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联合国
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l'agriculture

Organización
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Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Report of the Ninety-eighth Session of the Programme Committee

Rome, 3 - 7 September 2007

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Matters requiring attention by the Council

Matters requiring discussion and/or decision

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Item 2: Programme of Work and Budget 2008-09

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REPORT OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

3 – 7 September 2007

Introduction

1. The Committee submits to the Council the following report of its Ninety-eighth Session.
2. The following Members were present:

Chairperson: Mr V. Heard (United Kingdom)
Vice-Chairperson: H.E. M. Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic)
Members: Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)
Ms J. Barfield (Australia)
Mr J. Melanson (Canada)
Mr R. Parasuram (India)
Ms Z. Budhan (Jamaica)
Mr S.A. Essa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
Mr Y. Olaniran (Nigeria)
Mr R. Recide (Philippines)
Ms V.B. Titi (South Africa)

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable¹

3. The Agenda and Timetable for the meeting were approved.

Item 2: Programme of Work and Budget 2008-09²

4. The Committee welcomed the clear information included in the document, particularly with regard to financial and budgetary dimensions. It noted that biennial outputs had not been prepared at this stage and encouraged a more outcome-oriented approach to programme presentations in the future. It agreed that the full PWB duly reflected the guidance of the Programme and Finance Committees themselves and of the Council, as expressed at their last sessions of respectively May and June 2007, also taking into consideration the reports of the Technical Committees.

5. To improve its comprehension of the overall proposal, the Committee requested and received clarifications on key budgetary figures, including those related to anticipated cost increases, the implications in terms of assessments of the maintenance budget elaborated in the full PWB, the impact of the fluctuations in the US dollar/Euro exchange rate, and the separate proposals to restore the financial health of the Organization.

Relation to IEE

6. The Committee recognised that distinct arrangements had been put in place by the Council for consideration by the membership up to the Conference of the PWB proposals and the Independent External Evaluation. However, Members of the Committee felt that it was difficult for them to completely ignore the tentative findings and recommendations contained in the consultative working draft of the IEE, which had been widely circulated to all Members.

¹ PC 98/1; PC 98/INF/1

² C 2007/3

7. The Committee concurred that the eventual outcome of the IEE could not be predicted at this stage. However, it recognised that the separate discussion of the Independent External Evaluation might result in decisions by the Conference affecting the content of the PWB 2008-09 in terms of the timing and implementation of the Programme of Work for the next biennium. In rendering its usual advice on the PWB to the Council, the Committee therefore drew attention to the fact that the PWB could be revised in line with the guidance of the Conference. In this eventuality, the Conference might invite the Programme and Finance Committees to review any proposed revisions as soon as they had been formulated by the Secretariat.

Substantive review

8. The Committee focused its discussion of the full PWB primarily on Sections I and II, and Annex 1. While generally agreeing that its advice on priorities has been adequately followed, it provided further guidance, as noted hereunder.

9. With respect to Section I: “*Overall context*”, the Committee appreciated the evidence of active engagement of FAO with current UN “*Delivering as One*” pilots at country level. It welcomed the illustrations of existing collaboration among the Rome-based institutions, and was advised of ongoing contacts to develop further joint initiatives, including an exercise being carried out aimed at “*mapping*” all areas of cooperation among FAO, IFAD and WFP. In this regard, the Committee stressed the importance of achieving even closer cooperation at country level.

10. In relation to the reforms proposed by the Director-General in the 2005-06 period and endorsed by the governing bodies, the Committee noted that the new headquarters structure had been fully operative since 1/1/2007, while action was still under way regarding several decentralized locations, including the full deployment of the Shared Services Centre (SSC) in its new configuration. The Committee was advised that the timing of implementation and achievement of the substantial savings target resulting from the SSC was on track.

11. Regarding Section II: “*Substantive thrusts*”, the Committee took note of the succinct prognosis of major trends and challenges, while observing that such key issues as the impact of HIV/AIDS should also be included. As to the four multi-disciplinary priority thrusts highlighted in this section, the Committee welcomed the intent to formulate by early 2008 comprehensive strategies on capacity building, as well as knowledge management, and it addressed at more length climate change and bioenergy.

12. The Committee agreed with the importance of addressing issues linked to climate change and bioenergy, topics to which the international community was moreover likely to accord highest priority over the long term. While recalling their rapidly evolving contexts, the Committee underlined their close relevance to the mandate of FAO. The Committee generally endorsed the related multidisciplinary approaches presented in the PWB within areas of FAO’s comparative advantage. It was advised of already active partnerships on these themes and recommended that FAO should aim at increasing such partnerships with other actors and elaborate comprehensive strategies, taking account also of capacity building requirements.

13. The Committee sought clarifications on the use of the proposed increased allocations to the corresponding programme entities. As regards climate change, the Committee noted that the Secretariat was moving emphasis from mitigation to adaptation measures. It was satisfied that the Secretariat was also aiming at addressing in the first instance the most pressing needs of countries or affected populations, particularly the most vulnerable. As to bioenergy, the Committee noted with interest that planned work would cover among other factors the implications for food security and environmental dimensions and would target countries with the greatest engagement in bioenergy production. The Committee underlined the risks involved if public information messages on bioenergy were not managed in an appropriate manner.

14. The Committee welcomed the more integrated presentation of regular budget and extra-budgetary resources, which constituted a welcome step toward preparing a comprehensive resource mobilisation strategy, taking into account the difficulty of predicting the level of voluntary contributions. It addressed the pros and cons of seeking to drill down forecasts of extra-

budgetary resources to the programme entity level, or conversely of using more thematic aggregates which would better support a more strategic dialogue with potential donors. The Committee noted that the latter practice was used with visible success in comparable UN Organizations such as WHO.

15. The Committee noted the relevance of FAO's National Medium Term Planning Frameworks (NMTPFs) which were presently being developed as a way of bringing together country demand with FAO comparative advantage. It was advised that a few NMTPFs had been completed so far, focusing in particular on the countries chosen for "Delivering as One" pilots, and considered that it would be useful to carry out an internal assessment or evaluation of their quality and of the ongoing NMTPF process.

16. In addressing some of the resource allocations proposed in the full PWB under the maintenance budget, the Committee observed that Codex and related food safety work continued to be under-resourced. In this connection, the Committee was informed that the share of WHO's contribution to the joint food standards programme had been declining steadily and was now below 20 percent. It appreciated that high-level contacts were under way with this Organization to convince it to redress this trend. Support to increasing allocations to the IPPC was also expressed (cf. more ample discussion of IPPC activities under the following item).

17. In relation to gender related work, the Committee noted with concern that, while the allocation of the entity (3FP01) playing a central role in supporting gender mainstreaming in FAO had been retained at the same level, this was accompanied by cuts for other entities of Programme 3F: *Gender and Equity in Rural Societies*, including one dealing in particular with the impact of HIV/AIDS among other human diseases.

Item 3: Independent Evaluation of the Workings of the International Plant Protection Convention and its Institutional Arrangements³

18. The Committee appreciated the quality and thoroughness of both the Evaluation Report and the Management Response. It was also grateful to have the opportunity to interact with Dr Lopian, one of the Vice-Chairs of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) and to receive the response of the CPM to the evaluation report. While acknowledging the status of the CPM as a body falling under Article XIV of the FAO Constitution, the Committee agreed not to confine its discussion to FAO-related recommendations and to take a flexible view of the legal framework.

19. The Committee stressed the importance of technical assistance, especially to develop member countries' capacities to fully benefit from the IPPC. It acknowledged the expertise available in the CPM on phytosanitary matters and stressed the potentially important role of FAO in the design, implementation and facilitation of capacity building. In line with the assessment made by the IEE, capacity building deserved much greater emphasis in future, and this required both an overall FAO strategy for capacity building and a global strategy for phytosanitary capacity building, drawing fully on the potentials of FAO, the CPM and its membership. This should take into account what all other organizations are doing in this area. The Committee considered that a catalytic role in capacity building should continue to be a priority for the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme, while acknowledging its limitations in longer-term support. The limited resources currently channelled through the IPPC and FAO in support of technical assistance related to phytosanitary capacity were noted, and the Committee suggested that the potential for multilateral trust funds with a broader scope than the present IPPC multilateral trust fund should be further explored.

20. The Committee supported the recommendation to make greater use of standards developed by regional organizations. It stressed the need to strengthen the capacity of regional

³ PC 98/3; PC 98/3 Sup. 1; PC 98/3 Sup. 2

organizations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, to play this role and to promote the regional harmonisation of standards.

21. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the action taken by the CPM as recommended by the evaluation to combine the functions of the Bureau and that of the Informal Working Group on Strategic Planning and Technical Assistance (SPTA). It recognised that the recommendation regarding the size of the Standards Committee was a matter for decision by the CPM, but welcomed that the CPM would be examining the issue further, in line with the recommendation of the evaluation that a smaller group would be more efficient for decision-making.

22. The Committee noted the value of the dispute settlement provisions in the IPPC.

23. With respect to staffing, the Committee concurred with the Management Response that the Coordinator's position should be maintained, together with a full-time Secretary at D1 level, given the tasks involved. As recommended by the evaluation and accepted in the Management Response, the selection of the full-time IPPC Secretary should follow a transparent process, including a greater engagement of the CPM Bureau, similar to the process for selecting the Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources. Overall, the recommendations aiming at strengthening the IPPC Secretariat were supported.

24. The Committee acknowledged that the recommendation of outsourcing translation was not in conformity with the policy of the Organization, although it was recognised that significant cost-savings could be achieved in doing so. It also noted the view of the Vice-Chair of the CPM that standards were highly technical and best translated by plant protection professionals. The Committee agreed that the FAO policy in this regard should be further reviewed with a view to its relaxation.

25. The Committee regretted that FAO management had only accepted partially the recommendation that the Organization should undertake a Review of the World Phytosanitary Status because of resource constraints. It recommended that a less-costly product be produced jointly by the CPM and the FAO Secretariat.

26. The Committee concluded the discussion on the evaluation by addressing the funding issues. It acknowledged that funding options had been explored at length by the CPM and the evaluation report and stressed that these could not be properly addressed further without the development of a multi-year funding strategy that clearly indicated resource requirements, potential funding sources and the expected outputs and benefits. The Committee also stressed the importance of increased and reliable FAO Regular Programme funding to the IPPC to enable effective implementation of the outcome of the IPPC evaluation to underpin and promote extra-budgetary resource mobilisation and the mobilisation of resources in kind.

Item 3: Evaluation - Further Discussion of the Evaluation Programme of Work

27. Under the broader heading of Evaluation, the Committee considered two further proposals for the evaluation Programme of Work:

- National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks (quality, relevance to needs and coherence). Such an evaluation would look at the quality of the frameworks developed to-date, as well as any reasons for slow progress in developing more. This would be in the context of "Delivering as One", the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) and their potential for increasing the effectiveness of FAO itself in serving Members' needs; and
- The statistics work of FAO. This would be a comprehensive evaluation of the totality of FAO's work in statistics, with a special focus on FAOSTAT.

28. Members prioritised the evaluation of statistics over that of National Medium-Term Priority Frameworks and it was agreed to seek extra-budgetary funding for this latter evaluation.

It was noted that in the absence of such funding, this evaluation could not be initiated any earlier than 2009.

Item 5. Any Other Business

29. There was no discussion under this agenda item.