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Продовольственная и
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Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-fifth session

Rome, 17-18 November 2008

Report of the Ninety-ninth Session of the Programme Committee
Rome, 28 - 30 May 2008

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Matters requiring attention by the Council

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REPORT OF THE NINETY-NINTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

28 – 30 May 2007

Introduction

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

Chairperson: Mr V. Heard (United Kingdom)
Members: Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)
Mr C.A. Amaral (Angola)
Ms M. del Carmen Squeff (Argentina)
Ms F. Bartlett (Australia)
H.E. J.A. Marcondes de Carvalho (Brazil)
Mr J. Melanson (Canada)
Mr A.A.M. Hosni Abdel Aziz (Egypt)
H.E. P. Bacale Mbiang (Equatorial Guinea)
Mr R. Parasuram (India)
Mr S. Yokoi (Japan)

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable¹

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

Item 2: Election of Vice-chairperson for 2008

4. Mr R. Parasuram of India was elected Vice-chairperson for 2008.

Item 3: Evaluation

a) Evaluation of FAO's Emergency and Rehabilitation Work in the Horn of Africa²

5. The Committee appreciated the quality and the clarity of the evaluation. It recognised the difficulties of working in post-conflict environments and the importance of integrating the political and practical dimensions in analysing the complexity of the situations and the role that FAO can reasonably play.
6. The Committee felt that some of the recommendations were not fully realistic; too many had financing implications that the Organization was not in a position to fulfil. While recognising some of the difficulties in raising funds for rehabilitation and recovery, new sources had been mobilised during the 2004-06 period of the evaluation. As nearly all of FAO's emergency and rehabilitation work is funded by extra-budgetary support, longer-term institutional arrangements to strengthen this area of work should be conceived that fit voluntary funding models.
7. The Committee noted that FAO had made solid improvements in its activities in the Greater Horn of Africa, including a more strategic approach through the development of Plans of Action, the systematic fielding of emergency coordinators, active partnerships with NGOs and a

¹ PC 99/1; PC 99/INF/1

² PC 99/3 a); PC 99/3 a) Sup.1

clear commitment to address transboundary issues. The Committee also agreed on the need for strengthening work in areas where FAO had comparative advantages and noted TCE's current effort in developing an overall strategy for emergency activities. It further noted key issues in the Horn of Africa included land tenure, and understanding pastoralists' livelihoods. As some of the countries are moving toward rehabilitation and development, more emphasis should be given to consolidation and sustainability of results, preparedness, and safety net mechanisms to address chronic poverty and vulnerability. Further diversification and expansion of FAO's work will require appropriate expertise in the region, if timely technical support is to be provided.

b) FAO's Effectiveness at Country Level: A Synthesis of Evaluations³

8. The Committee appreciated the quality of the synthesis of four country evaluations that had taken place in 2006-07. The document contained many good lessons that reinforced findings and recommendations of the IEE. While noting that individual country evaluations had numerous recommendations and management responses had been prepared for each one, the Committee felt that the synthesis would have benefited from general recommendations drawn from the country evaluations, and a management response to these. Future synthesis reports should also include a specific focus on cooperation between the Rome-based agencies at country level.

9. The Committee stressed the importance of the FAO Representative, noting that too many posts were vacant. The Committee stated that FAO Representations must have adequate resources, including an appropriate level of technical support from the rest of the Organization. The Committee noted that national capacities and requirements differ from country to country. FAO must take account of this, including in the selection of FAO Representatives.

10. With respect to normative products of FAO, the Committee stated that efforts should be made to increase their exposure at country level, including by making them available in local languages. Noting the important role of FAO to facilitate the participation of developing countries in international fora, the Committee observed that FAO needed to provide technical support, besides mobilizing funds for attendance, to increase the value of such participation to the country.

11. The Committee agreed that FAO needed to better define its objectives at country level, and National Medium-term Planning Frameworks (NMTPFs) could be useful for this. Government leadership and donor involvement were important for the successful definition of an NMTPF. Noting the shortcomings of the NMTPFs cited in the synthesis, the Committee reiterated its decision taken from the September 2007 meeting that a process evaluation, examining the Plans developed so far, should be a priority evaluation activity. If necessary, the Secretariat should seek extra-budgetary funds.

12. The Committee requested that country evaluations should continue as a regular evaluation activity of FAO and that future evaluations should focus on countries at different levels of development. Synthesis reports should be presented to the Committee every 2-3 years, with future reports taking into account the Committee's observations.

c) Procedure to be followed in recruiting a Head of Evaluation

13. The Committee received a proposal from Management on a possible procedure for appointing a Head of Evaluation. The proposal noted the large measure of agreement emerging between the CoC-IEE Working Groups and Management on institutional arrangements for evaluation, as recorded in the Chair's Progress Report to the Conference Committee for IEE Follow-up of May 2008.

14. Management outlined a proposed selection procedure to Committee Members which included an open, competitive advertisement at D-2 level, internal screening and interviews in line with existing procedure for selection of D-level staff, consultation with the Programme Committee on the selected candidate and appointment of the Head by the Director-General.

³ PC 99/3 b

15. In reacting to this proposal, the Committee stated that the procedure eventually agreed would need to be in line with the institutional arrangements for Evaluation approved by the governing bodies, relating in particular to the grade level and reporting lines of the Head of Evaluation. In the case of a separate Evaluation office within the secretariat, with reporting lines to the Director-General and to the governing bodies, the Committee expected the selection process should reflect this dual link. Specifically, as the governing body which advised the Council on evaluation, the Committee considered that without delaying the recruitment process, it should review the terms of reference and statement of qualifications for the post, and that representatives of the Director-General and governing bodies, as well as evaluation specialists from other UN agencies, should then participate in a panel to screen and select an appropriate candidate.

Item 4. UN Joint Inspection Unit Reports

*JIU/REP/2001/1: Voluntary contributions in United Nations system organizations.
Impact on programme delivery and resource mobilization strategies⁴*

JIU/REP/2007/2: United Nations system staff medical coverage⁵

JIU/REP/2007/4: Age structure of human resources in the organizations of the United Nations system⁶

JIU/REP/2007/6: Knowledge management in the United Nations system⁷

16. The Committees took note with interest, of these four UN Joint Inspection Unit Reports and the Director-General's comments thereon.

Item 5. Any Other Business

17. Under this agenda item the Committee agreed to admitting non-speaking Observers, from Member countries, to the next session of the Programme Committee.

⁴ CL 135/INF/6

⁵ CL 135/INF/7

⁶ CL 135/INF/8

⁷ CL 135/INF/9