in the UN system Chief Executive Board (CEB) Task Force on Sexual Harassment. We look forward to reviewing the results of these discussions.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

Lately, sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries, and sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of power within organizations have been widely reported. Sexual exploitation and abuse in all forms undermines the ability of international development actors to work effectively. Moreover, an organization that does not protect its own staff from harassment and abuse of power cannot protect its beneficiaries.

The EU and its Member States welcome inclusion of this item on the FAO Council agenda. It is an opportunity to send a united message about the importance of preventing and responding to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). We underline the importance of FAO’s commitment to zero-tolerance of any forms of harassment, whether in the headquarters, in regional or country offices, or in programmes; and take steps to address the Secretary-General’s strategy to improve the system-wide response to SEA.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Mexico on behalf of the G77+China countries, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Group, the European Regional Group, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, and support the policies, procedures and mechanisms that FAO already has in place. We welcome FAO’s development of an action plan to strengthen these further, in line with the UNSG’s zero tolerance commitment.

We believe that implementation of institutional and cultural changes to create a safe environment for reporting and whistleblowing, which holds perpetrators of SEA and sexual harassment to account, with timely investigations and appropriate judicial proceedings, should be a priority for all UN organizations. Only then can organizations deliver a real change.

In such a culture we expect to see the following from FAO:

- Open and transparent accountability systems that are clearly communicated to beneficiaries, staff, partners, and Member States, with a view to implementing robust preventative measures.
- Survivors provided with adequate psycho-social support and protection, and wherever possible be spared prolonged administrative processes.
- Accessible and confidential mechanisms to encourage and enable reporting on SEA, power abuse and harassment in all its forms to uncover cases and protect whistle-blowers.
- Appropriate training on these topics at FAO headquarters and field locations.
- A joined-up One UN approach in which affiliated organizations, suppliers and implementers abide by the same principles.
- In general, we feel it is timely for FAO to introduce an independent, anonymous staff satisfaction survey in line with other UN agencies, including IFAD and WFP.

We support FAO in strengthening its action plan accordingly and call for the inclusion of the time-bound deliverables mentioned. We request that FAO submits an updated version to the next FAO Council in December and presents annual updates to the Finance Committee and Council as a stand-alone agenda item. This will help to monitor progress, as well as increase transparency and accountability of actions.

Director-General, Independent Chair of Council, colleagues, many Member States are taking action on this issue and we welcome your engagement on this important agenda. We look forward to continuing to work with FAO management, in collaboration with other partners, in the context of the UN system-wide commitment to zero tolerance

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the North America Regional Group. Canada and the United States of America could not join the statements of the other Regional Groups for procedural reasons. Our points today will reinforce much of what has already been said. As other speakers have emphasized, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) have once again been widely reported in both non-governmental and UN organizations, reminding all of us of the progress we still need to make on this issue. We ask that special attention be paid to any observations of under-reporting, no matter what the original language.

The UN bears a special responsibility to lead by example and to leave no one behind. It has a pivotal role in supporting Member States in their implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and 2030 Agenda and to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes.

Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in all forms undermine the ability of international actors to work effectively, threatens organizations' scope to carry out their missions, and puts at risk delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We commend FAO for its policies to prevent and manage incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

Building on existing actions, comprehensive reviews that have been undertaken, and the annual Special Measures Reports by the UN Secretary-General, the focus now must be on the implementation of appropriate institutional and cultural changes, and ensuring a joined-up, system-wide One UN approach.

Only by advancing an organizational culture that prioritises respect and high standards of behaviour; places beneficiaries and their safety at the centre of their work; creates a safe environment for reporting and whistleblowing; puts victims and survivors first; promotes gender equality including

women's equal participation in decision-making and allows for equal opportunities for women to train for and achieve positions of leadership; increases the number of women employed, including throughout the UN system; and hold perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment to account - only then can organizations deliver real change.

We expect open and transparent communication with beneficiaries, staff, partners and Member States about the work of FAO to tackle these issues and support victims and survivors.

Victims and survivors must be provided with adequate social and psychological support and protection, and wherever possible spared the agony of prolonged administrative processes.

We encourage reporting on SEA, power abuse and harassment in all its forms to uncover cases, and protection for whistle-blowers who come forward.

We note the report on *"The Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Authority Abuse"* that FAO implemented a whistleblower protection policy in 2011. We encourage FAO to undertake a review of this policy to ensure it meets current UN system-wide best practices, as well as to ensure it incorporates recommendations from the soon-to-be released JIU report on *"Review of Whistleblower Policies and Practices in the UN System Organizations"*.

Effective implementation of strong whistleblower protection policies will encourage staff to come forward and report incidents of misconduct, including harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of power.

We encourage all staff – at headquarters and field locations – to receive appropriate and ongoing training, including on gender equality, child protection, recognizing and addressing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, support services, work safety, whistleblower protection and related ethics policies and corporate governance.

The United Nations, UN agencies and UN Funds and Programmes must ensure a uniform, One-UN approach and ensure that affiliated organizations, suppliers, contractors and implementers abide by the same principles. Similar to UN peacekeeping operations, UN Funds and Programmes and other UN organizations should also make data publically available on instances of sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment in order to promote greater transparency and accountability within the system, and share information on best practices and lessons learned.

The Secretary General's Special Measures Report on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse requires senior managers system-wide to submit annual certifications to their respective governing bodies that all credible allegations related to UN staff and affiliated personnel have been fully and accurately reported.

We would also urge the Director-General to commission in the next year a review of implementation of these measures and of staff perceptions of change, led by an independent, external group.

In line with this and the commitment of the leadership of FAO to zero tolerance, we request that updates on tackling these issues be presented annually to the Council or to the Finance Committee as part of an annual report of the Ethics Office's activities. This will help increase transparency and accountability of the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy as well as allow for greater visibility into the work of the Ethics Office.

Let us stress that in this battle we stand ready to support FAO. Many Member States have started reviewing their own policies and taking action on these topics and we will share our experiences with the UN and UN organizations. We welcome your continued engagement and leadership on this important agenda.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Mexico. The Nordic EU countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic countries take note of the information provided to the Council. Thank you, Mr Chair, for your additional remarks. Undoubtedly there is a structure in place for handling reporting and investigation of sexual harassment and abuse.

Experience from other organizations within and outside of the UN system shows that underreporting of harassment and abuse is widespread. There are no reasons for thinking that the situation in FAO is any different.

Rather, a remarkably low level of reporting may be a sign of a culture of fear in the organization. A culture in which you are afraid your contract may not be extended or where you, meaning a victim, will be requested to move to a different division or duty station, if you raise a complaint. In any organization that is unacceptable.

An anonymous report in theory is rarely anonymous in practice, especially in small working communities.

Therefore, we would like senior management to explain how they actively and in practice, work to ensure the integrity and security of both staff or non-staff human resources, and protect them from any repercussions, should they report any misconduct.

To conclude, it is self-evident that, the Zero tolerance policy against all forms of sexual harassment in FAO shall be respected and followed also by the representatives of the membership. Now it is time to make it a reality.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Germany aligns itself fully with the cross-regional statement on this issue as well as with the EU statement delivered by Bulgaria. The fact that all Member States have decided to jointly issue a statement on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment shows that this is a major concern to all of us.

In addition, I would like to share some observations on the FAO action plan for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

We welcome the clear statement on a zero-tolerance policy of FAO on this issue. This is indeed a vital subject that needs to be addressed with urgency and determination.

We regret that we did not have sufficient time to study the report and that there was no previous opportunity to discuss the action plan in the competent committees. Therefore, we would like to use this occasion to ask the Secretariat for clarification on the following points:

Besides prevention, reporting is key to successfully fight sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The action plan makes no specific mentioning of specific actions to improve reporting lines within FAO. Can you please explain in detail how reporting lines will be improved?

One of the action points in the conduct of a targeted Perception Survey within FAO. Can you specify when and by whom this survey will be carried out?

Can you confirm that the one additional professional position in the office of the OIG that is mentioned in the action plan will be dedicated to working exclusively on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment?

Concerning outreach and support, we note that measures “b”, “d” and “e” are basically one line of activities that aim at internal communication. As regards measure “a”, the establishment of training programmes, we would ask for your confirmation that such training measures will be mandatory at least to all managerial positions.

The report of the Inspector-General noted “*The figures indicated under-reporting of SEA and SH matters, consistent with data from other UN entities*”. We also checked the Spanish and French versions of the Report and find no differences there. We are somewhat concerned that this important finding is not mentioned in the action plan that was submitted by FAO.

I want to conclude by stating that Germany is looking forward to regular updates on this issue in the Governing Bodies of this Organization.

Mme Evelyne TOGBE OLORY (Bénin)

Le Bénin s'associe à la déclaration faite par la Zambie au nom du Groupe Afrique et souhaite ajouter quelques commentaires.

Tout comme les orateurs qui nous ont précédés, le Bénin voudrait féliciter la direction de la FAO pour l'intérêt accordé au bien-être de son personnel et féliciter, plus particulièrement et personnellement, le Directeur général pour l'engagement dans ce sens qu'il a pris devant nous ce matin dans cette salle.

Le Bénin loue tout particulièrement les procédures établies par la FAO, qui visent à la protection des fonctionnaires qui viendraient à dénoncer des actes de manquement constatés. Nous sommes en effet résolument convaincus qu'une telle protection est indispensable pour établir un climat de confiance entre le personnel et la direction, par lequel les écarts pourraient être très rapidement dénoncés et donc investigués et corrigés au plus tôt.

Les informations que le Directeur général nous a fournies ce matin concernant un potentiel sous-signalement des cas nous confirment bien que le personnel devrait se sentir en confiance.

Le Bénin applaudit également le travail engagé par la FAO avec d'autres agences du système onusien pour la mise en place d'une base de données visant à empêcher l'embauche par un organisme de personnes qui se seraient livrées à des actes de harcèlement auprès d'autres organismes.

Avec ces louanges, arrivent toutefois quelques remarques quant aux domaines dans lesquels le Bénin pense que la FAO pourrait faire quelques efforts supplémentaires. Ils sont au nombre de deux.

Premièrement, nous notons que l'accent est mis, dans ce document et dans les propos du Directeur général ce matin, sur le harcèlement sexuel. Le Bénin voudrait souligner, tout comme le Mexique l'a fait au nom d'un groupe multirégional, que le harcèlement moral et le harcèlement racial sont des éléments tout aussi importants à prendre également et sérieusement en compte par l'Organisation.

Deuxièmement, concernant le recrutement, s'il est bon que la FAO s'assure de ne pas recruter des personnes qui se seraient livrées à des actes de harcèlement auprès d'autres organismes des Nations Unies, le Bénin pense toutefois qu'il serait souhaitable qu'un mécanisme puisse être mis en place afin que de telles vérifications ne se limitent pas seulement aux candidats qui auraient déjà été employés par d'autres organismes onusiens, mais qu'un filtre sur ce point puisse être assuré pour tous les candidats à quelque poste que ce soit au sein de la FAO et, plus particulièrement, pour les candidats à des postes de supervision.

Avec ces commentaires, le Bénin réitère à la Direction de la FAO toute son appréciation pour l'attention portée à cette question d'importance cruciale pour le bien-être du personnel.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Mexico.

Australia unreservedly condemns sexual exploitation and abuse and expects UN agencies to do the same. Such behaviour by UN personnel exploits the vulnerability of the people they have been sent to help; it undermines the legitimacy of the UN and it disrespects the vast majority of UN personnel. We reiterate the Secretary-General's UN System-Wide Zero-Tolerance Policy.

We are pleased to see the steps taken by the UN to combat this issue and ensure justice for victims, including the UN Secretary-General's appointment of Victims' Rights Advocates and the development of a UN compact on SEA to strengthen prevention and accountability measures.

However, we would like to see a more consistent approach across UN agencies and posts, including having specific risk-based child protection and SEA policies implemented where none exist. We urge FAO to continue to ensure its policies are in line with best practice and Member State expectations, and strengthen them where necessary.

Aside from being an ethical problem, this is often a gender problem relating to the abuse and imbalance of power. The Australian Government has a steadfast and ongoing commitment to promoting the empowerment of women and girls, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. We

encourage FAO to focus on creating an enabling environment for women and ensuring a strong legal framework and positive corporate culture to eliminate sexual harassment.

FAO should ensure a transparent and clear ethics framework is in place where allegations of misconduct can be reported and investigated in a timely and independent manner. We understand that the UN will soon institute measures to ensure that offenders who are dismissed from one UN agency as a result of these allegations are not hired at other UN agencies. We encourage FAO to actively participate in such system-wide exercises.

Australia takes SEA issues very seriously and we expect an effective and credible approach to it by all UN agencies including FAO.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, and thank you, Director-General, for being here and for your unwavering commitment to zero tolerance. Thank you as well for the announcements on measures that you will take to increase investigative capacity and, your willingness to see how you can strengthen practices informed by best practices and other practices that are being done elsewhere.

Recognizing the importance of this issue for Canada, in addition to the statement made on behalf of the North American Region, we wanted to highlight that this issue was also discussed at the recent G7 Development Ministerial Meeting that was held last week in Whistler, Canada that led to a Whistler Declaration on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in international assistance. This was built on the UN Secretary-General's zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse across the UN system.

This issue was also recently discussed at the annual Tidewater Meeting in Washington, DC on development assistance, and at these meetings we committed to working with our humanitarian and development partners to strengthen their capacity for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and for effective response to allegations of misconduct.

These statements highlighted the importance of improved recruitment and referral practices, accessible complaint mechanisms, and systems to investigate claims while protecting survivors.

We also thank you for having a shared action plan as requested at the joint meeting. It is a bit unfortunate that we have not had the chance to have more time to review it but we will have a few questions and comments on it:

First, we would like to stress the importance of reinforcing the distinction between sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. I noted that the Director-General made the distinction in his remarks and while the two are related, they require distinct systems to respond and to report.

Second, systems to address sexual exploitation and abuse need to take into account the vulnerabilities of those affected and the UN Secretary-General's Report has an Annex 1 on this particular issue that is called "*A New Approach*" and we need to acknowledge this conduct can be criminal under certain circumstances.

We would like to know how well integrated sexual exploitation and abuse is in the 2015 Policy that FAO has on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. We would also like to know what is the relationship between that policy and the 2013 Policy on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Do you feel that these policies need to be updated in light of recent discussions? And we also noted that in Annex 1 of the action plan you join some recommendation of the CEB Taskforce that says at the end that it will meet again with some recommendations in the fall, notably a model for UN policy on sexual harassment and other types of proposals.

We also feel that the three focus areas in the action plan are appropriate but we are not clear about some measures and feel that there may be a gap around local partner and subcontractor accountability. We note that it is not clear whether the scope of the action plan covers that and it is also very important in terms of support to victims.

And finally, since you are also inviting good practices, we feel that in other UN agencies recently have had relevant discussions. For example, at WHO, there are some very good practices that have been implemented as well as at UNICEF, and we would encourage FAO to look as well at the World Bank's Taskforce recommendations on sexual exploitation and abuse in development projects.

As we said, zero tolerance is the baseline and that means that one case is one too many and I think that we have to really look at all of the experiences out there to see how we can strengthen all of our practices in the UN System but as well in our organization as Member States.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

First of all, I would like to align myself and the United Kingdom with the statement made by Mexico on behalf of many of us and the statement made by Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

I would also like to thank colleagues across the Membership for it has been a pleasure working together with all of you on such an important issue. I am very pleased that there is so much agreement and consensus on the way forward on this issue. So thank you to everyone.

I would just like to take this opportunity to respond to one of the points made by the Director of Human Resources in his presentation. We very much welcome the publication of FAO's Action Plan on Friday evening and I was particularly pleased to hear the Director confirming that there will be ambitious dates for the implementation of the actions in that action plan and I was hoping that the Director would be able to confirm for us today that those actions will have been completed by the end of this year and I very much look forward to discussing or to Council reviewing and discussing progress with that at its next meeting in December.

And having now listened to so many of my colleagues around Council, it seems like all of us would very much welcome the opportunity for Council to discuss this issue at its session in December.

CHAIRPERSON

I have not received any further requests for the floor, so I will pass the floor first to the Director-General and then to the Director of Human Resources for their responses.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Mr Chair, if you allow me, I would like first to ask the Deputy Director-General for Programmes to answer the question raised by Mexico about the measures being implemented to protect the beneficiaries in our projects.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

I am happy to speak about that.

Where we are particularly vulnerable, all of us, I think, is in projects conducted in humanitarian contexts rather than in our projects because what we are offering is more technical assistance and of a more technical nature. This aspect of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and abuse has been, as you can imagine, a very large topic for the humanitarian community in general. It includes not only our own staff and actions but also the question that Canada raised on control of the contractors or the partners in the field that distribute benefits in the case of food or cash or seeds, etc.

This was the main item on the agenda last week of the Interagency Standing Committee in New York of the humanitarian agencies and builds on a long process that unfortunately has not been good enough. All of us recognize the leadership of Mr Bill Swing, International Organization of Migration, who has championed the Organization since 2011, but as we all recognize, there has not been sufficient progress, and there were a number of major incidents, as you all know, in this past year.

The agreement, I think it is worth going into a little bit of detail on this, applies to us in our own actions but also what we will do and have agreed to do collectively, the humanitarian system, with our other United Nations agency partners that are members together with the main representatives of the NGO partners in that Interagency Standing Committee.

I should say at the outset that all of the items that you have mentioned – and that are mentioned in our reports – on abuse of power, harassment, a safe working environment, safe reporting, and a change in culture to mitigate the effects of power imbalance, are incorporated into this, but there are two other areas that I think are particularly important. One of those is that we put together a compendium of best practices across the agencies on what has worked well in the case of UNICEF, for example, that was mentioned, the World Bank, UNHCR, and we had also some examples from countries where things have worked.

This compendium of best practice is shared amongst all of us and we are instituting new procedures and information sharing on recruitment because people who have been dismissed for misconduct, which is unfortunately not uncommon, have eventually found their way into other agencies. There is a lot of new activity and a lot of new work on common databases, on the way that we recruit people, on a declaration and on reporting at the start of the contract and on follow-up that would kick into place in the case of abuse or exploitation or allegations. We think collectively for the humanitarian system, this will help.

Nevertheless, I think the underlying message really is one. As you have pointed out, from your own experience, and in your organizations, and pointed out in our papers, is the need to change the organizational culture that minimizes this risk and be much more victim-centered. I think, on the humanitarian side of the work of all of our agencies, the emphasis for too long has been on protecting reputational standing and the downside of reputational risk rather than focusing on the victims.

This, I think, is a major cultural shift that we all recognize and that is built into this. This is maybe still too general, but I think all of the points that you have mentioned that are in our reports for what we will do or are doing here at headquarters apply equally well to the field but with, particularly in humanitarian contexts, a much more intentional sharing of information, best practice and working together with our partners to avoid abuse and exploitation not only of our staff but in particular of the network of implementing partners that we have on the ground.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would like to acknowledge and thank you for your proposals and suggestions to facilitate our work. I would kindly ask you to send your statements to me directly. I would also like to open this possibility for any Member to report if they have concrete suggestions.

I now give the floor to Mr Fernando Serván, OHR Director, to answer the precise questions of Germany, precisely as usual. And I will ask also Mr Thierry Rajaobelina, Inspector General, to clarify this issue of the language because it has apparently become a problem.

But I would like to say that we will not move in the right direction, if we are still based only on perceptions. We need to have concrete evidence. So the survey is key and fundamental, and it needs to be done by professionals. It is not for someone to start to say how it should be done, this way or that way. There are people who know how to do it. We are working with them. In the UN system, we have a common survey with a common methodology and FAO will align with this.

So our main message is that we welcome your suggestions. We all agree that we need to go for a more concrete evidence base. We will be working on that under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General for all of the UN system.

Before giving the floor to Fernando and then to Thierry, let me also highlight that it has become a common issue that every time we address another different point, Members ask us to do more and more. We agree with that. It is good to have a stimulus to try to do our best. But I would like to remind you about this when we start, and we will need to do it very soon, our discussion about our next budget, especially for those countries that have been pushing all the time for zero tolerance growth - zero budget growth - sorry for the mistake. So zero tolerance and zero budget growth are not compatible.

So let us work to provide more funding also for these new areas for which we are receiving appeals to do more and more. We need to put in place more rigorous controls especially in our field actions, and I am not talking only about FAO, it is the entire UN system that needs better control for what we do on

the ground. So, Fernando, can you please clarify the points and then, Thierry, if you could add some comments.

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Yo quería aclarar, respecto a las preguntas del Delegado de Alemania, como ya lo ha mencionado el Director General, que el survey va a ser hecho de manera anónima al personal de la Organización, está siendo elaborado en paralelo con el CEB, con la fuerza de trabajo de ellos, y estamos tratando de coordinarlo dentro del Sistema de Naciones Unidas. Ha sido una decisión de los directores ejecutivos del sistema de tener una metodología que permita comparar los datos. Entonces esto es un tema donde estamos trabajando conjuntamente con el resto de las agencias.

En respecto al tema de reporting, le voy a pedir al Señor Thierry Rajaobelina que cumplimente mejor cuáles son las actividades que estamos haciendo y que forman parte del Plan de Acción, eso fue también mencionado, como saben Ustedes, en el Informe Anual del Inspector General. Confirmando que la capacitación que se menciona en el punto A va a ser obligatoria. Al momento tenemos disponible el curso interno de la FAO, que explica las diferentes políticas internas. Y ese curso lo tenemos ya disponible en dos idiomas. Para el resto del curso que se ha mencionado y áreas de capacitación, estamos trabajando con el Sistema de Naciones Unidas para tener un curso que sea estandarizado.

Las actividades que mencionó el Delegado de Alemania, bajo los acápites B, D y E, incluyen, bueno por razones de brevedad no están incluidos en el documento, pero incluyen toda una serie de actividades que están desarrollando las diferentes unidades de la Organización, tanto la Oficina de Ética como la de Recursos Humanos y la Oficina del Inspector General. Ellas están mencionadas separadamente porque la audiencia puede ser diferente, y el tema específico puede ser diferente, pero confirmo que son todas actividades de comunicación y presentación y diseminación en general.

Quería también mencionar, como ha preguntado el Representante del Reino Unido, que todas las actividades que están bajo el control de la Organización y que requieren trabajo interno estamos trabajando con fechas límites muy prontas y seguramente van a estar listas antes del Consejo. Pero hay algunas que requieren coordinación con el Sistema, y a pesar de que hay interés en el sistema de avanzar rápidamente, estamos progresando y vamos a depender un poco de ellos. La próxima semana o la siguiente va a haber otra reunión de la task force del sistema, donde nuestra colega Junko Sasaki representa a la Organización. A través de ellos estamos pasando el mensaje de urgencia, que creo que no es solamente nuestro, creo que es el sistema que se está proponiendo.

En respecto a las diferentes políticas que se mencionan, en tanto al 2015, 2013 y 2011, hay en proceso una revisión, como ha mencionado el Delegado de Estados Unidos, seguramente llevará a actualizaciones una vez que el informe llegue oficialmente a la Organización, y para el resto de las preguntas de detalles sobre este tema, también voy a pedir al Señor Thierry Rajaobelina que contribuya.

Y, por último, quería referirme a lo que ha mencionado el Delegado de Canadá, o sea de recoger buenas prácticas de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), UNICEF y el Banco Mundial. Esto se está compartiendo dentro del grupo de Naciones Unidas, sin embargo, tomaremos iniciativa en contactar estas organizaciones y tratar de recoger las buenas prácticas. Yo creo que es un proceso, como ha mencionado también el Señor Dan Gustafson, en que estamos todos empeñados y estamos tratando de compartir información para evitar duplicaciones y sobre todo mejorar la armonización del tratamiento del tema.

Y con eso, paso la palabra al Señor Thierry Rajaobelina para los temas adicionales.

M. Thierry RAJAABELINA (Inspecteur général)

S'agissant de la redevabilité des personnes coupables de harcèlement sexuel et de cas d'exploitation et d'abus sexuels, je peux vous assurer que le Bureau de l'Inspecteur général et son service d'enquête font de ces cas une priorité. Donc, même si nous avons 150 plaintes par an dans les secteurs les plus divers, une seule plainte concernant un cas de harcèlement sexuel ou d'exploitation ou d'abus sexuel aura priorité.

Il se trouve, heureusement ou non, que nous avons très peu de cas, moins d'un par an. Cependant, avec les efforts mentionnés dans le Plan d'action qui vous a été présenté ce matin, je pense que nos collègues et nos bénéficiaires seront rendus plus sensibles à ces problématiques et sans doute serons-nous appelés à examiner plus de cas, auxquels nous donnerons priorité. Et dans ce but, c'est une bonne chose, en accord avec le Directeur Général, nos ressources ont augmenté en termes d'enquête, puisque nous avons un enquêteur supplémentaire. Cela pourrait sembler peu, mais cela représente quand même une augmentation de 20 pour cent de nos ressources d'enquête, ce qui n'est pas négligeable. Je m'en réjouis très personnellement parce que cela nous permettra de traiter encore plus rapidement les cas de plaintes pour harcèlement sexuel et d'exploitation et abus sexuels.

Quelques précisions au sujet des différentes questions qui ont été posées, notamment en ce qui concerne les efforts de coordination et d'harmonisation au sein des Nations Unies. Je voudrais d'abord mentionner que la FAO et moi-même sommes coordonnateurs cette année du groupe d'enquête des Nations Unies, UN-RIAS (Représentants des services de vérification interne des comptes des organismes des Nations Unies); il s'agit du réseau des différents enquêteurs du système des Nations Unies et l'une des priorités du Plan de travail de ce réseau, à la demande du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, est de préparer des lignes directrices communes, harmonisées en matière d'enquêtes relatives aux cas d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus de pouvoir, de façon à ce que les victimes soient au centre de nos procédures d'enquête. Les travaux ont bien progressé et à l'automne, nous en présenterons le résultat et sans doute la FAO fera des propositions pour adopter nos procédures d'enquête afin d'améliorer le traitement des plaintes relatives aux cas d'exploitation et d'abus sexuels.

Au même titre que ce réseau d'enquête des Nations Unies, la semaine dernière, le Comité permanent interorganisations, qui coordonne l'action humanitaire des Nations Unies (*IASC en anglais*) a mentionné la nécessité de coordonner davantage les enquêtes dans les domaines de l'exploitation et abus sexuels et de harcèlement sexuel. Le Comité a demandé à ce que les services d'enquête des différentes organisations membre du Comité se réunissent pour échanger des informations sur les bonnes pratiques. Ce sera donc le groupe d'enquête des Nations Unies (UN-RIAS) et la FAO qui, avec les autres organisations, mèneront ces travaux à l'automne de façon à échanger nos vues et informations sur les bonnes pratiques.

Sur les services d'assistance téléphonique, «hotlines», comme il est mentionné dans le Plan d'action, nous avons à la FAO et dans le Bureau de l'Inspecteur général, une ligne téléphonique d'urgence que les plaignants peuvent utiliser à tout moment. Elle n'est sans doute pas pour le moment au degré le plus avancé et conforme aux meilleures pratiques, mais nous attendons les conclusions de l'étude du groupe de travail du Conseil des chefs de secrétariat des Nations Unies, qui comprend un groupe de travail spécifique sur les lignes téléphoniques d'urgence. En fonction des résultats de ce groupe de travail, nous adopterons les solutions les meilleures en matière de service d'assistance téléphonique, notamment en termes de langue et peut-être de sous-traitance et de réponse dans les délais les plus rapides.

Sur l'harmonisation des différentes politiques relatives à la protection des victimes, notamment en cas de harcèlement sexuel, d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus de pouvoir, et de protection des collaborateurs dénonçant des irrégularités, le Conseil des chefs de secrétariat et son groupe de travail sur la protection contre le harcèlement sexuel a prévu à l'automne de faire des propositions en matière d'harmonisation des politiques, et je suis certain qu'avec notre groupe de travail interne, nous examinerons comment améliorer la politique de la FAO en la matière.

De même, s'agissant des cas d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus de pouvoir, le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies dans son rapport annuel de février sur les mesures prises en la matière, a annoncé que son représentant spécial dans le domaine de la protection contre les cas d'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus de pouvoir ferait des propositions pour harmoniser les politiques. Là aussi, nous examinerons comment nous devons adapter notre politique d'enquêtes en la matière, qui date de 2011.

Enfin, la politique de protection des collaborateurs dénonçant des irrégularités fera sans doute aussi l'objet d'une révision à la suite des propositions que présentera le groupe de travail du Conseil des chefs de secrétariat.

Un avant-dernier mot très rapide sur la coordination avec les autres organismes ayant leur siège à Rome, notamment sur les échanges de bonnes pratiques. Il se trouve que ce sujet sera à l'ordre du jour de nos discussions la semaine prochaine, lorsque nous réunirons nos équipes d'audit et d'enquête. Nous avons décidé ensemble d'organiser d'ici la fin de l'année une formation spécifique sur les auditions pour les responsables chargés des enquêtes dans le domaine de l'exploitation sexuelle et d'abus de pouvoir.

Enfin, je terminerais avec mon rapport annuel sur les questions de traduction. Je crois que j'ai déjà mentionné que le Bureau de l'Inspecteur général a reçu très peu de dénonciations d'abus et exploitation sexuels et de harcèlement sexuel — et que cela, en français, donnerait à penser que ces cas ne sont pas tous signalés. Mais ce qui est plus important, je crois, au-delà des questions de traduction, c'est le Plan d'action qui vous est proposé, car il est conforme aux plans d'action adoptés par les autres organismes des Nations Unies; il est de surcroît, et j'en remercie le Directeur général, tout à fait conforme aux recommandations que j'avais faites dans ma note de service de février, à la suite du travail qu'il m'avait demandé sur les différentes politiques de la FAO.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer for Netherlands)

I would like to thank the Director-General, his Management team and the Inspector General for the responses to suggestions brought forward by the Membership.

I think it is very important that we do not only listen to statements but also discuss this issue in the Council. I also think it is very important that we do not only focus on sexual harassment and exploitation, which is a crime and should not be tolerated at all, but also focus on abuse of power because they are two parts of the issue.

Secondly, I do hope, listening to the answers, that we will receive a strengthened plan of action by the Director-General based on suggestions made by the Membership. Thirdly, although it is clear that the United Nations System will carry out a system worldwide survey, I believe WFP as well as IFAD have already started their own surveys here in Rome. I think it would be wonderful, if also FAO could follow that example as soon as possible.

But I have a question to the Director-General because I was a little bit confused by his remarks that zero tolerance is not compatible with zero nominal growth. What does it mean? Is it implying that if we do not give actual resources, you cannot implement a zero tolerance policy within our Organization?

I think, of course, I understand your requests for more resources to even do more in this field, but I think it is very important for us to know that you will be able to implement the policy with a zero nominal budget.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

To answer the question of the Netherlands, it was mentioned in the context of extending this zero tolerance for our contractors and the beneficiaries of FAO projects, things that we do not do nowadays, and we will require much more funding to do that. So, I said it is not possible and I have been repeating this, to do more and more for less and less. And that is the issue that we will have when we start to discuss our next budget.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

Could you confirm for us how you plan to report on our discussion this morning on this issue? Or how you plan for Council to report on this issue.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, I was going to attempt to summarize the conclusions of the Council. They will be put on the screen for Members to comment and make amendments and then it will form part of the Council's Report, whatever the conclusions are. Obviously they will go to the Drafting Committee first and then come back to the Council as part of the draft report.

My conclusions for Item 11 are as follows:

1. The Council endorsed FAO's commitment to zero-tolerance to any forms of harassment and:
 - a) took note of the policies, procedures and mechanisms in place in the Organization to prevent harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, based on the three pillars of reporting, investigation and decision-making and outreach and support;
 - b) noted efforts to address this important issue with a corporate Action Plan for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment, aligned with the recent recommendations of the UN system Chief Executives Board;
 - c) taking into account the need for an enabling institutional and cultural environment for reporting and whistleblowing, encouraged Management to ensure appropriate and ongoing training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for its staff and personnel;
 - d) encouraged the Organization to continue its participation in the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the United Nations System, chaired by the Chair of the High-level Committee on Management, with a view to sharing experiences, approaches and best practices;
 - e) encouraged the Organization to conduct among its staff and personnel an independent and anonymous survey on the effectiveness of standing policies regarding harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse; and
 - f) encouraged the Organization to ensure adequate social and psychological support and protection to victims.
2. The Council requested the Secretariat to provide periodic reports to the Council through the Finance Committee, on the progressive implementation of the Action Plan starting with the November 2018 session of the Finance Committee.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Very good summary.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

Could I ask us to scroll down on the screen? I just want to take a look at paragraph 2 again.

As an initial point for paragraph 1, point (f), we had a lot of discussion about reporting and again, in other fora we have talked about, it is not simply the question of having paper policies, but an effective reporting mechanism.

In my delegation, we think this is one of the reasons we are seeing a statistical underreporting problem with FAO and we would, therefore, suggest the following language be added to point (f) at the end, after "victims": *"and emphasized the need for effective reporting mechanisms"*.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

In point (c) it says *"...encouraged Management to ensure appropriate and ongoing training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for its staff and personnel"*.

I think that words like *"appropriate and ongoing"* seem to be a bit vague to me. I would like to see the word *"mandatory"* somewhere in this paragraph, at least for managerial positions.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

We would like to thank you for a very good summary. We would like to support the comment just made by the United States and Germany.

Then I have a question on paragraph 2, because it says that the update should go to the Council through the Finance Committee, but my question is: would that be enough in order to cover also the programmatic aspects? I mean what is going on in the humanitarian area at the field level, for the beneficiaries, subcontractors, and so forth.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

In support of the comment made by Finland, in paragraph 2, we wonder if that could be resolved by being examined at the Council as a standalone agenda item. It could still go to the Finance Committee, but instead of being examined under the Finance Committee Report, it would be a standalone agenda item at the Council.

Besides, in paragraph 2, I also would like to point out, because there was a lot on the discussion, the recognition that there may be a need to revisit some policies as broader efforts are also being done in the UN System to strengthen these policies.

So I believe that the periodic reports should be more than just on the implementation of the action plan. These reports should inform as well on updates of the progress made in the implementation on the action plan and the updates as required on FAO policies.

CHAIRPERSON

Canada and Finland, is the language of paragraph 2 now acceptable for you? Good.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I would like to refer to paragraph 1(e), when we speak about the independent and anonymous survey, “*independent and anonymous staff satisfaction survey in line with other UN agencies including IFAD and WFP*”. The rest of the text can be deleted after “*WFP*”. This is our first proposal.

Moreover, we have one more suggestion as new point (g): “*Support FAO’s existing policies, procedures and mechanisms and call on FAO to strengthen its action plan further, submit to the next Council in December and provide annual reporting on implementation, in line with UNSG’s commitment to zero tolerance*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Bulgaria, your point (f) somehow duplicates point (a), because there is reference to reporting with the three pillars, which take all of that into account.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

In paragraph 2 it talks about periodic reports. Is there a common UN understanding of what “*periodic*” means or should we say “*annual*”?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I would like to go back to paragraph 2.

I have some problems with the reporting to the Joint Meeting of Programme and Finance Committees. I think usually the Report of the Inspector General is the masterpiece of the Finance Committee. It could be a little bit awkward that the Members of the Programme Committee, who are not aware of what is happening in the Report of the Inspector General, are presented with elements of what is in that Report.

I believe the best committee is the Finance Committee in this respect, because it is the Report of the Inspector General. So I am a little bit reluctant to keep the reporting as it is. I would say: “*The Council encouraged the Secretariat to provide annual reports under a standing item to the Finance Committee on the progressive implementation of the action plan*”, because that is the work of the Finance Committee as an oversight of the Inspector General’s Report.

Then, we are looking at aligning the work of the ombudsman here and point (f) does not say anything on what is the role of the ombudsman on the social and psychological support. So, I wish to bring that element up here to help in the social psychological support. That should be brought in by the ombudsman, because I consider that it is its work, and it is too vague here. For me, it looks too general and then I wish that we should focus on the work of the ombudsman in this point.

Mr Chairperson, could you please give the floor to Benin to bring in the other aspects that were mentioned in his statement?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Regarding paragraph 2, we feel that there may be some repetition or confusion with the last part of point (g) and it relates to one of the questions posed by the UK and the comment made by Cameroon.

So, I think that we could support that it goes under a standing item to the Council through the Finance Committee.

With respect to the periodicity, there is no standard duration to my understanding.

At WFP they decided to do it quarterly, but at the very least, the formal report should be done, we believe, through the annual report of the Office of the Inspector General through the Ethics Office's activities. Yet, this does not mean that we could not have more periodic reports under progressive implementation of the action plan. In fact, we highlighted the session in November 2018, which I think is usually not the session where we would have the annual report of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Therefore, I think that we need to reconcile the last part of point (g) with paragraph 2. I do not have right now the best language for that. I can come back with some specific language.

And then maybe for point (g), it would be appropriate just to add: "*Support FAO's existing policies, procedures, and mechanisms and call on FAO to review them as required and to strengthen its action plan*".

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

I have three quick points.

In regards to point (g), on "*...support FAO's existing policies, procedures, and mechanisms*", our concern is that prejudices what the survey result is going to say. We think we can make the same point by deleting all of that and by simply keeping the sentence "*...to call on FAO to strengthen its action plan*". So, we would delete everything from "*support*" to "*as required*" and retain the language: "*...call on FAO to strengthen its action plan*" that was in the original EU formulation.

Point (f) talks about deficiencies in the current mechanism. Then, our rationale on that is we are not in a position to support current mechanisms. But secondly, we are about to go through a survey, which might reveal to us problems with existing procedures, so I would prefer not to prejudge that.

In point (e), we are wondering if perhaps we want to change the verb from "*encouraged*" to "*requested*", which we think would be stronger language. Everything I have heard from FAO senior management indicates that you are going to do this anyway, but this might help you in terms of reinforcing your resources for it.

Finally, in point (f), we share our concerns from our Cameroonian colleague about the need for specificity. However, our concern is that using the wording "*through the ombudsman*" to ensure adequate social and psychological support may be too narrow.

This support needs to come from all of FAO, specifically managers and senior managers. So we understand the intent of the deletion of the insertion, but we would actually request that it be deleted. It includes the ombudsman, but not just the ombudsman. And we believe the original formulation would capture that.

M. Bonaventure KOUAKANOU (Bénin)

Juste un point à ajouter, car nous rappelions tantôt qu'il y a plusieurs cas de harcèlement dont il faut tenir compte. Je crois que c'est au point (a) que cela a été rappelé, le cas du harcèlement racial n'est pas mentionné.

CHAIRPERSON

Benin, Paragraph 1 speaks about any forms of harassment, so that should take care of it.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

We agree on this deletion of the first part of the new point (g) and we accept the sentence to start directly with “*call on FAO to strengthen its action plan*”.

Mr Hesham Mohamed BADR (Egypt)

We have many comments on these conclusions, 24 comments, and we can go ahead and delete three or four of the paragraphs and add others, but that would be a drafting exercise. So I am not happy with what was going on because there is a Drafting Committee. If you have decided to change this into a Drafting Committee, tell us. Then we will put all of the 24 comments and start deleting. This is not efficient. We are talking about the efficiency of an organization and I think we are wasting our time since we have a Drafting Committee.

The idea is to have the principle issues there that the whole membership can discuss if it is cardinal, but then to leave the wording because there is more than one way to express a language and everyone has his way of expressing it.

So I am just putting this on the table that if you want to change this into a Drafting Committee, then you will have to tell the Members and each one will bring all of their comments. But I believe that we should take what was presented short of major changes to what the Chair has done and what Members have done and then take it to the Drafting Committee. Or else we will not be an efficient Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

I entirely agree with you, Egypt. In fact, one of the reasons for not putting the Draft Summary on the screen was exactly this, we do not want 49 Members of Council to become a Drafting Committee and that is why it is being done on a trial basis. However, I agree that the wording being proposed sometimes duplicates wording in another paragraph.

We are turning this into some sort of a drafting session which we were apprehensive of in the beginning. I would appeal to Members not to propose wording which becomes a drafting session because each time a particular wording is proposed, there is another delegation who has a different view on that wording.

Basically if you feel my summary captures the gist of your decisions, let the Drafting Committee do the rest because the decision would not change. The frills around it may change and here I feel some of the suggestions being made are not the decisions but the frills around a sentence or particular word or particular suggestions.

May I appeal, please? I have got five more speakers and we should avoid acting as if we are a Drafting Committee. Otherwise for each item, the summary on the screen would be sort of discussion where everyone wants to change a particular part of the wording.

As I said in meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs and other groups, if you put any text in front of a group, each one has his own editorial preference and style and we will be here the whole afternoon.

So I will give the floor to the speakers who have requested the floor but can I appeal please, if the summary captures your decisions, let them be and let the Drafting Committee put all of the frills around. Thank you.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Actually, when I heard that long silence after you proposed your summary, I was hopeful that we would all agree on it without any debate. Actually, the intervention by Afghanistan gave the right tone to our conclusions because I think that what you have proposed encompassed most of the positions that were expressed here.

I asked for the floor just to point out a contradiction on paragraph 2. When it says “*annual reports*” and then it says “*standing item*”, it would seem that every session of the Council would have one item on this subject whilst an annual report would mean that we examine it every two sessions, at least. Perhaps it would be more accurate if we would say “*annual reports under a standalone item*”. I think that was the idea of whoever proposed that language.

CHAIRPERSON

I think you are making a valid point and we will adjust that.

M. Seydou CISSÉ (Côte D'ivoire)

Pour appuyer le Bénin, je dirais qu'au point (a), en insérant: «...toute forme de harcèlement et de discrimination», nous rentrerions dans le cadre de ce que vient de dire le Bénin.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I support fully what Benin and Côte d'Ivoire said. But I think the issue of racial discrimination is key and I think it should be well highlighted somewhere in point (a). That is the idea. I think the Drafting Committee will take care of that. But if we can somewhere after "*harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority*" add "*racial discrimination*", something like that. We will leave that to the Drafting Committee.

I completely agree with the Ambassador of Egypt. We are trapped ourselves because we discussed the working methods of the Council and this is the proposal. I think we are learning that we cannot turn the Council into a Drafting Committee. The idea should be there, and then we have the verbatim records that may help, and then the rest could be done by the Drafting Committee. As we are bringing in the ideas, everything should be encompassed there and the Drafting Committee should do the rest.

CHAIRPERSON

That is why I was saying that Members should see whether the summary captures the gist of the decisions or the conclusions and the language used can be left to the Drafting Committee. We should pay attention to whether the summary has all the decisions or conclusions resulting from the debate rather than the particular type of wording, which I think the Drafting Committee will do.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

I fully agree with the statement by the Ambassador of Egypt. We have now turned this meeting into a Drafting Committee. Let us face it. We were quite happy with your conclusion. This does not mean that it is the conclusion of the Council. It is your conclusion.

The Council still has to conclude and that is done through the Drafting Committee. What has been done now has created problems for the Drafting Committee. This text will be examined carefully by Members of the Drafting Committee and we are wasting time.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I have no text changes or amendments to make. I would just like to again plead in favor of keeping up this practice of showing the text on the screen. For me and my limited possibilities, it is of tremendous help to actually see the text and see what we talk about, what we decide upon, and not just to listen to it. I fully agree we should not start drafting here, but seeing the text has a high value for many of us, perhaps for all of us.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

I would like to second what my German colleague has just said. Frankly speaking, I wonder whether we are doing drafting or we are actually working together to achieve the best possible conclusions on a very important item.

I do not share the view that what we are doing here is just drafting because, just a couple of examples from our colleagues from the Africa Group, where they are suggesting or proposing the end of racial discrimination or the word "*mandatory*" instead of "*appropriate*". This is not drafting. I think that we all should rejoice that thanks to the very important improvement of the working method of the Council, which is having the text on the screen, we are really having a more interactive and better meeting today.

Mme Félicité DJOUAH (Observateur du Gabon)

Je voulais simplement appuyer l'idée du Bénin, mais je vois que cela a été fait.

CHAIRPERSON

Gabon, it is an error of mine, Observers do not participate in commenting on the summary but thank you anyway for your comment.

Any other comment? If not, the summary is adopted. And the Drafting Committee will do the rest.

Item 3. Programme Implementation Report 2016-17**Point 3. Rapport sur l'exécution du Programme 2016-2017****Tema 3. Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2016-17**

(C 2019/8)

CHAIRPERSON

The first item on the agenda this morning is item 3, *Programme Implementation Report 2016-17*. Please ensure that you have document C 2019/8 before you.

I now give the floor to Ms Beth Crawford, Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management, to present the report.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Officer-in-Charge, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

As you know, the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 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 2016-17.

This information is contained in the main PIR document, C 2019/8, two web annexes, and the region-specific documents presented to the Regional Conferences. We have also published a short brochure to convey the main results, which includes overviews at strategic objective, outcome and output levels, which is available at the documents desk in all languages. All of this documentation is also available on the FAO internet site: <http://www.fao.org/pir>.

Today I would like to focus briefly on the salient points of the PIR 2016-17.

This is the second PIR under the Reviewed Strategic Framework and Medium-Term Plan 2014-17. It presents results against the results chain, which comprises of five Strategic Objectives which are the development impacts of FAO work, the 17 outcomes which are changes in capacities needed at country level and globally to achieve these objectives, and the 48 outputs, what FAO delivers. And these are all 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 crosscutting themes of gender, governance, nutrition and climate change, as well as the four Functional Objectives and three special chapters that provide the internal enabling environment for FAOs work.

The document outlines major policy developments and FAO's role in keeping hunger, food security and malnutrition at the forefront. Our work on emerging threats and opportunities is also highlighted, including Fall Army Worm, Antimicrobial Resistance, GIAHS, biotechnologies and agroecology.

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 25 SDG indicators.

Furthermore, this PIR uses a more robust target-setting, monitoring and reporting methodology for results at outcome and output level, with roles and responsibilities more clearly laid out and country offices more significantly involved in the process from early stages.

Let me outline the measurement of results at the three levels of Strategic Objective, Outcome, and Output.

This is the first PIR that reports on trends and progress at the level of the Strategic Objectives, which are the global development goals that FAO and member countries aspire to achieve in collaboration with the rest of the international community. This measurement at the Strategic Objective level was done by aligning the FAO results framework to SDGs by identifying and using exclusively the SDG indicators that relate to each FAO Strategic Objective.

For the PIR reporting at the Strategic Objective level, we therefore used the available data on the set of 39 SDG-based indicators identified. As you know, methodologies and standards are not yet available for many SDG indicators, so we will build on the reporting at this level over the coming biennia.

Outcomes reflect the changes needed at the country-level and/or in the global enabling environment to foster the achievement of the Strategic Objectives. Outcome indicators measure the degree to which those necessary changes and required capacities to achieve the Strategic Objectives are in place. Results at the outcome level are reported in three ways, as shown on the indicator pages for each Strategic Objective and in Annex 4 of the document.

One is the percentage of countries with improved indicator scores between 2013 and 2017; a second is the percentage of countries with indicator scores in each of five performance classes (from low to high); a third is the number of countries responding to the indicator as measured against the target. In 2016-17, 82 percent of the Outcome targets were met.

The methodology and measurement for the outcome indicators was developed by the FAO Chief Statistician, with analysis by our Strategic Programme Leaders.

The outputs are FAO contributions in terms of processes, products, and services to the outcomes, that is, what FAO is accountable to deliver. The output indicators measure the delivery of results at country, regional, or global levels as reported by our country and regional offices and our technical divisions, with the analysis and validation carried out by our Strategic Programme Leaders.

In 2016-17, FAO met 82 percent of the output targets, showing FAO delivered assistance to members as committed in the Programme of Work and Budget.

It should be noted that given the more robust approach to results management, the threshold for considering a target met was raised to 100 percent, from 75 percent in 2014-15. Had the less stringent threshold been applied, FAO would have met 96 percent of the output targets, up from 88 percent in 2014-15.

In addition to the reporting at the various levels of the results chain, the PIR presents integrated reporting on gender, governance, climate change and nutrition as crosscutting themes. In addition to the benefits from these cross-cutting themes captured through the SO output indicators, all nine measurable Key Performance Indicators under Objective 6 were achieved, showing the progress in creating an enabling environment for improved performance through the provision of the necessary tools, standards, guidelines and training to staff and partners implementing the Strategic Programmes.

Throughout the PIR document, we have also identified the key programmatic and operational lessons learned in delivering the Programme of Work. Key lessons include the importance of cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral dialogues and approaches which are instrumental to achieving the 2030 Agenda. This includes broadening partnerships, widening the range of stakeholders with which we collaborate and further strengthening collaboration across programmes and offices within the Organization.

We have also seen how improving the engagement of country offices in the planning stages provides better information for FAO assistance and ensures that the required support and resources are properly foreseen.

In the final section of the document, the PIR shows how FAO has benefitted from improved means of delivery resulting from the transformational changes. We have met 22 out of 27 key performance indicator targets, or 81 percent of the targets which measure performance in the Functional Objectives and Special Chapters.

Highlights in this section include that over 100 strategic partnerships were forged and advocacy initiatives on corporate priorities supported.

The Decentralized Office Network was reinforced thanks to refined criteria for allocating resources, improved integration of their results in the corporate planning framework, improved tools for performance assessment, and the introduction of flexible office structure models.

Risk management and internal controls were enhanced with the launch of the Internal Control Reporting process which will culminate in the presentation of the Statement of Internal Control with the 2017 financial accounts.

Our overall expenditure for 2016-17 was USD 2.6 billion in full compliance with the IPSAS accounting standards, with extra-budgetary expenditure at USD 1.6 billion, or 4 percent higher than in 2014-15.

Expenditure rate of the net appropriation was 99.6 percent, and the overall underspending of USD 3.9 million is transferred to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities to advance financing to provide technical assistance and investment programming for development finance.

Resources mobilized during the biennium for on-going and future work increased by 16 percent to USD 2.1 billion, of which 79 percent are for country, sub-regional and regional projects.

The Organization also achieved USD 37 million in recurrent efficiency savings.

In conclusion, this is a brief overview of the results of the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 for consideration and endorsement by the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee who also chaired the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and 170th Session of the Finance Committee, to report on the discussions on this item during the Joint Meeting.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am pleased to present the outcomes of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and the 170th Session of the Finance Committee on the subject of the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 CL 159/5.

The Joint Meeting welcomed the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2016-17, and the overall progress made by FAO while expressing concern on the rising global hunger resulting from climate change and conflicts. In particular, the Joint Meeting:

- expressed overall satisfaction at the implementation of the programme of work in 2016-17 and welcomed FAO's results in reaching 82 percent of the planned Outputs under a more rigorous target setting and measurement approach, while noting the limited progress in some outcomes of the Strategic Programme;
- underlined FAO's important work in policies related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global developments during 2016-17;
- encouraged FAO's work on the collection of data on SDG indicators and underlined the importance of this data being used to support national efforts to implement the SDGs, as well as advocacy by Members and FAO;
- looked forward to FAO's continued engagement in emerging threats and opportunities in the area of sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition;
- noted and encouraged continuing efforts to reinforce the decentralized office network, and work initiated in relation to the review of country office staffing models;
- expressed satisfaction at the net budgetary appropriation expenditure at 99.6 percent, the higher delivery of Trust Funds and TCP, and the resource mobilization figure of over USD 2 billion, coupled with increased efficiencies including achievement of USD 37 million in savings;
- encouraged continued progress in achieving equitable geographical representation of staff, and gender balance at professional and senior levels and requested the Secretariat to provide more detailed information on these concerns to Members; and

- noted that the final 2016-17 budgetary outturn based on the unaudited accounts of the Organization resulted in an overall underspending of USD 3.9 million, which would be entirely transferred to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SDFDA) to advance financing to provide technical assistance and investment programming for development finance, and requested for periodical updates on the funding of the SDFDA, and recalled the agreement reached at the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee aimed at supporting a sustainable funding solution to the FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius;

The Joint Meeting endorsed the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 for transmission to the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, to provide any additional comments on the discussions in the Joint Meeting.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I will be very brief because I fully ascribe to what was said by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, but I really would like to highlight what he said about the Strategic Objectives. I think when we read the Report, it is clear that we are meeting 82 percent of the objectives, but at the same time, we see that the number of people living in hunger has been growing with almost 40 million people and probably this year it will be even increased.

Of course, we know the reasons, especially hunger caused by conflict and hunger caused by climate change. So it is a clear sign that I think we have to step up our efforts to see how we can tackle these enormous problems, and of course FAO is the UN Organization which plays a crucial role in tackling these problems.

At the same time, I think it is also very important that we align the indicators of the Strategic Objectives to the SDGs much more, because the overall goal is to implement the SDGs, to achieve the SDGs also with zero hunger. Therefore, I think it is very important to align, the Strategic Objectives but especially the indicators with the indicators of the SDGs.

I think that was also clearly reflected in the discussions in the Programme Committee and I think it is very important to report on both because I think then we get perhaps a less positive picture but a realistic picture.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the Statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the G77 and China and also on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We would like to highlight the following points:

We appreciate the work carried out by FAO, the result achieved during the past biennium, and the analysis of lessons learned provided in this document.

We note with satisfaction the change in the criteria of Output indicator value score and a more stringent approach applied during 2016-2017 to measure the results to be considered as "*achieved*", from 75 percent in the biennium 2014-2015 to 100 percent in biennium 2016-2017.

Under this stringent measure of performance, 82 percent of the Output indicator targets were met in 2016-2017. We would like to congratulate the Secretariat with this achievement. However, we have to look at the situation carefully that we really achieve an end to hunger and malnutrition.

In addition, we are pleased with the implementation of Regional Initiative on Zero Hunger, in particular assisting countries to prepare the "National Zero Hunger Challenge" in Asia and the Pacific.

The concrete results from the Regional Rice Initiative in Asia and the Pacific that could help to reduce production cost by 20 percent and reduce post-harvesting loss by 60 percent are impressive. We encourage FAO to do more activities with tangible results like this for the next years.

We appreciate technical support of FAO provided to countries to fulfil their commitments with international agreements such as the Port State Measure Agreement and the Paris Agreement. We wish to see continued efforts in this biennium.

Lastly, we agree that the work on climate change and sustainable water and soil management need to be implemented in an integrated manner and cross-cutting sectors through multi-ministerial and multi-stakeholder approaches. Thailand will continue to support FAO work to achieve Strategic Objective 2 in this biennium.

Regarding Document C 2019/18 Web Annex 6, it got our attention and we would like to have more clarification how FAO managed 103 unscheduled sessions or works in the biennium 2016-17, with only 13 planned being cancelled. What are the implications on the workload and the budget allocation for those unscheduled works?

Mr Hesham Mohamed BADR (Egypt)

It gives me great pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of G77 and China under item 3, *Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2016-17*, and would like to highlight the following points:

The Group of 77 and China expresses its appreciation for the progress made in the FAO Programme implementation 2016-17 which resulted in the achievement of 82 percent of the planned Outputs under a more rigorous target setting.

Nevertheless, we are concerned that despite the efforts of FAO and other UN Agencies, the number of global hunger is rising as confirmed by the 2017 State of World Food Security Report which showed that hunger is on the rise after more than 10 years of decline. Currently, 815 million people in the world suffer from hunger, 38 million more than in 2015.

The negative effects of climate change and the increasing number of conflicts threaten the realization of all the Sustainable Development Goals, and especially SDG 2.

We believe that the information provided on key programmatic and operational lessons learned for each strategic Objective can be a very import tool for improving future performance and achieving more effectiveness in the work and outcomes of FAO.

G77 and China note that FAO has aligned its results framework to the SDGs by identifying and using exclusively the SDG targets and indicators that relate to each FAO Strategic Objective. In this regard, we call on FAO to continue to support developing countries in the area of data collection and statistics which is a key for the achievement of SDGs.

We support and encourage FAO's continued engagement in different Fora related to food security and nutrition. In this regard, we believe that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda remain the guiding element for FAO's work. Additionally, we appreciate the engagement of FAO in the global process leading up to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

We take this opportunity to urge FAO to pay attention to the importance of having a balanced representation between developing and developed countries in the upcoming high level events organized during the World Food Day to give the opportunity to all members to share their views and lessons learned in this regard.

While the Group 77 and China appreciates the continued achievement of efficiency savings which reached USD 37 million in 2016-17; we stress that this matter should be handled with cautious so that any further savings should not lead to undermining the FAO programme of work.

The FAO budget may be increased in the future depending on the needs of the Organization and its ability to deliver its programme of work without undermining the technical capacity at headquarters and decentralized offices especially for regional and country offices which do not have at the moment adequate technical capacities.

We appreciate the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources of USD 2.1 billion. We call on donor countries to continue to support the work of FAO through un-earmarked contributions that responds to FAO priorities and in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

The area of South-South cooperation is one of the key priorities of the G77 and China. We call on FAO to continue to give priority to the use of partnerships to enable the Organization to leverage its comparative advantages, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation.

The G77 and China requests the secretariat to continue its effort to strengthen capacity building activities, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation. We encourage FAO to promote innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation such as agroecology, biotechnology, biodiversity, agroforestry systems and GIAHS.

We strongly call on FAO to continue its efforts to capacitate the decentralized offices with much needed resources, both technical and financial that will empower these offices and make them able to respond to their increasing demands and challenges.

We call on FAO to continue its work to implement and expedite the implementation of the regional initiatives and to support national efforts to face emerging threats.

We reiterate the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), and call on FAO to continue to ensure the full utilization of the TCP resources while giving priority to the needs of developing countries to eradicate poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development.

We highlight the need for a fair and market-oriented international agricultural trading system with a view to facilitating market access and investments in agricultural products, so that family farmers and small-scale producers can also benefit from it. We therefore reiterate our call on FAO to continue its attention of the world commodity situation and to support member countries in this regard.

We stress the importance of strengthening efforts to achieve equitable geographical representation of staff and consultants, and gender balance at professional and senior levels.

On the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA), we appreciate the decision to allocate the unspent balance of USD 3.9 million to the Special Fund. This would allow FAO to mobilize more financing to provide technical assistance and investment programming for development. In the meantime, we would like to recall that the target of the fund is USD 10 million, and stress on the importance of taking steps to mobilize the necessary financing in this regard.

As recommended by the Finance Committee, we are looking forward for progress report on the SFDFA.

And finally, we call on continued work of FAO, in cooperation with WHO in the area of food safety.

M. Seydou CISSÉ (Côte D'ivoire)

La Côte d'Ivoire prend la parole au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le point 3 de l'ordre du jour, sur le document intitulé: «Rapport sur l'exécution du programme 2016 – 2017».

La Côte d'Ivoire voudrait remercier le Secrétariat pour la qualité des documents et féliciter le Président pour la bonne conduite des travaux.

Le Groupe régional Afrique note avec satisfaction la mise en œuvre du programme de travail 2016-17 et se félicite des résultats réalisés par la FAO puisqu'elle a atteint 82 pour cent des produits prévus grâce à l'adoption d'une approche plus rigoureuse en matière de mesure des cibles.

Le Groupe régional Afrique salue la réalisation de ce rapport et apprécie le travail accompli, qui s'appuie sur le cadre stratégique et intègre les principales priorités de notre région, telles que présentées par la vingt-neuvième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique, à savoir l'élimination de la faim à l'horizon 2025, l'intensification durable de la production et le développement des chaînes de valeurs, ainsi que le renforcement de la résilience dans les zones arides.

Au cours de la trentième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique, le Groupe régional Afrique a noté avec satisfaction l'adéquation des travaux de la FAO avec les priorités de la région et a renouvelé les trois initiatives régionales. À cet effet, il recommande leur maintien dans l'exercice biennal 2018-2019.

Convaincu que le développement de l'agriculture constitue une solution durable en termes de création d'emplois pour les jeunes et les femmes, le Groupe régional Afrique se félicite de ce que les objectifs

stratégiques et les initiatives régionales pour l'Afrique s'inscrivent dans la droite ligne du Programme 2030 et de la déclaration de Malabo.

Aussi, le Groupe régional Afrique a-t-il accueilli favorablement le travail important de la FAO dans les politiques liées à la mise en œuvre du Programme 2030 et autres événements mondiaux au cours de la période 2016-2017. Nous voudrions également réitérer notre adhésion à l'Accord de Paris relatif au changement climatique, au Cadre d'action de Sendai pour la réduction des risques de catastrophe 2015-2030, à celui de la Décennie de la nutrition et aux initiatives en faveur de l'agroécologie et de la biodiversité.

Par ailleurs, le Groupe régional Afrique insiste sur l'importance des données statistiques pour mettre en œuvre les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD), puis encourage la FAO à collecter les données sur les indicateurs des ODD et à appuyer les efforts nationaux dans ce domaine.

En ce qui concerne le processus de décentralisation, le Groupe régional Afrique apprécie la mise en œuvre des décisions prises à la vingt-neuvième session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique, ainsi que les progrès réalisés en la matière pour le Réseau de bureaux décentralisés de la FAO.

Il souhaite cependant le renforcement des capacités des bureaux de pays par la dotation en personnel de haut niveau et souligne l'importance d'une représentation adéquate, qui rende possible un fort engagement et une capacité de mobilisation de ressources à l'appui du programme de terrain de la FAO, notamment l'élaboration des Cadres de programmation par pays (CPP). Il encourage les progrès continus dans la réalisation d'une représentation géographique équitable du personnel et dans le respect du genre.

Le Groupe régional Afrique recommande de continuer à accorder la priorité aux partenariats et à accroître la mobilisation de ressources au niveau décentralisé, en mettant l'accent sur la coopération Sud-Sud et la coopération triangulaire, tout en maintenant une collaboration étroite avec les organisations ayant leur siège à Rome

Il appuie les efforts déployés par la FAO pour fournir un soutien plus efficace sur le terrain, notamment dans les domaines du développement agro-industriel, de l'emploi des jeunes, de la gestion efficace des eaux et des sols, de la lutte contre les organismes nuisibles et les maladies des animaux (PPR) et des végétaux (chenille légionnaire d'automne), ainsi que de la résistance aux antimicrobiens.

Au plan financier, le Groupe Afrique se félicite de la réalisation de 37 millions d'USD de gains d'efficacité et de l'augmentation dans la mobilisation de ressources affectées au Programme de coopération technique (PCT), qui sont passées de 125,8 à 135,6 millions d'USD dans le présent exercice biennal.

Enfin, le Groupe régional Afrique note que le rapport final 2016-2017, basé sur les comptes vérifiés de l'Organisation, a dégagé un montant non affecté de 3,9 millions d'USD, qui sera entièrement transféré au Fonds spécial pour les activités de financement du développement qui permettront à la FAO de fournir une assistance technique aux pays en développement, pour la recherche de financement auprès du Fonds vert pour le changement climatique.

Pour terminer, la Côte d'Ivoire se félicite d'accueillir la visite de terrain 2018 des Représentants permanents de la FAO du 23 au 27 juin 2018.

Avec ces observations, le Groupe régional Afrique approuve ce rapport.

CHAIRPERSON

I believe it is already 12.30 hours, so it is time to adjourn our morning session but before we adjourn, I give the floor to the Secretary-General to make an announcement.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind delegates that a Special Event on: "*Celebration of the 1st International Day for the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU)*" will take place during lunch time today in the Sheikh Zayed Centre from 13.00 to 14.30 hours.

Also, I wish to remind members of the Friends of the Chair to make their way to the King Faisal Room, where light refreshments will be served. You should have received in hard copies and through email the relevant documentation for this meeting which I should recall is restricted to the two representatives of each Regional Group and two silent observers.

CHAIRPERSON

I wish to remind Members that I have a long list of speakers which will carry on when we resume the meeting. I would request that we start our meeting 14.30 hours sharp and now I adjourn for lunch.

The meeting rose at 12.30 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 30

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.30

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**FOURTH PLENARY SESSION
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 June 2018

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14.45 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 45
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 14.45
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 3. Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 (continued)**Point 3. Rapport sur l'exécution du Programme 2016-2017 (suite)****Tema 3. Informe sobre la ejecución del programa en 2016-17 (continuación)***(C 2019/8)***CHAIRPERSON**

We can commence this afternoon's session. We will proceed to the list of speakers.

Mr Segfredo SERRANO (Philippines)

The Philippines is delivering this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We appreciate the Secretariat's preparation and presentation of this comprehensive and informative report.

We also wish to thank the Finance Committee Chairperson, Mr Lupiño Lazaro, for the presentation of the outcomes of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee on this item.

We welcome this second PIR, an accountability document, outlining the achievements in 2016-17, which would also form the basis for lessons learned for the current biennium as well as for the next Programme of Work and Budget.

In this regard, we wish to highlight the following:

We note with satisfaction that FAO reached 82 percent of the planned Outputs under a more rigorous target setting approach, together with the net budgetary appropriation expenditure at 99.6 percent, the higher delivery of Trust Funds and TCP, and the resource mobilization of over USD 2 billion.

We are encouraged with FAO's efforts in contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global policy developments aimed at keeping hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, at the forefront of the development agenda.

We appreciate the Regional Initiatives and the strengthening of strategic partnerships with Member Governments, UN system organizations, private sector, and civil society, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation. The Asia Region has generally benefitted from the implementation of Regional Initiatives on Zero Hunger, Rice and Blue Growth in the past biennium.

We are pleased with FAO's increased efforts to promote innovative approaches to sustainable agricultural production such as agroecology, biotechnology and Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

We appreciate FAO's spearheading of the 2016 International Year of Pulses and we look forward to FAO's sustained support in the recently declared Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028.

The Asia Regional Group, however, would like to also raise the following concerns.

We concur with the recommendation of the recent Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees to encourage continued progress in achieving equitable geographical representation of staff in FAO and gender balance at professional and senior levels, and to request the Secretariat to provide more information on these concerns to Members.

In the Asia Region, there are five countries that are under-represented and five more that are non-represented in the FAO staff as of December 2017, which needs urgent attention. In relation to this, we reiterate our call for flexibility in language requirements in the Human Resources recruitment process.

Although we appreciate the generation of efficiency savings of USD 37 million, we need to be careful that any significant budget reductions will not adversely affect the Organization's operational capacities, especially in achieving SDGs and objectives.

While we highly appreciate that the unspent balance of USD 3.9 million in 2016-17 will entirely go to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA), we join in requesting the Secretariat for periodical updates on this mechanism, which has a target funding of USD 10 million.

We encourage FAO to continue its support in exploring a sustainable funding solution to FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius.

While we are grateful for FAO's assistance to Members, including some Asian countries, in integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into national plans, and similar initiatives, we concur with the proposed development of a knowledge platform for sharing information and expertise among Members in this work area in the current biennium.

We support FAO's continuous efforts to review country office staffing models to allow net appropriation resources to be reallocated within country office network budget of each region at a cost-neutral basis, according to country-specific and emerging needs and priorities.

With these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17.

Mr Bryce QUICK (United States of America)

The United States of America would like to take this opportunity to thank FAO for managing within its means and for the opportunity to provide early comments on the PIR.

We appreciate the Secretariat's efforts to address geographic distribution and gender parity.

We strongly urge the Secretariat to consider budgetary transfers or set aside a portion of the future savings achieved from efficiency gains to help fill the funding gap in the Joint FAO/WHO Food Safety Scientific Advice Programme for Codex, as well as the International Plant Protection Convention who face very similar funding challenges which impact core work that is fundamental to the core mission of FAO.

As our esteemed colleague from Australia pointed out in yesterday's session during the discussion of the Regional Conferences, the work carried out by the scientific bodies is critical to facilitating agriculture trade, strengthening biosecurity and underpinning food security across the globe.

Consistent with these thoughts, the United States of America would encourage sustainable and long-term funding solutions to reduce the work back log in both standard setting bodies and the development of a more predictable and efficient work mode.

Lastly, at the previous session of the Finance Committee in May 2018, we supported our German and UK colleagues' request for an update on the development of a key performance indicator, as requested by the 169th Finance Committee, on "*the vacancy rate for professional posts under outcome 11.1, Efficient and effective management of human resources*".

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua desea cederle la palabra a la República Bolivariana de Venezuela para que realice una intervención a nombre de un grupo de países Miembros de la FAO.

Sr. Elías Rafael ELJURI ABRAHAM (Observador para Venezuela)

Realizamos esta intervención a nombre de Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Haití, Nicaragua, República Dominicana y Venezuela. Asimismo, nos sumamos a la declaración del G77 y China.

Antes de comenzar la intervención, queremos ofrecer nuestras sentidas condolencias por lo ocurrido en Guatemala que ha cobrado la vida a más de 65 personas y donde han afectado a casi 1,7 millones de personas.

Felicitamos a la FAO por la consecución de los logros alcanzados en el marco de los Objetivos Estratégicos y funcionales para el período 2016-2017, y desea manifestar su beneplácito por el enfoque aplicado para medir los resultados de dicho bienio, durante el cual se logró alcanzar el 82 por ciento de las metas fijadas.

La FAO es un organismo clave para el logro de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, al ser responsable de 25 indicadores de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) y, en este marco, para la elaboración de metodologías y la recolección de datos y procesos con miras a formular compromisos vinculados con la Agenda 2030.

Encomiamos, en particular, la labor realizada por la FAO en el bienio 2016-17 y apoyamos su mandato y su misión al lado de los gobiernos para combatir el hambre en el mundo, la cual afecta a 795 millones de personas.

En este ámbito, reafirmamos que la paz es indispensable para la eliminación del hambre, y que los recursos que sustentan los conflictos deberían destinarse al desarrollo agrícola y a la eliminación de la pobreza.

Otro logro a destacar, son los resultados alcanzados en el desarrollo del análisis de género para fundamentar la elaboración y revisión de estrategias nacionales sobre seguridad alimentaria y nutrición. Instamos a la Organización a seguir priorizando la eliminación del hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición.

A este respecto, agradecemos a la FAO por el apoyo brindado para la aplicación del Plan para la Seguridad Alimentaria, Nutrición y Erradicación del Hambre de la CELAC, aprobado en 2016. Al realizar esta labor también se fortalecieron las capacidades de las partes interesadas pertinentes para el bienestar nutricional y la educación alimentaria y nutricional en los marcos nacionales de alimentación.

En este ámbito, estamos comprometidos en eliminar el hambre y la desnutrición en el 2025.

Los desastres climáticos - principalmente la sequía - fueron también factores importantes en el origen de crisis alimentarias en 23 países y fueron responsables de la inseguridad alimentaria aguda de unos 39 millones de personas.

Por ello, nos complace que la FAO participara activamente en el proceso mundial para el Acuerdo de París sobre el Cambio Climático y en las reuniones de la Conferencia de las Partes (COP) del Convenio sobre Biodiversidad Biológica (CBD). La Organización ha desempeñado un papel decisivo para poner de relieve la importancia crucial de la agricultura para hacer frente al cambio climático y al hambre y ha promovido enfoques innovadores de la producción agrícola sostenible, incluidos los Sistemas Importantes del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundial (SIPAM), la agroecología, la biotecnología, y la biodiversidad.

En este último ámbito consideramos sumamente positivo la iniciativa que condujo al establecimiento de la plataforma de la FAO para fortalecer la biodiversidad biológica en todos los sectores agrícolas.

También la FAO tuvo un importante rol en promover el Acuerdo sobre medidas del Estado rector del puerto (Acuerdo sobre MERP), tratado internacional vinculante que entró en vigor en junio de 2016 y que estamos seguros tendrá un significativo impacto en prevenir, desalentar y eliminar la pesca ilegal, no declarada y no reglamentada.

Otro ámbito de acción positivo fue el apoyo brindado a las 15 iniciativas regionales aprobadas y ejecutadas durante 2016-17. Igualmente, a las oficinas descentralizadas.

Deseamos destacar que el cambio para la transformación de la FAO auspiciado por el Director General desde 2012, comprende, como elemento básico, el aprovechamiento eficaz de los recursos en el seno de la Organización. A este respecto, acogemos con suma satisfacción que se haya logrado un nivel de ahorros por eficiencia de 37 millones de USD en este bienio. Instamos a continuar con el ahorro en beneficio del programa.

Por último, recordamos que hoy es el Día Mundial del Medio Ambiente y llamamos a evitar la contaminación por plástico, que es el llamado de este año.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We welcome the Programme Implementation Report that shows FAO delivered 82 percent of its planned outputs and outcome indicators in the 2016-17 biennium, and improved performance overall. Of course, we also need to consider the impact of FAO's work in the light of current challenges.

Evidence shows that the world is not on track to achieve the food security and nutrition targets of the 2030 Agenda. Driven by conflict, climate change and protracted crises, global hunger and food

insecurity have recently worsened. Against this background, we would like to ask management how FAO activities will be adjusted so that results contribute even more to SO1, helping to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

As custodian of 21 SDG indicators, it is particularly important that FAO supports countries in monitoring, and uses data gathered to advocate globally for greater progress with the SDGs. We recognise FAO's work in developing the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), an important tool for monitoring SDG indicator 2.1.

We note that national statistics agencies will need capacity-building support to collect and analyse data, and would like to encourage prioritisation of this. We also encourage FAO to use its analysis based on the data gathered to advocate for national evidence based policies aimed at achieving zero hunger; and to support its Members in policy implementation and adjusting programmes, where needed, to ensure they are tailored to achieve the greatest possible impact.

We appreciate FAO having maintained its commitment to delivering USD 37 million in savings. We encourage FAO to continue prioritising value for money and improved efficiency to ensure that maximum resources are directed at contributing to the SDGs in a targeted, sustainable way through the delivery of FAO's strategic objectives.

We welcome the fact that sustainable forest management is highlighted in the document. Forests are crucial for food, water, wood, energy, biodiversity, health and climate change, and sustainable forest management is key to achieving the SDGs.

We also wish to underline that all of these positive results have been achieved also thanks to the dedicated work of the people working in FAO - both staff and consultants. This is reflected in the results of the report on the functional objectives.

Looking ahead, we expect FAO to continue strengthening its management for results, allocating the resources needed to improve results and impact, targeting priority areas in alignment with SDG targets and indicators.

Once again, we welcome progress in taking forward FAO's results agenda over the past biennium. We encourage FAO to strengthen its methodology, also in considering the impact of FAO's work in contributing to the SDGs; and to ensure that FAO builds on lessons learnt to continue improving its delivery of results.

Mr Mohammad Jawad RANJBAR (Afghanistan)

First, Afghanistan fully supports the statement made by Egypt on behalf of the G77 and China. Therefore, we wish to limit our intervention to the following additional aspects of PIR 2016-17.

82 percent of rigorous target setting fully achieved in PIR 2016-17 is the same as that of PIR 2014-15. All the five Strategic Objectives have performed well in terms of outputs produced, especially SO2 and SO5. In terms of outcomes, performance is shown as optimal for SO5 and good for SO3 but not so good for SO1 and SO2.

Objective 6 has performed well both in 2016-17 and 2014-15.

The USD 2.1 billion extra-budgetary funds raised in 2016-17 is 16 percent higher than 2014-15, a very good sign indeed.

The under-recovered administrative and operational costs rose to USD 18.4 million in 2016-17, a 10 percent increase over 2014-15. This is not a good sign.

On 31 December 2017, the female staff at grade D1 and above was 26 percent compared with 22 percent on 31 December 2015. Female professionals reached 43 percent of total professional staff compared with 40 percent in 2014-15. So some progress was made but equality is still to be achieved.

We also wish to underscore a few observations made by the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees on the PIR 2016-17, namely to use Regional Initiatives in support of sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition, additional financial support for the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SDFDA) and taking further steps to enrich the quality of the PIR.

With these observations, Afghanistan endorses PIR 2016-17.

Mr Won Chul JOO (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea fully aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group joint statement by the Philippines and would like to highlight some points in the PIR report.

We would like to commend FAO for its high-level performance by achieving more than 80 percent of its Output and Outcome indicators during the past biennium to achieve its Strategic Objectives.

We are also pleased to note the progress in gender balance in the workforce of FAO. The proportion of female staff as of December 2017 reached 52 percent. However, at the Professional and Director Level, it was 43 percent and 26 percent respectively. We believe there is still more room for improvement and encourage FAO to continue its effort in this regard.

Mr Mesah TARIGAN (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself to the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by the Philippines.

Indonesia would like to complement the statement to appreciate the important work carried out by the Organization on major points and developments and note the achievement of organizational results under the strategic and functional objectives.

In this regard, we would also like to convey our sincere gratitude to FAO for our new country representative for Indonesia, Mr Stephen Rudgard. He has been working since last April 2018 and we hope that Mr. Rudgard could continue our mutual collaboration and improve the valuable results achieved by his predecessor.

We would like to highlight three important points mentioned in the PIR.

Firstly, we encourage FAO to also publish statistical data which serves a basis for the outputs and outcomes measurement. We are of the view that publishing the data will enrich member countries experience in such measurement as well as support the principle of transparency, which FAO has been known for.

Secondly, with regard to decentralization offices network efforts, Indonesia appreciates the work being done by FAO. Indonesia supports FAO to continue its efforts in strengthening the decentralized office network. This is paramount in order to increase the impact of FAO's work and to integrate these offices more towards the implementation of the Strategic Framework as well as to enable these offices to respond to the dynamic demands and challenges in their operational areas.

Thirdly, we would like to emphasize the importance of the expansion of FAO's work in the area of South-South cooperation and Regional Initiatives. Regional Rice Initiative and Blue Growth Initiative. It helped us build the technical capacity of Indonesian smallholders which enables them to have better access to production inputs and markets. Therefore, it is important to continue prioritizing such initiatives that would lead to more and more farmers benefiting from the positive impact of the programme.

Lastly, with regard to the issue of geographical representation of staff within the Organization, we encourage FAO to equitably increase representation of Member Countries in its work staff by giving special emphasis to 20 under-represented and 24 non-represented countries including Indonesia and the Asia Region. We are aware that under-representation or non-representation is a shared responsibility between FAO and the respective country itself. However, we commend Joint Committee Report on this regard and request the Secretariat to provide further detailed information on these concerns to Members.

With these statements, we would like to accept this document.

Ms Ayumi HARA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group comments delivered by the Philippines. In addition, we would like to make following two comments.

With regard to item 3, the PIR 2016-17, Japan welcomes the consistent implementation of the projects and values its quantitative monitoring of the Output based on the outcome frameworks. This report will serve as a good basis for documenting the FAO's efforts toward further development of result-based organization, as well as the high-level achievement of outcome- and output-level targets and the cost reduction.

However, Japan would also like to show its concerns that the HR information, Professional and above staff subject to geographical distribution policy by nationality and grade, is not provided in the PIR anymore. This is not sensitive information and we hope the FAO Secretariat will update this information.

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China endorses the statement delivered by the delegate of Egypt on behalf of the G77 and China, as well as the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We welcome the progress made by FAO. On this basis, China wishes to make the following comments.

First of all, about the South-South cooperation, China appreciates that developing countries can have a communication exchange in technology, so they can be supported in achieving the 2030 Agenda in a timely manner as well as ensuring global food security. We appreciate FAO putting South-South cooperation as a main task to be considered as a priority. China also is willing to work with FAO further to push forward South-South cooperation.

Secondly, with regard to GIAHS, China appreciates FAO's promotion of innovative approaches in sustainable agricultural production to achieve SDG2. We are pleased to note that there are 50 GIAHS sites in the world. It is the first time that sites in Europe and North America are included. We encourage the Organization to continue to promote this work.

Regarding language services, China has always paid high importance to the balance and consistency of the six official languages of FAO. China expects FAO would make more efforts in this regard and to ensure more outputs in Chinese, Arabic, and Russian publications. We encourage FAO to adopt a more flexible approach providing language services within its limited resources to ensure the equality and balance of the languages used.

Fourthly, regarding the 2016-17 unspent balance of allocations, we support the Conference and the Council decision to transfer USD 2.9 million to the Special Fund for Development Activities (SFDFA).

Mr Abdalla SULIMAN (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

First and foremost, I would like to express our support for the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the G77 and China and we would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this important document. Here are our observations in this regard:

First of all, we are very satisfied with the Programme Implementation and its Report for 2016-17 with 82 percent of the targets having been met. We also would like to stress the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme when it comes to our countries because we have observed a minimal reduction in projects for emergency support compared to the previous biennium 21 percent of development projects and 10 percent less when it comes to cost.

We call upon the Organization to continue to work in this direction and give priority to need in terms of the type and number of projects that it embarks upon since it seems that our region has benefitted from a smaller number of projects and this is not consistent with the situation of our region. Also, we are awaiting with keen interest the evaluation of the methodology for the use of resources.

In regard to the languages used in the Organization and in the meetings approved, of those not approved, 252 meetings a year. Here we observe that there are no details presented when it comes to the overall figure provided and it says that 18 percent of the meetings provided for five languages, 8 percent four languages, and 20 percent with three languages.

Considering that part of these meetings were held in the Regional Offices, therefore we would ask that the Secretariat provide us with further details on the types of these meetings and the same goes with

regard to the publications of the Organization during the same period of time because in Arabic, Russian, and Chinese, only 3 percent was published out of a large number of publications.

We greatly appreciate the efforts made by the Organization in order to bring balance to gender representation in the Organization by 2022 and in the professional posts, 2024. We call upon the Organization to set a time limit, a deadline to achieve this balance, insisting on the merit-based principle which is so crucial.

We therefore encourage the Organization to put into practice Article A, Paragraph 3 of the Constitution of the Organization, which calls upon the need for geographic balance in officials so as to be able to fill these vacancies with the most appropriate professionals available.

And finally, we would like to ask the Organization to meet the challenges outlined in this report to prepare a more flexible programme in order for us to be able to cope with the challenges related to sustainable development, hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and the lower productivity and weak value chains.

On this basis, we approve the Programme Implementation Report for 2016-2017.

Mr Winston RUDDER (Trinidad and Tobago)

The PIR 2016-17 is a treasure trove of information highlighting the performance of FAO over the last biennium. It underscores the relevance of this Organization on which we place tremendous responsibility and therefore is a must read for us, its stakeholders. Arguably, the Report is much more than an institutional accountability document assuring us that due diligence and prudence are exercised in the provision and delivery of agreed outputs and that our contributions are well spent, as they were.

The POW of a purpose-driven FAO has far deeper implications. Indeed, we are now fully agreed that it must be intrinsically linked to the realization of the strategic goals of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, it is expected to have profound impact on the development fortunes of countries the Organization serves and the livelihoods of their citizens.

With this in view, Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the 15 Member States of the CARICOM sub-region of Latin America and the Caribbean, in commending the Organization's performance over the period, offers the following comment:

We strongly advocate the widest possible application of innovative communications technologies, including as appropriate, social media and informal information-sharing mechanisms, to shine more light on these achievements. They should be more broadly disseminated, as quickly as practicable, so that they serve to facilitate and are more immediately accessible and replicable to influence progress beyond the confines of countries and regions where success was originally attained.

As concerned development practitioners, we share the concern that despite the significant progress by FAO in its performance, hunger and malnutrition continue to rise. And, we should have common interest in fast-tracking implementation of excellent results. Therefore, let us not hide these accomplishments under a bushel when so many countries, especially Small Island Developing and other vulnerable States, often experience difficulty in sourcing timely solutions as they strive to confront the daunting challenges which inhibit their development.

Sra. Marta BARCENA COQUI (Mexico)

La Delegación de México saluda el informe, que muestra la eficiencia del trabajo de la FAO en el último bienio, al cumplir 82 por ciento de sus metas a través de la focalización de sus objetivos y nuevos métodos de trabajo, así como su alineación a la Agenda 2030 y sus 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

La FAO es central para la consecución de la Agenda 2030. Destacamos las iniciativas regionales, entre las que se encuentra el programa Mesoamérica Sin Hambre, un proyecto de cooperación México-FAO, en el contexto de la Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular, con una duración de cinco años y un monto total de 15 millones USD, que ha demostrado su éxito al disminuir el hambre en la subregión de Mesoamérica.

Subrayamos también la elevación de la oficina de FAO en México al nivel de Oficina de asociación y enlace. La colaboración técnica de la FAO es fundamental para México en áreas como el Programa especial de seguridad alimentaria (PESA). Me referiré a algunos puntos específicos del programa de ejecución.

Por primero, quiero subrayar la importancia de la FAO como agencia custodia de 25 indicadores de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). Saludamos el lanzamiento de la plataforma para la integración de la biodiversidad, en seguimiento a la declaración de Cancún de la COP-13, de la Convención sobre Diversidad Biológica, así como la celebración del diálogo de múltiples partes interesadas en la materia, el Primer y el Segundo Simposio sobre agroecología y el trabajo que está realizando la FAO en materia de Sitios del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundial (SIPAM-GIAHS).

La erradicación del hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición son objetivos centrales para la FAO. Si bien América Latina y el Caribe es una región en donde se han producido progresos en la disminución del hambre, enfrentamos ahora el reto del sobrepeso y la obesidad. Nuevos sistemas alimentarios son necesarios y ese será el gran reto de la FAO en años futuros. Una agricultura productiva y sostenible, el Objetivo Estratégico 2, es clave para el desarrollo. La importancia de la FAO para lograr este objetivo es toral. De ahí la centralidad en su trabajo en materia de Sitios Importantes del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundial, México inscribió en 2017 su primer sitio, el de las Chinampas de Xochimilco, como SIPAM, y próximamente presentaremos otras propuestas.

El Primer Simposio en materia de agroecología y las reuniones regionales subsiguientes resultaron un paso fundamental para el éxito del segundo simposio. El reto futuro más importante para articular estos esfuerzos varios es la integración de la preservación de la biodiversidad en todos los sectores agrícolas, así como lograr que la agricultura, los bosques, la pesca y la ganadería disminuyan sus impactos en el cambio climático y contribuyan a la mitigación del mismo.

México concede una importancia central a la labor de la FAO en el acompañamiento y asesoría a los países en el acceso a los mecanismos de financiamiento para la lucha contra el cambio climático. Por ello, apoyará y financiará esta labor mediante el establecimiento de un fondo con la FAO para el Caribe.

La pobreza rural está directamente relacionada a la migración, tanto interna como internacional. De ahí el necesario énfasis de FAO en la materia. La migración debe ser siempre una opción y no una necesidad, y subrayar siempre que la migración es un fenómeno socioeconómico y derivado de crisis.

No puedo dejar de encomiar la labor de la FAO para incrementar la resiliencia. Los desastres y catástrofes naturales se multiplican, y son cada vez más intensos e impredecibles. Basta ver lo sucedido el domingo pasado en la hermana República de Guatemala con la erupción del Volcán de Fuego. México ha extendido a nuestros hermanos guatemaltecos todo su apoyo y su solidaridad. Los terremotos en México, los huracanes en el Caribe, las inundaciones en Perú y Chile han afectado nuestros sectores agrícolas y ponen la resiliencia en primer lugar. Por ello, la labor de apoyo de la FAO a los países en la elaboración de estrategias de manejo y reducción de riesgos debe continuar siendo una de sus prioridades en los sectores agrícolas.

Por último, quiero reconocer el esfuerzo de la FAO para una mayor y mejor colaboración entre las agencias de Naciones Unidas en Roma. Se han dado los primeros pasos, más nos queda un largo camino por andar, y la Agenda 2030 exige a las tres agencias de Roma mayor coordinación, respetando sus respectivos mandatos.

Con estos comentarios, México apoya el Informe de la Ejecución del Programa 2016-2017 y felicita a la FAO, a sus oficinas regionales y a sus oficinas de país por su buen desempeño.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia would like to echo the comments made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Regional Group and the United States in relation to the importance of sustainable funding for the Scientific Advice Programme that supports the food safety standards work of Codex. This work, along with the plant health work of the International Plant Protection Convention, are the foundations of much of FAO's activities and they should receive funding consistent with this essential role.

Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)

Canada is pleased to endorse the Programme Implementation Report that we have been able to discuss today. As others have remarked, it is a rich document filled with a lot of details of FAO's results. In particular, Canada would also like to associate ourselves with remarks from other delegations concerning the importance of supporting the international standards work and sustainable funding, in particular funding for scientific advisory boards.

As detailed in the Programme Implementation Report on Output 4.1.1 (the output on FAO's work for food safety, quality, and plant health), the results were below target, so clearly more work needs to be done.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

Firstly, from the perspective of the Joint Meeting, I am very glad that most of the issues and concerns raised by Members are the ones that were also raised by the Joint Meeting and we are pleased that Members have shared these views as gathered from the rich and substantive interventions gathered today and of course the endorsement by Members of the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17.

We will continue to deal with these issues and concerns, as appropriate, towards strengthening the capacity of the Organization in achieving its goals as outlined in the Programme of Work and Budget and perhaps anticipate more progress when the next PIR is issued.

As I observed, most of the issues and comments raised by Members and queries were addressed more toward the FAO management and the Secretariat and some of them have been discussed, of course, in the Joint Meeting and I think separately also between the committee meetings of the Programme and Finance Committees.

However, we would look forward to having more information or explanation from the FAO management and Secretariat on these matters and hopefully this would satisfy also the concerns raised today, from this morning.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I fully agree with what was said by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. We would like to thank the Members of the Council for their crucial input, also recognizing I think not only the important work that is being done by FAO but also the challenges that we have especially in meeting the SDGs and in putting actionable efforts in a way that we can reduce the number of people who live in hunger and reverse the trend of an increase in people living in hunger as a result of climate change and especially by conflict.

In that respect, I think it is important to acknowledge that the Security Council agreed two weeks ago to a resolution with a link to the crucial aspect between conflict and food security, and I think this would give an enormous boost for the work of FAO to step up its efforts and also for the Members to see how we can implement action plans to implement important resolutions of the Security Council.

Having the attention of the Security Council and of course, the UN General Assembly is crucial for our work here in Rome.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Officer-in-charge, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

I will start and then I am sure the Deputy Director-General would like to also respond to some of the more specific questions on issues like decentralization and the web annex 6 as well as the programmatic aspects.

Firstly, I would just like to express our appreciation for the careful review and the thoughtful and thorough comments that we have received from the Members. The Programme Implementation Report is a key document for us that both looks back at what we have achieved in the previous biennium, what we could do better, and how these reflections should guide our work as we move forward.

Having these comments from you helps us to set a clear path for us moving forward, so I wanted to express my appreciation for that.

We have noted that there are common issues coming out from the feedback. For example, I have heard many references to the importance of partnerships, South-South and Triangular cooperation, and the need to continue work in this crosscutting and multidisciplinary manner in order to achieve 2030 Agenda.

Some of the priority areas I have heard are sustainable agricultural approaches; food security and nutrition; climate change; food systems; transboundary pests and diseases; food safety; standard setting; statistical data for decision making; and SDG measurements.

I think we are hearing consistent messages coming also from each of the regional conferences and now here so that again is very clear for us on the way forward.

I also appreciate that many of you mentioned the importance of the regional initiatives. I think that those regional initiatives have really become important in guiding the work at the country level and we are continuing to adjust for emerging issues to build on those initiatives in taking the work forward.

Now several members of course have noted that the results of the last biennium are against a backdrop of rising numbers of chronically undernourished people. And where we most notably see the deterioration in these numbers is in situations of conflict or also conflict combined with droughts and floods.

I believe the Deputy Director-General Programmes may wish to speak more about this but this is a major challenge that requires all of our efforts to see how we can move forward to meet the 2030 Agenda. I wanted to say a few words on the results framework and how we are using that results framework to guide our work and the relationship with the SDG indicators.

Through the results framework, we aimed to have a strong theory of change and we would like to see movement on each level, from outputs to outcomes to Strategic Objectives. In this way, we will see the same improvements, the same movements and trends.

And, if that is not the case, then we can understand the reason why and then we can adjust accordingly. One way that we could adjust is to make adjustments on how we measure our interventions. You would have seen in the 2018-21 Results Framework where we have made some changes to some of the indicators to change how we measure things to better reflect the direction that we are moving in.

We can also adjust our interventions and many of these examples are included in the Programme Implementation Report document looking forward to 2018-19.

Just to mention, for example, under SO5, when the assessment of the outcome indicators showed that although there is improvement, that many countries remained weak in applying prevention and mitigation measures.

We therefore stress that we will continue to put our focus on supporting countries to improve capacities to implement good practices and access services.

Similarly in SO1, noting the slow rate of decrease of undernourishment combined with rising child overweight and adult obesity as measured by the SDG indicators, we have highlighted the continued need to foster high-level political commitment on these issues, as well as to address the underlying factors in the food system.

So as many of you have noted, we have indeed identified the 39 SDG level indicators exclusively to measure progress at the Strategic Objective level. We believe that as we move forward, we will have more and more data to report on and to draw conclusions on how the indicators at various levels are progressing and how we are adjusting our work accordingly.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

The issue I would like to address is the great concern that we all have for the fact that not only are we not making progress, we are not on track to reach the objective of hunger and of poverty, extreme poverty eradication, but in the case of hunger, numbers were in fact going backwards.

When we achieve the SDGs, we will see this as a collective achievement and as a collective success and if we do not achieve, it will again be a collective failure for all of us globally and among all of us as partners.

But it is true that we need to look very carefully at the implications of the deteriorating situation, see what the lessons learned for us are, and what adjustments we would make in the programme and those are I think really extremely important issues for us and it is true as Beth said, that the main reasons for the increase in numbers over the past several years have been conflict, extreme weather events, particularly drought, and also flooding but particularly drought and protracted crises.

The work of ours, together with eleven other partners, that I think captures this the best is the report on global food crises that came out a few months ago where we saw that the number of people in crisis situations, crisis emergency or catastrophic situations, in need of humanitarian assistance, went up to 124 million people, which is a large increase relative to the year before this year in 51 countries.

Now I will get back to that in just a second but we also need to keep in mind that, although the methodology is different and what it measures is different, the indicator on hunger that we are the custodian of, on the proportion of undernourished, contains another 700 million people. I mean, the two are not measuring the same things but we assume logically that the 124 million in crisis situations would also be part of this larger 815 million.

Never the less, those other 700 million are not in crisis situations and there are a multitude of issues that lead to their situation around vulnerabilities not only of climate, conflict, and protracted crises but of poverty, lack of access, and a lot of other interrelated problems that are really at the heart of how we approach the Sustainable Development Goals.

So we need to, of course across the board, address all of these issues, including in countries that are not affected by what have been the factors raising the numbers often in middle income countries where the majority of those 800 million people in fact reside.

So we need to continue our work, looking globally and at the individual situations in countries and within parts of countries and so on, and that we will continue.

Never the less, as you mentioned, several of you, we do need to consider if what we are working towards is addressing the right issues in the right proportion. And here I think I would certainly welcome the comment from Trinidad and Tobago that what really we need is to shed light on this and to look at the lessons that we have learned and how they are applied to scale these up and to apply them more broadly.

And here I would say that I am happy to report that where I think we have made the most of the lessons learned and made the most progress in the last several years has been in fact on the areas that are driving the numbers at the moment.

We made very good progress, together with others, in calling attention to the need, for example, to sustain agriculture based livelihoods in the midst of crises that will maintain crop production, livestock, fisheries, use of forest resources in a way that avoids households, families, and individuals from falling into an extreme emergency situation where they have sold off all of their assets and need to migrate or move into a camp or move into cities and so on.

So, how to deal with crises in a way that builds on what FAO's work is on agriculture, crops, livestock, and so on? I think we have made a lot of progress in the past several years and in raising the awareness of how important that is and raising the funding in the midst of crises.

Similarly, within the overall context of Strategic Programme 5 on resilience, I think it really gets at the heart of that as well. Similarly, with regard to conflict, how we work in conflict is an issue that I think we have also made good progress on and there is more to be done but we now incorporate much more explicit awareness of when we are operating in those contexts; is our work, our projects, contributing to the conflict in some way or are they sufficiently aware of the fact that we are avoiding making this situation worse, among others?

Similarly, the Strategic Programme 1 on policy support for capacity development for food security and nutrition, again I think is a perfect example of lesson learning. The building blocks of a lot of that

Strategic Objective 1 and that programme come out of the experience of Bangladesh and our collaboration there that is now being replicated and lessons learned and applied elsewhere and Bangladesh, of course, has made remarkable progress in reducing malnutrition in a relatively short period of time. So it is just one example.

Other countries are represented here today of course and have also made really good progress. Similarly in the other areas on sustainable production on how we combine social protection programmes in a way that enhances production and income within the Strategic Programme 3, how we take a more holistic food systems approach to the overall development of the economy and the wellbeing of population within the areas in which we work.

I am happy to say I think that those are the lessons. Those are the areas that if we had not done that earlier, we would need to work in those areas now to be fully consistent with 2030 Agenda and, in fact, to address the issues that we see driving the increase in the numbers of the impact of changing climate, protracted crises, and conflict.

So there is I think a positive experience in this. Never the less, we are extremely concerned with the fact that the numbers are getting worse rather than better and we need to ramp up what we do on advocacy, on expanding the work, on replication, on scaling up working with a lot of partners. Of course, it is not just us. It is a collective effort to highlight the lessons that we have learned and are continuously learning in the way that we would go forward.

I think also in terms of the resource allocation, I think this is going to have to be done primarily with additional voluntary contributions which is why we are building the resource mobilization efforts on the lessons that we have learned on how we address these specific issues.

So there are in fact a lot of implications for us and within what we recognize of course as a collective effort, not just up to us, but we are paying really extreme attention to this and we hope that this coming year we will see a reversal of the trend and that we will be back on track at least moving forward in the eradication of hunger and poverty and the other SDGs.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

We talk a lot about the challenges we are facing, hunger is on the rise, inequalities continue to increase, we have more migration, but at the same time we have other challenges, the population is increasing, we need to feed this growing population, and we need to preserve our natural resources.

This is another complex challenge we have to face to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda. As it has been said, we have been working on how we can transform our food and agricultural systems in order to sustainably achieve the challenge we are facing and achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda.

In this regard, we have been working on several approaches which can support us in achieving those goals. As it has been mentioned, and I think we got support from the Members of the Council, we organized the Symposium on Agroecology, we organized the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems meeting, and last week we organized the meeting on mainstreaming biodiversity across the agricultural sectors.

We hope the recommendations from those meetings will be presented to the technical committees this year for guidance on how they will be integrated in FAO's work to culminate at the end of this year with the The FAO Agricultural Innovation Symposium for Family Farmers, during which a platform that would bring innovation to agricultural sectors with a special focus on smallholders and family farmers will be created.

But on top of that, we have been working on the Oceans. Last year we were very active on SDG 14 which was reviewed during the HLPF. We had an event at lunchtime to mark the first anniversary of the IEU. And we have also been implementing the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA). It has been clear from the discussion that if we do not combat illegal fishing, we cannot achieve sustainable fishing, increase the sustainability of local fishing communities, and all the implications it will bring to all of us.

In the same vein, with regard to the work on the conservation of forests, sustainable forest management, we had an event this year on SDG 15 on halting deforestation, which will be taken to the High-level Political Forum. It is also another important contribution to the 2030 Agenda and the Agenda on Climate Change.

We have been working very closely with countries on how they can review their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), how we can help them to get access to climate-sensitive finance, not only the Green Climate Fund but also the Global Environment Facility GEF-7 replenishment of resources. The Sixth GEF Assembly in Viet Nam in June will place emphasis on food security as well as oceans and the Blue Growth Initiative, which are all items on the agenda. We are working with countries on how they can formulate projects to be presented. We are pleased to see that the surplus from the Development Fund will be carried forward and allocated to the preparation of a project for climate change.

With regard to the comments from Mexico, I would like to thank the Ambassador, for contributing USD 10 million to the formulation of projects for the Caribbean Region. The SIDS are a group of countries that are very much under the effects of climate change.

Maybe just one remark regarding the normative work, the norms and standard setting regarding the Scientific Advice Committee for Food Safety and Codex and IPPC. We fully agree that we need more sustainable and predictable solutions and we count on your support. I think one solution is the Blind Trust Fund that is under discussion, but we count on your support to have more contributions through our Programme of Work and Budget in order to have these contributions more predictable and allow us to have more sustainable work.

With regard to the plant and transboundary pests and animal diseases, I think the Fall Army Worm, the AMR, you have been discussing throughout this meeting. As it has been shown yesterday, FAO is really committed. We have not been working alone but with other United Nations organizations.

Partnership is very important to all the work we have been doing. Also, we count on your support to have more resources to face those challenges which can jeopardize all the efforts we are making in increasing sustainable food and agriculture production and sustainable livelihoods to our smallholder farmers.

Thank you for your support and collaboration.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur général adjoint Opérations)

Nous avons pris bonne note des recommandations du représentant de la Côte d'Ivoire, au nom du Groupe Afrique, et aussi de l'Indonésie concernant l'importance du renforcement des capacités des bureaux de pays et aussi d'avoir des représentants de la FAO avec les qualifications et l'expérience nécessaires pour diriger l'équipe pays, en particulier en ce qui concerne la mobilisation des ressources, mais aussi la formulation du Cadre de programmation par pays, et tout cela en appui aux priorités du gouvernement pour la domestication du Programme 2030.

Nous prendrons bien évidemment en compte ces recommandations dans la mise en œuvre des ajustements en cours concernant les capacités des bureaux décentralisés. À cet effet, je voudrais rappeler que le Secrétariat continue à renforcer la procédure de sélection des représentants de la FAO par des avis de vacance de poste, qui sont désormais publiés et revus plusieurs fois par an par un panel coordonné par la Directrice du Bureau d'appui aux bureaux décentralisés (elle est elle-même, je le rappelle, une ex-coordonnatrice résidente du système des Nations Unies), avec la participation des représentants régionaux, des directeurs pertinents, qu'il s'agisse du Directeur de la Division des urgences et de la réhabilitation, ou de la Division de la mobilisation des ressources, ou de directeurs de divisions techniques en fonction des postes à pourvoir.

Cette sélection est suivie d'une évaluation indépendante menée par une entreprise internationale de haut niveau, spécialisée dans la gestion des talents sur les capacités en termes de management et de leadership. Enfin, un contrôle des références plus renforcé est exercé depuis quelques temps, avant que les résultats de ces différents niveaux de sélection soient soumis au Directeur général pour éventuellement considérer la candidature et la soumettre à un gouvernement. C'est un processus lourd

et coûteux, mais nécessaire pour sélectionner les représentants dont les pays ont besoin. C'est aussi particulièrement important et pertinent dans le cadre de la réforme des Nations Unies.

Sur ce point je voudrais ajouter que le Directeur général, avec les représentants régionaux et moi-même, s'implique personnellement dans une évaluation continue des compétences des représentants de la FAO, qui est sans concession et qui amène, quand des décisions difficiles doivent être prises, à ne pas renouveler des contrats.

Continues in English

Philippines, while welcoming the savings made, cautioned the importance to be careful and to ensure that the efficiency savings are not at the expense of efficiency and results. We take note of this advice and we want to reassure Philippines that so far efficiency savings are linked to modernization of the administrative services and reinjected in the technical capacity. We aim simultaneously to make some efficiency savings but also to improve our efficiency and our effectiveness.

Many good examples of efficiency savings that we assign to modernization, for example, the strengthening and the expanding of the function of our Budapest Shared Service Center, the reduction of cross-linkages, the better management and monitoring of cost for travels – I remind you that is the second post of costs after human resources in the Organization – the better monitoring and management of the contracts with suppliers, the common services with other Rome-based agencies.

Yesterday, I informed the Director-General to give you an example of the type of modernizations that generate savings. The modernization of our telephone system alone allowed us to reduce by 47 percent of these costs at headquarters in one year.

Since 2013, these costs have been reduced by a quarter. We believe that there are still many areas that would allow cost savings through modernization. In particular our enterprise resource planning system, which we improved recently with the acquisition of a better system to manage human resources from selection to onboarding and onwards.

I would like to ask if you agree to give the floor to Mr Louis Gagnon to comment on the two points that were raised by Thailand and Sudan regarding the question of the 103 unscheduled sessions and the implications, as well as the question of Sudan regarding language coverage of meetings.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

To answer the question posed by Thailand, the reason why there is an important number of unscheduled sessions in the PIR, and this is not a new phenomenon as it happens every biennium, is mainly because of the advanced planning that goes into preparing the list of meetings for the following biennium.

As you will recall, the PWB for 2016-17 came out in February 2015, and of course at that point in time many meetings were still in the works. It was only later in 2015 and then during the biennium that the planning of these meetings could be finalized. This explains why there are 103 unscheduled sessions, which is in line, as I have said before, with the experience faced in previous biennia.

Regarding the question from Sudan referring to the number of meetings in less than six languages, this is on page 109 of the PIR, I should recall that a good number of meetings are not held at headquarters but in the various regions where FAO operates. Obviously, in all regions the language requirements are not the same. We have many meetings, for example, in Africa which need not be in all the FAO languages. This explains the statistics you see where we have a good number of meetings in two, three, or four languages.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of our discussion.

Before I proceed to summarise the discussion, I should like to urge once again the Members to avoid turning the discussions following my summary into a drafting committee, as we had agreed.

I shall proceed to read out my summary on item 3, *Programme Implementation Report 2016-17*:

1. The Council endorsed the findings of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and 170th Session of the Finance Committee on the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2016-17, and in particular:

- a) expressed satisfaction at the implementation of the Programme of Work in 2016-17 and welcomed FAO's results in reaching 82 percent of the planned Outputs under a more rigorous target setting and measurement approach;
- b) noted with concern the background of rising global hunger as a result of climate change and increasing number of conflicts;
- c) welcomed the alignment of the FAO results framework to the SDGs by identifying and using the SDG targets and indicators that relate to each Strategic Objective;
- d) expressed satisfaction at the net budgetary appropriation expenditure at 99.6 percent, the higher delivery of Trust Funds and Technical Cooperation Programme, and the resource mobilization figure of over USD 2 billion, coupled with increased efficiencies including achievement of USD 37 million in savings;
- e) noted with satisfaction the priority given by the Organization to the use of partnerships to enable it to leverage its comparative advantages, including through South-South and Triangular cooperation;
- f) encouraged continued progress in achieving equitable geographical representation of staff, and gender balance at professional and senior levels;
- g) noted and encouraged continuing efforts to reinforce the decentralized office network, including the review of country office staffing models;
- h) noted that the underspending of USD 3.9 million in the 2016-17 net budgetary appropriations expenditure would be entirely transferred to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities; and
- i) recalled the recommendation from the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and 169th Session of the Finance Committee for allocation of unspent Trust Fund balances for the Blind Trust Fund aimed at supporting FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius.

2. The Council endorsed the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17 and recommended that it be submitted to the Conference in June 2019 for approval.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

In point (b), what does “background” mean? Perhaps it would be better to say “noted with concern the reasons for rising global hunger”.

CHAIRPERSON

I believe this is taken from the Programme Committee's report. But if you have a suggestion for another wording, we can take that on board.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

Just to confirm that the wording was lifted from the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees. It was actually in the preambular part of the report because we noted the progress in FAO's work, however there is this concern about the rising global hunger and climate change. The progress in FAO's work is taking place amidst the background of rising global hunger due to climate change and conflicts. It could be also “noted with concern the situation” or other words that could describe this. I think we are open to that.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I would like to suggest to add at the end of point (b) after “conflicts”: “and called on FAO to build on lessons learned and adjust activities, where necessary, so that results have a greater impact in contributing to the SDGs”.

Then we propose two new subparagraphs after point (i), the new paragraph should be: “*encouraged FAO to prioritize support to national statistics agencies to collect and analyze data*”. And a last new subparagraph: “*underlined that the positive results have been achieved also thanks to the dedicated work of the people working in FAO, both staff and consultants*”.

Ms Ayumi HARA (Japan)

In point (f) I would like to suggest to add the sentence: “*requested the Secretariat to provide more detailed information on these concerns to Members*”. This is the same as the report of the Joint Meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

Japan, you are suggesting the word “*concerns*” but there is no such word in this point (f).

Perhaps we could use “*issues*” instead.

Ms Ayumi HARA (Japan)

Okay. Thank you.

Mr Daryl NEARING (Canada)

We would like to intervene on what is currently listed as point (i), right now the text states: “*recalled the recommendation from the Joint Meeting*” and there were several interventions that were a little more prescriptive or a little more forthright than that.

We would like to suggest an amendment to that text so that point (i) would begin with: “*stressed the need for sustainable funding for*”, and then the text in the bottom of the paragraph, “*FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius*”.

We could still keep the text about the decisions by the Joint Meeting. It is just that the current text as written I do not think it adequately reflected the conversation we had.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests for the floor. So with these amendments, the summary is adopted.

Item 5. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and 170th Session of the Finance Committee (May 2018)

Point 5. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent vingt-quatrième session) et du Comité financier (cent soixante-dixième session) (mai 2018)

Tema 5. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 124.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 170.º período de sesiones (mayo de 2018)

(CL 159/5 ; CL 159/INF/7)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now consider item 5, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and the 170th Session of the Finance Committee*, which took place on 21 and 25 May 2018. The documents before you are CL 159/5 and CL 159/INF/7 before you.

As agreed, we will not reopen discussions on the Programme Implementation Report 2016-17, which has just been concluded.

We also agreed when the Agenda was adopted that the Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on Mandatory Age of Separation (MAS) would be discussed as a separate item, which is a new item 15, which will be tabled tomorrow.

I now invite Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, who also chaired the Joint Meeting, to introduce the Report.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am pleased to briefly present the outcome of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and the 170th Session of the Finance Committee on the subject of the proposal for a high-level event on FAO's role in food security matters at World Food Day (WFD).

The Joint Meeting was appreciative of the proposal and provided the following specific guidance that:

- a) a Concept Note be prepared by the Secretariat setting out the expected objectives and outcomes of the high-level event, as well as how the CFS would be involved;
- b) consideration be given to launching the State of Food and Agriculture Report (SOFA) during the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) session in October 2018, noting the relevance of the State of Food Insecurity Report (SOFI) to the mandate of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS);
- c) geographical and gender balance in the two panels to be held on WFD should be ensured;
- d) an update on the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition be jointly presented by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO) during the event.

Finally, the Joint Meeting noted that the costs for the event would be absorbed by the WFD 2018 budget and voluntary contributions.

Mr Hongxing NI (China)

China has the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

First of all, we would like to support the Philippines on the joint statement on item 3, *Programme Implementation Report 2016-17*. The Joint Meeting reviewed three issues: the PIR 2016-17, MAS and the Proposal for a high-level event on FAO's role in food security matters at World Food Day. In accordance with the agenda, the Mandatory Age of Separation will be discussed under item 7. Therefore, we would like to share comments on the high-level event at the World Food Day.

We welcome the high-level event and thank the Secretariat for the arrangements. We are looking forward to receiving a concept note setting out the expected objectives and outcomes of this event.

We note that consideration should be given to launching the SOFA report during the COAG session in October 2018, so that the Member States could have enough time to digest the report and actively participate in the discussion.

We request the appropriate arrangements to be set for participants of CFS Plenary. We encourage the Secretariat to further communicate with Regional Groups on the need for geographical and gender balance in this event with a participatory approach of all key stakeholders.

With these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the reports of the Joint Meeting of PC124 and FC170.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. The European Union and its Member States welcome the report of the session of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and the 170th Session of the Finance Committee.

We endorse its findings and the recommendations made in the report.

We would like to highlight the following points of particular importance. As mentioned under item 3, we welcome the progress made toward the implementation of the Programme of Work in 2016-17 and FAO's results in reaching 82 percent of the planned outputs. But we note with concern the limited progress achieved in implementing some of the outcomes of the strategic programmes, such as the low numbers of countries that increased the resources allocated to eradicating hunger, Outcome 1.1.B.

We strongly endorse the Joint Meeting's request to FAO management in relation to the action plan for preventing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. We look forward to the implementation of the strengthened action plan.

We encourage FAO to continue to work on the collection of data on SDG indicators and we also encourage FAO to ensure that support is given to Members to develop capacities to monitor and track SDG indicators for which FAO is the custodian.

We welcome the conclusion of the Joint Meeting about FAO's continued engagement in emerging threats and opportunities in the area of sustainable agriculture and livestock, food security, and nutrition, especially in the context of conflicts and climate change.

We encourage continued efforts at regional level such as the FAO's work to combat the threat posed by the fall army worm in Africa.

CHAIRPERSON

I think you are commenting on the PIR which we have discussed separately so please limit your intervention to what was presented as part of this report.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

No, this is on item 5, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON

But the PIR was discussed separately. What you are commenting on was not part of the presentation of the Chair of the Joint Meeting.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

May I continue please?

CHAIRPERSON

But please be concise.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

We endorse the Joint Meeting's request to FAO management in relation to the preparation of a concept note setting out the objectives for the high-level event planned for the World Food Day. We note that meanwhile, the note has been posted and we look forward to discussing it.

One comment which we would already make at this stage that the presentation saw for 2018 would be appropriate for World Food Day but not for the CFS. We further note the Joint Committee's encouragement to continue efforts of management to reinforce the Decentralized Office Network, fully respecting the principle of cost neutrality with respect to the budget devoted to the network itself and work initiated in relation to the review of Country Office staffing models in line with the guidance of the Council at its 154th Session in 2016.

In this respect, we stress the need to take full account of the United Nations Development System Reform. Finally, Mr Chair, we note that also the Joint Committee did not reach a consensus on the issue of the Mandatory Age of Separation. We hope that the Council will resolve this issue at this session for the benefit of the Organization and we will continue to work with the other regions to do so.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

La préoccupation de mon collègue de la Bulgarie est compréhensible, car il avait préparé un discours sur les trois questions, mais je vais aller plus vite encore.

Je voudrais rapidement féliciter le Président du Comité financier, qui a dirigé la Réunion conjointe avec maestria, ainsi que le Président du Comité du Programme, pour le rapport qu'ils ont présenté.

Au cours de la réunion donc trois points ont été examinés, mais il n'est plus besoin de les citer puisqu'un seul point va maintenant être considéré: la manifestation de haut niveau qui sera organisée par la FAO. Le Groupe Afrique attend impatiemment du Secrétariat l'élaboration de la note dans laquelle seront précisés les objectifs et les résultats escomptés de la manifestation, ainsi que les leçons à en tirer. Nous voudrions également que le Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale soit convié pour en marquer l'importance.

Avec ces commentaires, le Groupe Afrique approuve le rapport de la Réunion conjointe.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

Just to briefly thank the Chairperson of the Programme Committee and Members of both the Programme and Finance Committees for their cooperation and contributions at the Joint Meeting and also on their behalf, I would like to thank or extend appreciation to the Secretariat for its assistance in our deliberations, not only in this particular item of the high-level event but as well as on the other items that we addressed during the Joint Meeting.

And of course to I would like to thank the Members of FAO, for providing us with the opportunity to move further on the important work of this Organization.

So thank you so much and we take note of all of the comments we gathered today.

CHAIRPERSON

For the summary of item 5, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and 170th Session of the Finance Committee (May 2018)*, I may point out that it only deals with one item because the PIR was a separate item and the Mandatory Age of Separation is also a separate item so this summary only concerns one item in the Joint Meeting's Report.

The Council endorsed the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and the 170th Session of the Finance Committee, and noted its guidance in relation to the proposal for a high-level event at World Food Day and noted the concept note setting out detailed information on this event.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

What you have said at the end of your last sentence, we propose just to add: "*and we look forward to discussing it.*"

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

When we say: "*noted the concept note setting out detailed information*", as far as I remember from the Joint Meeting, we requested a concept note but we have not discussed it yet, so maybe we could say: "*noted that the concept note will be prepared*" or "*requested the preparation of a concept note*".

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just to answer Egypt's question, yes, the concept note was actually published as an INF document for this session of the Council and it is document CL 159/INF/7.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Perhaps it would better to accommodate the concern expressed by Egypt if we quoted the number of the document as well as its date of issuance so that we do not have the impression that it was considered by the Joint Meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments? I see none. With these amendments, the summary is adopted.

Item 6. Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee (21-25 May 2018)
Point 6. Rapport de la cent vingt-quatrième session du Comité du Programme (21-25 mai 2018)
Tema 6. Informe del 124.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (21-25 de mayo de 2018)
(CL 159/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now take up item 6, *Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee*. The document before Council is CL 159/3.

I invite Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, to introduce the Report.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

Allow me to present the outcome of the discussion on the 124th Session of the Programme Committee. But first of all, I would like to thank the Vice-Chair and all of the Members of the Programme Committee for their hard work but excellent spirit, not only of collaboration but also in the transparency we had, the intense discussions we had in an open and transparent manner, as well as the fact that we had substantive discussions on all of the issues.

I would say in harmony and we could arrive on all of the issues in consensus and for that I really would like to applaud the Members of the Programme Committee.

I also would like to thank FAO Management, especially Ms Maria Helena Semedo and Mr Daniel Gustafson for an open and constructive manner in which they answered the questions but were also open for suggestions and even took over some of the suggestions of the Programme Committee. I think that is the spirit of what we need for this Organization, also to uplift our work worldwide.

And last but most certainly not least, the hard work of the Secretariat thanks to which we could arrive early Friday afternoon on a consensus document and a report.

The Programme Committee examined programmatic and evaluation matters on:

- a) preparation for the reviewed Medium Term Plan 2018-21 with input on regional priorities;
- b) the evaluation of FAO's work under Strategic Objective 1;
- c) a synthesis of lessons learned in the application of the Country Programming Framework; and
- d) a follow-up report to the Evaluation of FAO's work on genetic resources.

Moreover, we also discussed our methods of work, how to improve them, and to make much more use of informal settings to prepare for its formal sessions as well as to set the agenda for our next meeting.

When it comes to the preparation for the Reviewed Medium Term Plan 2018-21, of course, we specifically discussed the regional priorities. The Programme Committee:

- a) appreciated the alignment of FAO's Results Framework in the MTP 2018-2021 to the Sustainable Development Goals and welcomed the inclusion of the SDG indicators in the Results Framework;
- b) stressed the need to ensure support to Members to develop the capacity to monitor and track the SDG indicators and to give further consideration to the links between meeting the SO outputs, targets, and especially of course achieving the SDGs;
- c) welcomed the support expressed by the Regional Conferences for continuity in a strategic direction of the Organization and look forward to further analysis in November on the priorities and initiatives with the complete input from all Regional Conferences, the informal Regional Conference for North America, and the technical committees because we only had the input of certain Regional Conferences but not all and it is very important that we discuss and work with all of the outcomes of the Regional Conferences.
- d) stressed the importance of FAO's work on guidance on emerging issues and regional initiatives and priorities such as food safety, especially, of course, the work on the Codex of standard setting and safe foods, enabling trade, the International Plant Protection Convention on standard setting for plant health and plant protection, blue growth, the importance given to SIDS, as well as countries in dry and arid zones and the LDCs. Of course, AMR, agroecology, biotechnology and other innovative approaches;
- e) supported FAO's action on climate change, especially in supporting countries to access climate financing and stressed that priority should be given to SIDS and LDCs as well as to all of the countries vulnerable to climate change;
- and f) recognized the need for continued review of the coverage of FAO's Decentralized Offices underlining the importance of taking into account the outcome of the outcome of the discussions in relation to the United Nations Development System.

On the evaluation of FAO's Contribution to the Eradication of FAO's contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition (SO1), the Committee welcomed the Evaluation and the Management Response and

- a) noted the positive findings of the evaluation in terms of the design and implementation of SO1, trusting the need to address hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition in the context of migration caused by conflicts as a critical issue as well as other crosscutting issues, especially, of course, climate change;
- b) welcomed Management's recognition for the need to adjust FAO's programming to reflect increasing conflicts as developers of food insecurity and hunger;
- c) appreciated the crosscutting nature of SO1 and the enhanced need for FAO to develop cross SO initiatives;
- d) encouraged a greater role of FAO in the dissemination of data on food security at country level and;
- e) looked forward to reviewing the evaluation of the Nutrition Strategy which should include impact aspects at the November Session.

On the synthesis of lessons learned in the application of the Country Programming Framework (CPF), the Committee:

- a) provided guidance on further strengthening the CPFs and their guidelines,
- b) endorsed the three recommendations of the synthesis report, and encouraged Management to accept and implement all three recommendations in full;
- c) stressed the need to further strengthen the coherence of the UN at country level and welcomed management support for the ongoing UN Development Reform process;
- d) highlighted FAO's role in support to formulation, evaluation, and scaling up of ministerial sector policies and strategies, including decent employment with a focus on youth, social protection, and of course gender mainstreaming;
- e) stressed the need for having an oversight mechanism as a structural and mandatory component of CPFs;
- f) highlighted the important role of steering committees in the preparation of CPFs and the broad stakeholder involvement, including, I would say, many ministries of government; and
- g) welcomed Management's agreement to pilot the development of joint CPFs with WFP and IFAD as a clear sign, of course, of the Rome-based collaboration.

On the Follow-up report to the evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture (cf. PC 119/5), the Committee:

- a) highlighted the role of conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources within the context of climate change;
- b) requested that work on implementation of recommendation 2 on the development of the capacity of Decentralized Offices in support of work on genetic resources should be accelerated;
- c) noted a need for additional resources to the work of the Organization in the area of genetic resources; and
- d) welcomed the strengthened involvement of the private sector in this area and also financial contributions to the work of the FAO.

With that, I have concluded my introduction of the report.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan is honoured to make this statement on behalf of the Near East Group and wishes to address only three sections of the Programme Committee Report.

Section one, on Reviewed MTP 2018-21, the Near East Group supports the following key observations of the Programme Committee, namely: integrating the SDGs in FAO's results framework; stress on Regional Initiatives and other emerging issues; partnership with UN organizations, non-state actors and South-South and Triangular cooperation; FAO's support to actions within the context of climate change.

Section two, on the evaluation of SO1, the Near East Group shares the observations and useful suggestions of the Programme Committee on the evaluation of SO1 as well as the Management response to the findings of the recommendations of the evaluation report. The Near East Group fully agrees with the Programme Committee's observation about the key role of SO1 in the mandate of FAO, its cross-cutting nature, its heavy demand for data collection and analysis, its stress on wide-ranging partnership and the difficulty of delivery in situation of conflict.

The Near East Group notes that while the PC has agreed with the four recommendations of the evaluation, it has not expressed opinion on the five critical conclusions of the evaluation report of SO1 (pages 14-16 of the Summary Evaluation Report).

Section three, the Near East Group fully shares the key observations of the Programme Committee on the synthesis of CPFs, especially its Roman numerals I to V, paragraph 5(b). It also underlines the Programme Committee's recognition of better context analysis, scaling up pro-poor multisector actions at country level, linking CPFs to regional programmes and innovative methods of partnership and resource mobilization. Again, the Near East Group notes that the Programme Committee has endorsed the three recommendations but has remained silent about the three critical conclusions of the synthesis of CPFs (pages 30-31 of the synthesis report).

With these comments, the Near East Group endorses the valuable Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and we thank His Excellency Ambassador Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, and his dedicated members of the Programme Committee.

M. Abdennour GOUGAM (Algérie)

L'Algérie a l'honneur de prendre la parole au nom du Groupe régional Afrique sur le point 6 de l'ordre du jour, et voudrait, à ce titre, féliciter le Président du Comité du Programme, S.E l'Ambassadeur Hoogeveen, pour son leadership et pour la gestion des travaux de la 124ème session du Comité du Programme, ainsi que pour la qualité du rapport présenté. Elle félicite également les membres du Comité du Programme pour la qualité des avis techniques et des conclusions soumises à l'attention du Conseil.

Le Groupe se réjouit du fait que le Comité ait examiné à sa session plusieurs questions relatives à la planification des programmes et à l'évaluation. S'agissant des questions de planification, le Groupe régional Afrique note l'importance des questions débattues, dont le Cadre stratégique de la FAO, le Plan à moyen terme 2018-2021 révisé et les priorités régionales, ainsi que le contexte global et mondial.

Le Groupe Afrique est satisfait du fait que les besoins, les tendances et les enjeux régionaux identifiés pendant les Conférences régionales aient fait l'objet d'un examen approfondi, notamment sur les thèmes d'intérêt pour la région Afrique à savoir, le changement climatique, l'emploi des jeunes, la résilience, l'intégration de la biodiversité dans les secteurs de l'agriculture, de la pêche et des forêts, ainsi que le financement du développement.

Nous nous félicitons de l'alignement des objectifs stratégiques de la FAO sur les objectifs de développement durable (ODD) mettant l'accent sur la nécessité d'établir des liens entre les indicateurs des ODD et le cadre de résultats du Plan à moyen terme 2018-2021 révisé.

Le Groupe régional Afrique a souligné, à maintes occasions, l'importance axiale que revêt le mandat de la FAO pour faire avancer les questions relatives à la salubrité des aliments, et le rôle normatif de

premier plan joué dans ce cadre par le Codex Alimentarius pour sa contribution exclusive en faveur d'aliments sûrs en vue également de leur commercialisation.

Le Groupe Afrique invite l'Organisation à jouer un rôle renforcé dans l'accompagnement des Membres dans leur effort d'adaptation et d'atténuation de l'impact du changement climatique.

Nous pensons, dans ce contexte, que les informations et les tendances nouvelles contenues dans le rapport sur L'État de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition dans le monde - Renforcer la résilience pour favoriser la paix et la sécurité alimentaire, sont à prendre en compte dans les approches nationales à travers leur domestication pour l'élaboration d'outils pertinents d'aide à la décision.

À cet effet, nous encourageons la FAO à continuer sur cette lancée à travers la consolidation de son rôle dans la diffusion et la vulgarisation de données sur l'insécurité alimentaire au niveau des pays, afin d'améliorer l'analyse du contexte, son suivi et l'évaluation de ses activités et initiatives.

Pour ce qui est de la contribution de la FAO à l'éradication de la faim, de l'insécurité alimentaire et de la malnutrition, notre région salue la reconnaissance par la direction de la nécessité d'adapter la programmation de l'Organisation aux situations de conflit, en raison de la tendance de plus en plus vérifiable faisant état d'un nexus affirmé entre ces phénomènes et l'insécurité alimentaire dans le monde.

Le Groupe régional Afrique souscrit aux recommandations du Comité de prendre en compte les réalités nationales et locales dans la mise en œuvre de la stratégie et de son plan d'action, ainsi que le rôle des bureaux décentralisés.

Nous appuyons également la recommandation du Comité au sujet de la priorité accordée par la FAO aux pays les moins avancés et aux petits États insulaires en développement, compte tenu de leur vulnérabilité au changement climatique, à l'insécurité, à la malnutrition ainsi qu'aux autres défis auxquels ils se trouvent confrontés.

Aussi invitons-nous la FAO à apporter son soutien et son appui à ces pays à travers l'accompagnement de leurs efforts dans la mise en œuvre du Programme de développement durable à l'horizon 2030, dans la création d'un environnement institutionnel propice à la réalisation des objectifs relatifs à la sécurité alimentaire et la nutrition, notamment par le renforcement de leurs capacités techniques et la promotion de leur résilience.

Avec ces considérations, le Groupe régional Afrique donne son accord pour l'adoption du Rapport.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The European Union and its 28 Member States welcome the Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee. We endorse its findings and the recommendations made in the report.

We would like to highlight the following points of particular importance.

Firstly, we welcome the inclusion of the SDG indicators in FAO's updated Medium Term Plan and we reiterate the Programme Committee's calls to ensure that a) support is given to Members to monitor SDG indicators for which FAO is custodian; and b) there are clear links between FAO's output targets and the SDG indicators.

We welcome the Programme Committee's call to FAO's Management to provide more transparency and clear criteria for which countries will receive FAO's support to access financing from the Global Environmental Facility, the Green Climate Fund and other sources of "climate" financing.

We look forward to the Programme Committee's review of the priorities that emerged from the European Regional Conference alongside those from FAO's other regional conferences.

Secondly, we welcome the evaluation of FAO's work to contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This is particularly timely given the growing numbers of global hungry. We welcome Management's recognition for the need to adjust FAO's programming to reflect increasing conflicts as drivers of food insecurity and hunger.

Thirdly, we appreciate the Programme Committee's review of the lessons learned from the application of FAO's Country Programming Framework and we encourage management to strengthen the CPFs as suggested. We agree that FAO should disseminate data on food insecurity at country level in order to enhance its context analysis, monitoring and evaluation of the CPF, and its advocacy work.

We welcome Management's agreement to pilot joint CPFs with WFP and IFAD. We note that IFAD has also committed to this. We request that management updates Members on progress with this during the next joint meeting of the Members of FAO, IFAD and WHO.

In order for FAO to continue making an essential contribution to the achievement of the SDGs, we call upon FAO to play its full part in implementing the reform of the UN development system and to align its activities with the provisions of the relevant UNGA Resolution.

Fourthly, we would like to commend the Programme Committee on agreeing the agenda for their next meeting. This greatly increases the transparency of their work and the ability of members to scrutinize it. We very much look forward to the progress update on FAO's AMR Action Plan and the Programme Committee's review of it.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate the request we made at December's Council session that FAO meets its minimum standards on gender equality this biennium.

I would like to conclude with a comment on the quality of the dialogue between members of the Programme Committee and Management. We welcomed the open and constructive tone of the PC discussion and we look forward to following the deliberations of PC at its next meeting in November.

Mr Hongxing NI (China)

China has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

First and foremost, we would like to thank His Excellency Johannes Hoogeveen for the comprehensive presentation of the report. We would also like to congratulate His Excellency, as the Chair of the Programme Committee, and its Members for the valuable outcomes. The Asia Regional Group supports the recommendations in the report, and would like to make the following comments:

With regard to the Preparation for the Reviewed Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018-21 – Regional Priorities, we welcomed the alignment of FAO's result framework in the MTP 2018-21 to the Sustainable Development Goals.

We also appreciate the report which adequately reflects the regional priorities of Asia and the Pacific such as Blue Growth, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and the Interregional Initiatives on Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) for the Pacific which were discussed at the 34th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific held in Nadi, Fiji, on April 9-13 2018. We support the Programme Committee's recommendation that priority support for climate change should be given to SIDS and LDCs as well as all other countries vulnerable to climate change.

Regarding the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO1), recognizing the cross-cutting nature of SO1, we stress the importance of reinforcing collaboration not only with RBAs but also with non-state actors through partnerships and other arrangements in achieving SO1.

On Synthesis of lessons learnt in application of the Country Programming Framework (CPF), we would like to stress the need for having a monitoring and oversight mechanism as a structural and mandatory component of CPFs. We also emphasize the need to strengthen the coherence of the UN at country level and welcomed the Management's agreement to pilot the development of joint CPFs with other RBAs. We encourage FAO to be more actively engaged in the ongoing UN development reform process.

Finally, on the Follow-up report to the evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, as a region with abundant genetic resources, we highly support the idea of genetic resources as a central element in FAO's programmes on biodiversity. At the same time, we are concerned that progress in the implementation of

recommendation 2 is slow and we are expecting that much more work would be done in the near future.

Mr Mesah TARIGAN (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself with statement of Asia Regional Group delivered by China.

Indonesia would like to complement the statement through some comments below:

First, in relation to paragraph 3(g), particularly regarding Codex standard for food safety and enabling trade, Indonesia is of the view that FAO's work on this issue will be beneficial to Member Countries not only for protecting public health but also for increasing rural livelihood from income generating activities. However, it should be noted that the stipulation of this standard needs to be agreed upon by the countries involved.

Furthermore, harmonization of rules or standards used in international trade is highly considerable to adopt the rules based on the ability of a country, since most food is produced by small-scale farmers with limited resources. Food safety is important to protect public health while also to increase domestic and international trade. Therefore, it is also a necessity to boost FAO role in improving the member countries' abilities to meet Codex standard as a complement to the mentioned FAO guidance.

Second, on paragraph 4(i) regarding the role of healthy diets, Indonesia supports FAO to exploit available but unutilized food resources in order to address the triple burden of malnutrition and to meet the growing needs of food for the world's population. We, therefore, suggest FAO to enhance cooperation in research and development on the local food up to downstream stages.

Last, on paragraph 6(b), utilization of genetic resources should consider the local resources of each country so that the development needs to adjust to each region's conditions. It is also worth noting the protection rules for the genetic resources of each country.

Based on this comment, Indonesia supports the endorsement of the report.

Mr Daiji KAWAGUCHI (Japan)

First of all, Japan would like to thank all the Members of the Programme Committee for their work and preparation of the report.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a brief comment on the evaluation of FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources of food and agriculture.

Japan welcomes a follow-up report to the evaluation of FAO's contribution in this area.

Japan is committed to supporting activities relating to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture ITPGRFA in various ways. For instance, with the largest financial contribution among Member Countries. Japan supports the ITPGRFA secretariat by providing technical expertise, and also through serving as a bureau member representing the Asia Region.

In order to collect positive results from the next session of the ITPGRFA Governing Body, Japan is willing to actively engage in discussions to enhance functions of the multilateral system, which is particularly important for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources.

To this end, Japan calls upon FAO's Secretariat to support the ITPGRFA secretariat to facilitate smooth and productive discussions.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic EU countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic countries welcome the Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee. We would like to highlight a few issues that are closely linked with the PC discussions and report.

As stated earlier, we call upon FAO to participate actively in the implementation of the UN Development System Reform as guided by the UN General Assembly adopted on 31 May 2018. It is

important that FAO aligns its activities with the provisions of the Resolution, including a new role of the Resident Coordinators (RC) and the cost-sharing formula for the Resident Coordinator system, the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and the new generation of UN country teams.

Proper funding of the reformed RC system is crucial, therefore FAO needs to prepare for its full participation of this new funding scheme from the beginning of 2019, as well as pay its current outstanding contributions to the obligations to the existing Regional Coordinator System. The Nordic countries would welcome regular updates by the Secretariat on this issue.

Secondly, on genetic resources, the Nordic countries would also like to highlight the important role of FAO in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources. In meeting the challenge of climate change, genetic resources for food and agriculture including fishery and forestry play an invaluable role. We welcome the activities of FAO on this issue, for instance the multi-stakeholder dialogue on biodiversity mainstreaming, held in Rome, last week.

FAO's work on the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) builds the important knowledge base for normative work especially by country reports. However, more attention needs to be paid to the quality of these reports which is very much a question of adequate resources. FAO budget has to provide a solid base for the funding of CGRFA but also alternative sources of funding need to be exploited.

We would like to stress that apart from conservation, sustainable use of genetic resources deserves more attention. The integrated approach of conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture should become a part of global, regional and national strategies and programmes aimed at fostering sustainable agriculture.

To conclude, after this official part of my intervention, I would like to make a suggestion, if I may, namely, the innovation of having the list of speakers on the screen is very much appreciated by all, in addition to that, it would be a very nice service to have the name of the country, the current speaker, visible on the screen as well.

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

Chile acoge con agrado el Informe del Comité de Programa, sus recomendaciones y observaciones, y desea brevemente relevar el informe de seguimiento de la evaluación de la contribución de la FAO a la conservación y la utilización sostenible de los recursos genéticos para la alimentación y la agricultura, en especial:

Lo expresado en el numeral 6c) respecto a la preocupación expresada por el Comité por la lentitud en los progresos en la aplicación de la recomendación 2, relativa al fomento de la capacidad de las oficinas descentralizadas en apoyar la labor sobre recursos genéticos de los países.

Y lo señalado en la letra D, sobre la falta de Recursos Adicionales para la labor de la Organización en la esfera de los recursos genéticos.

Quisiéramos hacer notar que ambas deficiencias afectan especialmente a los países en desarrollo, y ayudan a mantener y aumentar la brecha de capacidades y conocimientos entre los países desarrollados y en desarrollo en esta materia, de gran importancia para la conservación de la biodiversidad, la adaptación al cambio climático, la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, y la superación de la pobreza.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Brazil also welcomes the report of the Programme Committee and appreciates the positive results reached by the Members of the Committee at the last session. We fully support the regional priorities identified in the document and appreciate in particular the identification of Strategic Objective 1 on eradication of hunger and malnutrition as the core role to the mandate of the Organization.

Brazil believes that FAO has a key role to play in disseminating the guidelines and recommendations from the Committee on World Food Security, such as the CFS Global Strategic Framework, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), and RAI principles in the Framework for Action on Protracted Crises at the country level.

These recommendations were developed by a range of stakeholders and are important tools to the work of FAO in ensuring food and nutrition security and promoting progressive realization of the rights to adequate food. In this regard, I would like to eventually, when we come to the conclusions, propose the addition of a bullet on the item of evaluation of FAO's contributions to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, and nutrition.

Concerning FAO's contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture, I would like to underscore the need for additional resources for the work of FAO in this area, taking into account new responsibilities FAO is assuming as a platform for mainstreaming biodiversity in the agricultural sectors.

I would also like to suggest that larger and more predictable resources are allocated to support the participation of experts from developing countries in meetings on genetic resources.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

We would like to thank all the Members of the Council who have commented the Report of the Programme Committee, and also I thank their positive tone about the results of the Committee and underscoring some of the important conclusions of the Committee.

When I address the remarks of the Near East Group, my dear friend from Afghanistan, Mr Abdul Razak Ayazi, I would like to highlight the importance which we also attach in our discussions to the Results Framework, but especially linking not only SO 1, but the strategic objectives to the SDGs because I think that is crucial not only for our work here in Rome but especially of "lifting" the image and the work of FAO in the broader United Nations System.

I would like to thank Mr Ayazi for highlighting the role of non-state actors in implementing many of the policies of FAO, and, of course, also coming to appropriate approaches in a concrete manner. I have to assure him that we do not only address the positive remarks in evaluation but we also certainly address, as the Members of the Programme Committee, the critical remarks made not only in the evaluation but also, for example, when we spoke about genetic resources. We took quite some time in the Committee to address them, to ask questions to the Management, but also to see how we can improve the work of FAO based on those critical remarks.

I would like to thank Algeria on behalf of the African Regional Group for stressing the importance of the regional initiatives. We also saw yesterday how important they are and how many results we can achieve, if we work together on a regional basis, and especially for specifying not only the important role of youth but also addressing the issue of youth and how to tackle youth employment. I think that is one of the most crucial issues when we look at our food production not in five years but in 2030 and 2050. We have to address it in a much more concrete manner.

When it comes to the Country Programming Framework (CPF), I would like to thank him also for underlining the importance of the collection of data and information at country level. That is not only the basis for the Country Framework but I think it could also be the basis for much more advocacy work of the CPF, not only to the work of the involved partners but also looking to funding partners.

I would like to thank the EU for making a clear reference to the SO indicators and the SDGs. I think that increased transparency about the criteria is needed when it comes to the Green Climate Fund, as when we look to sustainable agriculture and food systems, we have to work together and join efforts in trying to access and help countries to access the Green Climate Fund, especially developing countries. There is a lot of work to be done in that respect in order for countries to access both the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF).

Additionally, I think that we learnt on the CPF that we need a very good oversight mechanism, and I think it is indeed what also the Programme Committee said, that it should be mandatory because it can help countries and funders to work with countries on projects and programmes.

I would like to thank China on behalf of the Asia Regional Group for highlighting some specific issues. I think the discussions which we had on GIAHS and on Blue Growth were not only very important but also showed more light about several issues, like the importance, for example with regards to Blue Growth, of the Blue Growth Network; the relationship with the SIDS, but also other

developed countries, and, of course, the GIAHS which are crucial in raising attention to all forms of agriculture.

When it comes to the genetic resources, I am glad that many of the interventions were related to this topic because we often forget it as part of our discussions. In the Programme Committee, we often forget that everything starts, our whole food system and our food starts with the availability of genetic resources. We surely addressed the critical remarks about not enough progress made in a certain area. I think the Management, especially Maria Helena Semedo, promised us to step up those efforts. But we have to work collectively, especially on the funding issue.

We should not only look to governments. But I know, and I referred to it in my opening statement, that the private sector is willing to do more. We need to find a solution for the multilateral system. I think in the next coming month we are going to work on that within the framework of the Treaty and see how we can arrive at a consensus because what I know and learned from my meetings with the private sector, they are willing to contribute more to the work of genetic resources.

Japan also referred to that work and the importance of it. I would like to thank Japan for its active role related to the Treaty and the genetic resources. We certainly need all the expertise and resources we can have.

Both yesterday and today many interventions were related to the role of FAO within the implementation of the Reform of the United Nations Development System (UNDS). I would like to highlight that it should not only implement it but I think for the feasibility not only of the FAO Organization itself but also for our work on food security and for meeting the SDG challenges, it is crucial that FAO could take the lead in the implementation and could show a way forward on how we can implement it certainly not in New York but at regional and country level. Certainly, with the new Resident Coordinator, the experience and expertise FAO has, I think that FAO can play that crucial and perhaps supporting role at the country level.

If I am not mistaken, Chile also highlighted not only the necessity of funding but I think the importance for the developing countries. Brazil said it as well. I think we have to do something about it also as Members of FAO because it is crucial that many genetic resources are coming from developing countries. When we speak about benefit sharing, we have to make sure that we have the experts of those countries in the meetings here in Rome or wherever there are meetings on the genetic resources because we need their input to make the system work and to get the system working.

To Brazil, I fully support what has been said, the important role of FAO in implementing decisions and guidelines of the CFS because only, if we can get its implementation on the ground, we can show results and then can also show the added value of CFS.

With that, I would like to conclude my answers to the remarks of the distinguished Members of the Council.

Lastly, I would like to thank again the teamwork effort of the members of the Programme Committee. With the team spirit, we could arrive at this positive and also sometimes critical conclusion.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

Thank you for the comments received and thank you, Chair, for your words about myself and Dan. I think we try to do the maximum we can to have a positive debate. Your reply already headed some of the questions regarding the genetic resources but what I can say is that we have been working at the country level, helping the countries to have national strategies and national action plans, how they will integrate and how they will better manage their genetic resources.

So far, one of the findings has been through TCPs. If they consider a priority, it is included in the Country Programming Framework and will be able to move and to mobilize additional resources.

Unfortunately, those are the funds you have been using so far but we hope we will be able to mobilize and to accommodate more resources. But what we have been discussing today, the amount of priorities has been increasing. The competition is high for resources and the resources are not increasing and this is a difficult equation.

All of us, we have in front of us to solve. But just to assure you while that is a priority for FAO, we support the countries when it is a priority for them also, but we need additional resources to work on the integration and the national plans and strategies regarding genetic resources.

In replying to the question from the European Union about being more transparent on the use of resources for the Green Climate Fund, I can say that we started just right after FAO has been accredited by the Green Climate Fund. At that period, it was more demand driven in the sense that the countries and the regions where FAO was able to contribute to the formulation of the projects and where we received a demand coming from the countries.

It was difficult to start immediately and, one must confess, we did not have money at that period. I think now we have more visible resources. We defined already a strategy, a priority where we will be having more transparency. Also sometimes when a given country accommodates resources, like Mexico that accommodated USD 10 million to FAO to work in the Caribbean, the Caribbean will be one of our priorities as well as SIDS were already one of the priorities, but when a country accommodates, this will be also our priority and we hope other countries will be doing the same in a way that we can accommodate all of the demands we have and maybe we do not need to have a competition for resources to the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility.

Surely, the priorities are the countries in food deficit and the countries facing the effects of climate change, the most vulnerable ones. The vulnerability is one of the priorities we need to respond when formulating the projects but it has to be also a priority for the country to work with FAO because some countries, they prefer to work with other United Nations agencies.

But we will share with you a strategy. We are working on to see how and what are FAO's guidance and priorities in using those funds.

I think there were also some questions or comments regarding the UNDS Reform. As the Director-General said yesterday, we took it very seriously. FAO is fully engaged in the implementation of the Reform and for sure, the resources to be allocated for the UN Country Team will be taken into consideration for FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that is the end of our discussion on this item. So we wait for the summary to be on the screen.

I shall now read out the conclusions on item 6, *Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee* which was held between 21 and 25 May 2018:

The Council endorsed the Report of the 124th Session of the Programme Committee and in particular:

- a) noted with appreciation the priorities identified by the Regional Conferences for preparation of the Reviewed Medium Term Plan 2018-21 as well as the integration of the SDGs in the Results Framework and the focus on the regional initiatives;
- b) the evaluation of FAO's contribution to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, Strategic Objective 1;
- c) partnerships with UN organizations, including non-state actors and South-South and Triangular cooperation;
- d) FAO's work on conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources for food and agriculture;
- e) the importance of mandatory monitoring and oversight mechanisms for Country Programming Frameworks.

That is the end of the summary and I open the floor for comments.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

As I had announced, we would like to introduce language that would address the role FAO plays in implementing CFS guidelines. It could be inserted after point (b) perhaps. Maybe we could start with: *“recognized the key role FAO plays in strengthening the dissemination and promoting the use and*

application of CFS policy products, such as the GSF, the VGGTs, the RAI principles, and the FFA at the country level”.

Maybe we need to spell that out but the Drafting Committee will take care of that.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

We propose to add two more subparagraphs at the end:

f) *“welcome management’s agreement to pilot joint CPFs with WFP and IFAD and request a progress update for the next Joint Meeting of the Members of FAO, IFAD, and WFP”;*

g) *“underline the importance of the progress update on FAO’s AMR Action Plan to be prepared for November’s Programme Committee’s meeting”.*

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

We would like to add a point concerning the UNDS Reform, something along the lines of point (h): *“called upon FAO to participate actively in the implementation of the UN Development System Reform as guided by the UN General Assembly”.*

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Regarding point (h), FAO is already doing it so what is the use of putting it?

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

FAO is certainly doing it but the adjective *“actively”* is the key.

CHAIRPERSON

I will leave it to the Drafting Committee. I think we are late now and I am not going to argue on one word.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

I also take issue with this proposal. It would seem that the discussion is still going on and we have a resolution that has been adopted, so perhaps it should address FAO’s effective implementation of the UN Development System Reform.

So perhaps instead of *“participate actively”* it should be to *“effectively implement”*.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I would like just to say that we fully support Brazil’s proposal.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

On point (e), Management can correct me, I think that country CPFs are country owned, they are implemented by countries. FAO supports them. The mandatory monitoring is the function of the government. I do not know whether you can say that or impose mandatory monitoring, or say through the field visit? It can create problems in the Drafting Committee.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Officer-in-charge, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

This particular issue indeed was also discussed during the Programme Committee where I gave some examples. For example, I was in the FAO representation in Sri Lanka and the Government had asked not to have separate oversight mechanisms with each agency, but joint mechanisms.

We believe that we can perhaps take on board the spirit of this recommendation. Maybe we can look a little bit at the wording to provide some more clear guidance to the country levels of the importance of this type of monitoring and oversight mechanism although it may take different forms in different countries.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

Concerning point (h), we are very close but I just wanted to repeat whatever I said in the first place: *“Called upon FAO to participate actively in the implementation of the UN Development System Reform as guided by the UN General Assembly”.*

CHAIRPERSON

I do not have any other requests for the floor. The summary is adopted.

Item 7. Reports of the 170th (21-25 May 2018) and 171stst (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier

Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas

(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)

Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears

Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés

Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos

(CL 159/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now move to item 7 but we will not be able to deal with the entire item so we will have the presentation by the Chair of the Finance Committee and some additional comments by the Legal Counsel and then we will adjourn and we will continue the discussion tomorrow morning.

The next meeting of the Friends of the Chair on the issue of Mandatory Age of Separation, will take place during the lunch break tomorrow from 13.00 to 14.00 hours.

Now we take up agenda item 7, *Reports of the 170th and 171st Sessions of the Finance Committee*, which took place from 21 to 25 May and from 29 to 31 May 2018 respectively. This item has one sub item, namely 7.1 “*Status of Contributions and Arrears*”. The documents before Council are CL 159/4; CL 159/7 and CL 159/LIM/2. Document CL 159/LIM/2 sets out the Status of Assessments and Arrears as at 28 May 2018.

Member Nations currently owe to FAO USD 148.45 million and EUR 113.06 million for 2018 and prior years, which complicates FAO’s liquidity management.

As of 28 May 2018, 54 percent of the 2018 assessed contributions still needed to be settled. 65 Member Nations still had arrears outstanding from 2018 and previous years and 26 owed arrears in such amounts as would prejudice their right to vote at the next Session of the Conference, in accordance with Article III paragraph 4 of the Constitution.

Before I give the floor to Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, to introduce the item, I wish to recall that discussion on the Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation will be dealt with under item 15 on Wednesday.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am pleased to present the Reports of the 170th and 171st Sessions of the Finance Committee. These Reports are submitted to the Council in documents that were earlier mentioned by the Chair, which I will not repeat. I know it is early evening but please bear with me as my presentation will be a little comprehensive considering we had a packed agenda during this session, which covered a number of interesting topics.

To start with, the 171st Session was convened to deal with WFP matters and results have been submitted to the WFP Executive Board for its consideration. At this session, the Committee reviewed a proposed amendment to the FAO Staff Regulations allowing implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for WFP staff members. This amendment is annexed to CL 159/7 and is submitted to the Council for its approval.

As agreed with the Independent Chairperson of the Council, I shall now proceed to present the salient highlights of the report of the 170th Session of the Finance Committee except for those matters referring to the Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on Mandatory Age of Separation (MAS) for staff members; what I mentioned earlier is those applicable to WFP staff

members only, but as you know the Mandatory Age of Separation for FAO staff members is still under discussion.

The Finance Committee work for FAO matters may be characterized in 5 general themes of work, first of which is financial position. In reviewing the financial position of the Organization, the Committee noted that the Organization's liquidity was expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs through the end of 2018. Recognizing that the Organization's ongoing cash flow health was dependent on the timely payment of assessed contributions; the Committee urged all Member Nations to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions. The Committee welcomed the continued steady increase in the TCP monthly expenditure rate and encouraged the Secretariat to maintain this trend and ensure full implementation of the TCP appropriation.

The Committee noted that the total return on the short-term portfolio for 2017 of 1.00 percent reflected FAO's low risk investment approach and the continuing low interest rate environment and appreciated the positive result of the long-term investment portfolio with an overall return of 19.56 percent, while noting that this was lower than the benchmark by 1.08 percent.

In reviewing the Actuarial Valuation of Staff Related Liabilities, the Committee noted that the increase in total Staff Related Liabilities as at 31 December 2017 was due mainly to changes in the actuarial assumptions used and requested the Secretariat to consider decreasing the frequency of performance of actuarial valuations in consultation with the External Auditor in the event that fluctuations in the underlying assumptions are minimal. Acknowledging that the underfunding of After Service Medical Coverage liabilities was an issue facing all United Nations System Organizations, the Committee requested the Secretariat to continue its participation in the UN Working Group in order to find a uniform solution to this area.

The second work area is on budgetary matters. The Committee reviewed the Annual Report on Budgetary Performance and Programme and Budgetary Transfers in the 2016-17 biennium and took note of the unspent balance of USD 3.9 million, recalling that it would be allocated in 2018-19 to replenish the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA).

The Committee approved the final budgetary transfers for 2016-17 detailed in Annex I of CL 159/4. In approving the budgetary transfers for 2016-17, the Committee recalled the need for sustainable funding solutions for high priority areas of work of the Organization, including scientific advice for food safety and standard setting such as Codex Alimentarius and recommended its consideration for future budgetary transfers.

On the third area of work which is human resources, the Committee examined an update on progress on Human Resources Management and recognized that more information and statistics had been provided in the document compared to the previous session. The Committee requested that future reports provide additional information on other areas of Human Resources Management at FAO, broken down by funding source as appropriate, and encouraged progress in vacancy rates, geographic representation and gender balance, requesting further analysis and breakdown of these statistics at the next sessions of the Finance Committee. The Committee further encouraged the Secretariat to increase efficiency of human resources, processes and procedures and reiterated its previous requests to the Secretariat to provide comprehensive statistical data in response to specific requests by Members, consistent with the practices at other RBAs.

The Committee commended the Secretariat on its efforts to promote multilingualism at the level of headquarters and decentralized offices.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of having geographic balance of consultants, as with the professional staff in PWB positions and requested the Secretariat for more detailed data in this regard. The Committee emphasized the importance of adopting a flexible approach, considering the needs of different working conditions, to avoid disruption of projects and programmes, in particular in decentralized offices and requested the Secretariat to present a progress report to the autumn 2018 session of the Committee on ongoing efforts to better improve the geographic distribution of consultants.

On the fourth area, which is oversight, the Committee reviewed the FAO Audit Committee – 2017 Annual Report to the Director-General. The Committee acknowledged the important role of the FAO Audit Committee in providing independent assurance and advice, and appreciated the FAO Audit Committee's advice in relation to strengthening the internal control framework at both headquarters and decentralized offices, risk management, governance, and fraud and corrupt practices. The Committee looked forward to a comprehensive progress report from Management on the implementation of the FAO Audit Committee's recommendations at the Finance Committee's session in autumn 2018.

The Committee reviewed the revised update of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference, including further amendments introduced following discussion of this item at its formal and informal sessions and Management's comments thereon. The Committee concurred with the updated text of the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee (Annex II of CL159/4) and agreed to submit the updated Terms of Reference to the Council for its endorsement.

The Committee reviewed the 2017 Annual Report of the Inspector General and appreciated the quality of the report and the analysis of issues presented. The Committee welcomed and encouraged the good cooperation and convergence of views on internal control issues, between the Office of the Inspector General and Management, and reiterated the importance of continued attention by Management to strengthening internal control, in particular in high-risk areas and decentralized offices. The Committee expressed concern regarding the OIG (Office of the Inspector General) findings of under-reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and requested action from the Secretariat on those findings. The Committee noted with concern the staff vacancies in the OIG and encouraged its ongoing recruitment efforts. The Committee appreciated the progress made in successfully closing a large number of recommendations and urged the Secretariat to continue its ongoing efforts.

The Committee reviewed and noted the arrangements for the selection and appointment of the External Auditor for the six-year period 2020-2025 and requested that the Secretariat initiate the selection process by inviting proposals from eligible Auditors-General of Members of FAO and present a progress report to its next regular session.

On the fifth work area, other matters, the Committee reviewed the mechanism for setting the level of representation allowances for Deputy Directors-General and Assistant Directors-General, and recommended that the current mechanism of automatic adjustment of the level of the representation allowance be discontinued. The Committee requested the Secretariat to submit to the March 2019 Session of the Committee a proposal on future levels and conditions for the allowance.

The Committee noted the information provided on the Commissary closure process-related activities and encouraged the Secretariat to explore available business model options and inform the Committee at a future session. The Committee took note of the proposals on the use of the former Commissary reserves and support to staff welfare.

The Committee endorsed the proposal to establish a new multi-donor Trust Fund to support the functioning of the Committee for the Scientific Advice for Codex Alimentarius and encouraged contributions from member countries and non-state actors that would be pooled into the MUL Trust Fund. The Committee emphasized the importance of safeguarding the independence and impartiality of the Scientific Advice Programme from real and perceived risks of undue influence, which could be linked to the receipt of funds from the private sector. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat's continued engagement with WHO in implementing sustainable funding solutions for work relating to food scientific advice for Codex Alimentarius.

In conclusion, the sessions of the Committee were very productive and at times so intense that we had to calm down members. I would like to extend my utmost thanks to the Members of the Finance Committee and, on their behalf, extend our appreciation to Management and the Secretariat for their responses and assistance in our deliberations, and also our gratitude to the Member Nations of FAO for providing us with this opportunity to be of service in addressing a number of important issues facing the Organization. I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our reports.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I wanted to provide some additional elements of information to the presentation by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee regarding the proposed amendment to the Staff Regulations of FAO which is before the Council now.

The implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for staff recruited before 1 January 2014 implies an amendment to the FAO Staff Regulations and it is the Council which has the authority to approve amendments to the Staff Regulations. This is why a proposed amendment is before the Council.

The proposed amendment to the Staff Regulations is set out in the Report of the Finance Committee concerning WFP matters and it concerns only WFP staff. WFP staff are managed in accordance with FAO Staff Regulations and Rules under the General Regulations of the World Food Programme and there is, therefore, a need also for the provision on mandatory age of separation in the FAO Staff Regulations to be amended.

WFP made the request to FAO and we prepared an amendment to the Staff Regulations dealing only with the issue of the Mandatory Age of Separation for WFP staff. And in doing so, we built upon a precedent that existed already and took place in this same room and we would have a specific provision for WFP staff.

At this point, we propose that the Council should proceed with the approval of this amendment.

Later in the week, if and when your efforts are successful, we may end up with a specific and a common Staff Regulation for both WFP and FAO, as it is normally the case and with a specific provision on the entering into force of the provision of the Revised Staff Regulations as far as FAO is concerned.

So I would invite the Council to proceed with the approval of this specific amendment to the FAO Staff Regulations, which concerns only WFP staff. Perhaps later in the week the amendment of this text will evolve and become a common text for both WFP and FAO. But certainly we are not yet there so in the meanwhile, I would invite you to proceed with the approval of this amendment that was prepared by us here in FAO in consultation with WFP and in particular in consultation with my counterpart of WFP.

CHAIRPERSON

We will take up this item tomorrow morning.

I would like to remind you that the meeting of the Friends of the Chair will take place tomorrow at 13.00 hours.

I will give the floor to the Secretary-General for some announcements.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind delegates of the Signature Ceremony with the Heads of the three Rome-based Agencies which will take place tomorrow, Wednesday 6 June, from 09.15 to 09.45 hours. The plenary session of Council will commence thereafter.

CHAIRPERSON

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 18.10 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 10

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.10

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**FIFTH PLENARY SESSION
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

6 June 2018

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.50 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 50
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 9.50
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

- Item 7. Reports of the 170th (21-25 May 2018) and 171st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)**
- Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)**
- Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)**
(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)

- Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears**
Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés
Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos
 (CL 159/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, as the signing ceremony is over, I now call the Fifth Plenary Meeting of the 159th Session of the Council to order.

As you will recall, we had commenced item 7 last evening, so we continue with this item. The presentations by the Chair of the Finance Committee were made yesterday, and today I open the floor to the speakers. So the floor is open to the Members for any comments you have on item 7, which is *Reports of the 170th and 171st Sessions of the Finance Committee*.

Mr Agung HENDRIADI (Indonesia)

Indonesia has the honour to deliver the joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

First of all, we will count the conclusion and advice from the report of the Finance Committee. However, we have some comments and suggestions.

Regarding the Organization's financial position, we note that the sufficiency of liquidity to cover the operational needs is based on the timely payment of assessed contributions. Also, we note the decrease in the General Fund deficit from USD 922.2 million to USD 893.1 million due to the favourable return of the long-term investment. That is why we request the Secretariat to continue participation in the UN Working Group in order to find a unified solution on this issue.

We note also with appreciation that there are improvements in the vacancy rate, geographic and gender balance in human resources management. We welcome the new policy in recruitment of consultants. We encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts to achieve equitable geographic representation and gender balance in the Organization, including through flexible approaches, considering the different practical needs from headquarters and decentralized offices.

We also support the revision of the Terms of Reference of FAO Audit Committee. We request the Secretariat to pay due attention to the conclusions as well as to take timely actions on the implementation of the recommendations from the 2017 reports of the Inspector General and FAO Audit Committee.

Finally, we look forward to further improvements.

With these comments, the Asia Regional Group endorses the reports of Finance Committee.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The EU and its Member States welcome the Report of the 170th Session of the Finance Committee. We endorse its findings and recommendations made in the report.

We would like to highlight the following points of particular importance:

We congratulate the FC on the submission of the updated Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the Audit Committee and commend the FC for the ample effort undertaken to finalize these ToRs in closed sessions of the FC. We fully endorse the updated ToRs.

On Human Resources Management, we regret the lack of quality of the documents and the insufficient answers that were provided by the Secretariat during the meeting. We strongly underline the need for more adequate information and data transparency, so that the Finance Committee can fulfill its oversight function and avoid uncertainty regarding legitimate information needs. We therefore fully endorse in particular the Committee's reiterated requests for the provision of comprehensive and relevant information and urge the ICC to highlight this in the report of this item.

On the geographical balance of consultants, we regret the last-minute introduction of the issue at the December session of the FAO Council. The topic was not on the agenda and the background documents were made available only 2 and 3 days respectively before the Council meeting. This led to an uninformed debate in the Council and created misunderstandings and even dispute among Members, thus undermining the Council's conclusions on this issue. Trust should characterize relations between the Secretariat and Members, also in the key area of human resources.

Secondly, we wish to underline that we have still not received unambiguous information on the number of consultants affected, the breakdown by funding sources, the pool of consultants to which geographic distribution would apply and the cost implications of adopting new rules. Moreover, the insufficient, sometimes contradictory and inconsistent data presented by management is inadequate to take any informed decision.

These considerations would caution against introducing new burdensome frameworks.

We therefore disagree with the introduction of a rigid selection processes involving quotas and percentages envisaged by FAO management in paragraphs 29 to 44 of the background document, before the Membership is fully informed on all of its implications, including financial consequences. To maintain sufficient extra-budgetary resources, a transparent framework is needed, with merit as the primary selection criterion. We expect that our concerns be adequately reflected in the conclusions.

We particularly welcome the Annual Reports of the Inspector General and the Audit Committee and the Finance Committee's emphasis put on the importance of continued attention by the management to strengthen internal control, in particular in high risk areas and Decentralized Offices.

Furthermore, we share the Committee's concern regarding the OIG findings of underreporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and support the FC's request for actions from the Secretariat on those findings.

We welcome the Committee's endorsement of the proposal to establish a new Multi-donor Trust Fund to support the functioning of the FAO's programme for scientific advice for food safety.

However, we believe that a long-term sustainable funding solution for scientific advice for food safety and FAO's standard setting activities shall be found within the regular budget. In this regard, we endorse the Committee's recommendation to consider the aforementioned areas of work for future budget transfers.

Last but not least, we would like to request the Finance Committee to consider the Results Framework 2018-19 for functional objectives at its autumn session.

Sr. Mateo Nsogo NGUERE MICUE (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial hace esta intervención conjuntamente con Kenia, en nombre de los países del Grupo Africano, los cuales felicitan exclusivamente al Señor Lupiño Lázaro, Presidente del Comité de Finanzas, por su brillante presentación del Informe que nos hizo ayer tarde, al propio tiempo que le congratulamos por su liderazgo, capacidad de aguante y mediación para intentar lograr el consenso de los Miembros del Comité de Finanzas sobre los temas importantes de la Organización. Extendemos así mismo nuestras felicitaciones a los Miembros del Comité de Finanzas por el interés y la participación activa en los debates y las deliberaciones de los asuntos relacionadas con la buena marcha de la Organización.

Estamos satisfechos porque se ha seguido manteniendo la asignación presupuestaria correspondiente al capítulo de los Programas de Cooperación Técnica, TCP. Apreciamos la reducción del déficit de la Organización, conocidos en los últimos años, gracias al rendimiento favorable de las inversiones a largo plazo. Invitamos a los Países Miembros a pagar sus contribuciones obligatorias anuales a tiempo

para lograr que la FAO pueda cumplir con su Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto del actual ejercicio económico y evitar los atrasos.

El Grupo Africano lamenta que los Miembros del Comité de Finanzas no pudieron llegar a un consenso sobre la fecha de la entrada en vigor de la Resolución de Naciones Unidas relacionado con el aumento de la edad de jubilación de 62 a 65 años al personal de la FAO contratado antes del primero de enero de 2014, tema controversial que el Comité de Finanzas ha tenido que remitir de nuevo a la atención de este Consejo para encontrar una salida complaciente para todos los Miembros.

Exhortamos la flexibilidad de los Miembros y el Consejo para llegar a un acuerdo que satisfaga las necesidades relacionadas con la buena marcha de la Organización, ya que la dirección de la FAO plantea el aplazamiento de la aplicación de dicha Resolución de las Naciones Unidas, lo que les permitirá conseguir unos ahorros al igual que el rejuvenecimiento de la capacidad técnica de la Organización, la representación geográfica, así como la igualdad de género. Estas razones son las que nos han motivado para respaldar la propuesta que planteó la dirección con respecto a la aplicación de la referida Resolución de Naciones Unidas, porque nuestro interés es velar por la buena marcha de nuestra Organización, agenda que puede satisfacer las necesidades de los Estados Miembros. Para ello, debemos trabajar y apoyar a la administración para que la FAO sea una institución sólida y competitiva. Por lo tanto, esperamos que cuando el Consejo llegue a este punto para lograr el mayor consenso posible y mutuo entendimiento de los Miembros, que satisfaga las necesidades de la Organización y evitar las posibles consecuencias políticas que puedan perjudicar negativamente a la institución.

Hay otra cuestión que quiero plantear a la Administración. En la presentación de las cuentas de la FAO, en el apartado que contempla el fondo fiduciario de solidaridad africana, pedimos una información acerca de la cantidad que apareció, o sea según la información que maneja nuestro Gobierno, es que somos Miembros del Comité del Director, del comité, o sea, del fondo fiduciario. En ese apartado apareció 111 millones de dólares, mientras que nos consta que en el fondo fiduciario solo ha habido dos aportaciones, es decir, por parte del Gobierno de Guinea Ecuatorial 30 millones y Angola 10, en total 40 millones. Nos gustaría que la Secretaría nos explique el origen de esos fondos, o si son reales o cómo se ha comportaron esa financiación.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia would like to thank the Chairperson of the Finance Committee for leading quite a difficult committee and keeping everyone as calm as possible, so thank you very much for that.

We would also like to highlight the issue of sustainable funding for the Scientific Advice Programme that underpins the food safety standard work of Codex.

We were pleased that the Finance Committee recalled the need for sustainable funding solutions for high priority areas of work of FAO, including scientific advice for food safety and standard setting such as Codex, and recommended its consideration for future budgetary transfers.

We also welcome the establishment of the Multi-donor Trust Fund for the Scientific Advice Programme. But we also express a note of caution about thinking the funding issues for the Scientific Advice Programme are solved. They are not. We still do not know if WHO will support the contribution of non-state actors to the Multi-donor Trust Fund. And even if WHO does support this, we do not know if non-state actors will contribute to the Fund as it is currently constructed.

We encourage FAO to continue talking to WHO about the fund, and also to industry about whether the fund is currently constructed in a way that would attract their contributions.

Australia strongly supports the standard-setting work of FAO – both food safety and plant health. As I said yesterday, we believe that this work represents FAO's strongest comparative advantage and that it is the foundation upon which all of FAO's other work is built. Without plant health and food safety, there is no food security for anyone.

This is why we support all efforts to provide more sustainable funding for both the scientific advice programme for food safety and the International Plant Protection Convention. But we consider that,

ultimately, the sustainable funding solution should come from the Regular Programme in recognition of the essential role this work plays in all of FAO's activities.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Nordic EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

We would like to thank the Chair of the Finance Committee and its members for a comprehensive report yesterday. We have some comments on FAO's human resources management and on resources for normative work.

The Nordic countries continue to have some concerns regarding human resources management of FAO. Since attracting and retaining highly skilled staff is essential to develop and strengthen a technical knowledge organization, we consider this to be an issue of importance to the whole Membership.

We would welcome an increased level of transparency, a modernized management with a higher degree of delegation, and a maintained and strong focus on competence-based recruitment to improve the human resources situation of the Organization.

We are happy to note that progress has been made in terms of gender equality at the organization-wide level. However, among the senior management gender balance still needs to be improved considerably. Hence, we see room for improvement regarding the gender dimension at all levels of FAO.

The Nordic countries endorse the establishment of the Multi-donor Trust Fund as a solution to support FAO's important work of the Food Safety Scientific Advice for Codex Alimentarius. Independence and impartiality of scientific work must not be risked while new partnerships are being established in order to secure adequate resources for this work.

In this context, we would like to highlight the importance of securing resources for FAO's standard-setting and normative work on a long-term sustainable base. Strengthening the capacity of international standard-setting bodies such as Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is an essential added value of FAO. All countries benefit from the standards used in protecting consumers, developing rural industries and in global trade, to be defined at a neutral, science-based forum.

Mr Pierfrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement made by Bulgaria on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

On the specific issue of the geographical balance of consultants, we would like to make a couple of additional points.

Firstly, we would like to highlight that the way the Council has discussed and decided upon the issue constitutes, in our view, a breach of the Methods of Work of the Council. The note on such methods presented for the current session of the Council is clear: the provisional agenda should indicate whether an item is submitted to Council for decision, discussion or information and documents should be dispatched at least four weeks before the opening of the session in question.

Management's handling of the issue at the Council Session in December 2017 is not in line with these rules: in particular, no indication was previously given on whether the December Council was seized upon to decide on the issue. Nonetheless, the conclusions of the 158th Session of the Council on the matter turned out to be of an operational nature, including verbs such as "*encouraged*" and "*requested*" and thus indicating that the Council had actually decided on the issue. Precisely what, in our view, it did not have the authority to do.

Secondly, FC 170/7 document FC 170/7 neglects a delicate part of that very Council decision, which refers to the need to take into account the points raised at that Council session in drafting a comprehensive document for the geographical balance of consultants. The verbatim records of the 158th Session of the FAO Council indicate that a number of issues were raised, including on the

potential cost implications of adopting new measures. Document FC 170/7 makes no mention of such issues.

As stated by Bulgaria on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States, we thus completely disagree with the proposal to introduce any quotas or percentages in the shortlists, rosters or actual hiring of consultants, as envisaged in paragraphs 29 to 44 of document FC 170/7. The ability of FAO to benefit from the widest and most geographically diverse technical capacity is not questioned. On the contrary, we favour efforts to reach out to as many applicants as possible as well as to develop a dynamic roster policy that is able to transparently take full advantage of the diversity of each region's expertise.

However, setting up rigid quotas would have no precedent in the UN system and is out of touch with the reality of FAO which, according to the documentation provided by management, is that of an Organization which fares considerably better than the large majority of other UN Agencies on geographic distribution of consultants.

Mr Daiji KAWAGUCHI (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group comments delivered by Indonesia. In addition, Japan would like to make the following three comments:

Firstly, Japan urges all the member countries to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions. Japan has been doing so, despite its strained financial situation, to show its strong support for FAO's work, and Japan encourages other member countries to follow suit.

Secondly, with regard to human resources management, Japan welcomes the report on the recent achievements. However, Japan expects the FAO Secretariat to provide sufficient statistical data in future reports, especially updated information on geographical representation of staff as promptly as possible. Japan hopes that FAO continues to place high value on ensuring technical competency of the staff in its recruitment process, while also taking account of equitable geographical representation.

The third and the last comment is about the unspent balance for 2016-17 biennium. The final budgetary out-turn for that period resulted in unspent balance of USD 3.9 million, which is less than we originally expected. It is disappointing that the unspent balance will be entirely transferred to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA), and no support will be allocated to FAO's work relating to scientific advice for food safety.

Given that, Japan requests the Secretariat to calculate the unspent balance of the MAFAP/FMM trust fund as soon as possible, and, if the balance does exist, take necessary procedures so that it can be allocated to support the Food Safety Scientific Advice for Codex Alimentarius.

Japan also requests the Secretariat to report, as soon as possible, the expenditure planning of the USD 3.9 million for SFDFA.

With regard to the Multi-donor Trust Fund for supporting the function of the Committee for Scientific Advice, it is crucially important as stressed in the report of the Finance Committee, to safeguard the independence and impartiality of the Scientific Advice Programme from real and perceived risks of undue influence, which could be linked to the receipt of funds from the private sector.

Japan understands that the Blind Trust Fund, which was agreed in the Council at its 158th Session, is virtually identical to the Multi-donor Trust Fund, which was agreed in the Finance Committee at its 170th Session. In case these two trust funds are not the same, we would appreciate the secretariat to identify the relationship between those two trust funds.

Meanwhile, Japan hopes that the predetermined four-year period of Multi-donor Trust Fund will be extended if the sustainable funding solution is not found within a four-year period and the trust fund is proven beneficial.

Japan supports the report of the 170th Session of the Finance Committee which encourages the secretariat, together with WHO, on identifying and implementing sustainable funding solutions for work and activities relating to Food Safety Scientific Advice for Codex Alimentarius.

Sra. Marta BARCENA COQUI (México)

Agradecemos al Presidente del Comité de Finanzas su gran labor y paciencia al frente del mismo. Apoyamos el Informe del 170.º periodo de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas. Durante esa sesión el Comité debatió varios temas de importancia para los trabajos de la FAO, por lo que solo resaltaré algunos elementos importantes para mi delegación.

Tomamos nota con agrado del incremento continuo y regular de la tasa de gasto mensual del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (TCP), hasta alcanzar un nivel de 5.8 millones de dólares a fines del 2017, tal como lo pedimos en la Conferencia del año pasado. Esperamos que esta tendencia creciente se mantenga.

Asimismo, tomamos nota que los saldos no utilizados del bienio anterior, al ubicarse en 3.9 millones de dólares, serán transferidos totalmente al Fondo Especial para Actividades de Financiación del Desarrollo, con objeto de apoyar la presentación de proyectos ante el Fondo Verde Climático. México se sumará financieramente a este esfuerzo.

La situación financiera de la Organización, en términos generales, es sólida. Pero es de llamar la atención el incremento total del pasivo relacionado con el personal, que se incrementó en 208.2 millones de dólares, hasta alcanzar 1,527.4 millones de dólares.

Pedimos que la FAO continúe participando en el Grupo de Trabajo de las Naciones Unidas, con objeto de hallar una solución al nivel del sistema para la cuestión del pasivo del seguro médico después del retiro.

Quisiera también informar que el Gobierno de México ha procedido a cubrir en días pasados las adeudas de sus cuotas pendientes de 2016-2017 y parcialmente 2018, por lo que esperaríamos una actualización posterior del anexo B del documento CL 159/LIM/2. Apoyamos los términos de referencia del Comité de Auditoría, acordados en el Comité de Finanzas, así como las recomendaciones para mejorar los trabajos del Comité y las recomendaciones aprobadas por el Comité, en particular la propuesta de la enmienda del estatuto del personal contenida en el párrafo 70 del Informe, que aplicaría para el personal del PMA.

Quisiera cerrar mi intervención en lo relativo a la cuestión de la aplicación de las resoluciones de Naciones Unidas 70/244 y 72/255 sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio para el personal de la FAO contratado antes del 2014. México reitera el llamado para que el Consejo tome una decisión en este periodo de sesiones, basado en el consenso y teniendo como objetivo el mejor interés de la Organización.

Ms Liyue TANG (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports Indonesia for the joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We also thank the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Mr Lupino, for his hard work.

Regarding the Commissary of FAO, Chinese diplomats all wish that the Commissary can continue its operations. It is not because it is not cost-effective that it has to be closed. The current alternative is not satisfactory. Many goods are very far from FAO premises and have to be pre-ordered, whereas the Commissary can introduce very good quality products issued from FAO partnerships or South-South cooperation, which is very significant to broadcast FAO's strategy and FAO's work, so we need all efforts and we urge FAO to reopen the Commissary at the earliest.

Mr Sid Ahmed M.Alamain Hamid ALAMAIN (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

First of all, we would like to commend the efforts of Mr Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and we would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this important document.

We also would like to make the following observations:

First of all, we would like to commend the financial situation of the Organization. Based on the information that was presented to us, it is expected that the Organization will have enough liquidity to cover its needs until the end of 2018.

However, we would like to note that the ongoing cash flow is important for the activities of the Organization and in this regard we would like to ask all countries to pay their assessed contributions in full and in a timely fashion.

We would like to welcome the TCP monthly expenditure rate and stress the full implementation of the Technical Cooperation Programme as was advised by the Conference.

With regards to human resources, we would like to note a slight improvement on the quality and quantity of data provided by the Secretariat. We also would like to call upon them to provide statistical data as was previously agreed.

We note with concern the absence of a unit in charge of setting up human resource management policies. This will have an impact on the timeframe of the human resource management, including the equitable geographic distribution of staff.

We would like to call upon FAO to increase its efforts to redesign the workforce plan in an efficient manner in order to identify the expertise, knowledge, and skills needed and we would like to call upon it to adopt the best strategic recruitment policies in order to recruit the right individuals in the right place at the right time.

We call upon the Organization to pay particular attention to striking the right balance between staff, consultants, and non-staff and determine a specific timeframe for that.

With regards to the recruitment of consultants in the Organization, we would like to comment the notable increase in the technical capacities of the Organization with regards to the flexible use of human resources which raised 30 percent in accordance to the Independent Evaluation. This is particularly due to the recruitment of contractors to carry out technical work. Therefore, we would like to call upon the Organization to continue this trend, particularly in the Decentralized Offices.

We call upon FAO to pay particular attention to the geographical representation and the recruitment of consultants in order to avoid undermining the international character of the Organization. Of course, merit should continue to be the main criterion in the recruitment process.

We call upon FAO to pay particular attention and adopt flexibility when recruiting consultants from the region without undermining the principles of merit. We believe these consultants are knowledgeable enough with the local working environment and we would like to note in this regard that our region has the least number of consultants recruited from their countries.

As was recommended by the Conference in 2003, we call upon informing Members of the geographical representation on a regular basis and the measures taken in this regard. With these conclusions, Sudan endorses the Report of the Finance Committee in its 170th Session.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thank you Mr Chairperson for giving Thailand the floor to echo our concerns.

Thailand fully aligns itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We highly appreciate the work carried out by the Finance Committee with the leadership of Mr Lupiño, Chairperson of the Finance Committee. We welcome the conclusions and recommendations of the reports to the Council.

Thailand would like to highlight our concerns on some aspects:

We encourage and support FAO's efforts in contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to ending the poverty, hunger and malnutrition. We appreciate FAO's work and achievements made in 2016-17 according to the planned outputs.

Regarding human resource management, Thailand encourages FAO to consider geographic representation and gender balance for staff recruitment, and we also request further data and statistical analysis for better decision of the Members.

In addition, we note the review of country office staffing models that would enhance the flexibility to the emerging needs of Member Countries. However, it is important to reiterate the call for urgent attention to the flexibility in language requirements in the recruitment process of staff and consultants.

Thailand also encourages FAO to monitor and evaluate the cost-benefits and the actual outcomes of project activities implemented in the countries, and also the sustainability of such activities at the country level. We would like to ensure that investment and all efforts really make contribution to farmers' livelihoods and to countries' prosperity in order to improve better food security, sustainable agriculture and food systems, rural development and reduction of the poverty.

As we know, without healthy soil and water resources, there is no safe aquaculture and safe food. Therefore, we would like to request FAO to also focus on investment and improvement of sustainable soil and water resource management. As we are aware of the complexities of sustainable aquaculture and food systems we continue supporting FAO to enhance the integrated and multi-stakeholder approach for better resilience of sustainable agriculture and food systems for a better future through South-South cooperation and other appropriate modalities.

This morning, as you have heard from the three leaders of Rome-based Agencies, they also mentioned the integrated approach among the Agencies as well as breaking all the silos among all of us to make sure that we really can achieve the results and deal with better livelihoods, better work to people in the field, as we discuss here in terms of the political talk, in terms of the policy-making talk. That is why we also have to reflect that all the work that we are discussing here, it is really achieved in the field. It is really achieved at the country level.

In conclusion, Thailand endorses the report of the Finance Committee.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Having listened carefully to the discussions, I would like to congratulate the Chair of the Finance Committee for having steered the discussions to a closure to what seems to have been very turbulent moments last week or two weeks ago and would like to also align ourselves very closely with the statements made by Australia and Finland.

I think that we have all realized or we have all appreciated how FAO's greatest asset as a knowledge Organization is its staff which compose its technical capacity, so its staff expertise, experience, and skills. And as such, we must see how we can value and nurture and see how the staff can also evolve and develop itself so that FAO's technical capacity can always be fit to respond to the challenges that are in front of us and that, as many have said, should be done through a robust human resources management strategy and this is, I think, one of the things that for us has come up as a main and key lessons learned and actions to take and we feel that could help in restoring a lot of, I would say, probably trust on issues that are very related to human resources management and that has been on the agenda of the Council and in the previous Governing Bodies two weeks ago.

We also feel that FAO has to make sure that it can appropriately, adequately fulfill its core mandate, that no other organization can do as a knowledge Organization and that is certainly the normative work. So we want to support the statements of Australia and Finland in this regard, in particular on food safety and plant health. We have always said that unsafe food is no food or not food so we need to make sure that FAO is appropriately resourced and in a sustainable way to carry out this core work that no other organization can do as best.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

At the outset I would like to express my gratitude for the endorsement by the Council on the Report of the Finance Committee. Indeed, we took a lot of hard work on it and it is good that many of the points that were raised there were recognized and supported by Members, in particular those that have recognized the improvement of the financial position of the Organization, general financial performance but at the same time, encouraging the timely and full payment of Members because as we know, this would affect the health and performance of the funding of the resources of this Organization.

Also I am pleased to hear that there is also support— first on the approval of the revisions that were made on the Audit Committee Terms of Reference. That also took a series of consultations and meetings not only in the previous session but in the previous Finance Committee Sessions as well and we finally had a conclusion on it and it is now for also concurrence of the Council.

Also we are glad that there is also support on pursuing further the OIG recommendations, particularly on the sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

On the unspent balance, while there is also recognition as earlier discussed on where this will be, where the 2016-17 unspent balance will go, of course as we have agreed in the past session of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, it is not only the SFDDA itself will have to be looked at. At the same time, there is this urge or encouragement to pursue more on the sustainable funding for scientific advice and other work related activities of this Organization such as Codex, and we do fully take note of that and have also extensively discussed this, including the possibility of the budgetary transfers and continuous engagement with the WHO. And this was also again reiterated by Members.

We also recognize the TCP rate that this could also be further improved in order to meet what the Conference Resolution has mandated or what the Conference has mandated, this body. And on sustainable agricultural systems, there are also issues raised like the sustainable soil management and also the role of the South-South cooperation in this regard and we take note of that too.

Lastly, on the Codex, we also are pleased that Members will be also endorsing the multi-sectoral taskforce for our trust fund for this.

And finally on HR which is the most interesting topic and most extensively discussed, many Members have also reiterated the need for more information, more data, in particular, on the geographic balance, the geographic representation, gender balance, and also the improvement in recruitment procedures and I think those concerns that were raised, in particular how the geographic balance of consultants has been handled in the last Council, including the document that was submitted to the Finance Committee. The management and Secretariat may be in a better position to address that. So maybe we will have more information on this from the management responses and we also take note that the EU's recommendation on the results of the review of the 2018-19 functional objectives, we take note of that too.

Lastly, I very much appreciate the commendation made by Members on my chairmanship of the Committee. Indeed, as Canada mentioned, that week was a bit turbulent and I thank Members for the recognition of the resilience and patience that I extended during that meeting and it was made possible of course because of the cooperation, contributions, and flexibility of the Finance Committee Members.

And I hope that I can still live up to that being calm and patient in the conduct on the chairmanship because I am not sure if I can be in control of my temper all of the time.

But of course I will be glad to work further with the Members thank also the Management and the Secretariat for their responses and assistance in our deliberations.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

Allow me to take the opportunity at this discussion of the item of the Finance Committee Report to introduce on my right, our new Assistant Director-General in charge of the Corporate Services Department. She started on assignment on 1 June, not so long ago, and she is coming from an eminent career in the private sector and in the European Bank for Construction and Development.

We are confident that she can bring a major contribution to help FAO reach the highest level of efficiency in the management of administrative processes while managing the risk faced by the Organization we are discussing in the Finance Committee and here.

I would like also to thank the Chair of the Finance Committee for the kind words and the support received from the Secretariat on the Members of the Finance Committee for the guidance we received during the session of this Finance Committee on all important items.

We had good discussions, at times frank, but always leading to a common wish to make FAO a better managed organization and a good place to invest for our partners.

With this Report of the Finance Committee we have clear guidance on how to improve the way we manage resources entrusted to the Organization, including human resources as Canada reminded us, the greatest asset of the Organization, and also 75 percent of our budget.

We believe that the related guidance also on internal control, oversight matters, and the way we manage risk will be very helpful for us to progress and to be fully in a position to report good progress at the next session of the Finance Committee.

We expect also a clear guidance of the Council on these issues dealt by the Finance Committee.

I will ask Mr Aiman Hija to react on the comments of Indonesia on behalf of the Asia Regional Group regarding financial management and the Equatorial Guinea regarding the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund that benefitted from major contribution from Equatorial Guinea and Angola.

I will ask also Mr Fernando Serván to answer Bulgaria on behalf of the EU, Finland on behalf of the Nordic Group, Italy, Thailand, Sudan, and also Council Members on HR matters.

Mr Gustafson joined us to react on points regarding carry over of the special fund for development and finance activities, the sustainable funding for the normative work of FAO such as food safety and also the question of the cost benefit of project activities.

One area that came back regularly in all interventions of the Members is a question of internal control as highlighted by Bulgaria but also others and it is a matter that is naturally at the heart of the concern of the Finance Committee and it touches on essential issues such as implementation of our policy on internal control, the accountability framework, our policy on fraud and corrupt practices, and the overall risk framework in FAO.

I can ensure you that we are progressing well on all of these issues and that we hope that the antithesis part of what is defined as our third of defense in the control framework, the Office of the Inspector General, the external auditors, and the Audit Committee will continue to acknowledge progress made.

Let me give you a few examples to illustrate the progress we are making. As I mentioned to the Members of the Finance Committee, one of the major progress for the Organization will be for the first time in its history, the Director-General issuing at the same time that the audited account of the Organization, Statement of Internal Control where we will confirm in a public document that the resources entrusted to him as a leader of the Organization are managed in the proper way and the risks facing the Organization are also managed the proper way.

This report is based on the reports coming from the lower level management and escalating up to the highest level where managers are requested to certify, sign off an internal control questionnaire touching all of the areas of internal control and representation letter certifying that resources under their responsibility are managed in a proper way.

So that is a major development. The External Auditor is reviewing this draft internal control statement right now when we are discussing and the matter will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting at the fall session.

And also an important development is the work we are developing in line with the guidance received from oversight bodies on fraud prevention and control. You will recall that this was a matter discussed here in the Council, the concern that it could be under reporting in the UN on fraud and corrupt practices and the need for UN entities to develop a proper assessment of the fraud risks and strategy and action plan to address this risk.

We are in the middle of it and I am confident that we will be in a position to present for the review of the Finance Committee at the next session, the fraud prevention and control strategy and action plan.

Another important matter is the need, and it was highlighted by the Finance Committee, for FAO to continue to progress and be more thorough in the follow-up to the recommendation of our oversight bodies, be it the internal audit, the Report of the Inspector General, the Report of the External Audit, the Report of the JIU, and the Report of the Audit Committee.

When the Inspector General presented its report that was reviewed by the Finance Committee, we had something that was unacceptable, more than 400 outstanding audit recommendations not closed. When

I presented the item at the Finance Committee, I was pleased to inform the Members that we will reduce this number to 200 and with only 100 overdue.

I was also informing that the long outstanding risk recommendations had been closed.

I am pleased to inform that we are continuing to progress on this and for example, as of today we have only 47 overdue recommendations outstanding which is representing probably only 3 percent of all of the recommendations and we do not have any more long high risk overdue recommendations, so it is a good progress.

While we are making this progress, an important development is the progress we are making in systems of information management available to all managers that help track better data and figures on key indicators for management to allow to correct in real-time the situation.

So we have this dashboard, very user friendly, that allows managers to know exactly at any time what the situation and what they are supposed to correct for better management of the resources.

So with this capacity to know and measure what the situation is, it helps us really make major progress.

So that is the type of thing I wanted to report. There is more. We are also reviewing our internal control framework as well as risk log for the overall Organization, declining at the different levels of management. A number of activities with a stronger technical support in their advisory capacity of the Office of the Inspector General which are all elements that I believe will help improve the overall management of the Organization.

I think that is what I can say at this stage and I may come back if my colleagues have not covered key, important advice from the Members of the Council.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General)

I am happy to respond on the trust fund that proposed to support the Scientific Advice Programme of Codex Commission and certainly we appreciate the statements of general support for this idea and the need for increased funding for that work.

It would be a different trust fund than the one that exists now in that the current one is not open to non-state actors. The new one as you know would be open to both non-state and state actors. We haven't discussed in the future if we would need both trust funds open and I would see that we may in fact eventually just have the one, but since the proposal is for the new one that would exist simultaneously at least to begin with the other one.

With regard to the firewall and the negotiations or the discussions with private sector on how this would work, how it would be attractive, I think it is important to understand how we see the overall process working and what the barriers are.

The overall process of the Codex Commission decisions is well known and very public and what is on the agenda that is discussed in different committees and then at Codex as a whole by your delegations is ongoing and well known.

What we are talking about here is the backlog first of the scientific advice necessary that goes into that process of discussions by Members within the Codex Committees and what we are aiming for is to eliminate the backlog and to have a smooth process predictable of these issues going through the process in a predictable and smooth way with the scientific advice coming in in a timely manner.

At the moment since there is a backlog, there is interest among some private sector or non-state actor groups in having some of those issues that they are interested in move faster than others within this backlog, but we are hopeful that with the additional funding from whatever source, when it moves through the system on a predictable, normal way, there would be less pressure for trying to get one issue further along in the process that is held back and more appreciation for the smooth running of the overall process.

So in that sense, we believe that it would be attractive or could be attractive to non-state actors as well as to governments to have the process running as a well-oiled machine.

In the discussion with private sector that has been more informal including last week I was in Washington for discussion with the World Bank and also the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and some others, but at one of the events there were private sector representatives and we talked about this a bit informally and I think they would be in fact interested in this kind of thing, although of course they are most interested in the issues that are of immediate concern to them. So there is a balance to be struck there and I think when the process moves smoothly and predictably, I think that is when we will reach the appropriate balance.

But we are very aware of the firewall aspects to separate what would look like special influence somehow and I think that, as we mentioned in the paper, would be easily managed.

We are also in touch with WHO on this and next week in fact I hope to have a phone call with my counterpart to discuss the outcome and the discussions here and it is a continuous ongoing process with WHO as well and we are hopeful that we can find ways to increase funding for this critical role that is at the moment holding back the progress – slowing down the progress of the Codex decisions, moving through the system in a way that is satisfactory to all and I am hopeful that we will get there.

Mr Aiman HIJA (Director, Finance Division)

First of all, I would like to thank all Members which conferred the importance of a timely settlement of the contributions of the Organization. As you all know, FAO is fully dependent on the contributions of the Members. Our Working Capital Fund and Reserve Fund are only enough to cover one month of expenditures. I would like also to thank all Members who throughout the year helped us for the timely settlement or the collection of the arrears from their capitals. It is highly appreciated.

In this regard, you are continuing to be conservative and follow high standards in a global practice in the investments for the After Service Medical deficits investments. We are a member of the Task Force of the United Nations working for a solution, a practical solution for it. But I would like to warn in this regard that there is no solution for After Service Medical deficit without contributions from the Members. It is not imminent to pay, but it is a long-term responsibility.

The question of the fund. This is one of the unique funds I have worked with in the Organization. We strongly encourage all Members to undertake such regional cooperation. The Fund is a multi-donor fund and it was first reported under multi-donors, so it was among our USD 270 million. But with the recommendation of His Excellency Representative of Angola in the Finance Committee, giving the importance and special nature of this Fund, we started reporting separately.

In the biennium 2012-13, the amount was USD 40 million. In the second biennium, 2014-15, there was USD 111 million with primarily interest on the amount. From now on, actually, every special fund like this, even if it is a multi-donor fund, will not be reported under multi-donor. We will show it separately on a separate line in order to emphasize the importance of such regional cooperation.

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Voy a dirigirme por separado a dos de los temas centrales que los Miembros han puesto para la atención del Consejo en esta ocasión.

El primero es en particular sobre la gestión de los recursos humanos. Ha habido muchas intervenciones. Reitero que las conclusiones que se expresaron en el informe final del Comité de Finanzas con una serie de recomendaciones para la Secretaría han comenzado a ser aplicadas, en particular la necesidad expresada por los Miembros de disponer de mayores datos anticipadamente a la próxima reunión del Comité de Finanzas, y como mencionado por diferentes países, tener una información más transparente y actualizada sobre representación geográfica y balance de género.

Se ha pedido, durante la reunión del Comité de Finanzas y se ha acordado, que se retomará la práctica de publicar la situación de la representación geográfica en el sitio web de los Representantes Permanentes y vamos a retomar esa práctica. De la misma manera, eso va a permitir a los Miembros de ver los avances que la Organización está haciendo, tanto en la representación geográfica como en la disminución de los países no representados o no adecuadamente representados.

En lo que respecta al tema de consultores, y su balance geográfico, es importante destacar que este tema, como se trataba tanto en el Consejo precedente, como en particular en las últimas dos sesiones

del Comité de Finanzas, la Secretaría ha mencionado principalmente que el criterio para la selección de consultores se mantendrá como criterio de mérito, y lo que ha emergido y se ha mostrado en los datos es un desbalance muy fuerte entre la representación geográfica por regiones y por países, y la Secretaría ha recibido recomendaciones de parte de los Miembros de trabajar para mejorar ese balance, manteniendo criterios de mérito y como se ha mencionado en más de una ocasión, también teniendo en cuenta los costos de cualquier variación al esquema actual.

Se mencionó que, en particular, esto se refiere a la representación geográfica, a consultorías financiadas por el programa regular, mientras que consultorías financiadas con fondos fiduciarios no están afectados en ningún momento por esto.

Se ha mencionado durante la reunión del Comité de Finanzas, y también aparece en el Informe y en ese momento, que la clave para mejorar el balance geográfico de consultores es enriquecer la capacidad de la Organización de atraer candidatos. Lo ha mencionado más que un país y vamos a comenzar a trabajar con Ustedes, con los Miembros, particularmente con los Representantes o las Representaciones de los países menos representados, para mejorar la difusión de nuestros anuncios de vacantes y poder atraer, esperamos, un mayor número de consultores potenciales, de candidatos calificados.

En todo esto, como se ha mencionado, el esfuerzo se concentra en aumentar la disponibilidad de candidatos de todas las regiones. Énfasis particular tendrá que ponerse necesariamente en la región del Cercano Oriente y de Asia y Pacífico, donde con los datos que hemos presentado a Ustedes se demuestra que hay una diferencia muy grande entre la contratación de consultores de estas regiones en las propias regiones, en nuestras Oficinas de esas regiones.

Finalmente, para concluir y aclarar el tema que se se mencionó durante el documento y se propuso durante el debate en Comité de Finanzas sobre aplicar cuotas por nacionalidades, gracias a la guía recibida por los Miembros del Comité de Finanzas, no se va a aplicar. Nuestros esfuerzos se concentran ahora en ampliar la base geográfica de los posibles consultores financiados por Programa ordinario. Una vez que se amplíe la base para eso, los consultores también pueden ser contratados con fondos fiduciarios, pero importante es ampliar la base.

Esperamos que con eso y con los mensajes que transmitiremos internamente a los Directivos de la Organización, podamos presentar resultados mejores a la próxima sesión del Comité de Finanzas, como ya ha sido solicitado. Pero reitero, no estamos aplicando cuotas. Esto fué una cosa que se ha mencionado en el documento, pero que, debido a la propuesta y guía de los Miembros, no se aplicará, concentrando nuestros esfuerzos en la diseminación de nuestros anuncios, de manera de atraer un mayor número de candidatos.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I have just a follow-up question to the Director of Human Resources. You mentioned something about not applying the quota. I understand that this was not really discussed. The discussions in the Finance Committee were mainly on achieving specific objectives, but there was no agreement on applying or not applying a quota. You said you have got the guidance. Which guidance were you referring to?

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

No, me refería a la necesidad y a la manifestación de los Miembros de presentar un Informe al Comité de Finanzas sobre los progresos y no necesariamente sobre la metodología para los progresos.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

In this case, I would prefer to make it clear that we did not commend or reject the quota system but we requested the Management to achieve the objective of better geographical balance of consultants and we leave this to the Management. We do not want really to intervene in this, but there was no rejection of the quota system as such, at least no consensus on the rejection of the quota system.

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Pienso que el comentario de Egipto sea adecuado y lo tomamos en cuenta.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Italy would like to support this flexible approach indicated by the Director of Human Resources when he correctly made reference to the ruling out of any quota systems to be applied to consultants.

I would like just to recall the Report of the Finance Committee, paragraph 18(c), *“Emphasized the importance of adopting a flexible approach, considering the needs of different working conditions, to avoid the disruption of projects and programmes, in particular in Decentralized Offices”*.

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Creo que las dos afirmaciones no se contradicen. Como he reiterado, la Secretaría intenta aplicar flexibilidad, mantener criterios de mérito, y mejorar el balance geográfico de consultores. Esos resultados se presentarán a la próxima sesión del Comité de Finanzas. Reitero que el énfasis en este momento es ampliar la base de potenciales consultores para que las unidades dentro de la Organización tengan ellos la flexibilidad de contratar y sobre todo que, en regiones, como mencioné, del Cercano Oriente y Asia, donde la contratación local es muy baja, se disponga de un mayor número de consultores de la región que puedan ser contratados a nivel nacional – oficinas en los países – regional y subregional.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests from the floor, so I will draw my conclusions on item 7, *Reports of the 170th and 171st Sessions of the Finance Committee*, held from 21 to 25 May and from 29 and 31 May respectively.

1. The Council approved the Reports of the 170th and 171st Sessions of the Finance Committee and in particular:

- a) urged all Member Nations to make payment of assessed contributions on time and in full;
- b) noted that the Finance Committee had approved the final budgetary transfers arising from implementation of the 2016-17 Programme of Work;
- c) endorsed the Committee’s support for Management’s proposal for a sustainable funding solution to FAO’s work and activities relating to Food Safety Scientific Advice for Codex Alimentarius, including plant health and the work of the International Plant Protection Convention;
- d) endorsed the proposed updates to the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee;
- e) endorsed the Committee’s guidance to the Secretariat on the content of future reports on Human Resources Management, including the provision of comprehensive statistical data upon request and information on geographic distribution;
- f) requested the Secretariat to provide detailed information at future Governing Body meetings on the recruitment of consultants from all sources of funding and emphasized the importance of adopting a flexible approach in the selection processes applicable to consultants;
- g) endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the proposed amendment to the FAO Staff Regulations allowing implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for World Food Programme staff members.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

We have two proposed amendments, on point (d). When we refer to the Terms of Reference, would the best term here be to say *“endorsed the proposed updates or the new Terms of Reference”* or *“the proposed changes”* maybe?

And the second one, on point (f), what we agreed upon in the Finance Committee is to request a progress report. So I would suggest that in point (f) *“requested the Secretariat to provide”*, be instead of *“detailed information”*, a *“progress report”* and then it might be easier to use the language of the Finance Committee, which is *“to provide a progress report to the next session of the Council on the ongoing efforts to better improve the geographic distribution of consultants”*, and then we can add the

last point *“taking into account the importance of adopting a flexible approach in the selection process, in particular in Decentralized Offices.”*

CHAIRPERSON

Your amendment to point (d) was *“endorsed proposed updates?”*

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

With regard to point (d), I would recommend retaining *“updates”* because as we discussed and also reflected in the report, we use that word because periodically the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee is being updated to introduce those changes. I think the original drafting of language is okay.

And on point (f), I think we should include the Egyptian proposal. We should bracket *“at future Governing Body meetings”*.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

Just a small one under point (c) because it says *“Codex Alimentarius, including plant health”*. We believe it should say *“Codex Alimentarius and plant health and the work of the International Plant Health Convention”*.

And then, on human resources management under point (e), we would like to have some language on this call to pay attention to gender balance, especially at the more senior level of FAO resources.

It could say something like *“took note of progress made in gender balance at the Organization-wide level and encouraged FAO to improve gender balance among the senior management”*. But I will leave it in your good hands to finalize it.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Congratulations on your summing up of the discussions.

I actually had doubts about the addition of the International Treaty on Plant Protection in point (c), but I think that the formulation provided by Finland addresses my query. We are actually not confusing the Convention with Codex Alimentarius. If we add that in such a way, it is an articulation of both areas of work.

I would like to address point (e), which seems to confuse what was the recommendation of the Committee towards the provision of data. The actual language in the report, which is point (e) in paragraph 16, says *“reiterated its previous requests to the Secretariat to provide comprehensive statistical data in response to requests by Members consistent with the practices of other RBAs”*. In order to conform with this recommendation, I would suggest to delete some portion of point (e). After *“Secretariat on...”*, we delete *“the content of the future reports on human resources management, including”*, and we leave the rest of the sentence. So it would read: *“endorsed the Committee's guidance to the Secretariat on the provision of comprehensive statistical data upon request and information on geographic distribution”*.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

Under point (e), I have also two small suggestions. First, after *“geographical distribution”* to add *“and vacancy rate”*. Before that in the same sentence to delete *“upon request”*.

And I have one sentence to be added in point (f), no, it is now point (g). At the end of point (g), to add the sentence: *“Council welcomed the assurance by FAO Secretariat to not apply a quota in the selection of consultants”*.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Could we go back to point (c), please?

In the discussion we had today, there were two elements that were raised by a number of delegations, including ours, and that was the Council highlighted the need for a sustainable funding solution for the Scientific Advice and for the IPPC, and we also endorsed, as it says there, *“the Committee's support*

for Management's proposal". I would like that to reflect those two elements. I suggest that point (c) starts with "*highlighted the need for a sustainable funding solution for*", and it is essentially the text you have later in that paragraph, "*for the Scientific Advice Programme for Food Safety Standards and for plant health and the work of the IPPC*", and then "*...and endorsed the Committee's...*" – so there would be two elements.

You would just need to move plant health and IPPC up prior to "*and endorsed*" as you had it before.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

First of all, let me address the proposal by Bulgaria to delete "*upon request*". Perhaps we could use the language that was adopted in the Report of the Finance Committee in which it says instead of "*upon request*", "*in response to requests by Members*" so we make it clear how the mechanism for consultation of this data should work.

Then again on the issue of geographic balance by consultants, I am not sure whether the proposal of introducing a line that would welcome assurances by the Secretariat, which are questioned by Members of the Council, would work. Perhaps what could be envisaged here is also to use the language from the Finance Committee.

I would suggest that we use point (c), "*emphasize the importance of adopting a flexible approach considering the needs of different working conditions to avoid disruption of projects and programmes, in particular in Decentralized Offices,*" as it was quoted by the distinguished Representative of Italy.

Perhaps also point (a), which acknowledges the importance of having geographic balance of consultants as with the professional staff in PWB positions. I guess that those two sentences would provide a balanced view of the contents of the debates during this session.

CHAIRPERSON

Brazil, could you repeat your proposal a little slower?

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Actually, Mr Chairman, I think the Drafting Committee could take care of that because it is cut and paste, but I am referring to paragraph 18 (a) and (c) of the Finance Committee report, that would reflect in a balanced way the outcome of our deliberations rather than welcoming assurances that are questioned by some Members of the Council.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I would like to make a comment on point (e). The shortening that was suggested by Brazil earlier, taking out the words human resources management actually makes it somewhat unclear what this paragraph is talking about. So we would have to reintroduce human resources management perhaps—now it is getting complicated as it has changed considerably but we would have to have this word in there.

As regards the question "*upon request*" or "*in response to a request by Members*", I just looked at the report again. I mean, we have the phrase "*request by Members...*" but it relates to statistical data. When it comes to future reports providing additional information, there is no such thing as "*upon request*" or "*in response to request*".

I would suggest to delete both parts, "*upon request*" and "*in response to requests by Members*", and just leave the sentence by saying "*the provision of comprehensive statistical data and information on geographic distribution and vacancy rate*".

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Two comments on point (c). When we refer to the support for the "*proposal for a sustainable funding solution*", I would suggest also that we refer to the Committee's guidance regarding the importance of safeguarding the independence and impartiality of the Scientific Advice Programme, which is also from the Finance Committee and it was one of the most important points in the discussion.

Regarding the proposal from Bulgaria, I think we cannot accept this. What other Members referred to is a flexible approach and this is something we can live with and I think the proposal from Brazil to combine the two bullet points of the Finance Committee Report could work for us, but I would suggest that we delete the new point that was suggested by Bulgaria.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got three speakers. It is becoming a bit difficult to make these amendments so we will have to leave them for the Drafting Committee. I will give the floor to the three speakers but I would like to remind again, let us not be a Drafting Committee because if the concept which I have read out refers to your decision, let the other aspects return to it by the Finance Committee because, Members suggest one amendment. Another wants to suggest deletion. This will carry on. This was the fear. That is why we were not putting the summary on the screen.

So let us address whether a particular decision, which you have made or conclusion you have reached, the concept, is there or the thrust is there and let the flowers be planted by the Drafting Committee around that decision.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Actually we found so far the practice quite useful and I feel that I much more own the decision and I remember what we have actually decided and discussed, so I find it to be a useful tool and I don't think that our discussions have been prolonged unduly so far and have been quite substantive in terms of the additions or amendments.

Just on point (e), I think it has been a good discussion because it is actually quite important and the danger is always to cherry pick some of the paragraphs of the Finance Committee, which had quite a number of sub paragraphs under human resources management.

So I think that enough comments have been made on how the Drafting Committee can make sure that it reflects this well. I would support the suggestion made by Germany and I also wanted to ensure that when we put information on geographic distribution and vacancy rate, that we also have the gender balance. This is quite clear from the Finance Committee. There are different paragraphs as well that ask for that.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Very briefly, I support the amendment to point (c) proposed by Egypt. I just think we need to handle it in the Drafting Committee, separately because that issue is specifically related to the Multi-donor Trust Fund, not to the sustainable funding solution overall.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Three points, the first one is on our nice screen over there. I would like to repeat the comment I made yesterday because you seem a little bit shy about this new thing we are experiencing. It is positive. It is really something to be congratulated for.

Second point is to second the request made by Bulgaria and Germany.

But the third point more generally speaking is about not having a copy and paste of the Finance Committee conclusions in our Council. The Council is a different Governing Body as compared to all other subsidiary bodies as the distinguished representative of Brazil is certainly aware of and in this sense, I think that the original language that you proposed on the geographical distribution of consultants captured not just the conversation that we have had this morning but also the interactive part of it with the Human Resources Department.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

If there is conflict on the text among the Members of the Council and if that conflict is not resolved, it is very unfair to ask the Drafting Committee to solve a problem which is here. So the Drafting Committee cannot act for the Council.

Secondly, as far as I know – the Secretariat can explain – in the history of FAO, a high-level consultant was never a quota. It was free of quota for the last 60 years. Why make it an issue?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

First of all, I would like just to stress that we cannot agree that we have become a Drafting Committee because we are discussing right now very substantial points and that is why I appreciate what the Council Members are doing.

Second, to the direction of my Egyptian colleague, I would say that we welcome the Secretariat information which was made available by the Director of Human Resources and I do not see any problem to reflect this in our final report.

It is just a question about caution against introducing geographical distribution quotas for consultants. I do not see any problem here.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Let me first address point (f) because we have a pending recommendation from Germany to reintroduce human resources management so, if we could decapitalize that expression, that means use a small letter, perhaps we could delete "*the content of future reports*" and leave the sentence as it is.

So that would respond to Germany's suggestion and "*the concept of future reports*" should be deleted. That would probably attend the preoccupation.

My suggestion as to points (a) and (d) of the Finance Committee, to solve a problem that we are facing, is not simply a mechanical suggestion of cutting and pasting. It is to save time so that we use language that has been already discussed before, which would perhaps enable us to stand on common ground.

We are not on common ground with the introduction by Bulgaria on assurances about geographic quota and that is why we are still stumbling on the drafting of these conclusions. I do agree with Afghanistan's remark that what is not solved here cannot be solved at the Drafting Committee.

So my compromise solution was to use agreed language by the Finance Committee that takes account of the concerns expressed by Bulgaria and Egypt and, in a balanced way, would reflect the outcome of the debate.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we have to wait until the various amendments are taken on board for me to say we have adopted the summary.

Perhaps, it may be quicker, if we just go paragraph by paragraph and deal with the amendments because there are so many amendments to the same paragraph. The paragraph which has most of them seems to be point (e). So let us go paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1, (a) and (b). Adopted.

We can go to point (c).

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I would just suggest to merge (c) and (d) because they are the same issue. So after "*funding solution*", we can say "*while emphasizing the importance*" and then we continue the rest of point (d).

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph (d)?

Paragraph (e)?

I notice that "*upon request*" or "*in response to request*", has been suggested as a deletion but shouldn't it be there for Management to know on what area or what issue the comprehensive statistical data should be provided? Otherwise there will be always referenced that they have not been given this and they have not given that. Shouldn't it be upon request when it concerns the provision of comprehensive data just for Management to know what exactly is required?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

Now we are referring to the Report. It is in the Report so that we insist “*upon request*” to be deleted.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Just to second what Bulgaria said. The paragraph that we have in front of us, point (e), kind of reflects within the Finance Committee Report, paragraph 16 point (b) and not where it does say something about future reports about additional information.

The word “*upon request*” is to be found in another paragraph of the same report but it relates to “*additional information relating to geographic representation of staff to be requested by individual Member States*”, so two different sets of information we are talking about here.

CHAIRPERSON

So point (e), everyone agrees the way it is now so we move to (f). We have removed “*upon request*”.

Point (f).

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Can you add after “*gender balance*”, can you add also “*geographical distribution*” because this was also mentioned in the discussion?

CHAIRPERSON

We move to point (g).

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Could we go back to point (f). I am fine with the addition but I think that the efforts to improve at the senior level, was particularly targeted to gender balance. I am not sure if that is true for geographic distribution. I do not know if it is informed but I think for gender balance it is quite clear that it is not the same at those levels.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am not quite sure now about this addition under (f) even if geographic distribution is an important issue because there is not progress made in that specific field. I wanted to focus this paragraph on gender balance because we can refer to the geographical distribution in other paragraphs but this changes the context and the basic idea of this new sub-paragraph.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

We support both the reference to geographic distribution and the reference to the senior level.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Yes, I agree with Finland. I would suggest to remove geographical distribution from point (f) but have another bullet that would “*request Management to continue its effort to improve geographical distribution in the Organization*”.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Does point (f) state exactly what Finland had proposed in the beginning? It is okay then.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I do not want to make your task more difficult.

With regard to the newly introduced point (g), I was just wondering if FAO has a key performance indicator that says that 75 percent of all Member States should be equitably represented and this is currently over achieved at the 76.8 percent. So I wonder where such a request to the Secretariat should have its basis.

We would also have preferred to leave the word “*geographic distribution of staff*” in the previous paragraph suggested by Finland.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Maybe just to respond to Germany. Maybe we add in 1(g), "*in ensuring improved equitable geographical distribution of staff*". So we acknowledge the improvement and we request further improvement. So just add the word improve after ensuring in point (g).

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

We are somewhat puzzled. We are over achieving a key performance indicator and we have a commitment but we find it difficult to push beyond overachieving an indicator here in this text and we believe it does not really reflect the discussion that we had here earlier.

CHAIRPERSON

So point (g) is deleted.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

We have always been asking Management to improve its performance in other areas apart from HR. We considered it. So I do not see a problem in including this.

CHAIRPERSON

The point raised by Germany that the indicator is over achieved in this. It comes about in point (h) as well I think. Geographic distribution comes in (h) as well. Would that?

So the wording, "*Acknowledge the Secretariat's efforts in ensuring*"?

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Maybe we can say "*encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts in ensuring improved equitable geographic distribution*".

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

For the reasons highlighted by Germany, we would like to delete point (g) and go back to the original wording in point (f), including "*geographic balance*" in (f).

Mr Mitiku Tesso JEBESSA (Ethiopia)

To really improve things is to be 99 percent and not alone 76 percent. So it is not really a problem. I support what Egypt said. Improvement is good in every sector and in everything.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

I thought that maybe, if the argument is that there is some kind of an over-achievement in that area, of course even in the case of over-achievement, there has to be room for further improvement. So perhaps what we can then say "*to acknowledge efforts already made and urge for further improvement*" in that regard.

I think it makes sense in that regard.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

First of all, we would like to keep the paragraph on gender exactly as Finland had said before, not to bring the geographical distribution there. So we are only dealing with gender issues.

There is no harm in what Egypt said. We agree exactly with the original proposal.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

I am a little worried that we are going in circles. I believe that we are working on the basis of consensus. When I see strong positions for the introduction of some language, I would urge colleagues to be more flexible. That includes Egypt, of course, but also Bulgaria.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I wonder if we could, to keep the point (f) focused on gender, if we could not add to (h) before “*requested the Secretariat to provide*”, we could “*take note of the progress in achieving equitable geographic distribution of staff and requested*”.

Point (h) is about that as well as a progress report on how you are improving. I just feel that at some point there is an imbalance in terms of targets and the message we send on gender. The targets are not overachieved at all and there is just one paragraph that is dedicated to that. I think that point (h) is enough in terms of taking note of progress and requesting improvement on the issue of equitable geographic distribution of staff.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we seem to be stuck. I am sure Members of the Drafting Committee must be thrilled because their work is going to be very fast.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

We do not want this to go on and on. But, again, I think Canada is mixing between two different things.

In point (h), we are talking about consultants, which is a separate issue to discuss under a separate item in the next Council. In the Finance Committee, we have a specific recommendation for this, which is to present our progress report on the issue of equitable geographic distribution of staff, as was mentioned by South Africa and Ethiopia. It is an important issue that we always request. We acknowledge that there was relative improvement but there is still room for more improvement.

We were very flexible in accepting what Finland suggested for point (f) to be just for gender parity at senior level. Now we are very flexible. Either you add it to point (f), so we acknowledge the progress made in both gender balance and geographic balance, but we also request the Management to take efforts toward both issues or we have a dedicated one for this.

CHAIRPERSON

I think the points made by a few Members, Ethiopia, South Africa, Egypt, are acknowledging that the progress achieved needs the indicators, but what there is no harm in what they are suggesting, in asking for further improvement.

Would Members please, I appeal, agree to this as a new para because all it is saying is we acknowledge you have done well and could we request that you continue further improvement in this area? It is a pretty neutral sort of suggestion. Could we agree to that and move forward?

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Perhaps if your suggestion is acceptable, we could perfect the paragraph by deleting “*assuring*” and simply say, “*its efforts in improving*”.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I understand that these are two different issues, but the issue that is put in paragraph (g), I cannot find easily a reflection of the Finance Committee decision in this regard. I did not recall that there was a broader discussion today in the Council apart from point (h).

Having said that, I think that if I look at the Finance Committee and also to respect maybe similar language in point (f), perhaps we could say “*took note of the progress in achieving gender balance targets at the corporate level and encouraged efforts to improve gender balance at senior level*”.

And for point (g), we could put to “*continue its efforts in achieving equitable geographic distribution of staff targets*”. I sought this request to continue having information on how they were achieving their targets. I think it would more appropriately reflect what the discussions have said so far, including regarding indicators.

At some point, what we are asking them to achieve is their targets. Of course, we can always improve 100 percent. Otherwise, point (f) should also be about ensuring gender balance.

CHAIRPERSON

If we start talking about what was discussed and not discussed, then it is really like the Drafting Committee pulling out verbatim records and seeing who said what. It is a conceptual summary which should capture the conclusions and discussions here.

In fact, Egypt, I believe, did raise the issue of geographic balance, not only geographic balance but constantly emphasized at the decentralized level. It is pretty neutral wording. It is saying they are acknowledging what has been done so far and the efforts to improve should continue.

It does not bind anybody. It is a general guidance on an issue which I think nobody objects to – equitable geographical distribution. If we start looking into who said what or what was discussed, then it will be a never ending exercise.

Mr Imed SELATNIA (Algeria)

My country agrees on the remark you have just pointed out. I think there is no harm in that wording in point (g) as it is formulated. I think that even in Rome here, we have very pertinent Rome-based Agencies. Hunger is still here. I think there is always something to improve. We agree on that wording.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

We would just have one minor change, but it reflects the respect that we really should pay to the key performance indicators that we have all agreed to. This is something very serious for us. We cannot just deliberately ask for something more on a specific issue because we think it is important. It may be important, but we should talk about new key performance indicators.

Therefore, my suggestion would be to respect the language that we have used here which says equitable representation and just use it in the text here in saying continued efforts in achieving equitable geographic distribution of staff without giving a value to it.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to support the suggestion made by Germany. And I would also like to say that on the issue of whether the Council's summary should reflect Council decisions, I think that in the past we have always said that it should, so I am a bit surprised that this is questioned now.

It is not a question of who said or what said but I think that it should reflect the Council decisions.

CHAIRPERSON

I would have to disagree. That is what we are trying to work out what the Council decision is. As to who said what is not the Council's decision. The Council's decision is being worked out now as the overall decision of the Council. It is not who said what. That is not the decision.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Yes. I meant it should reflect the Council discussions, not decisions. The Council decision or summary should reflect the Council discussions. In my first lesson when I arrived here, which was procedures, was that you have to make sure that you discuss and bring up a point quite specifically, if you are going to insist on it in the decision. I just wanted to remind that rule. It is not a question of just looking at who said what. It is really supposed to reflect the discussions.

CHAIRPERSON

We have point (g) still on the table. Is (g) okay?

So we move on to point (h).

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

One small suggestion at the end of point (h), “*in particular*” to be changed with “*including*”. Yes, and “*in particular*” to be deleted.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I would suggest that we take points (h) and (i) together. They are related. The reference in point (h) to the flexible approach was actually a result of discussions in the Finance Committee that we agreed to have a flexible approach because we do not want to tie the Management and we understand the sensitivity about allowing this issue. But in our understanding, the flexible approach covers what the Secretariat referred to in its response to the questions.

We asked the Secretariat a clear question about the usage of quota. We do not recommend the usage of quota but we do not also recommend ruling this out. As Afghanistan said in a wise way, this is something that should not be discussed now.

I would believe that the reference to flexible approach in point (h) covers (i). We cannot use both of them. Either we delete point (i) or we delete the flexible approach in point (h). Our preference would be to keep the flexible approach but delete point (i).

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I think that we should have this point (i) because it is a factual one. We have received new information today and it is very important.

But I can go, in order to reach consensus, to propose another wording, not “*Council welcomed*” if the colleagues do not agree, but “*Council took note*”. We can change it because it is factual and I think it is a good compromise.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

While I share the concerns expressed by Egypt, I would like to propose that we finalize point (h) first. I would propose that we accept the changes included there except for one portion. We could read this paragraph this way: “*Requested the Secretariat to provide a progress report to the next session of the Council on their ongoing efforts to better improve the geographic distribution of consultants, taking into account all sources of funding*”. That is my reading of this paragraph.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

We favor the joint consideration of points (h) and (i). It is the same issue at stake here, first.

Secondly, we support the suggestion made in the spirit of harmony and flexibility by Bulgaria.

And thirdly, we strongly agree with what the Afghanistan delegate said before. But I would like to recall that something very close to the concept of quota was not suggested or proposed by any Member Countries of FAO when it comes to consultants.

Rigidity, cumbersome procedures, and bureaucracy are not in the best interest of FAO's successful leadership in achieving the SDGs, so we positively took note of what the Director of Human Resources told us before. This is something new and the point (i) rightfully reflects the outcome of this conversation.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

First on point (h), I remember very well that the discussion under Decentralized Offices was brought by China in the Finance Committee and there was so much focus on the importance of having consultants from different developing countries in Decentralized Offices. I think, in particular, it is important here.

On point (i), again, we requested – I do not understand really the disagreement on this issue – we requested Management to achieve an objective. We as Egypt, we do not want to intervene in this. We do not favour quotas.

We do not really want Management to apply quotas, but we want them to achieve the objectives that the Council asked them to achieve. The reference to quotas here actually complicates their mission and complicates our mission as well, because if we single out one issue, it means that it was a source of disagreement. The proposal that came from the Management in the Finance Committee included many items, and singling out the quota, I do not think helps anyone.

And then to say that the Council took note – we did not take note of this. We asked questions from the Management and the Management confirmed that their objective is to achieve the target of better geographical distribution of consultants.

So we will not support point (i).

CHAIRPERSON

Excuse me. Director of Human Resources, can you repeat exactly what you told the Council on this issue?

Sr. Fernando SERVAN (Director de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Mencioné que la propuesta del documento que se presentó al Comité de Finanzas mencionaba un límite, no una cuota, y que, gracias a la guía recibida por parte de los Miembros y sus comentarios, íbamos a trabajar en incentivar los esfuerzos en ampliar la base de potenciales consultores como mecanismo para tener la flexibilidad para contratar consultores independientemente de las fuentes de financiamiento, y que por tanto no íbamos a aplicar el límite superior.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Maybe just to help reach a consensus here, maybe we can, if other Members will accept this, we can say that the Council took note of the assurance by FAO Secretariat to apply a flexible approach in the selection of consultants.

We support this. We know that it should be a flexible approach. But just singling out the quota, I do not think even it helps the Members that want to include it.

CHAIRPERSON

Reference to the flexible approach is in an earlier paragraph. Egypt, your suggestion about the flexible approach is mentioned in point (h)

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I think the only difference here is that we – really the Management confirms this, which was requested by some Members, that the Management acknowledges and confirms that this will be used, which is different a little bit than what is included in point (h).

CHAIRPERSON

So maybe we can combine (h) and (i) and carry on in (h) “*and took note of the assurance*”.

The new paragraph (h) which combines (h) and (i).

Is that okay?

Sr. Mario ARRIOLA WOOG (Mexico)

Respaldamos la posición de Egipto de usar la palabra "flexible approach", porque eso ya incluye el mérito del consultor y permite buscar el objetivo de alcanzar igualdad de género y distribución geográfica.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, but now if Members take the floor, could they just address the fact that the two paras have been combined and whether that provides them with sufficient comfort that their view is reflected?

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We agree by combining point (i) with (h) provided my colleague from Bulgaria is happy about it.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

We are not completely convinced that “*flexible approach*” is clear to anybody. It seems rather vague when in – I don’t know, two, five, or ten years some historians will read these conclusions, and they will wonder what they were talking about.

So it could be useful to add after Decentralized Offices, a couple of key concepts that would help making this clearer:

First, *“by incentivizing the largest possible participation in recruitment procedures, while keeping merit skills and technical competence as an essential criterion”* – not *“the”* but *“an essential criterion”* because we are flexible.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Italy. I am sure if I bump into a Member with a very happy look on his face in the corridor, he is bound to be a Member of the Drafting Committee.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

We had another preference but in the good spirit of our work, I would agree to combine those two paragraphs. In order to simplify a little bit the whole paragraph, I would propose to keep our initial text and to change as I see that our Egyptian colleague has a problem with the word quota, the suggestion would be to change *“quota”* with *“ranges”*.

And then the whole text is to be *“Council took note of the assurance by FAO Secretariat to not apply ranges in the selection of consultants”*.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

On the last speaker. I do not know, if he is referring to range. I think our **“relevant qualified”** cover a broad range than *“range”*.

But coming to the point that was raised by the esteemed Delegate of Italy, I am not too sure what are we trying to say there because now we have ballooned, that paragraph. It has now become some sort of an omnibus because you say *“while keeping merit skills and technical...”*

If you talk of a selection process, it is implied that those things would be taken into consideration. Why therefore do we have to then mention them? So I am of a strong view that we delete all of that while keeping merit because in any selection process, it is implied that it is going to take all of those things into consideration.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

It is – we share the view of South Africa that this is becoming too complicated. One solution would be just to summarize this paragraph and say stop after *“geographical distribution of consultants”* and then delete everything because this is really what we want Management to provide.

Then the Management can take into consideration all of the points that were raised by others during this discussion. So we want a progress report on how to improve this and they take into consideration our points.

But if we are just limiting what we requested FAO Management in the last Council to incentivize the largest possible participation, I don't think we give justice to this issue.

We spent many hours on it both in the Council and in the Finance Committee and then what we request Management just to incentivize and to disseminate? Is it job vacancies for the largest audience? I do not think this was the intention of the Council.

Mr Mitiku Tesso JEBESSA (Ethiopia)

The distinguished representative of Italy has correctly put it. You know, if we just simply put the word flexible here, it is vague. We have to qualify what flexibility really means in terms of different criteria as we put it here. Simply if we say flexible, we can rarely use it the way we wish it to really be.

CHAIRPERSON

I think, Members, we are in fact indulging in drafts and re-drafts. May I suggest because we have taken a lot of time on one para, we move onto the next paras and we will come back to this after dealing with others? Perhaps we may even need a bit of consultation with each other because at this rate, we will carry on and we are already behind our schedule.

So may I suggest that we move to the next paragraphs and we will come back to this one after we have adopted the others?

So we go now to point (j). There are no comments so point (j) is okay.

At this stage, perhaps we can interrupt our discussions because I am told that the Director-General is joining us together with Mr Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. He was the recipient of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize as well as the recipient of Pope John XXIII's Peace Memorial.

He is joining us. They are on their way. So perhaps we can stop here and just wait for them and then we will pick up our discussions again. And also give time for reflection on the previous paragraphs.

The meeting was suspended from 12.32 to 13.11 hours

La séance est suspendue de 12 h 32 à 13 h 11

Se suspende la sesión de las 12.32 a las 13.11

CHAIRPERSON

We can now go back to our session but since it is late we will adjourn for lunch. Before we close, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for some announcements.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Delegates are reminded of the need to register for Council if they wish to be included in the List of Participants of this session. The Provisional List of Participants is available at the Documents Desk and delegates are invited to check that their names and titles are accurate. Any corrections or amendments should be submitted to the Documents Desk for inclusion in the final list.

I also wish to remind delegates that there will be two side events taking place during lunch time today. The first side event is on *Tracking SDGs on the road to 2030* which will take place in the Sheikh Zayed Centre from 12.30 to 14.00 hours as soon as this session concludes; and the second side event: *End Poverty and hunger and secure the right to food: Exchanging Knowledge through South-South and Triangular Cooperation* will be held from 14.15 to 15.30 hours and will be preceded by a light lunch starting at 13.30 hours to mark the launch of the photo exhibition on display in the Atrium.

Finally Members of the Friends of the Chair are invited to make their way to the Kind Faisal Room for the meeting taking place from 13.00 to approximately 15.00 hours. A light lunch will be available prior to the start of the meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Mr Gagnon. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.50 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 50

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.50

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**SIXTH PLENARY SESSION
SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

6 June 2018

The Sixth Plenary Meeting was opened at 16.02 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La sixième séance plénière est ouverte à 16 h 02
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la sexta sesión plenaria a las 16.02
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

- Item 7. Reports of the 170th (21-25 May 2018) and 171st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)**
- Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)**
- Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)**
(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)

Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears
Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés
Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos
 (CL 159/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We are still on item 7. There was one paragraph in my summary which still has to be agreed. It is on the screen in yellow. It is points (h) and (i).

The floor is open. Can we please try and reach an agreement and not argue on specific words?

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

About point (i), it is not very clear: “*not to apply ranges in the selection of consultants*”. What is “*ranges*”? I think it is much better to make it clear and rely on the principle that the selection or the hiring of consultants from all funding sources should be open and competitive. That is the principle.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

On point (i), I would like again to repeat that this is new information we have received from the Director of Human Resources, and we would like to reflect it in our report. We wanted to welcome it, but as some colleagues have a problem with accepting such information, we agreed that the Council will take note. We even agreed in our attempt to reach a compromise to change “*quota*” with “*ranges*”.

If some colleagues now do not prefer the word “*ranges*”, then we are ready to come back to “*quota*”. But I think that this is very important information and all the 28 countries of the European Union would like this paragraph to remain in the final version of the report.

Mr Antonio Otavio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

As I said in my previous intervention, we work on the basis of consensus. I had already pled for flexibility both from Egypt and Bulgaria. I do not see that flexibility forthcoming. We do not have 28 Members of the EU in the Council, so that is not an argument. As I see, the paragraph as amended before, includes the preoccupation that has been expressed by the EU, but I think we should read it through so that we can fix the language there.

If you allow me, I will read it as I see it: “*Requested the Secretariat to provide a progress report to the next session of the Council on the ongoing efforts to improve...*” – you do not need “*better*” – “*...the geographic distribution of consultants, taking into account...*” and then you can still delete the part about the future Governing Body meetings but add Afghanistan's suggestion and restate the idea that the principles on “*the recruitment of consultants from all funding sources should be open and competitive*”. “*And took note of the assurance by the FAO Secretariat to apply a flexible approach in the selection processes applicable to consultants, including in Decentralized Offices, by incentivizing the largest possible participation in recruitment procedures, while keeping merit, skills, and technical competence as essential criteria*”, because there we have three criteria.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Again, we will not be able to support what was mentioned by Bulgaria on point (i). We believe that it is included in point (h).

I think we are missing a very important element in our summary which is the revised Policy on Recruitment and Evaluation of Consultants which was presented by Management to the Finance

Committee. I think that when we request Management to present a progress report, we should make reference to it in point (h) when we mention *“the ongoing efforts to improve geographical distribution of consultants”*, after that can we add, *“based on the revised Policy on Recruitment and Evaluation of Consultants”*.

Then, we support the reference to *“a flexible approach in the selection process applicable to consultants”*, but not saying *“including in Decentralized Offices”*, but *“in particular in Decentralized Offices”*.

The reason I am saying this is because we pointed out that in some Regional Offices, including the one for the Near East, out of 17 or 19 consultants, four come from the region. It was a request not only by Egypt but I think also from China to give priority to regional consultants which know much better the situation of their regions.

The last comment, when we say *“by incentivizing the largest possible participation in the recruitment procedure”*, we cannot agree to this because this is as if we are requesting Management only to incentivize the largest possible participation. It goes beyond this. The new policy includes many points not only about larger participation but many other issues. So we cannot accept this. *“Keeping merit, skills, and technical competence as essential criteria”*, we can live with this, it is important also and this is something that we advocate, giving preference to geographical distribution but also keeping the process merit-based.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

When I heard the last intervention of our Brazilian colleague, I was almost rejoicing because I had the impression that we were on a promising path to achieving a final quick solution. When I heard the last intervention, unfortunately, I had the impression that we are still far from the path suggested by our Brazilian colleague. We cannot accept *“in particular”* instead of *“including”*.

I take this opportunity to mention an important aspect that Italy raised at the December Session of the Council. Italy, upon instructions from our Government, has raised again the cost implications that are missing in the document provided by the Secretariat.

This is an important part because if costs are going to rocket due to the new procedure for recruiting consultants, the chances of FAO to continue with savings to be devoted to technical cooperation will diminish.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

If we just request Management to present a progress report based on the new Policy for Recruitment, it includes everything that Italy just said. I am referring to paragraph 25 which refers to the primordial criteria of merit, the need to avoid disruption of projects, the lower costs, the application of methodology consistent with geographic distribution. Everything is included in this policy that was presented by the Management. If we make reference to it, it would be enough and we might have a shorter recommendation for Management.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, we are back to commenting on the usage of particular words instead of on the thrust of the Council's decision. Is that the role of the Council?

Mr Hongxing NI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China encourages FAO to use more local expertise and technical consultants for the decentralized offices. Therefore, if the other colleagues have arguments to make on this point, I have to point out that we have spent a lot of time during the Finance Committee session on this issue.

Therefore, can we suggest that we go back to the Finance Committee Report, paragraph 18(c)? That is to say: *“emphasized the importance of adopting a flexible approach, considering the needs of different working conditions, to avoid disruption of projects and programmes, in particular in Decentralized Offices”*.

CHAIRPERSON

Would it be agreeable, if we borrowed some words from the Finance Committee's report because we cannot spend time on arguing two words?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

In the spirit of being constructive and reaching consensus, I will propose another compromise.

We are ready to delete point (i) and instead of this, in point (h) to incorporate some additional words after “took note of the assurance by the FAO Secretariat to apply” we suggest to add: “a flexible approach without quantitative restriction”. I think that this compromise proposal would suit my Egyptian friend.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Mr Chair, if we do not reach agreement here, please send it to the Drafting Committee. I think that changing the language does not help.

We are willing to refer to the document that was presented by the Secretariat which includes “a flexible approach”. We will also agree to mention “flexible approach” as identified or as explained by the FAO document, but “quantitative”, this is singling out one criterion.

There are many criteria and if we can include all of them and then exclude only one, I might understand. But just singling out this one does not give a good indication.

Mr Lupino LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

Indeed, we are already spending a lot of time here. I also do not intend to be here on the podium for the rest of the afternoon.

I would appeal to Members. Even before China has mentioned it, there were already some delegations who referred to the Finance Committee report and how it is worded. Right now it seems that we are going also in circles in putting in some new language or we are trying now to discuss further.

In the Finance Committee's report, as mentioned, paragraphs 18(c) and 18(d) refer to the progress report to the next session and to the flexible approach. What I suggest is that in the same vein we treat point (h) as two separate points, one requesting the Secretariat to provide the progress report, and the other taking note of the assurance by the FAO Secretariat for a flexible approach.

And then, as suggested also by Egypt, with these elements we may give the Drafting Committee the instruction or the mandate to improve on this.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

We agree with the proposal from the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am sorry that I had four or five compromised solutions. This is because, for us, this is a very substantial issue. I propose to work with Egypt to find a common text on this.

CHAIRPERSON

By that, you mean that you will have bilateral discussions with them?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

Yes, Mr Chair. This is what I had in mind.

CHAIRPERSON

But the solution must come back to the Council then.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON

At least it gives us an opportunity to move on.

So that brings us to the end of this item with the provision that they will have bilateral discussions and come back to us for a final agreement.

Item 8. Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (12-14 March 2018)

Point 8. Rapport de la cent-sixième session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (12-14 mars 2018)

Tema 8. Informe del 106.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (12-14 de marzo de 2018)

(CL 159/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We now continue with item 8, *Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*. The document before you is CL 159/2.

I invite His Excellency Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, Chairperson of the CCLM, to present the report.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

Good afternoon, colleagues. Let me begin by thanking my colleagues in the CCLM for their support and the constructive and friendly atmosphere in which they held their deliberations. I also want to thank Antonio Tavares and his team for the support that they gave us.

It is my pleasure to present the Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, CCLM, held from 12 to 14 March this year.

The CCLM Agenda included four items:

First, the CCLM examined a document entitled “*Procedures related to the process of appointment of the Director-General*” and noted the background information provided. The Committee agreed with the proposal that any internal candidates for the office of Director-General be placed on special leave without pay from the date of communication of nominations under Rule XXXVII, paragraph 1(b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO). It noted that this proposal reflected the practice followed in 2011 and that the matter had been discussed in the context of the implementation of the FAO Reform.

It further agreed that an advance letter of resignation be submitted with the nomination of any internal candidate to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Council, for subsequent transmission to the Director-General Elect who will decide, within ten days after assuming office, whether to accept the resignation. If no decision is taken by that date, the letter of resignation will be null and void.

The Committee also agreed that, in anticipation for the process for the election of the next Director-General, staff members be reminded of their obligations of neutrality and impartiality as set out in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, in line with established practice in FAO and other UN Systems Organizations.

The CCLM noted the Secretariat’s observations on the need for a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming administrations and requested the Secretariat to prepare a document on this matter for consideration at its next session.

The Council is invited to note the deliberations of the CCLM and endorse its conclusions just presented.

The second item on the Agenda related to a Proposal to amend the Statutes of the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC). The CCLM noted that the Commission, during its 15th Regular Session in Panama City, Panama, in January this year, had reviewed and unanimously approved the amendments to the Statutes aimed at expanding the mandate of the Commission to marine artisanal fisheries.

The CCLM observed that in view of the various regional fisheries bodies active in the region, the planning and implementation of COPESCAALC activities would require coordination with those of other bodies (e.g. WECAFC), including with respect to the use of resources, identification of complementarities and strengthening synergies. The CCLM endorsed the revised Statutes, set out in Appendix 1 to the CCLM Report, and agreed to forward them to this Session of the Council for approval.

The Council is invited to approve the Resolution amending the Statutes the Commission for Small Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPEAALC), set out in Appendix 1 to the CCLM Report.

The CCLM took note of document CCLM 106/4 “*Activities of the Development Law Branch – Information Report*” and the information presented during the Session. It expressed appreciation for the role of the Development Law Branch (LEGN) in assisting Members in addressing their global priorities and commitments such as AMR and observed the importance of appropriate gaps and needs analysis, underlining that legal reform is not needed in every case.

The Council is invited to welcome the concerted focus given by the Development Law Branch to country needs and priorities in assisting Members to address their global priorities and commitments and alignment of its activities with achievement of the FAO Strategic Objectives.

The last document considered by the CCLM was *Procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution*. The document included information on steps taken in accordance with the decision adopted by the Council on this matter at its 155th Session concerning both the implementation of an interim procedure and the development of a long-term one.

The Committee noted the consultations undertaken by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on the issue of the procedures for the appointment of secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution, the ongoing processes, as well as the views of the Secretariat and further noted that the matter would be considered again by the CCLM at its next session. The Council is invited to take note of the CCLM deliberations.

This brings me to the end of my presentation, and I thank you for your attention.

Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)

Japan has the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Regional Group thanks the Chair of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, for presenting the report of the 106th Session of Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

We would also like to seize the opportunity to again recognize the important works by the members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, and commend the Secretariat for preparing the related documents.

During the 36th Session of the FAO Conference that took place back in 2009, we, the Member Countries of FAO have approved and adopted Section H of Document C 2009/LIM/8 which defines the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters as one of the Governing Bodies of FAO.

This is due to the nature of the Committee to discuss and consider various legal and constitutional aspects of the Organization, as well as to provide legal opinions through its meetings and sessions, in relation to the works and functions of the Organization in accordance with the Basic Texts.

This is very important to note and to bear in mind that the CCLM works through its expertise in the legal and constitutional aspects, to assist Member States for the benefit of the Organization to promote the common welfare by furthering separate and collective action on their part for the purpose of raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the people, securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, bettering the condition of rural populations, and thus contributing towards an expanding world economy and ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger.

During the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters that took place from 12 to 14 March 2018, various legal and constitutional matters to be discussed and considered were presented to the members of the CCLM for further guidance.

Having to carefully scrutinize the Report of the 106th Session of the CCLM, we wish to provide our views as follows:

On the Procedures related to the process of appointment of the Director-General, The Asia Regional Group is also of the view that in anticipation of the elections for the Director-General of FAO that is due to take place in 2019, it is desirable to clarify a number of issues, in this regard are the issues of the status of internal candidates during the electoral process, the status of unsuccessful internal candidates, and the question of compliance by staff with obligations of neutrality in connection with the electoral process.

Therefore, The Asia Regional Group fully supports the policy that any internal candidate for the office of Director-General be placed on special leave without pay from the date of communication of nominations under Rule XXXVII, paragraph 1(b) of the General Rules of the Organization.

We are also of the same view that an advance letter of resignation be submitted with the nomination of any internal candidate to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Council, for subsequent transmission to the Director-General Elect who will decide, within ten days after assuming office, whether to accept the resignation. And, if no decision is taken by that date, the letter of resignation will be null and void.

With regard to the obligation of neutrality and impartiality of staff members in connection with the electoral process, we agree that staff members of the Organization be reminded of their obligations of neutrality and impartiality as set out in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, in line with established practice in FAO and other UN Systems Organizations.

Furthermore, we also welcome the concern of the Secretariat and take note of its observations on the need for a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming administrations and request the Secretariat to prepare a document on this matter for consideration at the next CCLM session.

On the Proposal to amend the Statutes of the Commission for Small Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPPESAALC), the Asia Regional Group is of the view that the more expanding of the works of the Commission shall provide more opportunities to the contribution of food and nutrition security in the region.

It should also be clearly pointed out that the Commission should be able to promote the management and sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture and work to satisfy the needs and interests of its members to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, life below water. With this, the Asia Regional Group approve the Resolution amending the Statutes of COPPESAALC set out in Appendix 1 to the Report.

On the Activities of the Development Law Service, the Asia Regional Group also welcomes the concerted focus given by the Development Law Branch to country needs and priorities in assisting Members to address their global priorities and commitments and the careful alignment of its activities with achievement of the FAO Strategic Objectives.

We would also like to again renew our support to the Committee in recognizing the Development Law Service for its role within the legal frameworks and the dissemination of information in the achievement of the global development agenda in food security and nutrition issues, and continue supporting Members' efforts towards sustainable development. We also take this opportunity to praise LEGN for its periodic continued effort to apprise the Committee on its work.

On the Procedure for the appointment of Secretaries of Bodies under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, the Asia Regional Group take note of the consultations undertaken by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on the issue of the procedures for the appointment of secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution, the ongoing processes, as well as the views of the Secretariat and further note that the matter would be considered again by the CCLM.

We also fully support the recommendation that concerned Article XIV Bodies could be invited to participate in the next CCLM Session, for obtaining a more balanced and impartial information.

Last but not least, we would like to briefly raise the issue of representation during the taking place of these discussions within the Governing Body.

As pointed out by the Report, the Asia Regional Group wishes to be put on record of the concern of non-attendance of a Member of a Governing Body during the course of its Session. We would like the Secretariat to secure the attendance of the Member of the Governing Body during the course of its sessions and/or another person acting on behalf of the Member of that Governing Body. We consider this a very important situation due to the potential opportunity-loss to the region, to be equally represented during a policy-making process within the Organization.

With this note, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE-MABUSELA (Lesotho)

Lesotho is honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group on this Agenda item, which we deem to be of great importance.

Allow me therefore, Chairperson, to begin by thanking the Chairperson of the CCLM, my dear friend and colleague Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, Members of the CCLM, and also the Legal Office for the meticulous work done as reflected in this report.

Allow me to echo the sentiment of those who came before me in thanking the Secretariat for compiling this wonderful report.

The Africa Regional Group welcomes the report notes with appreciation the mammoth task related to the process of appointment of the Director-General and indeed recognises and cannot over-emphasize the importance of exercising due diligence by all involved in the process. Premised on this, the Africa Regional Group therefore agrees with the recommendations made in the Report that:

Any internal candidate for the office of the of Director-General be placed on special leave without pay from the date of communication of nominations under Rule XXXVII, paragraph 1(b) of the General Rules of the Organization.

We are also in agreement to that an advance letter of resignation be submitted with the nomination of the internal candidate to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Council, for subsequent transmission to the Director-General Elect who will then decide whether to accept the resignation, and if no decision is taken by that date, the letter of resignation will be null and void.

The Africa Regional Group is also in agreement with the recommendation that in anticipation for the process for the election of the next Director-General, staff members should be reminded of their obligations of neutrality and impartiality as set out in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, and in line with established practice in FAO and other UN Systems Organizations.

We therefore note with appreciation the Secretariat's observations on the need for a smooth transition between the outgoing and incoming administrations and supports the request that the Secretariat should prepare a document on this matter for consideration at the next CCLM session.

With regard to COPPESAALC, the Africa Regional Group approves the Resolution amending the Statutes of the Commission for Small Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean as set out in Appendix 1 of this Report.

Before we conclude, the Africa Regional Group welcomes the concerted focus given by the Development Law Branch to Country needs and priorities in assisting Members to address their global priorities and commitments and the careful alignment of its activities with achievement of the FAO Strategic Objectives.

The Africa Regional Group again notes with appreciation the consultations undertaken by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on the issue of the Procedure for the appointment of

secretaries for Bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution, the ongoing processes, as well as the views of the Secretariat and further notes that the matter should be considered again by the CCLM.

In conclusion, the African Regional Group welcomes and endorses this report of the CCLM.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters who participated in the 106th Session of the committee for their thorough work on the matters discussed.

We appreciate the information given to the committee on the important and successful work of the Development Law Branch. We would be in favour of its team's work being presented to an even wider audience of members, in order to enrich members' knowledge of this part of the FAO's work.

The CCLM deliberated on the appointment of secretaries to the Article XIV Bodies. We would like to recall the decision of the 155th Session of the Council, which stated that *"with immediate effect, the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and the FAO Secretariat will consult with the concerned Article XIV Bodies with a view to developing a proposal on procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of concerned Article XIV Bodies acceptable to the Bodies and to be submitted to the FAO Council by the end of 2018"*.

In line with that decision, the CCLM concluded that this matter must be thoroughly processed and performed with due attention given to the needs and the views of the Article XIV Bodies.

We welcome the fact that the committee decided to invite representatives of the Article XIV Bodies to its next session, to support a more informed discussion. We encourage the ICC and the FAO Secretariat to reconsider the IOTC proposal and to step up their work in finding a solution to this issue that is, as was already decided by Council, acceptable to the Bodies.

At its meeting, the Committee was requested to endorse the preparation of a document on a smooth transition between the newly appointed and the resigning Director-General. We regret that, due to the way the issue was put in front of the Committee, its members were not given time to reflect in advance or to consult on the topic. We would however like to underline that we do not see the need for preparing such a document and we therefore propose that that part of the report not be endorsed.

Finally, the CCLM is a central and important part of the FAO's governance. We take note of and appreciate the comments in the report that efforts shall be made to ensure the presence and active participation of all committee members.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia wishes to express its support for the ongoing efforts that you are making to discuss with Article XIV Bodies, namely the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the International Plant and Genetic Resources Treaty, and the process for appointment of their Executive Secretaries.

We understand that both the IOTC and the treaty are operating in good faith to draft changes to their rules and procedures to find a solution that is acceptable to them and that takes account of FAO's responsibilities as requested by the Council in its decision in its session in December 2016.

We also welcome the Committee's decision to invite representatives of the IOTC and the Treaty to its next meeting to discuss the proposals in more detail. Australia is confident that a solution acceptable to both parties will be found and we look forward to Council's consideration of that solution when the agreement occurs.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Realizo esta intervención a nombre de Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador, Haití, Nicaragua, República Dominicana y Venezuela. Agradecemos la presentación del documento CL 159/2 y acogemos con beneplácito el informe del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos de la FAO, celebrado del 12 al 14 de marzo del 2018.

De cara a las lecciones a cargo del Director General de la FAO, consideramos que los procedimientos que figuran en el informe obedecen a prácticas apropiadas, mismas que promueven un proceso abierto, justo, equitativo y transparente de elección y un traspaso ordenado de parte de la administración saliente.

Asimismo, manifestamos satisfacción respecto al informe de actividades presentada por la subdivisión de derechos para el desarrollo de la Oficina Jurídica, mismo que recoge actividades de ejecución concreta, según prioridades y necesidades expresadas por los países. Agradecemos el trabajo realizado por la Comisión de Pesca Continental y Acuicultura para América Latina y Caribe, COPESCAALC, reunida en Panamá del 22 al 24 de febrero de 2018, cuyos resultados apuntan a enmendar su estatuto, incorporando la pesca en pequeña escala y artesanal en su estatuto, evitando solapamiento con otros organismos subregionales de pesca y/o de ordenación pesquera y mayores compromisos financieros de la FAO.

Finalmente, tomamos nota y valoramos las consultas en curso realizada por el Presidente Independiente del Consejo, dirigida a elaborar un procedimiento a largo plazo para la selección de los secretarios del órgano, establecidos en virtud del artículo XIV de la Constitución. En este sentido, consideramos pertinente y oportuno esperar los resultados de este proceso de consultación, auspiciando que el mismo guarde coherencia con el régimen jurídico del Órgano Estatuario de la FAO, creado en virtud del artículo XIV de la Constitución.

Con estas consideraciones, refrendamos el informe del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos.

Mr Thanawat TIENSIN (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement made by Japan on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

Thailand thanks CCLM and Legal Office for the concise report.

We took note that staff members of the FAO shall be neutral and impartial during the process of election of the next Director-General to ensure the smooth transition.

With regard to the appointment of Secretary of the Bodies under Article 14 Bodies of the FAO Constitution, it is important that Article XIV Bodies, such as Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and others, should stay with FAO with greater autonomy.

We would suggest that the procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of Bodies should be mutually agreeable.

We look forward to see the outcome of the next CCLM meeting

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

La Delegación de Chile agradece la presentación del Informe del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos de la FAO y desea hacer algunos comentarios

Acogemos con satisfacción la aprobación de las enmiendas a los estatutos de la Comisión de Pesca Continental y Acuicultura para América Latina y el Caribe (COPESCAALC), que incorporan la pesca en pequeña escala y artesanal en el estatuto, evitando solapamientos con otros organismos subregionales de pesca y/o de ordenación pesquera y no significan mayores compromisos financieros de la FAO.

En relación a la elaboración de un procedimiento a largo plazo para la selección de los secretarios de los órganos establecidos en virtud del artículo XIV de la Constitución, tomamos nota y agradecemos las consultas en curso realizadas por el Presidente Independiente del Consejo.

En este sentido, Chile llama a encontrar satisfactorias soluciones en consulta con los órganos bajo el artículo XIV de la Constitución, en el pleno respeto de las disposiciones generales de la Convención de Viena de Derecho de los Tratados, la naturaleza jurídica particular de cada órgano y las disposiciones pertinentes de los tratados constitutivos.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

First, we thank the CCLM Chair for his report and for his service as CCLM Chair. We will restrict our comments to Article XIV Bodies.

The United States of America takes note of the information presented in CL 159/2, including the procedures for the selection and appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies. We note that the Independent Chair of Council continues consultations on the issue and that decisions on a way ahead have not yet been finalized with Members and that any procedures used to date are considered interim procedures.

We would like to see a solution that is acceptable to both the Secretariat and the Member States.

M. Carlos AMARAL (Observateur de l'Angola)

Premièrement, nous félicitons le Président du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques pour la présentation du rapport et souscrivons totalement et intégralement à l'intervention du Lesotho au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Deuxièmement, je prends la parole pour demander s'il serait possible que les candidats au poste de Directeur général présentent leur programme aux représentants permanents et répondent à des questions non seulement au moment de la Conférence, comme prévu dans le présent document, mais également avant, lors d'une session du Conseil.

Je pense que nous avons suivi cette procédure au FIDA et même, si je me rappelle bien, la dernière fois ici à la FAO. Ceci afin de donner la possibilité aux Membres d'avoir une idée des candidats et d'informer nos pays sur les qualifications de ces candidats.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

I want to thank the Members of the Council for their very constructive and positive comments. Bulgaria, the issue of the transition, it is true that the Committee received this document or rather a document from the Secretariat I think the day before or during the meeting itself.

We did express concern that we were being given this document at that very late hour. However, we did discuss the document. What we could not do was to endorse the proposal contained in that document because we needed more time.

This is why we then asked them to refer a document and submit it in the proper manner for consideration at our meeting in October, but we did understand that there were real issues, especially with the transition between Mr Diouf and the current Director-General. I have even had discussions with Management to find out exactly what happened and we got the impression that the transition was drawn out, it was messy, and it was not helpful. And we do not think that it should be something that happens in an organization as big and as important as FAO.

Therefore we invited them to prepare something that we can look at with their proposals. We do not know what they are going to propose. We have not seen it yet. We will see what they are proposing in October. But the most important point that I need to emphasize is that we did discuss the proposal, that document. We looked at it and discussed it, but we could not endorse it and this is why we put that recommendation that you prepare a proper document and give it to us in October.

So I do not know, if removing any references to a discussion that actually happened will be the correct procedure. The discussion did happen and we came up with the recommendation that we have in the document.

The other issue is about the Article XIV Bodies. We share Members' concerns and interest in this matter. We wait to see what we are going to receive in October and if indeed the Members of the Article XIV Bodies come, we will be very happy to engage them and we also look forward to the participation of the representative of Southwest Pacific who specifically raised that matter and said that arrangements have to be made for that Member to be available.

In fact, to the best of our knowledge, the Member has always been invited to come. Arrangements have been made for him to come. But for some reasons to do with his work, he is not always able to

attend. In fact, we have held two meetings without representation from that region which is a very regrettable situation.

So we hope that the next time, arrangements will be made so that there can be representation.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Very briefly, there are three points which I consider to be addressed to us, the Secretariat. Regarding the Article XIV Bodies, as Ambassador Magwenzi has explained, we will continue to work on this matter.

Regarding the issue of the representation of the Southwest Pacific Region in the Committee, at our level we did everything we could. My colleague, who is sitting next to me, intervened many times with the representative to the Committee.

So he could not come and this became an issue. I will intervene very actively with him for the next session; but we did all we could

We still think that we should be very prudent in having countries sitting behind the name plate of another country. I think we should be prudent in implementing any of the solutions that were proposed to us.

But I want to assure the Council that, once again, we shall intervene actively with that representative and I think we went as far as exploring the possibility of changing the date of the CCLM but then we realized that this did not suit other Members.

This is in fact a very longstanding issue peculiar to a specific region. Allow me to say that. We will try our best to ensure that the region will be represented.

Very briefly on another point, Mr Chairman, Ambassador Magwenzi has already explained the position. The last thing we would wish to have now, in this meeting, would be a discussion about the transition between an outgoing Director-General and an incoming Director-General although this was something which inflamed this same room many times some eight years ago.

I just want to point out that we do not wish to force anything. We do not wish to intervene on this matter. I would only point out that the general rules of the Organization and the rules of procedure of the CCLM foresee that if the Director-General believes that a particular topic should be considered in the interest of the Organization, it is the right and the duty of the Director-General, in consultation with the Chairperson, to place an item on the provisional agenda. Then it will be up to the Members to decide what they wish to do.

But I would not wish to have a discussion on this matter. We have reflected in the conclusions something that should be acceptable to the Members, subject of course to the position of the Members.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

I thought I could not let this go without a comment. Certainly the Southwest Pacific Region takes its role on the CCLM very seriously. As you know, we are in a unique position in that we have only two permanent delegations in Rome with an honorary council as well. It makes it very difficult for us to ensure representation beyond those of us based here but we also try very, very hard to ensure that it is not always Australia or New Zealand sitting at the table.

So on this basis, we are working very closely with our colleagues in the region to try and ensure that we get the representation as it is currently proposed at the CCLM meeting. We sincerely hope we will be able to achieve that. If we cannot, we ask for the assistance from the Secretariat in terms of ensuring there is representation from the Region.

M. Carlos AMARAL (Observateur de l'Angola)

Veillez excuser mon insistance en qualité d'observateur, mais j'ai soulevé une question. J'ai demandé s'il serait possible que les candidats au poste de Directeur général s'adressent aux représentants permanents avant la Conférence, lors du Conseil ou d'une réunion propre, afin d'informer nos pays de leurs qualifications avant la Conférence. Est-ce une pratique courante?

LEGAL COUNSEL

In fact, I did not answer that question on purpose because it came from an observer. I have the possibility, I would say, of not answering the question but I would imagine that any candidates can address the representatives and I do not think there is a need to change any or to foresee any special procedures.

Currently our Basic Texts foresee that the candidates address the Council and the Conference but I would imagine that the candidates could address informal meetings of representatives. So unless the Council wishes to have a discussion on this topic, and we could maybe have more detailed procedures, but nothing would prevent any candidates from having meetings with the representatives.

If the Council believes that we should address this topic, we can, although the nominations period will start in December and we are somewhat reluctant to establish formal rules after the beginning of that period. But we are in the hands of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Legal Counsel, but going by the last time the elections took place, there was an address by each candidate to the Council and there were questions asked by each region. Was that a one-off thing or is that a procedure?

LEGAL COUNSEL

The candidates are required to address the Council which takes place in April and answer questions that may be asked, but without drawing any conclusions. The same applies at the Conference before the election. We have specific, formal procedures that have been approved by the Members.

There could still be other possibilities of an informal nature, but formally the General Rules of the Organization foresee that the candidates address the Council in April and answer questions. We now have a well-defined practice also: the manner in which the questions are asked, the time allocated to the candidates. This is done again at the Conference. I think that by agreement of all candidates in 2011, there were some adjustments to the questions if I recall matters correctly.

But we have already a formal procedure set out in the Basic Texts for the candidates to address the Conference and the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

We will put my summary on the screen before I read it out.

Item 8 – *Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters:*

1. The Council approved the Report of the 106th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters with regard to internal candidates for the Office of Director-General, the Secretariat's observations on transition between outgoing and incoming administrations, appointment of secretaries of Article XIV Bodies and on the Development Law Service.
2. In particular, the Council:
 - a) agreed that any internal candidate for the Office of the Director-General be placed on special leave without pay from the date of communication of nominations under Rule XXXVII, paragraph (b) of the General Rules of the Organization;
 - b) agreed that an advance letter of resignation be submitted with the nomination of any internal candidate to the Secretary-General of the Conference and the Council, for transmission to the Director-General Elect who will decide, within ten days after assuming office, whether to accept the resignation. If no decision is taken by that date, the letter of resignation will be null and void;
 - c) agreed that, in anticipation of the process for the election of the next Director-General, staff members be reminded of their obligations of neutrality and impartiality as set out in the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, in line with established practice in FAO and other UN system organizations;
 - d) noted the Secretariat's observations on transition between outgoing and incoming administrations;

e) welcomed the concerted focus given by the Development Law Branch to country needs and priorities in assisting Members to address their global priorities and commitments and the careful alignment of its activities with achievement of the FAO Strategic Objectives;

f) noted the consultations undertaken by the Independent Chairperson of the Council on the issue of the procedures for the appointment of secretaries of bodies under Article XIV of the Constitution, the ongoing processes, as well as the views of the Secretariat and further noted that the matter would be considered again by the CCLM at its next session.

3. In addition, the Council approved the Resolution amending the Statutes of the Commission for Small Scale and Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean set out in the *Appendix* to this Report.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

I think we can easily manage it in the Drafting Committee. I would just like to include in point f) something that a number of delegations noted, which was just recalling the fact that the future procedure for appointment of secretaries must be acceptable to both the Article XIV Bodies and to FAO. But I will not propose drafting. I would just like it noted that I will introduce that in the Drafting Committee.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

First of all, I would like to support Australia. Then we would like to ask for a small add-in to point d): *“noted the Secretariat’s observations on transition between outgoing and incoming administrations”*, and at the end to add *“... and asked that a document on this issue be produced well in time to allow sufficient consultation”*.

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE-MABUSELA (Lesotho)

I want us to get clarification from the Legal Counsel if we are talking about Rule XXXVII, paragraph 1(b), or Rule XXXVII, paragraph (b).

CHAIRPERSON

Rule XXXVII, paragraph 1(b).

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE-MABUSELA (Lesotho)

Then it should reflect as such on the draft.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I would like to go back to the addition by Bulgaria. I do not know whether we are talking about the same thing here. The Secretariat has made the vision on the transition historical. What would be the aim of a document that will be produced here? I would like to understand what we are asking the Council to do here.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

In fact, we want to thank Bulgaria for making this suggestion. It is consistent with what we had actually said in the CCLM. The chaos that happened in the transition last time should have been avoided. The Secretariat can come up with proposals or suggestions of how to avoid it in the next transition.

We will see what the Secretariat is going to propose. If it is acceptable, we will endorse it. If it is not, we will say “no”. But we need a document before us to be able to look at what is proposed.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

This is what I also wanted to say. The text that we have proposed is on point 9 of the CCLM report, so that everything is correct.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other comments. So the summary is adopted.

Item 9. Dates for submission of nominations for the Office of Director-General
Point 9. Date de présentation des candidatures au poste de Directeur général
Tema 9. Plazo para la presentación de candidaturas al cargo de Director General
(CL 159/6)

CHAIRPERSON

The next item on the agenda is Item 9 *Dates for Submission of Nominations for the Office of Director-General*. The document before Council is CL 159/6.

I will now pass the floor to the Secretary-General to provide some comments.

SECRETARY GENERAL

This document informs Members that the nomination period, as stipulated in Rule XXXVII, Paragraph 1(b) of the General Rules of the Organization, shall have a duration of three months and end at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the session of the Council which is scheduled to take place not less than 60 days before the session of the Conference at which the election will take place.

The dates proposed for the 161st Session of the Council are from 8 to 12 April 2019, and those proposed for the 41st Session of the Conference are from 22 to 29 June 2019.

Based on these dates, it is further proposed to set the dates of 1 December 2018 to 28 February 2019 as the period during which nominations may be submitted for the post of Director-General, to be elected at the 41st Session of the Conference.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

This statement is presented on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group wishes to thank FAO for timeously providing information as to the procedures to be followed regarding the nomination of candidates for the post of Director-General of the Organization, who will be elected during the 41st Session of the Conference in June 2019.

This pertinent information will provide countries and regions with sufficient time to reflect and submit nominations for this critical position. Furthermore, it will afford Member Countries with adequate time following the closure of the nomination process on 28 February 2019, to interact with the candidates during the ensuing Council session, scheduled from 8 to 12 April 2019, and, thereafter, prior to the Conference itself.

Most importantly, the Africa Regional Group wishes to also encourage FAO to take regional balance and gender into account when finalizing the shortlist for this critical position.

The Africa Regional Group wishes to renew its continued support to FAO and to also stress that it is vital that, in future, the Organization is headed by a strong willed Director-General, with the foresight to take the organization to greater heights in terms of achieving its strategic objectives both in the medium and long term.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We thank the Secretariat for document CL 159/6, which recalls the rules on the appointment of the new Director-General and sets 1 December 2018 to 28 February 2019 as the period during which nominations may be made for the position of Director-General to be elected at the 41st Session of FAO's Conference in June 2019.

We endorse this document, which we consider timely and adequate. As we have indicated under agenda item 8, we do not see any need for a transition document. We consider that the relevant provisions on the appointment of the new Director-General in FAO's Basic Texts are clear.

We look forward to the presentations of all candidates to the Council in April 2019 as part of an open and transparent process that focuses on getting the best person for FAO and the people it serves.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

I am perplexed because the statement delivered by Bulgaria stated that the document is not necessary, but that was the proposal introduced by Bulgaria during the discussion of item 8. Could I ask Bulgaria to clarify its position on this?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am going to find my statement and to cite it. Probably my Brazilian colleague did not hear me well. It was absolutely the same said during the discussion of item 8.

We speak about a transitional document, not about a document itself.

CHAIRPERSON

I think this particular summary does not need to go on the screen; it is one sentence.

Item 9, *Dates for submission of nominations for the Office of Director-General*, paragraph 1:

The Council set the dates of 1 December 2018 to 28 February 2019 as the period during which Member Nations could submit nominations for the office of Director-General.

I see no reaction so the summary is adopted.

Item 10. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 158th Session of the Council (4-8 December 2017)**Point 10. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent cinquante-huitième session (4-8 décembre 2017)****Tema 10. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 158.º período de sesiones (4-8 de diciembre de 2017)**

(CL 159/LIM/3 Rev.2; CL 159/INF/6)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move to item 10, *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 158th Session of the Council*.

The documents before you are CL 159/LIM/3 Rev.2 and CL 159/INF/6.

The Council is invited to note updates on decisions taken at relevant previous sessions, as outlined in document CL 159/LIM/3 Rev.2.

With regard to point 11 on seat-sharing arrangements contained in the table of decisions, I am pleased to report back to Council that, as requested by Council at its 158th Session, I convened informal consultations with Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Regional Groups regarding the terms of office of Council Members on which a consensus emerged, as set out in document CL 159/INF/6, whereby it was agreed that: seat sharing touches on the governance of FAO and is therefore a matter for the Membership of the Organization; it is considered by Members that there is no provision in the Basic Texts which specifically prohibits seat-sharing arrangements and, on that basis, Members of Regional Groups who desire to share seats on the Council are free to do so and under the modalities they deem appropriate. In this regard, Members of the Africa Regional Group confirmed that they have decided to serve full terms of three years. Finally, it was agreed, and it is submitted to the Council for approval, that the practice of seat-sharing at Council need not be re-examined by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Furthermore, with regard to point 19 on the Appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies set out in the table of decisions, I am pleased to provide an update as follows:

I wrote a letter both to the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as well as to the Chairperson of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, reminding them of the decision of the FAO Council.

Furthermore, on 5 April 2018, I participated in a meeting of the Bureau of the Governing Body of the Treaty. Further consultations with the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the Treaty are scheduled for July this year, on the occasion of a visit of the Chairperson to Rome.

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission held its 22nd session in Bangkok from 21 to 25 May 2018 during which an exchange of views on the matter took place.

Annex 1 to document CL 159/LIM/3 contains the Circular Communication sent to members of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission on 6 April 2018 with regard to the procedures for the selection and appointment of Secretaries of Article XIV Bodies.

This Circular Communication was considered together with a proposal prepared by a “*small drafting group*” and discussions were held together with the Assistant Director-General of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. A number of options are currently on the table.

One of these proposals is that on the occasion of the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fisheries, scheduled to take place at FAO headquarters from 9 to 13 July 2018, I will hold discussions with concerned members of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the FAO Secretariat.

The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters will review the matter again at its session in October 2018.

In line with the mandate by the Council to the Independent Chairperson of Council, I will report back definitively on this matter at the 160th Session of the Council in December 2018.

Mr Won Chul JOO (Republic of Korea)

I would like to commend the outcome of the consultation with respect to seat sharing arrangements by ICC, which is sub-item 11.

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, I would like to express our appreciation to the Independent Chairperson of the Council, Chairpersons, and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups for holding a number of consultations with a view to derive a consensus regarding the seat-sharing arrangements in the Council. We welcome and strongly support the consensus reached, especially the Members of each region that wish to share seats in the Council at liberty to do so in the modalities that they see fit.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We thank the Secretariat for the preparation of document CL 159/LIM/3 Rev 2 on the Status of Implementation of the Decisions taken at the 158th Session of the Council.

After thorough examination, we cannot concur with the status of implementation proposed by the Secretariat regarding point 9, geographical balance of consultants. We note that document CL 159/4 did not fully live up to the requests of the Council for the submission of a comprehensive document for geographical balance of consultants, taking into account the points raised by the Council at its 158th Session. The document was not clearly structured and did not make a clear distinction between information on the new recruitment system for consultants introduced since August 2017 and the issue of geographical balance of consultants.

Furthermore, related to the latter, the document is ambiguous because it is not clear to what extent the material provided was mere information or rather a proposal, both terms being used in the document. Finally, the document lacks important data and information, especially regarding the scope of a potential key for geographical balance and the cost implications of the latter. Against this backdrop, the Finance Committee at its 170th Session has requested additional data and information to be provided.

This points to a further issue: the request to take into account the points raised at the 158th Council session was not implemented, as several issues and questions which Members raised in the discussion, such as cost implications, have been disregarded in CL 159/4. Therefore, the status of implementation regarding the decision of the Council at its 158th Session should be “*ongoing*” instead of “*completed*”.

With respect to point 19, we take note of the activities undertaken by the ICC and the FAO Secretariat in connection with developing a proposal on procedures for the appointment of secretaries of Article XIV Bodies acceptable to these Bodies. However, we would like to express our

disappointment to the Annex 1 to document CL 159/LIM/3, which sets out the views by the FAO Secretariat on a proposal by the IOTC. This annex which is dated 6 April 2018 merely repeats positions taken by the FAO Secretariat in 2016 and 2017 which were already considered not acceptable by the IOTC.

We would like to recall that the FAO Secretariat was tasked by the Council in December 2016 to facilitate finding a solution that is acceptable to the Bodies. The way forward can only be found if the suggestions by the Article XIV Bodies concerned are duly taken on board. In our understanding, that is a prerequisite for an acceptable solution that will allow the Council to conclude this matter in a satisfactory manner by the end of 2018.

Mr Mitiku Tesso JEBESSA (Ethiopia)

This paper is planned to report on the Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 158th Session of the Council that took place from 4 December to 8 December 2017. Ethiopia is presenting the report on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

During the Session, a lot of decisions were made with the instruction by the Council that these decisions should be implemented by each and every responsible body of FAO. Decisions such as the implementation of the action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a high-level event dedicated to FAO's role in food security matters, which is to be funded by extra-budgetary resources, and be held in conjunction with the 2018 World Food Day events, have been directed to the responsible committees, which are the Programme and Finance Committees respectively. Very important decisions, like the use of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriation, to work on the targets of the policy on gender to meet its standards, to work on the recommendations of the independent evaluation of FAO's evaluation function, and the issue of implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for staff recruited before 1 January 2014. All of them have been well observed by the concerned authorities and organs of FAO.

The decisions taken during the 158th Session are not only those above mentioned. The list includes 20 proposed decisions by the session where all of them by one or another form have been considered by their respective authorities and divisions. Some are already accomplished and some are programmed to be finished by the end of the year. There are a few of them also to be transferred to the year 2019.

The decision passed by the Council about the progress of the continued use of partnerships, including South-South and Triangular cooperation, is planned to be presented to the Joint Meeting in a future session.

Improvements of the working methods of the Council and assignments given to the Independent Chairperson of the Council were dealt with by the ICC during his four informal meetings with the Chairs/Vice-Chairs of Regional groups between January and May 2018.

As to the decision of the Council about developing a proposal on procedures for the appointment of Secretaries of the International Treaties, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), the ICC and the FAO Secretariat participated in a meeting of the Bureau of the governing body of the ITPGRFA, which was held on 5 April 2018. Whereas in the case of IOTC, the FAO Secretariat presented its views on a draft procedure developed by an IOTC "small drafting group" working group through IOTC-circular of 6 April 2018 to IOTC Members. In the case of the IOTC, the FAO Secretariat is recommending that the interim procedure be continued as the long-term procedure for the selection and appointment of the Executive Secretary of the Commission (Commission of IOTC), as well as the secretaries for the other statutory bodies.

Finally, the Secretariat reveals that the draft proposal prepared by the small drafting group of the Commission is inconsistent with the status of the Commission as a statutory body of FAO and, therefore, operating within the FAO and UN system framework.

The Africa Regional Group believes that all the decisions of the 158th Session of the FAO Council have been touched on in different ways and mechanisms to be implemented. The Group also believes that there are some decisions to be carried over to the coming year of 2019. The Group appreciates all the work done to accomplish the fulfilment of the implementation of the decisions taken during the

session, and we, members of the Group, are ready to work with FAO management and different committees to bring all the decisions to their full implementation.

Ms Rosemary NAVARRETE (Australia)

Australia would like to note that we appreciate the work being done by the ICC in terms of the consultation on Article XIV.

We would also like to align with the European Union statement in relation to a solution to this consultation being favourable to all parties. I think that's a concern that was voiced previously and we trust that that will be worked on by you in the future months.

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

India congratulates the reporting officers for the detailed status of implementation of the decisions taken in the 158th Session of the Council.

Making a special reference to the Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security, India also welcomes the policy recommendations on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition; encouraging all stakeholders to use them; and also asked that they be discussed in the Committee on Forestry and forwarded to other relevant bodies. This is important not only from the direct contribution to food security but also through eco-systems services and improving livelihoods. In this context, I may be permitted to reiterate that no organization can be better placed than FAO to bring this synergy between different disciplines/sectors/departments and governments since food security is no longer restricted to only production of agri-commodities but equal, if not more, emphasis needs to be given to enhancing productivity, post-harvest management, agri-business marketing and strengthening standards for safe food. This scenario therefore calls for increasing collaboration between departments/disciplines earlier perhaps thought to be unrelated to food security.

As you might be aware, India has set for herself an ambitious target of Doubling Farmers Income by 2022 and all related organizations/stakeholders are working to make this a reality. We have come a long way from being dependent on imports to having record productions in grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables, therefore also contributing greatly to the global food basket. Hence now the focus for us is on post-production issues: progressive agri-market reforms, value chains, and also allied sectors including livestock, fisheries, agroforestry, adopting a cluster approach for the small and marginal farmers so as to improve logistics, reduce losses and better connect producers to consumers.

We would continue to partner with other countries and look forward to further strengthening exchange of cross-sectoral best practices so as improve food and nutrition security, especially in countries of major concern for all of us.

We would also request FAO Regional Offices to continue their support by sharing best practices from different regions for the mutual benefit of the peoples of all our countries.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments?

If none then I will give the floor to the Legal Counsel to reply to a question raised by Bulgaria. But before that, I could clarify the question of the geographic balance of consultants. Bulgaria, I think your point is correct. It should be considered ongoing and not completed, and I think some of the points you raised will be discussed at the Finance Committee because it is going to consider the question again.

So what I suggest is that the Legal Counsel give you some clarification on the other point you raised. Legal Counsel?

LEGAL COUNSEL

I am always very happy to respond to your requests for any clarifications but I remain rather reluctant to intervene on this matter and to provide information also because maybe this forum is a bit too large to discuss this matter in any detail.

But very briefly, the views that are appended to the document were provided in response to a specific request of the IOTC that the FAO Secretariat should offer its views on the proposals. There was a

decision to have a small drafting group, which had submitted a proposal to FAO and we felt that it was our duty to express our views on this procedure and we never in fact received any response.

We would appreciate a discussion on the substance of our views. We shall continue to discuss this matter. We shall continue to discuss with the countries. We have difficulties with the procedure that is extraneous to all the United Nation's system and, even in this spirit, we went as far, as since some Members wished the Commission to be removed from the framework of FAO, we did our best even to facilitate this process.

So we consider that we went very far in trying to accommodate all concerns and we shall continue to do so. We look forward to continuing to discuss with the Members. But we explore the whole range of possibilities and I would not wish that the Council should have an idea that we are not looking into this matter.

So we will still have discussions, as I understand, on the occasion of the forthcoming session of the Committee on Fisheries.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other request for the floor so we can put the summary on screen.

These are my conclusions for item 10, *Status of implementation of decisions taken at its 158th Session of the Council (4-8 December 2017)*:

1. The Council took note of the status of implementation of decisions taken at its 158th, 155th and 154th Sessions.
2. The Council requested that item 9 regarding geographical balance of consultants be marked as "ongoing".
3. With regard to the matter of the terms of office of Council Members, the Council took note of document CL 159/INF/6 setting out the outcome of consultations facilitated by the Independent Chairperson of the Council and agreed that:
 - a) there was no provision in the Basic Texts which specifically prohibited seat-sharing arrangements and that, on that basis, Members of Regional Groups who desired to share seats on the Council were at liberty to do so, under the modalities that they saw fit; and
 - b) the practice of seat-sharing at Council did not need to be re-examined by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Thank you for your very comprehensive and precise summary. Although I do recognize that we have been using the words "practice of seat-sharing", now that we have come to a conclusion, perhaps it would be more appropriate if we spoke of "possibility of seat-sharing" so that we do not make it a practice. So I would recommend that point (b) be reworded to say "the possibility of seat-sharing."

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

Should this number two be item 8?

CHAIRPERSON

It seems it is 9.

Ms Alka BHARGAVA (India)

Maybe I have an earlier version.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

Just to clarify that I was referring to point (b). Point (a) could stay as it was before. Seat-sharing arrangements, the possibility of seat sharing.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

In your note you mentioned the specificity of the Africa region and the decision that we took but it is not reflected here. So please, if it could be reflected here.

CHAIRPERSON

We will take it on board.

Ms Rosemary NAVARRETE (Australia)

There was substantial discussion by yourself as well as by Members about the work you did on consulting on Article XIV that may deserve mention here.

CHAIRPERSON

This is one of those items which is marked as “ongoing” but if you have a particular text, we can take it on board.

Ms Rosemary NAVARRETE (Australia)

I would not mind working on this in the Drafting Committee. I believe there was substantial discussion on it. If you want to take it on board as you did for the previous request, that would be great.

CHAIRPERSON

Should we leave it to the Drafting Committee?

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

It will probably make sense to have this last sentence in red as a new paragraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Any other comments? I see none. We can adopt that.

I think at this stage we will adjourn and continue with the next items tomorrow. I am told the Drafting Committee will be held from 18.30 to 20.00 hours in the Iraq Room.

We will meet at 9.30 hours tomorrow.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

It might be wiser to start in the morning with the Friends of the Chair so that, when Council resumes, there would be something on the table to discuss.

At this stage, we are not in a position to give you precise and final information on this. My suggestion is that you check the Order of the Day for tomorrow on the Council website tonight. In the coming hours, we will be able to know better the best way to proceed and you will know if we are going to start first with the Friends of the Chair or come back to Council at 9.30 hours tomorrow morning.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We would need to know at what time exactly we are starting the Friends of the Chair because our plan was to invite the Africa Group Members of the Council to meet before the meeting of the Friends of the Chair to get their guidance once more.

CHAIRPERSON

If we started the Friends of the Chair at 10.00 hours, would that work for you?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

So I take the opportunity to inform Africa Group Members that we will meet tomorrow morning at 9.30 hours. The room will be communicated to you by email tonight.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Tomorrow morning we will start at 10.00 hours in the King Faisal Room with the meeting of the Friends of the Chair, and we will announce later tonight through the Order of the Day at what time we will resume the Session of the Council here in the Red Room.

The meeting rose at 18.03 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 03

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.03

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION
SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SÉPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

7 June 2018

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 17.44 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 17 h 44
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 17.44
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

- Item 7. Reports of the 170th (21-25 May 2018) and 171st (29-31 May 2018) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)**
- Point 7. Rapports des cent soixante-dixième (21-25 mai 2018) et cent soixante et onzième (29-31 mai 2018) sessions du Comité financier (suite)**
- Tema 7. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 170.º (21-25 de mayo de 2018) y 171.º (29-31 de mayo de 2018) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)**
(CL 159/4; CL 159/7)

- Item 7.1 Status of Current Assessments and Arrears*
- Point 7.1 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés*
- Tema 7.1 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos*
(CL 159/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the Seventh Meeting of the 159th Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to inform Members that the late start to this afternoon's plenary meeting is due to consultations in the Friends of the Chair meeting. We will take up the items as listed in the Order of the Day.

We will start with item 7. If you recall there was some wording outstanding under this item. I believe an agreement has been reached on a text and it will be projected onscreen.

This text has been agreed between the two Members who had some disagreement and now have proposed an agreed text, as follows:

“...requested the Secretariat to present a progress report to the next session of the Council on the ongoing efforts to improve the geographic distribution of consultants, based on the revised policy of recruitment and evaluation of consultants; took note of the assurance by the Secretariat that the efforts to improve equitable geographical distribution will take into account the need for a flexible approach in the selection process including cost implications, retaining merit as the primary criterion for recruitment, and will not apply rigid numerical ranges”.

This has been agreed between the two Members. If you recall, they had said they would meet bilaterally and would come back with an agreed text and this is the agreed text.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I would like to thank Italy and other Members for showing flexibility on this. Our understanding from this language is that Management will now build on the revised policy on recruitment and evaluation of consultants to provide us in the next Council with an improved number of consultants from developing countries.

Again we reiterate what we have said before: the objective is to improve the number of consultants from developing countries and their ratio in the Organization and we expect that Management will give us an assessment of improved numbers from all regions of developing countries.

CHAIRPERSON

That wording has been adopted.

- Item 12. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2018-19**
- Point 12. Calendrier 2018-2019 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 2018-19**
(CL 159/LIM/1 Rev.2)

CHAIRPERSON

We can move on to item 12, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2018-19*. The document before Council is CL 159/LIM/1 Rev.2.

To avoid meetings overlapping, FAO draws up this calendar in close coordination with IFAD and WFP, and through the web-based RBA Common Calendar, which may be consulted by Members through the FAO Members Gateway accessible on the FAO Home Page.

The schedule of meetings for 2018 is before the Council for approval.

Any changes made since the last Session, when the calendar was presented to the Council for information, are indicated with an asterisk.

Are there any queries or comments on the proposed calendar?

I see no requests for the floor. The conclusion of this item is just one line so it does not need to be put on the screen.

It will say: The Council took note of the amendments to the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies for 2018-19 as produced in the appendix to this Report.

I see no requests for comments so item 12 is concluded.

Item 14. Provisional Agenda for the 160th Session of the Council (December 2018)

Point 14. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent soixantième session du Conseil (décembre 2018)

Tema 14. Programa provisional del 160.º período de sesiones del Consejo (diciembre de 2018)
(CL 159/INF/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now proceed to item 14, *Provisional Agenda for the 160th Session of the Council (3-7 December 2018)*. The relevant document is CL 159/INF/2.

I will now give the floor to delegations who wish to speak on this item.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

The EU and its Member States welcome this opportunity to agree to the provisional agenda for FAO's next Council meeting.

We are pleased that UN Member States were able to come to agreement on the UN Development Reform resolution and support the UN Secretary-General's vision. This resolution provides the scope to deliver the meaningful reform that we need from the system to achieve the ambitious goals of 2030 Agenda.

As a vital part of the UNDS, we want FAO to take this resolution as an endorsement from Member States to take swift action to deliver a more coherent, coordinated UN, focused on delivering results on the ground.

We request FAO Management to prepare a plan for Council deliberation that sets out how FAO will implement the reforms that have been agreed.

As discussed under item 11, we look forward to receiving the updated action plan on addressing sexual exploitation and abuse at the next Council meeting

CHAIRPERSON

Any other requests? I see none. Under this item, does the Secretary-General have any comments to make on what Bulgaria said?

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The comments are duly noted. This matter will come to the Council as part of the normal monitoring and planning mechanisms that are already in place. So I cannot say at this stage whether it will be through the Programme Committee, Joint Meeting or any other channel but obviously this would be brought to the attention of the Council as per standing mechanism.

CHAIRPERSON

Bulgaria, do you have any further comment?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

No, I understood that both items will be reflected in the Report and on the Agenda of the Council.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

When it comes to the Council, it might be through either the Report of the Programme Committee in which case there is not a specific Council agenda item, or the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees. Because of the importance of the subject matter, as you correctly pointed out, it will be covered by the planning, monitoring and reporting mechanism already in place at FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

Bulgaria, are you fine with that reply?

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

Yes, I would just like to reiterate that both of them deserve that.

CHAIRPERSON

For item 14, I may conclude by saying that the Council endorses the provisional agenda of its 160th Session in December 2018.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE

As an outcome of the exchange I have just heard, perhaps it would be better if you would include the reference to the document at the end of your conclusion: “as contained in...”.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, Brazil. That can be done. With that, this item is concluded.

Item 15. Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation**Point 15. Date d'entrée en vigueur de la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'âge élémentaire de départ à la retraite****Tema 15. Fecha de aplicación de la resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio**

(CL 159/4; CL 159/5; JM 2018.1/2 Information Notes 1, 2, 3; Information Note 4)

CHAIRPERSON

We now come to item 15, *Date of Implementation of the Mandatory Age of Separation*.

The pertinent documents are CL 159/4; CL 159/5; JM 2018.1/2 Information Notes 1, 2, 3; Information Note 4. I now invite the Secretariat to introduce this item. Mr Thomas, you have the floor.

M. Laurent THOMAS (Directeur général adjoint, Opérations)

J'avais préparé une introduction détaillée de ce point de l'ordre du jour, mais j'ai l'impression, au vu des discussions qui ont eu lieu au sein des différents groupes et des négociations menées au sein du groupe des Amis du Président indépendant du Conseil, que les Membres du Conseil sont maintenant bien au courant des détails et nuances de la question débattue. Je serai donc plus concis pour préserver votre énergie et le temps précieux pour la discussion de ce point de l'ordre du jour.

Il est important toutefois, pour appuyer vos débats, de rappeler quelques points.

Le document JM 2018.1/2, discuté par le Comité financier et lors de la Réunion conjointe du Comité financier et du Comité du Programme, présente la proposition du Secrétariat pour la mise en œuvre du report à 65 ans de *l'âge réglementaire de départ à la retraite* pour le personnel de la FAO recruté avant le 1^{er} janvier 2014, conformément à la résolution 70/244 du 23 décembre 2015 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, et cela à une date considérée optimale pour l'Organisation.

À la demande des Comités et des Membres, le Secrétariat a aussi préparé quatre notes techniques.

Les notes 1 à 3 présentent l'impact de différentes dates de mise en œuvre de la résolution entre le 1^{er} janvier 2018 et le 1^{er} janvier 2021 sur le cadre organique et les économies.

Enfin, la note No.4 présente l'opinion préparée par le Conseiller juridique de la FAO sur la légalité de la proposition du Secrétariat dans la mise en œuvre de la résolution, ainsi que la pertinence de la référence au cas spécifique du FIDA.

La proposition originale de la Direction de l'Organisation est que la modification de l'âge réglementaire du départ à la retraite pour le personnel recruté avant janvier 2014 soit mise en œuvre à partir du 1^{er} janvier 2021.

La proposition repose sur une analyse approfondie des besoins de l'Organisation en termes de planification de son personnel.

Si cette proposition était approuvée, elle aurait un impact sur 124 fonctionnaires du cadre organique et 84 de la catégorie des Service généraux qui doivent prendre leur retraite d'ici cette date, dans le cadre des règles établies.

La mise en œuvre du nouvel *âge réglementaire de départ à la retraite*, à 65 ans à partir du 1^{er} janvier 2021, permettrait à l'Organisation de disposer de la souplesse nécessaire pour se doter des capacités techniques pour mieux répondre à l'évolution des priorités du programme et de la demande des pays membres, soutenir le rajeunissement des effectifs, et appuyer aussi la réalisation de ses objectifs en matière de parité hommes-femmes et de représentation géographique de son personnel.

L'adoption de cette date faciliterait en outre la tâche du prochain Directeur général et de son équipe de direction, s'ils souhaitaient apporter des ajustements éventuels au Programme de travail et budget 2020-2021 en vue de les soumettre au Conseil pour approbation en décembre 2019.

Le document soumis à la Réunion conjointe souligne également que selon l'analyse du Secrétariat, y compris une évaluation actuarielle menée à notre demande, la proposition aura une incidence marginale sur la situation de la Caisse commune des pensions du personnel des Nations Unies et sur les obligations budgétaires de l'Organisation en ce qui concerne l'Assurance-maladie après cessation de service (AMACS).

En fixant la date d'application de l'*âge réglementaire de départ à la retraite* pour le personnel recruté avant le 1^{er} janvier 2014, les organes directeurs des organismes appliquant le régime commun prennent leurs décisions en ce qui concerne leur personnel à la lumière de leur situation et de leur intérêt particulier: à titre d'exemple, je rappelle les décisions suivantes: 1^{er} janvier 2020 pour le Fonds international de développement agricole (FIDA) et l'Organisation mondiale de la propriété intellectuelle (OMPI), 1^{er} janvier 2019 pour l'Organisation de l'Aviation civile internationale (OACI) et l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), et 1^{er} janvier 2018 pour d'autres organismes et entités des Nations Unies.

Dans le cas spécifique de la FAO, l'application de la résolution des Nations Unies est sujette à examen et approbation éventuelle par le Conseil, et devra ensuite être transposée sous forme d'amendement aux Statuts du personnel de la FAO.

Les documents et notes d'informations connexes, préparés par le Secrétariat, fournissent les informations nécessaires pour comprendre les implications de la résolution et de la mise en œuvre de la date proposée par le Secrétariat afin que les Membres puissent, à l'heure d'exercer leurs fonctions statutaires, prendre une décision en connaissance de cause, à la lumière des considérations pertinentes.

Lorsque le Secrétariat a été interpellé sur la question par les Membres du Comité financier, nous avons pu réaffirmer, au nom de la Direction, qu'il n'y avait aucune ambiguïté de notre part sur le caractère obligatoire de la mise en œuvre de la résolution, mais ceci à une date raisonnable considérée comme optimale dans l'intérêt de l'Organisation.

Cette position a été argumentée juridiquement, formellement et en toute transparence dans la Note d'information numéro 4 qui a été partagée avec vous.

Continues in English

Let me now turn to English to reflect as faithfully as I can the vision of the Director-General on the matter as he outlined it in his statement at the opening session of the Council.

Mr Graziano da Silva reaffirmed consistently that it his duty as Director-General to present the optimal date for FAO's implementation of the UNGA resolution based on well-substantiated analysis and cautious consideration of the matter.

But, ultimately, it is the sovereign authority of Members to decide on the date of implementation at FAO.

The Director-General favours a consensus among Members of the Council and he had wished that the Programme and Finance Committees had reached a consensus, which unfortunately did not happen, so that an agreed proposal would have been submitted to the Council.

This would be in line with the spirit and practice of consensus built in FAO since 2012, including for three successive budget discussions.

It is for this Council to decide the best date for FAO to start the implementation of this resolution.

The same process occurred in the Governing Bodies of other specialized agencies, namely the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

More recently, the Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported 1 January 2020 as the start date for the implementation of this resolution. Many countries that are Members of this Council participated in the decision-making in IFAD.

Various UN specialized agencies have set different starting dates for implementing the resolution, considering their needs, priorities and specific circumstances. In fact, this diversity of situation was already acknowledged with no particular comment or concern expressed in the latest report of the International Civil Service Commission on the monitoring of its decision when it met at the beginning of May.

This date was chosen mainly based on the objective, factual and documented reasons which have already detailed in the different notes.

There is a legal obligation to implement the UN resolution, but the Governing Bodies of each specialized UN agency can decide the best date to start implementation.

The Director-General recalled that this had already been done by the Governing Bodies of WIPO, WHO, ICAO and IFAD.

In these organizations, the legal question of the authority of the Governing Bodies of specialized agencies to decide on an implementation date was not even an issue for the same Members that are present here in this Council.

The Director-General is still convinced that, for FAO, the best date is 1 January 2021 for all the reasons that I have exhaustively explained before.

However, the Director-General understands and accepts that a different date could be considered in order to find a consensus.

Over the last weeks and days, the Director-General and FAO's Executive Management have had several bilateral meetings with Permanent Representatives to help Members find a compromise as the Membership could not come to an agreement amongst themselves on what they believed was the best option for the Organization.

So the Director-General presented what he considered the second best date; namely, 1 January 2020, as agreed in IFAD. He did not enter into a bargaining mode whereby he could have proposed July 2020, the second scenario presented in the information note. His proposal was to support your sovereign debate on this matter. He did so as a strong signal of his wish to help the Membership reach a consensus – a trademark of his mandate since he took leadership of the Organization.

According to Information Notes 2 and 3, the second best option proposed by the Director-General will still give FAO the possibility of replacing 85 professional staff members out of the 124 that I mentioned before.

It will also allow the Organization to have USD 6.9 million in savings.

The next Director-General could also decide to start the implementation of the UN resolution at the beginning of her or his mandate in August 2019, if she or he wishes to do so.

Furthermore, the Director-General expressed the comment that he did not see any reason for FAO to be punished with a date before 1 January 2020 by the same countries that supported the adoption of this date in IFAD. At the opening of the Council he reminded Members of the huge efforts which allowed to reinject USD 145 million in technical programmes thanks to savings in the administration area in a context of a flat budget and expanding demand on FAO. So FAO Management would expect that any further proposal in this regard be applauded.

It is very important that we preserve the consensus in your decision-making process in the last year of his mandate and in the preparation of the election of the next Director-General. This was acknowledged by many of you.

To conclude, Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council, let me recall that since the Director-General took office, he has been working tirelessly to achieve consensus based on a clear division of responsibilities between the prerogatives of Management and the guidance of the Governing Bodies. This is what has allowed him to exert his “full power and authority to direct the work of the Organization”, subject to the general supervision of the Conference and the Council.

Consensus among Members, and also between Management and Members, has been fundamental for us to work more closely together to make FAO a better Organization.

Mr Chairperson, honourable delegates, the FAO Secretariat is available to provide you with all the information and support you need to help collective wisdom emerge and to allow you to take what you consider to be the best decision in the interest of your Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

Members will recall that, at the beginning of the Council session, there was a Friends of the Chair group established to see if there could be consensus reached on this item.

I would like to very quickly brief the Members on this aspect. I wish to inform Members that the Friends of the Chair have met four times since Monday. A number of proposals regarding possible dates for implementation of the mandatory age of separation for FAO staff who joined the Organization prior to 1 January 2014 were discussed. I must say that throughout this lengthy exercise, Members showed good will and a true desire to reach a consensual solution.

However, notwithstanding efforts from each of the Regional Groups, agreement could not be reached and it was decided to bring the matter back to the Council for deliberation. So that is why it is before you.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

Thanks to the Secretariat for their briefing and thanks to you, Mr Chairperson, for your continuous efforts to reach a solution. The G77 and China, both members and observers of the Council, met twice to discuss this issue. The first time on Monday and the second time today.

The Group has considered the different legal, practical and political factors related to this issue. The Group also considered the positions of other Groups in light of the meetings with the ICC. After lengthy discussions today, the position that the Group supported is the following:

1. Full respect for the integrity of the UN system and the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions;
2. Although we know that a vote could be unavoidable, the Members stated that they do not favour voting at this stage. The G77 and China believe that this will have negative effects on the future of the Organization;
3. The Group will support the latest proposal of the ICC of the 1 July 2019 as the date of implementation. This approval is conditional on the approval of all Members of the Council;

4. The Group requests FAO to present a detailed plan of action to the next Council on how to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, and also to consider raising the target of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of geographical distribution as the current ratio does not match the Group's ambition.

Reaching consensus between a large group such as the G77 and China was not an easy task, but again Members showed a high level of maturity in recognizing the importance of consensus at this stage to avoid further polarization and allow the Organization to focus on its mandate of fighting hunger and malnutrition. We call on other Members to accept this compromise solution that may not be the best outcome for everyone, but for sure it is not the worst possible scenario.

Sra. Marta BARCENA COQUI (México)

Muchas gracias a la Secretaría por sus detalladas explicaciones. Reconocemos y apreciamos que el Director General subraye que recae en los Estados Miembros la decisión de la aplicación de la Edad Mandatoria de Retiro.

Agradecemos al Presidente Independiente del Consejo y a los países del Grupo de Amigos del Presidente los esfuerzos realizados para alcanzar un compromiso que beneficie a todos. A pesar de que hasta ahora ese compromiso no lo hemos logrado en el Grupo de Amigos del Presidente, estamos a un paso de alcanzar el mismo, considerando la posición que ha expresado Egipto a nombre del Grupo de los 77 más China.

En el Grupo de Amigos, en el último momento, México pidió que se enviara o que se conversara con los diferentes Grupos Regionales en la posición del Grupo de los 77. Lo hicimos en el GRULAC, tenemos entendido lo que se hizo en el Grupo Europeo, y en Grupo Asiático, pero no hemos tenido tiempo a la vez de intercambiar información sobre la reacción de los Grupos Regionales a la propuesta del Grupo 77 más China.

Por ello, México quisiera pedir una suspensión de la Reunión para que nos informemos mutuamente los Grupos Regionales de las consultas, y alcancemos el compromiso que evite una mayor polarización de la Organización y nos permita concentrarnos en las prioridades y objetivos de la FAO.

Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)

Japan delivers this statement on behalf of the Republic of Korea, China, the Philippines, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and India.

We fully respect and acknowledge the integrity of the UN common system.

We thank the Finance and Programme Committees and their Joint Meeting for making tremendous efforts on this matter.

We would also like to appreciate the many Regional Groups as well as the G77 and China which have moved a long way to facilitate consensus and we urge all Regional Groups to show flexibility to reach consensus.

After the discussions as a member of the Friends of the Chair on mandatory age of separation, we would sincerely request Members to be constructive and, as a group which underlines mutual understanding and cooperation among members, in a spirit of consensus make joint efforts to reach a final consensus.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

In supporting the proposal of Mexico, we also need a break for further consultations. That is why we propose to break now and resume our work on this issue tomorrow at 9.30 hours.

CHAIRPERSON

In response to the request made by Mexico and supported by the EU, I think it would be appropriate to suspend the session if it is going to enable further consultations so that we can arrive at a mutually agreed position and the Membership has a united position on this topic.

I would like to inform Members that the suspension would be, as mentioned by Bulgaria, until tomorrow because today there is a Drafting Committee meeting plus we have to finish by a certain time because of Ramadan. So I would like to suggest that we suspend today's proceedings and take up the Session tomorrow at 9.30 hours.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General for some announcements.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

As just announced, there will be a meeting of the Drafting Committee immediately after this Session. Members of the Drafting Committee are invited to proceed to the Iraq Room.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I just have a question as to whether tomorrow it is still possible to have the adoption of the Report?
Yes, ok thank you.

The meeting rose at 18.23 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 23

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.23

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION
HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

8 June 2018

The Eighth Plenary Meeting was opened at 12.08 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La huitième séance plénière est ouverte à 12 h 08
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la octava sesión plenaria a las 12.08
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 15. Date of Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation (suite)

Point 15. Date d'entrée en vigueur de la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'âge élémentaire de départ à la retraite (suite)

Tema 15. Fecha de aplicación de la resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio (continuación)

(CL 159/4; CL 159/5; JM 2018.1/2 Information Notes 1, 2, 3; Information Note 4)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, distinguished representatives, we return to item 15.

Before we start our proceedings today, I wish to inform Council that a request has been received from the FAO Staff Bodies to deliver a statement to Council. With Council's agreement, I would propose that the statement be delivered under item 16 *Any Other Matters*.

We will now resume item 15, *Date of Implementation of the Mandatory Age of Separation*.

In this respect, as you all know, there have been ongoing consultations regarding this item with a view to reaching a consensus. In this respect, Egypt has requested the floor. I give the floor to Egypt to report to the Council the outcome of these consultations.

Mr Hesham Mohamed BADR (Egypt)

On behalf of the Group of G77 and China, I would like to thank all Members of the Council for the spirit of consensus. We believe that after a long week the Council has managed to succeed in this challenge and has successfully avoided unnecessary polarization. The Group of G77 and China has worked with all regional groups and I am glad to report to you that we have successfully reached consensus. Like all consensus agreements, it was not easy for everyone. Reaching consensus was not an easy task. But, again, Members showed a high level of maturity in recognizing the importance of consensus at this stage to avoid further divisions and allow the Organization to focus on its mandate of fighting hunger and malnutrition.

I will now read the draft conclusion and would ask the Secretariat to put it on the screen.

1) The Council underlined the importance of maintaining the integrity of the United Nations Common System and agreed that UNGA Resolution 70/244 should have been discussed earlier;

2) The Council decided that new staff regulation 301.9.5 in respect of FAO staff members recruited prior to 1 January 2014 shall take effect on 1 July 2019;

3) The amendment of Staff Regulation 301.9.5 should be approved by the Council and reads as follows: *Staff members may not be retained in active service beyond the age of 65 years, unless the Director-General, in the interest of the Organization, extends this age limit in exceptional cases. Normally, such extension will be up to a maximum period of one year at a time. Staff members may elect to retire at the age of 60 years if their participation in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund commenced or recommenced before 1 January 1990 or at the age of 62 years if their participation commenced or recommenced on or after 1 January 1990 and before January 2014;*

4) The Council requested the Director-General to present to the next Council session a detailed action plan on the achievement of gender parity and geographical balance of FAO staff.

We understand that this last request will come under the report of item 7 of the Finance Committee.

This is the draft conclusion. As they say in Shakespearean language, "all is well that ends well". I hope this will be accepted.

This is the last Friday of Ramadan, so I know that many delegations will have to leave early to go to pray, but I hope that we can adopt this right away and look at the rest of the schedule. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone, particularly those in the Group of 77 and China, for their comprehension but also the other regional groups for their cooperation, flexibility and understanding. It showed that together we can avoid certain things in this Organization that would not be for the common good of the Organization and its Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, the text which was just read out by His Excellency, the Ambassador of Egypt, is now on the screen. I open the floor for any comments by Members or regional groups. The floor is open.

I see there are no requests for any further comments on this. I consider the text concluded and adopted.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

I would like to say that we have no objection but I would like to make a declaration.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. The candidate countries to the EU, Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States are deeply concerned about the proposal to further delay the implementation of UNGA Resolution 70/244 on the mandatory age of separation until 1 July 2019.

All UN members supported this Resolution to be implemented by all UN agencies across the UN system. Under this Resolution, the FAO had to raise by 1 January 2018 the mandatory age of separation to 65 years for staff recruited before 1 January 2014. In 2016, the Finance Committee and the Council called for an expeditious implementation of the Resolution. We regret with concern that good governance did not prevail: the Secretariat deliberately failed to bring this matter in good time before the FAO Governing Bodies and deferred any action until this Council, proposing instead to defer implementation by three years to January 2021.

As set out, the EU and its Member States would have preferred implementation without delay to ensure compliance with the UN system and avoid the serious reputational and financial risks for the FAO that non-compliance represents.

We would like to reiterate once more the importance of maintaining the integrity of the UN Common System and the need for full and immediate implementation of UNGA resolutions.

In order to reach a conclusion, the EU and its Member States accept this compromise. This should not be seen as a precedent either in FAO or any other UN organization. We will continue to insist that UNGA resolutions are fully implemented.

M. MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Le Cameroun s'adresse au Conseil après examen du point 15 de l'ordre du jour, au nom du Groupe régional Afrique.

Après un examen laborieux—c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire— de la question relative à l'application de la résolution 70/244 sur l'âge réglementaire de départ à la retraite du personnel des Nations Unies recruté avant le 1er janvier 2014, connu sous l'acronyme anglais «MAS-65», le Conseil a déclaré être arrivé à une conclusion acceptée par tous et nous y adhérons.

En évitant la solution extrême du vote, le Conseil a une fois de plus prouvé sa maturité et à tout le monde qu'il est le principal Organe directeur de la FAO à pouvoir prendre des décisions dans l'intervalle entre deux Conférences.

Le texte consensuel, qui a été revu ce matin au cours d'une réunion expresse du Groupe des 77 et la Chine, et qui vous a été présenté par son Président, rencontre évidemment l'adhésion du Groupe régional Afrique. En adoptant ce texte, nous réaffirmons l'intégrité du système commun des Nations Unies et l'obligation des Institutions spécialisées à mettre en œuvre les résolutions adoptées par les Membres.

C'est le lieu pour nous, au sein du Groupe régional Afrique, de reconnaître les efforts déployés par le Président indépendant du Conseil pour rallier les positions des différents groupes régionaux et de certains États Membres. L'esprit de consensus a primé et c'est à l'honneur de tous les pays qui ont

montré, malgré les instructions claires de leurs capitales respectives, beaucoup de flexibilité, et ce dans l'intérêt de notre bien commun, qui est celui de la FAO.

Maintenant, nous devons travailler dans la perspective du renforcement des voies de dialogue au sein du Conseil afin de renforcer davantage notre cohésion et assumer pleinement la gouvernance de notre Organisation.

Merci à tous pour les efforts qui ont été consentis.

Mr Won Chul JOO (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea is delivering this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We fully respect the integrity of the United Nations Common System. We are glad to see consensus reached through a very difficult process. Our special appreciation goes to Mr Khalid Mehboob, Independent Chairperson of the Council, Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Mr Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, and all the Members of the Friends of the Chair for all your hard work and joint efforts.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank and welcome the Lupiño-model of chairmanship of the Finance Committee, keeping calm, collected, and constructive, even under pressure. We are happy to join the consensus reached on the mandatory age of separation implementation date of 1 July 2019. We encourage the Finance Committee to follow up on the plan of action to achieve geographical balance and gender equality under the mandate of the Finance Committee. We look forward to continuing working with other regional groups in constructive, collaborative and in a friendly spirit for a better Organization.

Mr Fernando José MARRONI DE ABREU (Brazil)

We appreciate the efforts made by the Friends of the Chair, in particular the G77 and China, to find a solution to the issue of implementation of UN Resolution 70/244.

Brazil does not believe that the proposed outcome is a successful response to the mandate given by the General Assembly; however, Brazil would not stand in the way of consensus. We would like, though, to state on record that Brazil accepts this compromise in light of its constructive stance which has characterized our participation at this Council.

Notwithstanding the implication this compromise may have in light of Resolution 72/255, I would like to convey our concern that not fully implemented General Assembly resolutions regarding this matter may incur further unwarranted developments. Brazil will not refrain from reiterating these concerns at the proper instance, in particular at the General Assembly.

Brazil considers that these conclusions do not constitute a precedent with regard to other United Nations bodies, or to any future decision by this Council regarding implementation of decisions of the UN General Assembly and the International Civil Servant Commission.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The Nordic EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

We would also like to thank those who have been working for the whole week for us to have a conclusion on this issue.

The Nordic countries note that the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/244 sets 1 January 2018 as the date for implementation of the new mandatory age of separation. We continue to be concerned that the delay of the implementation of the General Assembly Resolution will pose both financial and reputational risks for FAO. We believe that implementation without further delay would have proven FAO's respect for the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and support the integrity of the United Nations Common System.

Having said this, in the spirit of compromise, the Nordic countries can support and have already supported and accepted the proposed date of implementation. We do not, however, consider the decision taken by the Council today as a precedent for any future decisions concerning the implementation of the United Nations General Assembly resolutions.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

As was said by many of us, including the FAO Secretariat, Management and the Director-General, it is our responsibility to make a decision on the issue of the mandatory age of separation, and that was long overdue. In doing so, we had the best interests of the Organization at heart, all things considered. Canada strongly supports the United Nations Common System and maintaining its integrity, as well as implementation of the UNGA Resolution on this issue by its set deadline.

We have attentively examined the grounds provided for asking for a delay in implementation which are very similar to those advanced in other United Nations specialized agencies and which we believe did not warrant further delay in implementation.

The goals of achieving high-quality technical capacity, gender parity and equitable geographic distribution are all important. We welcome the progress made so far by the Organization and are confident that FAO Management has at its disposal all the tools necessary to manage a workforce that is its greatest asset and contribute to make it an agile and leading knowledge organization on food security and nutrition through a robust human resources management strategy. The issue of the mandatory age of separation is not an effective strategy.

In the spirit of compromise, we can join consensus achieved on implementing the mandatory age of separation by 1 July 2019 – and this is not because it coincides with Canada's national day. But we appreciate the efforts of all concerned in having engaged in this process.

We also urge FAO Management to consider favourably requests from staff who wish to extend beyond 62 years of age, considering the importance of benefitting from the valuable contribution and experience of seasoned staff in the Organization and the importance of ensuring continuity during this important forthcoming transition period. This would signal a strong message about FAO's desire to align with UNGA Resolution 70/244 which is about acknowledging the contributions that staff can make beyond 62 years of age and about FAO as an organization that invests in its workforce.

Lastly, we have much to reflect on regarding the discussions that took place over the past weeks on this issue. I am very happy that the Council emerged united, and we feel that this aligns with the spirit of collaboration of the 2030 Agenda in ensuring that FAO is not lagging behind within the United Nations family and that it joins our common efforts to foster a One United Nations approach as part of the United Nations Development System Reform.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

Today marks a compromise, not a real consensus, and none of this conflict needed to occur. The language of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution is clear. The compromised language today, “maintaining the integrity of the United Nations Common System”, rings hollow when we consider how this matter was handled. We disassociate from the self-congratulatory tone of much of this discussion, but we will not break consensus on this issue.

We have two requests. Like Canada, we request that FAO Management consider favourably all applications from staff members wishing to have their employment extended beyond the age of 62. Secondly we request that the report to the United Nations General Assembly called for in operative paragraph 9 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 72/255 which directs a report to the General Assembly on organizational implementation of the mandatory age of separation reflect the failure of the FAO Secretariat to raise this matter in a timely manner.

The actions of the FAO Secretariat have already exacted significant reputational cost to this Organization.

Sra. Marta BARCENA COQUI (México)

Para México, la integridad del Sistema Común de las Naciones Unidas es fundamental y es responsabilidad de los Estados Miembros mantenerlo y de los Organismos especializados del Sistema de Naciones Unidas respetarlo e instrumentarlo. Por eso, México hubiera deseado la oportuna aplicación de las resoluciones 70/244 y 72/255 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas. El compromiso alcanzado hoy no debe sentar precedentes para ninguna otra organización del Sistema de Naciones Unidas.

México agradece el espíritu constructivo que prevaleció entre todos los países y grupos regionales, aun en los momentos más difíciles, y por ello es que nos alineamos a la propuesta del Grupo de los 77 más China. Nos congratulamos por el espíritu de consenso prevaleciente.

Asimismo, México desea agradecer al Grupo de Amigos del Presidente Independiente del Consejo el esfuerzo realizado, al Presidente mismo y los Presidentes de los Comités de Programa y Finanzas por sus constructivas aportaciones durante todo el proceso.

México se suma al compromiso alcanzado y espera que aunque este compromiso final no haya satisfecho las expectativas de todos, el espíritu de colaboración prevalezca en actividades futuras y nos permita concentrarnos en los temas de gran relevancia y envergadura que la FAO tiene hacia adelante en el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030.

CHAIRPERSON

I also wish to thank Members for the constructive engagement on this important issue that was before the Council this week. I appreciate your spirit of cooperation and collective objective of reaching a consensus, which has always been a distinctive mark of the working methods of the Council.

In particular, I wish to extend a word of thanks to my Friends of the Chair, who worked closely and whose deliberations also contributed to reaching consensus on this matter, which has been the source of extended and sometimes difficult deliberations over the past months. Let us build on this success as the Council continues to strengthen its role in giving guidance on governance matters.

Since there are no other comments on this issue, I consider this item closed.

I would like to make one comment. Since this text has been agreed by the Council, my assumption is that it does not need to go to the Drafting Committee? Because that would assist us in finalizing the Draft Report which would come before the Council this afternoon. I see there are nods of agreement.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

We agree with this approach, but just for the Secretariat to take care that the last request is included under the Finance Committee report which was discussed in the Drafting Committee yesterday.

CHAIRPERSON

So with this we can go to the next item.

Item 16. Any Other Matters**Point 16. Questions diverses****Tema 16. Asuntos varios****CHAIRPERSON**

We now move on to item 16, *Any Other Matters*.

As agreed by the Council, I now invite Mr Juan Coy, General Secretary of the Association of Professional Staff in FAO to deliver a statement on behalf of the FAO Staff Bodies.

I have a request from Qatar for the floor.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

As we mentioned previously, I would like to go back to item 4 of the agenda before hearing from the Staff Bodies' representative.

CHAIRPERSON

Qatar, I believe item 4 was closed. What exactly is the issue at stake?

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

We had mentioned that we needed to include a reference to the Regional Conference for the Near East. We had already discussed this matter with you.

CHAIRPERSON

I have been informed that there was a text which, as a draft, would go to the Drafting Committee and it will come back here. So we would suggest that if you have any comments on that text which will be in the Draft Report, you can raise your point then and it can be considered.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I would simply like to make a comment.

CHAIRPERSON

Go ahead, Qatar.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

Regarding item 4 in paragraph 5 on the adoption of the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East that was held in FAO headquarters, the representative of Kuwait mentioned the fact that there was an entire paragraph that had been deleted from the report.

The ADG of FAO clarified the fact that this deletion was made by mistake and therefore we would like to see the issue amended.

The Regional Conference and the ministerial delegations emphasized the importance of the statement that was made in its integral form. Some statements were added that were not present originally; other paragraphs that were originally in the report were deleted. This is unprecedented, I believe, in the history of the Organization, and therefore I ask the Council to adopt the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East that was approved by the representatives and the ministers, the Ministerial Declaration, knowing that this report is different from the report that was submitted here at this session of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General to explain the position.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Thank you Qatar for this intervention under *Any Other Matters*. The issue of discrepancies between the text adopted in Arabic by the Regional Conference for the Near East and the text that was published subsequently and submitted to this Council is known. This was brought to our attention and, more importantly, to the attention of the Secretariat of the Regional Conference for the Near East.

As a matter of procedure, it is not really an issue for this Council because the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East belongs to the Regional Conference of the Near East. So my understanding is that the Secretariat of the Regional Conference for the Near East is aware of the concerns that you have expressed and will endeavour to issue a revised version that will account for these concerns.

As regards item 4 of the agenda of the Council which was discussed in this session of the Council, conclusions drawn by the Chairperson were discussed here at the Council and reviewed by the Drafting Committee, so at this stage there is no need to look into this conclusion which we expect to adopt this afternoon in block with the other conclusions in the Report of the Council.

So, in short, the concerns that you have expressed are well noted. In fact, they will form part of the verbatim of this session of the Council, but ultimately will be dealt with by the Secretariat of the Regional Conference for the Near East.

CHAIRPERSON

I hope that clarifies the situation. We can now go back to the item under *Any Other Matters*; that is the statement of the Staff Bodies' representative. I invite Mr Juan Coy to take the floor and make that statement.

Mr Juan COY (General Secretary, Association of Professional Staff in FAO)

Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council, Mr Secretary-General of the Conference and Council, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to start by saying that since the session has gone on for longer than initially planned and due to the resulting time constraints, we have been asked to shorten our speech and so I will be giving a reduced version of it.

It is an honour for us to share with you the opinions and concerns of the staff we represent. When doing so, we always try to think not only of our own interests but to make a constructive contribution to the benefit of the Organization. This is based on the conviction that a motivated workforce that is treated with dignity, coupled with strong staff-Management relations characterized by mutual respect and collaboration, is in the interests of both staff and the Organization.

Unfortunately, staff-Management relations at FAO continue to be very poor. The basic problem in our view is the fundamental lack of respect for staff which characterizes the current leadership of this Organization. This is reflected directly in the way in which staff are treated, for instance in the continuing downgrading of posts and the curtailment of career opportunities for staff. It is also apparent in staff-Management relations. Consultation with the Staff Representative Bodies is essentially formal. Our views are sometimes taken into account on minor issues but are regularly disregarded on issues of greater importance. Furthermore, a number of matters are not even put on the table for consultation.

Problems are exacerbated by the limitations of the internal justice system. The Director-General, in spite of the oversight exercised by the Governing Bodies, has wide discretion in the discharge of his authority. When staff are directly affected by what they perceive as unfair and opaque decisions, for instance in the selection for posts, their chances for redress are limited as, indeed, the final decision on staff appeals rests with the Director-General himself.

The present administration disregards not only the Organization's rules, but also the UN system's directives. This is shown, for instance, in the incorrect application of provisions on rental subsidy over the course of the past year. It is also shown in the refusal to implement the new mandatory age of separation of 65 for staff recruited before 2014. FAO's refusal to follow the common system rules has led the ICSC and the General Assembly to openly criticize the Organization and warn it of the possible repercussions of the failure to follow the established rules.

At the last Finance Committee meeting, the Committee was informed that staff had, through a survey, demonstrated their interest in a reward system based on performance evaluation. However, the reward system they are requesting is not what OHR (Office of Human Resources) indicated. What staff want is that persistent good performance is recognized through the provision of real career opportunities. We believe that recruitment and career development processes in FAO call for a comprehensive review.

In terms of staff-Management relations, the last straw was probably the dismissal of the President of the Association of Professionals on 27 February 2018. We have serious doubts as to whether it was justified and proportional and, assuming that it was so, whether it was so urgent. On 9 March, the Association of Professionals wrote to the Director-General asking for clarifications on these questions. We recalled provisions in UN conventions and the fact that national legislation in many countries protects Staff Association leadership from dismissal and other disciplinary measures while in office. A reply by the Director, OHR to our letter to the Director-General was finally received on 29 May. The reply states that the disciplinary measures against the former President of the Association of Professionals were unrelated to any staff association activities, but does not address our other questions.

Most of the staff working for FAO as you know are dedicated to its mission, but we often find our only motivation in our sense of duty and responsibility and the pride we take in doing a good job and

making a difference. Unfortunately, the Management of FAO is not being helpful in generating motivation. By now we do not expect to see improvements under the current leadership of the Organization, and are looking ahead with the hope of seeing better times in the future. In 2012, the Joint Inspection Unit issued a report entitled “Staff-Management relations in the United Nations specialized agencies and common system”, in which it stated that “the attitude of the Executive Head serves as a critical factor in the success or failure of staff-Management relations in an organization”. We look forward to a Management of FAO that possesses some of the competencies listed in this report, including above all the realization of the importance of good quality relations with staff.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Thank you, Chair, and sorry for taking the floor on this matter. We are very grateful for the report that we just heard from the Staff Bodies’ representative and, as indicated, this was only a shortened report. We were wondering whether, by your good offices, the full report or the full contribution of the Staff Bodies’ representative could be made available to all Council Members.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

After hearing that report, I wondered if the Director of Human Resources Management would like to respond to it. I can see he is sitting there on the podium.

CHAIRPERSON

The Council practice has been, and that apparently was discussed in 1994, that the staff address the governing bodies but any substantive discussions flowing from that statement would not be engaged in, as it were.

These are basically HR (human resources) questions and they should be considered by the governing bodies *in fora* which are meant for this. HR issues could be discussed in the Finance Committee.

The staff have addressed the Council and have identified their perspective or their complaints. The governing bodies want to take heed but there is a committee, the Finance Committee, to deal with these issues rather than opening up a debate at this late stage.

So I would appeal that we not open these issues. These HR issues are a standard item on the agenda of the Finance Committee, and Member governments and Committee Members can use that Committee to discuss all HR issues.

May I appeal please to move on and not to open up issues which are of an HR nature which should be discussed in the Finance Committee at its next session?

Mr Pierfrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Italy would find it unfair for FAO Management of Human Resources to be left without any opportunity to reply to the rather meaningful, important remarks made by the Staff Association. So Italy would like to second the request made by the United Kingdom as well as the one made by Germany.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

I am not trying to get the Council to indulge in a debate on this kind of a report, but look at the nature, the importance and the kind of substantive issues that are raised in that report. We always, as a Council, get this report when the Council sits and we do not get the benefit of feedback because they have raised these issues here but they are sorted out somewhere else. I think we are entitled to get feedback to know how these issues were resolved.

Because every year, we get this kind of a report and we do not get the benefit of knowing what happened to those issues that were raised. I think that is the point that the Council has to take into consideration because it does not serve any purpose for them to report here and then you take it to the Finance Committee. We do not get to know. But it was raised here in the Council.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

This indeed is being discussed by the Finance Committee and the Office of Human Resources. But in this case, why did we allow the Staff Bodies' representative to speak before the Council without being replied to?

M. MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroun)

Je suis un peu ennuyé, car ce serait bien la première fois que ce genre de chose arrive au Conseil. Nous écoutons, généralement, la déclaration du Représentant du personnel, mais le Conseil ne peut commencer à débattre de questions de personnel. Et le principe du contradictoire devrait aussi être appliqué.

Nous pouvons peut-être demander que la matrice des questions soulevées fasse l'objet d'un suivi, mais de notre point de vue il n'y a pas à en discuter au Conseil ni à poser ainsi un précédent.

CHAIRPERSON

That was my suggestion because obviously the issues have been raised; the Members now are aware of the views of the staff. There is a specific committee which deals with these aspects. That committee is a committee of the Council. It is not an ordinary committee. The Finance Committee is supposed to analyze, to facilitate, to make recommendations to the Council to facilitate the discussions of the Council.

So I would agree with Cameroon that the Council should get back for discussion the topic after it has been considered from all aspects to just generate an *ad-hoc* debate by the HR Director responding to what the Staff Representative has said. It would not add anything to an informed discussion or to an informed conclusion, but some issues have been brought to your attention and, as Cameroon says, it would be valid to follow up. But follow-up through the process which you have set up. It is your committee. The committee reports to you so let it come back to you after it has considered all of these aspects and you will have a better informed debate at that point in time.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kindom)

Having listened to what you have said and what other Members have said, can I therefore propose that the text of the statement that we have just heard be submitted to the next meeting of the Finance Committee for a discussion on the issues raised in that statement?

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I support the proposal just made by my British colleague.

Mr Nkm SELEKA (South Africa)

I also concur with that because I think the principle point we are raising here is that we are not saying that the Council should engage with this report now. What we are saying is that the issues have been raised. Let them be referred to an appropriate structure and be dealt with. At a later stage we need to know what happened to those issues. Were they satisfactorily resolved so that we do not have to get the issues being referred to us from time to time without us making any pronouncement on them?

I think we can rest the case in this fashion, but next time around we need to get feedback as to what transpired on those issues.

CHAIRPERSON

In response to the United Kingdom's suggestion, yes, that could be a way forward because if the Finance Committee has to look at all of the aspects, then it should consider all of those issues.

I have just been shown the text which would be included in the Report of the Council and it is: "The statement by representatives of the FAO Staff Bodies, that is the Union of General Service Staff and the Association of Professionals in FAO, made by a representative of these bodies will be submitted to the next session of the Finance Committee for discussion".

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Just one amendment. As we heard that time was so short that the Staff Representative could not deliver the full report, we would like to request that the full report be submitted to the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I give the floor to Lithuania, Observer, now that all Members have spoken. We can give the floor to observers. Lithuania, you have the floor.

Ms Loreta MALCIENÈ (Observer for Lithuania)

I am speaking as the Chairperson of the European Regional Group. In one of your meetings with Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of Regional Groups, discussing the matter of improving the working methods of the Council, we asked you about the intervention of staff members of FAO in the Council. We expressed our wish, which was supported by some other Regional Groups, that if there were a request from the staff members to have an intervention during this Council, the Director-General should be present here and listen to that intervention.

I would like to ask if he was informed and if he refused to come? In the future, if there are statements from FAO staff members, we repeat our request for the Director-General to be present here in the Council and listen to that intervention because much was addressed directly to him.

Mr Yaya Olaitan OLANIRAN (Observer for Nigeria)

The statement that you put forward should include that the Finance Committee should report back to Council just in line with what South Africa indicated. I think we need to have that in black and white.

CHAIRPERSON

That I think is the normal process and it will be done. The matter will come back to the Council through the Finance Committee's Report.

Replying to Lithuania's question, the Director-General was not asked to be present for this item. His representative, the Director of Human Resources, was there. For future sessions, if it is the wish of the Council, we will pass that message on to Management.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

Just very briefly to endorse the request made by my colleague, the Chair of the European Regional Group.

M. Jean-Paul CARTERON (Observateur des îles Salomon)

J'ai la chance de vivre simultanément mon expérience de Représentant permanent auprès de la FAO et auprès de l'UNESCO. Ici, nous sommes des ambassadeurs et maîtres aussi de cette Organisation. Si, au niveau du personnel, les choses ne fonctionnent pas, si l'ambiance n'est pas bonne et la fusion, au niveau des esprits et de l'atmosphère, ne se fait pas, tout ce que nous faisons ici ne sert à rien.

Je pense donc que les problèmes soulevés il y a un instant par le Représentant du personnel, et qui sont apparemment graves, sont un élément essentiel de notre activité, de nos débats et réflexions; il ne s'agit pas à mon sens d'envoyer simplement les choses à l'examen d'une commission, mais plutôt d'approfondir, investiguer et savoir exactement ce qui se passe. En effet, je le redis, nous sommes tous là pour travailler, mais si, au niveau du personnel, les choses ne suivent pas, nous travaillons alors dans le vide.

S'il se pose un problème, il ne serait pas convenable que les ambassadeurs en discutent en présence du personnel parce que nous sommes les employeurs et notre devoir est d'écouter, d'enquêter et de discuter par la suite pour essayer de prendre les décisions qui peuvent s'imposer. Voilà quel est mon état d'esprit.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, the reason for the Finance Committee to look into these matters is because it is a mechanism put in place by Member governments to go into detail on issues, to analyze, to probe, to make recommendations to the Council. The matter will then come back to the Council for an informed discussion rather than an *ad-hoc* debate all of a sudden, as it were.

Would it not be better for the Finance Committee to probe this issue, to analyze, to make recommendations and bring back that analysis to you as part of its report and then you will have an opportunity to engage in an informed discussion, to see what is valid and what is not valid? That the Finance Committee will analyze for you. That is the reason for the Finance Committee.

It is not any committee, it is a committee of the Council, established for particular reasons so that the Council can have an informed discussion on substantive issues.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I have listened very carefully to what the Representative of the Solomon Islands said and I concur perfectly. I am somewhat ill at ease that we are discussing this matter and the Staff Representative is in the hall.

I am really ill at ease. I am not very comfortable discussing it with the staff present. It does not work that way.

The second issue is the suggestion of the Representative of the United Kingdom, which is a brilliant one but I think it needs to be discussed probably in the meeting of the Chairperson to discuss the work related to the Council; first of all what we can do, then in the Council when this kind of report is put before the Council, what is also supposed to be done.

Because it is new to me, even in any other agency, that the Governing Bodies are having discussions and the staff is present. So please, with your permission, I would politely ask you to request that we remain as a Council, alone.

Mr AKEEL HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

The Staff Bodies' representative tackled some important issues. He talked about the lack of transparency, the lack of justice and equitability and lack of respect to staff. In reality, I do not know how these issues can be referred to the Finance Committee and these, as matters related to human resources, must be discussed by the Secretariat of the Organization.

I think it is inconceivable for the Council to listen to such a presentation and such statements without providing a clear position in that regard. Simply referring the matter to the Finance Committee is one side of things but how can we talk about and discuss the lack of transparency, the lack of respect to staff and not take a clear issue and stand on that position?

M. Pierfrancesco SACCO (Italie)

Comme nous avons ici entendu l'expression de sensibilités presque personnelles, de nuances presque psychologiques, permettez-moi alors, Monsieur le Président, de vous exprimer aussi ma sensibilité personnelle en tant que Représentant du pays pro-activement hôte de la FAO, qui a à cœur l'image, la réputation, aussi bien que le succès de la FAO.

Quand j'ai soutenu la requête de la Représentante du Royaume-Uni d'avoir la possibilité d'entendre une réponse de l'Organisation, mon souci était celui de ne pas laisser cette salle sans que la position de l'Organisation puisse être connue, pour qu'à la suite de l'intervention du Représentant des syndicats nous ayons l'autre version, dans l'intérêt même de l'image et de la réputation de la FAO. Et bien évidemment la suite qui sera donnée à travers le Comité financier est une question différente et à part.

CHAIRPERSON

I was just trying to avoid a debate which is made up of general statements and general considerations which neither add this way or that way to the debate. Surely the Council would like accurate information to come to it to be discussed.

That was my only concern.

Ms Terri SARCH (United Kingdom)

You will recall that my first request was to hear a response from Management and maybe get some accurate reflection. You advised against that and my understanding was that other colleagues in the room agreed that the full text of the statement made by the Staff Representative should go to the Finance Committee for a fuller discussion and response from Management at that point.

I would be satisfied with that approach if the rest of the Council can agree to it.

Equally, I would be happy to discuss the issues now. I take on board the points made by my colleague from Qatar. They are very important points that have been raised. We need to demonstrate that we are concerned about it as a Council. I think we all are, from all of the interventions I have heard.

So I am willing to accept that we postpone this until the Finance Committee has reviewed the statement in November but I am not willing to accept that there is no discussion about this moving forward.

CHAIRPERSON

The intention was not to have no discussion. It was just to have an informed discussion after the Finance Committee has considered the full documentation.

On that basis, could we close this item and move on?

I see there are no comments. Before I close the session, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for some announcements.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members that the Draft Council Report will be transmitted through the FAO Members Gateway, and will be available on the password-protected area of the portal. Members will be informed as soon as available.

CHAIRPERSON

We will reconvene in plenary for the Adoption of the Report this afternoon at 15.00 hours. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 13:24 hours

La séance est levée à 13 h 24

Se levanta la sesión a las 13.24

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-ninth Session
Cent cinquante-neuvième session
159.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 June 2018
Rome, 4-8 juin 2018
Roma, 4-8 de junio de 2018**

**NINTH PLENARY SESSION
NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
NOVENA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

8 June 2018

The Ninth Plenary Meeting was opened at 15.22 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La neuvième séance plénière est ouverte à 15 h 22
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la novena sesión plenaria a las 15.22
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

**ADOPTION OF REPORT
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME**

CHAIRPERSON

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Ninth and final meeting of the 159th Session of the FAO Council. We will now proceed with the Adoption of the Report. The relevant document is CL 159/Draft Report, which was made available through the password-protected area of the FAO Members Gateway.

I now invite Mr Marc Mankoussou, Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, to present the report.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Président du Comité de rédaction)

Monsieur le Président, merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Directeur général, comme vous êtes des nôtres, je voudrais aussi souhaiter bon après-midi à tous les collègues, en cette dernière séance pour l'adoption du Rapport. Je prends la parole pour présenter les résultats, le fruit des travaux du Comité de rédaction. Je voudrais, en qualité de Président du Comité de rédaction, souligner trois choses.

La toute première, féliciter tous les groupes régionaux pour avoir nommé des pays très compétents, des délégués qui ont travaillé avec un véritable esprit de collaboration et de consensus, car c'est ce qui a caractérisé l'atmosphère de nos travaux. Ensuite, je voudrais féliciter ces pays, à savoir l'Afghanistan, l'Australie, le Brésil, la Chine, l'Égypte, les États-Unis d'Amérique, la Finlande, l'Italie, le Japon, le Kenya, le Nicaragua, la Roumanie, le Soudan, la Thaïlande et la Zambie, et vous remercier pour votre esprit d'ouverture et de collaboration.

Nous avons examiné, au cours de nos travaux, les 14 points qui nous ont été soumis. Comme vous le savez, le 15ème point a fait l'objet d'un consensus ce matin et nous n'avons pas eu à l'examiner puisque tout le monde était d'accord pour l'adopter ainsi. Nous avons travaillé durant deux jours: le premier jour, le mercredi, de 18h30 à 20h, et le deuxième jour, le vendredi, de 19h à 22h. Nous avons passé au scanner tous les points qui ont été débattus lors du Conseil. Notre trame de travail reposait sur les décisions que vous avez prises au cours des séances plénières et nous avons consulté également les procès verbaux qui ont constitué les mots clé de toutes les décisions, termes techniques et expressions usuelles utilisés au sein des Nations Unies, et que nous avons intégrés dans notre rapport.

Tous les points de l'ordre du jour ont été examinés avec un esprit d'ouverture et de consensus, et je peux vous assurer, Monsieur le Président, que le projet que vous avez devant vous reflète parfaitement les conclusions que vous avez présentées en plénière.

Nous avons vérifié l'exactitude des décisions et regardé la forme ainsi que le fond, tels qu'adoptés en plénière. Croyez-moi, la nouvelle méthode du Conseil consistant à projeter les décisions sur écran, nous a grandement aidés. Nous nous en félicitons et remercions le Conseil d'en avoir fait la recommandation.

Vous avez devant vous le fruit de notre travail commun et comme le dit un adage africain: «Lorsque les mâchoires se croisent, elles sont capables de briser un os.» Notre équipe était ces mâchoires, celles-ci se sont croisées et nous avons été capables de briser un os. Et l'os, c'est le projet de Rapport que vous avez devant vous.

Je vous invite, Monsieur le Président, à demander au Conseil de l'adopter tel que nous l'avons présenté.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Mr Mankoussou. I would like to extend my appreciation to you and to the members of the Drafting Committee for the good work done.

It appears that the Report of this Session may be approved in block. 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 in block?

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I am sorry to interrupt the applause, but I would like to point out that the report was made available only a few minutes ago and the EU is still considering it. We would therefore have to wait for the Presidency to come back with the final verdict of the EU coordination. I would ask you to stay with us for a couple of minutes on the issue.

While we do so, I would have a minor question. There is one thing that is not clear in the Report. It refers to item 5, *Report of the Joint Meeting*, where it states towards the end of the phrase: “noted the concept note CL 159/INF/7 setting out detailed information on this event and looked forward to discussing it”. We were wondering where this discussion should take place.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I am sorry to have to take the floor after that round of applause on the report. I have a comment that I would like to make on item 4, *Regional Conferences*. “The Council reviewed and endorsed the conclusions and regional priorities expressed by the five Regional Conferences, as well as the informal Regional Conference from North America held between February and May 2018”. We should say they were endorsed with the exception of the report on the Regional Conference for the Near East.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to echo what the delegate from Kuwait just said. On item 4, paragraph 1, it says that “The Council reviewed and endorsed the conclusions and regional priorities...as well as the informal Regional Conference for North America held between February and May 2018”. During this meeting, we discussed the report of our Regional Conference and requested that the original report that was endorsed by Ministers and Ambassadors be approved. I would like for a reference to be inserted such as: “with the exception of the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East where we approved the original report as endorsed by Ministers”.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Firstly, I shall address the question raised by Germany on item 5, which is very pertinent. I believe that the language was proposed to ensure that the concept note would be discussed. My understanding then, and now it has been confirmed, is that, as is normal practice for this type of proposal, this will be discussed in the context of an informal seminar to be held between now and the high-level event in October 2018.

With regard to the report from the Regional Conference for the Near East, the issue is that there would seem to be some discrepancies between the Arabic version, which was adopted, and other versions in other languages. As I mentioned this morning, the best way to deal with this is to work on a revised version, which is the responsibility of the Secretariat of the Regional Conference for the Near East. In other words, it is not for the Council to review the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East.

The other thing I should point out is that if you look at the document, it is a report that will be considered by the Conference. There is plenty of time between now and the Conference (to be held in June 2019) to issue a revised document, and any difficulty that you may have with the language would be corrected by then. As these conclusions here at Council are not specific to the Near East Region - the purpose of these conclusions is to highlight the common trends in the five regions - and noting also that the Council deals only with programmatic and budgetary matters because policy and regulatory matters go to the Conference, I suggest that we keep the conclusions as discussed in the Drafting Committee and in this Session, knowing that the report of the Regional Conference for the Near East will be corrected in due time before the Conference in June 2019.

Mr Khaled EL TAWEEL (Egypt)

Perhaps to avoid any further complications regarding the Regional Conference for the Near East, and if Kuwait and Qatar accept, we should keep the language as it is because the Council endorses the Regional Conference decision or report. At the same time, we shall ask for assurances that the Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa in Cairo will work with the Chairmanship of the Near East Group to make sure that there are no further discrepancies and these would be corrected in the meantime.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to support what my colleague from Egypt just said. However, my comment is not just linguistic in nature.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

It is not a discrepancy between the Arabic and English text. The problem is that the report in Arabic for the Council is not the report that was approved in the Regional Conference. It is not a matter of translation. It is not the same report that was approved by the countries in the region. There is a discrepancy when it comes to the content, the meaning, things which were included in the report that was approved. It is not just a matter of language.

Mr Petio PETEV (Bulgaria)

First of all, we do not have a problem with item 5 as it stands. Second, if you could wait five minutes for us.

Mr Sid Ahmed M. Alamain Hamid ALAMAIN (Sudan)

The Secretariat said that they would give us assurances that this concern would be reflected in the report. According to the response from the Secretariat, I think we can keep the same language, as my colleague from Egypt said. We will contact our office in Cairo to amend the observations from my colleague from Kuwait.

M. Abdennour GOUGAM (Algérie) (Langue originale arabe)

L'Algérie est d'accord avec ce qui vient d'être dit par mon collègue de l'Égypte pour ce qui est des remarques sur ce Rapport.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

One way out would be to say the following: "The Council reviewed and endorsed the conclusions and regional priorities expressed in the reports of the five Regional Conferences", and then remove in the third line "as contained in their respective reports".

Ms Liz NASSKAU (United Kingdom)

It is not on item 4 but rather on item 3, if I may, we have a small point there. Under paragraph 1(j), just a small addition that I think reflects the discussion that we had at the end of that sentence.

It is item 3, paragraph 1(j), and it would be to include the word "monitor" so that that section would read: "Encouraged FAO to prioritize support to national statistics agencies to collect and analyze data, in particular to support national efforts to monitor and achieve the SDGs". The sentence remains as is with the simple insertion.

Mr Willem OLT Hof (European Union)

I would like to draw your attention to item 6, page 5, and then item 6(c), and that is where CFS products are mentioned. We see the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (FFA) mentioned. What I just wanted to say is that none of these products appear with their correct title. Maybe this is indicative of the knowledge in the house. In any case, it is to be corrected according to the correct titles of each of the three products.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

On point 7(g) on “acknowledging the progress made”. We would like to delete that and instead say “encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts in achieving equitable geographic distribution of staff”.

CHAIRPERSON

Chair of the Drafting Committee, would you have any comment on what was just said?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Président du Comité de rédaction)

Nous avons passé des heures hier soir là-dessus. Il a été convenu entre les Membres du Comité de retenir le verbe qui avait été accepté en plénière, parce que casser le consensus poserait beaucoup de problèmes. Je pense quand on relit la phrase, qu’il est clair que l’on dit «a pris acte des progrès accomplis». Cela va à peu près dans le même sens que lorsqu’on parle d’une répartition géographique équitable. Je crois vraiment, pour ne pas ouvrir la boîte de Pandore, que nous pouvons l’accepter et cela nous permettrait d’aller de l’avant.

Mr Antonio Otávio SA RICARTE (Brazil)

I share the perspective given by the Chair of the Drafting Committee that we should not fiddle with the language that was adopted in the plenary. This was the result of a lengthy discussion in which it was signalled that a key performance indicator had been accomplished in a way that was more than expected, but there are still efforts to be made. I think the sentence as it reads now reflects the understanding of this body after having examined this issue thoroughly.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, there was a discussion on this, and especially on the achievement of the key performance indicators. I would appeal to Kuwait to accept the wording, which was not only discussed in plenary - and I continue to say that we are behaving like a Drafting Committee - but then discussed in the Drafting Committee. I would appeal not to reopen this question. What exactly would be your difficulty? The discussions in the plenary were concluded and there was specific input that the key performance indicators in this connection had even been exceeded. You are deleting the word acknowledged progress, so you have some evidence that progress was not achieved?

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

And “encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts”. That means that there has been progress to achieve equitable geographic distribution of staff. That is what I am trying to say here.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Just to second Brazil’s position.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

The Drafting Committee drafts the outcomes of the debate in plenary and the text never refers to terms that were not debated. Here we encouraged and requested that the Secretariat do certain things. We did not acknowledge the progress made. There is a difference between acknowledging something and encouraging something.

The Delegate of Kuwait is not deleting the notion that there was progress. What we are trying to say specifically is that instead of saying “acknowledge progress” made, “requested and encouraged the Secretariat” and that implies that there has indeed been progress.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Président du Comité de rédaction)

Je voudrais inviter mes chers collègues du Koweït et du Qatar à lire toute la phrase pour mieux comprendre, car ce qu’ils disent se trouve à la fin de cette phrase-là: «...et à encourager le Secrétariat à poursuivre ses efforts dans ce sens». En lisant le paragraphe en entier, vous comprendrez que ce que nos collègues sont en train de demander se trouve dans la phrase.

Peut-être n'est-ce pas rapporté dans la version arabe, mais je le trouve dans le texte français et ceux qui ont la version française peuvent le confirmer. Est-ce que vous le retrouvez dans la version arabe?

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to point out that I think this was the first time in the Council's history that the ICC's conclusions were put on the screen and I read out the conclusions to enable non-English speakers to have the benefit of the interpretation. What I read out and the plenary approved was "acknowledged progress made and encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts in achieving equitable geographic distribution of staff". That is the exact wording appearing in the report.

So the plenary has approved that draft going to the Drafting Committee.

Mr Khaled ELTAWHEEL (Egypt)

I remember this specific paragraph came from Egypt. It was proposed by us and I confirm to my brothers from Kuwait and Qatar that it was this language that we suggested.

I also would like to link this language in conjunction with paragraph 2 of this item which also "requests the Director-General to present to the next session a detailed action plan" and I think both of them convey the message that Kuwait and Qatar are keen to explain.

Mr Andrew RAE (South Africa)

I would like to lend South Africa to the point that Egypt made. I remember South Africa was involved in this particular debate. The Ambassador was very vocal in saying that there is nothing wrong with acknowledging progress that is made. He then went on to say that there is nothing wrong with acknowledging it and then still further asking FAO to strive towards improving on it.

So I believe that the text, at least in the English version, is as I recall the discussions.

Sr. Junior ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En la versión en español efectivamente está recogido lo que discutimos en Plenaria y que llevamos posteriormente al Comité de Redacción. No es necesario reabrir este tema dado que fue discutido ya en Plenaria, está recogido en su resumen y también en la reunión del Comité de Redacción que ya tuvimos, así que por favor continuemos y terminemos este tema porque hemos tenido una semana bastante difícil.

CHAIRPERSON

Nicaragua. I think we have cleared this misunderstanding.

Mr Vlad MUSTACIOSU (Romania)

Finally, since we are at the report point, we would like to compliment the ICC for the improved working method of the Council by having the draft conclusions displayed on screen. Although there is still room for improvement in regards to the extent of edits and intervention on the text in plenary, this method has helped reach a better and clearer consensus in plenary.

Having served on different drafting committees, including that of this week, we can tell that this really helped the work of the Drafting Committee in generating a more focused report that better reflects the discussions that were held in plenary.

Thus we encourage the ICC to keep this good practice for future sessions of the Council.

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE-MABUSELA (Lesotho)

For the sake of progress, Chairperson, I would like to propose the word "noted progress" and see if it goes down well with our colleagues for the sake of peace and progress. We really had a difficult week.

CHAIRPERSON

You see, I am in the hands of the plenary. This was the text sent to the Drafting Committee by the plenary so the plenary has to agree whether we can change that word. That is the beauty of the screen because it

was not an approximate text sent to the Drafting Committee. It was a text which was visible to Members of the Council and they made amendments to the text and the amended text went to the Drafting Committee.

So I will have to put this amendment to the plenary, whether they agree.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

I would plead in favour of keeping the text as it is and with the explanation given by our colleague from Egypt and supported by South Africa. I think we have full understanding that not each and every Member State of FAO feels equitably represented and that Management is invited to work on this. But still we also have to note that some progress was made in the past couple of years and that a key performance indicator has been achieved.

I think this is reflected in the sentence that we had agreed upon in Council and I also confirm it was a lengthy and complicated debate, and we should not open Pandora's Box as the Chair of the Drafting Committee said earlier.

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

Quisiéramos apoyar lo indicado por Usted. Nos parece que el texto que tenemos en frente refleja fielmente lo acordado por el Consejo con el texto proyectado en pantalla, y entiendo que también fue considerado cuidadosamente por el Comité de Redacción.

Mr Salah AL BAZZAZ (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

I do not wish to stand in the way of consensus. I can accept this proposal and this wording.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

This is just to provoke a smile on our faces and make a sort of hashtag with your expression "the beauty of the screen".

CHAIRPERSON

With the completion of the wording of that sub-paragraph, may I again put the point to the Council whether we can adopt this report in block now after the various amendments have been made?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

The Report of the 159th Session of the FAO Council is adopted.

I now invite the Director-General to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Let me start by thanking all of you for your hard work to achieve a consensus regarding the date of implementation of the UN resolution on the mandatory age of separation.

I thank especially the Independent Chairperson, Mr Mehboob, and the member countries that participated in the Friends of the Chair group for their great efforts to find a solution for this issue.

As already said by Ambassador Hisham Badr, Chair of the Group of G77 and China, it is not easy to achieve consensus, but it is that which best serves the Organization.

As I said in my opening remarks to this Council, keeping consensus among Members, and trust between Management and Members, is fundamental to continue building a stronger Organization.

Some of you have highlighted during this Council your concern with the rise of global hunger numbers as a result of the impacts of climate change and the increasing number of conflicts. In fact, almost every day we see in the media the desperation of poor and vulnerable people that are forced to migrate under the most humiliating conditions. Most of them coming from rural areas.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDGs 1 and 2, we have to do more for these people. They cannot be left behind.

But we cannot do more with less. We have to do more with more. More commitment, more investments, more resources in general, and especially more financial support for our Organization

Please bear this in mind, as we will soon start to negotiate our Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21. FAO's Regular Programme budget has been flat for the last seven years, with zero nominal growth, while the number of conflicts are increasing in the world, according to the Global Peace Index 2018, just released this week.

More financial resources towards sustainable development are crucial to build the resilience of vulnerable rural people across the world, and bring the numbers on hunger down again. We will not be able to save the lives of family farmers, pastoralists and fisher folks if we do not also save their livelihoods.

In this regard, FAO is very proud to have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with IFAD and WFP to strengthen our work together, especially in the field. The Memorandum will also be important to enhance even more the collaboration, coordination and synergies between the three agencies here in headquarters.

FAO will also follow the guidance from this Council and the Regional Conferences to continue strengthening the capacity of our decentralized offices. It is at country level that the fight against hunger will be won or lost.

Let me highlight that another important aspect is to maintain the financial health of global funds aimed at supporting developing countries to respond to the impacts of climate change. This is exactly the case of the Green Climate Fund, which FAO sees with great concern is struggling to receive adequate support from donor countries to properly continue its activities in the coming years.

FAO is working closely with a wide range of countries that have formally requested the Organization's assistance to prepare projects to be submitted to the Green Climate Fund. Nine countries by now have already had their projects approved by the Green Climate Fund with the support of FAO.

I am happy that the Council has endorsed FAO's commitment to zero tolerance to any form of harassment, especially sexual harassment. We will continue to strictly follow the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General in this regard, as well as the decisions taken by UN Chief Executive Board, the CEB.

As I said in my intervention on this agenda item, FAO will soon conduct an internal survey, based on a common methodology within the UN System, in order to produce data and information that can be comparable across the system. This will be important to provide further inputs to reinforce reporting, investigation and outreach, as well to inform our Action Plan.

Before concluding, I would also like to draw your attention to the difficult financial situation of the Organization due to the high amount of assessed contributions in arrears. Member countries still have to pay USD 186 million and EUR 130 million in relation to 2018 and prior years

As of 6 June 2018, just two days ago, 47 percent of the 2018 assessed contributions still needed to be settled. Sixty-two Member countries still have arrears outstanding from 2017 and previous years.

This money from assessed contributions is basically used to pay our staff and we are half way into the year. So I urge all countries to settle their obligations in regard to their assessed contributions.

To conclude, I would like to thank all of you once more for your hard work to make this Council Session a successful one.

I thank especially those who have come from capitals especially for this event. I hope to see you again in the next events here in FAO.

I also thank all FAO staff involved in the organization of this meeting, especially messengers and interpreters.

Thank you for your attention.

CHAIRPERSON

Before bringing down the gavel on the 159th Session of the FAO Council, please allow me to make a few closing remarks.

First of all, I wish to thank the Director-General for his support and active participation during the course of this week.

I also wish to thank you, the Members, for your constructive engagement with the important issues that were before Council this week. I very much appreciated the benefit of your spirit of cooperation and collective objective of reaching consensus, which has always been a distinctive mark of the working method of our Council. As I mentioned this morning, let us continue to build on this success as Council continues to strengthen its role in giving guidance on governance matters.

The Report we have just adopted captures the positive spirit that characterized our work this week. I am grateful that our session was marked by increased regional statements rather than interventions by individual countries, which I know have contributed to enabling us to work more efficiently and has resulted in a final report with a sharp focus on decisions and actions.

During this session of the Council, we received reports of the Regional Conferences, focusing on budgetary and programmatic aspects. I wish to thank the Chairpersons and their representatives, for having presented reports which reflected the ever-increasing awareness by the Regional Conferences of their important governance role. It is my expectation that the regional priorities resulting from this round of Regional Conferences will enable good preparations of the next programme of work and budget.

This has also been a session marked by a number of innovations with regard to our working methods, and I look forward to ongoing discussions as we strive to achieve continued improvements.

A particular word of appreciation goes to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Regional Groups with whom I have interacted regularly in the lead up to this Council session, and I am pleased to see that our hard work has paid off. I consider our informal consultations to be as important as our formal sessions as they provide us with the opportunity to speak openly and in a collegial and friendly manner, and I wish to recognize the support and engagement of all regions in this useful forum. Let us all endeavour not only to maintain this efficient way of going about our business, but also to consolidate and build upon these good practices.

I would also like to thank Management for their commitment to servicing the Council. I have been assisted by a reliable and dedicated Secretariat, the majority of them working behind the scenes. Allow me to convey my appreciation to Mr Gagnon (Secretary-General of the Council) and all his staff: the interpreters, translators, meeting facilities, room messengers, verbatim editors and reports office staff as well as security personnel. I am grateful to them all for their long hours of work and dedication to getting the job done.

I wish those of you who will be travelling home to your families a safe journey and thank you all once again for your contribution to this session.

I declare the 159th Session of the FAO Council closed.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

The meeting rose at 16:15 hours

La séance est levée à 16 h 15

Se levanta la sesión a las 16.15