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COUNCIL

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REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE AND THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (Rome, 23 May 2007)

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Matters requiring attention by the Council

Matters requiring discussion and/or decision

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REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE PROGRAMME AND FINANCE COMMITTEES

Rome, 23 May 2007

Introduction

1. The Committees submit to the Council the following report of their Joint Meeting.
2. The following Members were present at the meeting:

Programme Committee

Chairperson

Mr V. Heard (United Kingdom)

Members

Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)
 Ms J. Barfield (Australia)
 Mr J. Melanson (Canada)
 H.E. M. Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic)
 Mr R. Parasuram (India)
 Ms Z. Budhan (Jamaica)
 H.E. A.A. Zaied (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
 Mr R. Recide (Philippines)
 Mr Y. Olaniran (Nigeria)
 Ms V.B. Titi (South Africa)

Finance Committee

Chairperson

Mr A. Ashraf Khawaja (Pakistan)

Members

Mr S. Skafté (Denmark)
 Mr E.W. Hein (Germany)
 Mr A. Zodda (Italy)
 Mr S. Yokoi (Japan)
 Ms A.M. Baiardi Quesnel (Paraguay)
 Mr R. Seminario Portocarrero (Peru)
 H.E. A.I. Al-Abdulla (Qatar)
 Mr L. Brudvig (USA)
 H.E. M. Muchada (Zimbabwe)

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda¹

3. The Agenda for the Joint Meeting was approved.

Item 2: Summary Programme of Work and Budget 2008-09²

4. Following an introduction by the Director-General and after presentations by the two Chairpersons summarising the discussions in their respective Committee, the Summary PWB 2008-09 was jointly addressed by the Committees.
5. The Committees appreciated the concise and informative nature of the document. They recognized that it responded to the expectation of the Council of a “comprehensive financial plan”, including proposals to restore the financial health of the Organization. They noted the focus on a “maintenance budget” for the next biennium, that is continuing the substantive priorities already endorsed by the membership and identifying anticipated cost increases and implications for incremental costs. The Committees noted the linkages to factors which have been endorsed by, or reported to Members. As usual, the estimates for cost increases had been the object of particular scrutiny by the Finance Committee.

¹ JM 07.1/1

² CL 132/3

6. The Committees observed that the range of figures presented in the document have a significant impact on assessments. They recognised that the implications of important developments such as ongoing UN reforms and more particularly the outcome of the IEE could not as yet be taken into account. Therefore, the Committees were conscious that further information would be available in the period leading up to the decision by Conference. Accordingly, the Committees refrained from recording their preferences on budget levels at this stage.
7. The Committees looked forward to the full PWB expanding, with more detailed information and justifications, on the analysis presented in the Summary, including cost increases, efficiency gains and savings, handling of reserves and long-term liabilities, and capital expenditure requirements. They expected the full PWB to better articulate programmatic content under the “maintenance budget”, including programme implementation at the field level, as well as adequate reflections on the programmatic aspects of important challenges such as climate change and bioenergy while retaining the major prioritization of activities. The Committees noted the need to focus on results that contributed to the broader Millennium Development Goals. Pending specific recommendations from the IEE, the Committees welcomed the intent to initiate in the full PWB a more integrated presentation of Regular Budget and extra-budgetary resources. They noted that this could also facilitate opportunities for extra-budgetary support to meet critical funding gaps affecting priorities and programmes agreed by the membership.
8. The Committees also acknowledged the usefulness of presenting to Members preliminary information on the cost of IEE recommendations at the appropriate times (i.e. when the draft and final reports of the IEE would be available). While not prejudging the outcome of the IEE, and welcoming the indications provided by the Independent Chairperson of the Council of his intent to start dialogue as early as possible within the mechanism of the Friends of the Chair, the Committees reiterated the opportunity the IEE offered to the membership to decide on suitable measures for strengthening the work of, and tangible benefits delivered by the Organization to all of its Members.

Item 3: Collaboration on Administrative and Processing Work between FAO, WFP and IFAD³

9. The Joint Meeting noted with appreciation the presentation of the document on this agenda item prepared in response to the request made at its session in September 2006. It commended the three Rome-based institutions for progress made in the current areas of collaboration and for the identification of areas for potential collaboration. The Joint Meeting endorsed the Inter-Institutional Coordination Committee as a coordination mechanism to move forward on the existing proposals. The Committees requested periodic reports on progress of the work of the IICC.
10. The Joint Meeting whilst welcoming the present collaboration, requested opportunities for further discussion of this item with the prospect of identifying additional areas of collaboration. It requested the submission of an expanded report for its May 2008 session which would include other areas of cooperation as described in paragraphs 15 through 28 of CL132/3: SPWB 2008-09, as well as additional information on the savings and financial implications of this collaboration.

Item 4. Savings and Efficiencies in Governance

11. There was no discussion under this agenda item.

Item 5. Any Other Business

12. There was no discussion under this agenda item.

³ JM 07.1/3