



COUNCIL

Hundred and Thirty-sixth Session

Rome, 15-19 June 2009

Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO

Introduction

1. This sub-item has been added in response to Action no. 2.31 of the Immediate Plan of Action, to ensure that the Council is kept abreast of developments in other fora of importance for FAO's mandate and that dialogue is maintained with other Governing Bodies as appropriate, in particular the Governing Bodies of the Rome-based food and agriculture agencies.

I. Inter-agency collaboration on Nutrition: the role of FAO

2. FAO has been a member of the **UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN)** since 1977, when the then ACC/SCN was created. The Director of the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division participates in the Steering Committee which meets on a monthly basis, either face to face or via telephone conference calls.

3. The mandate of the SCN is to promote cooperation among UN agencies and partner organizations in support of community, national, regional, and international efforts to end malnutrition in all of its forms in this generation. It does this by refining the direction, increasing the scale and strengthening the coherence and impact of actions against malnutrition world wide, raising awareness of nutrition problems and mobilizing commitment to solve them at global, regional and national levels. The Secretariat of the SCN, presently hosted in WHO headquarters in Geneva, is funded through voluntary contributions by the UN agencies.

4. Presently the SCN has three constituencies: UN agencies, including other international and regional development finance institutions, and intergovernmental bodies; bilateral partners, including representatives from both high income and low income countries; and, civil society including international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions and other civil society representatives.

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5. FAO's participation in the SCN provides the important link between food, nutrition and health. It helps promote food-based interventions to improve nutrition and the livelihood of poor households particularly in rural areas.
6. In 2006, the SCN adopted a new Strategic Framework with a view to moving beyond advocacy work and to contribute concretely to the development of harmonized actions for accelerating the elimination of all types of malnutrition, as well as to help achieve the majority of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the country level, within the framework of the Millennium Declaration.
7. Several Working Groups and Task Forces have been set up within the SCN, most of which are relevant to FAO's work. FAO chairs the *Working group on Household Food Security* (AGN Division) and the *Working Group on Nutrition, Ethics and Human Rights* (Legal Office). FAO's contribution to other Working Groups is limited by staff and other funding constraints. FAO (ESAF Service) also co-leads with WFP the *Task force on Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation*.
8. SCN regularly issues a flagship publication called *The World Nutrition Report* with input and contribution from all members of the SCN. The Sixth World Nutrition Report is under active preparation for release at the end of 2009.
9. The AGN Division of FAO is also actively involved in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) **Nutrition cluster**, chaired by UNICEF, both in the field and at Headquarters level. Since its creation, the Nutrition Cluster has been working closely with the SCN Working Group on Nutrition in emergencies.
10. The heads of FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP have recently endorsed the Renewed Effort Against Child Hunger (**REACH**) initiative to facilitate joint action to end child hunger and under-nutrition at country level. The Assistant Directors-General of FAO's Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department (AG) and Technical Cooperation Department (TC) jointly support this initiative. The REACH core-team, hosted in WFP headquarters, includes representatives of the different agencies and key partners, in particular from NGOs. A facilitator is posted in the Resident Coordinator's office to ensure appropriate knowledge management, planning and fundraising. The promising results of the pilot experiences in Laos and Mauritania, supported by the Boston Consulting Group, are generating increasing interest and support. The SCN provides technical advisory services to REACH.
11. Although FAO is playing a key role in these different (but inter-related) inter-agency processes, stronger support from Council is urgently needed to increase FAO's visibility and contribution to help Member Nations raise levels of nutrition in close collaboration with other UN agencies. Unless the agriculture and health sectors jointly and explicitly take the lead at local level, no effective and sustainable progress in alleviating malnutrition are to be obtained. The present interest in nutrition generated by the crisis and the move towards joint programming at country level makes this topic particularly timely.
12. FAO's involvement in inter-agency collaboration on nutrition is a significant dimension of its nutrition work, in view of the inter-sectoral nature of nutritional problems and causes, which is recognized and supported as an effective contribution to FAO's inter-agency work at global, regional and country levels.

II. Decision of the Fortieth Session of the UN Statistical Commission on Agricultural Statistics

13. The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) on Agricultural Statistics is the primary entity of the global statistical system which meets annually to consider programmes to address emerging statistical issues and to approve international statistical standards.

14. The Fortieth Session was held in New York from 24 to 27 February 2009 and was attended by top managers of 122 National Statistical Offices and 38 International Agencies. Amongst other important issues of direct interest to FAO, such as climate change statistics and environmental-economic accounting, the Session discussed a document jointly prepared by the Statistical Office of the European Union, the World Bank, the United States Department of Agriculture and FAO on the need to develop a Global Strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics. The negative assessment of the current status of agricultural statistics, particularly in developing countries, and the conclusions on how to address this situation are consistent with the findings and recommendations of the IEE of FAO and the Evaluation of FAO Work in Statistics.

15. On this issue the United Nations Statistical Commission:

- a) Stressed that agricultural and rural statistics are essential for policymaking and that strategic direction is needed to meet the increasing demand for information at both the international and country levels, especially in the light of the recent food crisis;
- b) Emphasized the important role of agricultural ministries and other institutions in the compilation of agricultural statistics, as well as the coordinating role of national statistical offices and national statistical councils;
- c) Supported the development of a strategy based on the recommendations and road map as set out in the report;
- d) Recognized the important role of FAO, as the specialized agency in this field, and welcomed the commitment and effort of FAO to involve the ministries of agriculture through its governing bodies in the development of the strategy and the implementation plan;
- e) agreed with the creation of a Friends of the Chair Group to steer the process, with FAO and the United Nations Statistics Division serving as Secretariat, stressed the importance of proper representation of countries from all regions and at different levels of development, and welcomed interested countries to participate in the group to ensure ownership of the process by countries;
- f) requested that the Friends of the Chair Group report back to the Commission at its Forty-first Session on progress in the development of the strategy to improve agricultural and rural statistics.

16. Following these recommendations, FAO has taken the lead in the development of the Global Strategy, working with an international consultant to prepare the background document, facilitating the creation of the Friends of the Chair Group (FoC) and organizing a series of meetings in which the new global strategy on Agricultural Statistics will be reviewed. The Statistics Division is coordinating FAO input to the process and working closely with other divisions conducting the substantial statistical work to ensure that a comprehensive approach is adopted in developing the Global Strategy.

17. With regard to the meetings planned for the review process, a Seminar with Permanent Representatives to FAO will be convened on 22 June 2009 to present the work undertaken thus far and to encourage Member Nations to actively participate and contribute in the review process so that this document will fully reflect the situations and needs of countries.

18. Following this Seminar, the document will be discussed in Maputo, Mozambique (13-14 August 2009) at a satellite meeting of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). Approximately 100 experts from Ministries of Agriculture, National Statistical Offices and International Organizations are expected to attend this meeting and to discuss the key elements of the Global Strategy.

19. The document will be finally deliberated upon at the FAO Conference in November 2009 before being presented at the Forty-first Session of the UN Statistical Commission in February 2010.

20. The expected outcome of this Global Strategy is the improvement of national and international food and agricultural statistics with an internationally validated methodology for the design of evidence-based agriculture and rural development policies at national and global levels. The support of all stakeholders, both countries and development partners, in the development and implementation of the Global Strategy will be critical for the success of the initiative.

III. Developments on issues of world fisheries in the United Nations and other international fora, including the annual consultations for UNGA resolutions

21. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI) participates in fora that are both intergovernmental and global in nature. Some of these fora address issues related to the overall fisheries and aquaculture sector in a comprehensive manner, either by focussing on specific aspects or dealing with considerably broader themes, all of which have important links with fisheries and aquaculture.

22. In the first category, mention must be made of the discussions and negotiations that take place within the framework of the United Nations, i.e. two fora, the first being a preparatory stage for the second. The United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP) is an important and innovative forum, both in substance as well as in relation to its method of work, which allows for a dynamic participation of stakeholders. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department provides inputs to the documentation which serves as a basis for this work and participates in the meetings. The 10th Session of the ICP (17-19 June 2009) will be crucial for its future, since it will mainly focus on the question of the implementation of the outcomes of the ICP, including a review of these achievements and shortcomings in its first nine meetings.

23. Discussions and negotiations that take place within the United Nations General Assembly take into account issues discussed during the Sessions of the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI). Their results are embodied in two important resolutions, which are adopted every year, the first on "Oceans and the Law of the Sea" and the second on sustainable fisheries. The resolution on sustainable fisheries is particularly comprehensive and covers all issues and questions related to fisheries that are of relevance at the time of its adoption, and always includes many references to FAO and COFI, often with specific requests for action. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department pays particular attention to the process of its negotiation and submits the necessary information or comments as required.

24. The second category of fora comprises those that deal with specific aspects of the fisheries and aquaculture sector:

- a) cooperation between FAO and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), an example being the important work being developed on the safety of small fishing vessels. Such efforts, to which FAO is contributing actively, are very significant in view of the fact that fishing is considered to be the world's most dangerous occupation, with more than 24 000 deaths per year.
- b) cooperation between FAO and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the issue of working conditions in fishing, including safety at sea and child labour in fisheries and aquaculture.

25. Finally, the third category of fora include those that address broader issues affecting the fisheries and aquaculture sector, such as the ongoing debate on climate change. Due to the impacts that climate change may have on marine living resources as well as on fishers and their communities, there is an urgent need to undertake adaptation measures to increase the resilience of these communities, as well as mitigation measures to reduce their contribution to that change. In this respect, the Manado Ocean Declaration that was adopted on 14 May 2009 by the World Ocean Conference referred to the FAO reports that identified key issues and consequences of climate change for fisheries. This was recently brought to the attention of the participants at the

Bonn Climate Change Talks, held within the framework of the UNFCCC at the beginning of June 2009.

26. Finally, as concerns the other ongoing discussions in relevant fora, the negotiations on fishery subsidies within the WTO, as well as those relative to CITES (Washington Convention), have direct relevance for the fisheries and aquaculture sector and receive inputs and cooperation from FAO.

IV. Agriculture, Land Use and the Climate Change negotiations

1. Agriculture is essential to meeting climate change objectives

27. Agriculture, including land use change, on the one hand accounts for more than one-third of all global GHG emissions. On the other hand the mitigation potential of the sector is significant, with many mitigation practices (e.g. less till with crop rotation, agroforestry, composting, mulching and switching to perennial crops and improved management of livestock systems) generating multiple benefits such as increased resilience, higher agricultural productivity and production. These in turn can underpin adaptation, food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development.

28. Agriculture is a major contributor to the ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: stabilize greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere at a level that allows ecosystem resilience, does not threaten food production and enables economic development. Also, no other sector is as climate-sensitive as agriculture. Extensive adaptation will be required to allow agriculture to deliver on food, fibre and fuel requirements under increased climate variability and extremes. Early mitigation action will reduce the depth and breadth of adaptation needs over the medium and long-term.

2. Agriculture now part of the negotiations

29. Agriculture and land use were initially on the margins of negotiating how to reduce human impacts on climate change, with greater attention given to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). This was due to perceived complexities in the agriculture sector, including mitigation uncertainties (leakage and permanence), challenges and costs in measuring, reporting and verifying emission reductions, implementation of payment schemes and the exclusion of soil carbon sequestration from the Clean Development Mechanism.

30. More recently, agriculture has received greater attention within the negotiations, both in its own right and in view of its linkages with REDD. Some Parties are recognizing the need to transition towards more comprehensive approaches to land uses in order to address mitigation/adaptation synergies and trade-offs.

3. FAO advocacy on agriculture and land use within the negotiations

31. FAO has made six submissions to the negotiations, including a joint submission with IFAD. It has also organized several side events and participated in those of partner organizations, including the World Bank, the Terrestrial Carbon Group, UN REDD and World Food Programme. FAO and IPCC were the only UN system entities invited to make presentations to Parties at the in-session workshop on agriculture in April 2009. A Policy Brief for Parties was prepared for the recently concluded negotiating session held in Bonn from 1-12 June 2009. These advocacy activities, often in partnership with others, are helping to position agriculture and land use issues within an agreed outcome to be decided in Copenhagen in December 2009 and its eventual implementation.

4. Beyond Copenhagen

32. Sustainable agricultural practices that enable mitigation and adaptation, as well as development and food security, can facilitate the capture of multiple benefits as related multiple challenges are addressed. For this reason, they deserve high priority within climate change

strategies, funding mechanisms and implementation programmes. FAO is well-placed to work with its member countries and partners in supporting international and national implementation efforts to this end.

V. UN reform - governance, funding, gender architecture and Delivering as One: Opportunities and Challenges

33. **Intergovernmental process in New York:** Informal consultations on System-Wide Coherence are ongoing in the UN General Assembly co-chaired by Namibia and Spain and address the fragmentation of the UN System assistance at country level and enhance the predictability of funding. Discussions presently focus on three key issues:

- **(1) Governance:** Proposal by the UN Secretariat **to enhance the role of ECOSOC** in coordinating UN system development priorities; **revitalizing the coordination role of Operational Activities Segment** by merging it with the Coordination Segment; **Creation of an advisory group** composed of national focal points from ECOSOC member countries and **Responsibility for UN operational activities** for development at the country level.
- **(2) Funding:** Improve the predictability of funding; support the establishment of common country funds to fill funding gaps in common country programmes; reform multi-year strategic planning frameworks.
- **(3) Gender Architecture:** Three mechanisms for a possible new UN entity focusing on gender issues (1) New department, (2) Fund or Programme, or (3) Composite.
- **An independent evaluation** of the eight country pilots in “Delivering as One” (DaO) will be conducted by the General Assembly with support as requested from the UN Secretariat. Many members hold the view that the DaO model should not be replicated before it is fully evaluated.

34. **Inter-agency cooperation and reform**

- At the global level – the **United Nations Development Group (UNDG)** in 2008 became a third pillar of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), which comprises the UN Heads of Agencies, reflecting the more equal involvement of specialized agencies. FAO is the first Specialized Agency to be Vice-Chair for UNDG. The **UNDG Advisory Group** meets regularly, assisting the Chair in the oversight and improvement of UN coherence on key issues relating to UN country operational activities. At the regional level, FAO participates on a pilot basis in the Regional Directors Teams (RDTs).

35. **Developments in the field**

- **“Delivering as One”** is the primary operational exercise for implementing UN Reform. The Stocktaking Exercise 2008 highlights progress as well as main challenges.
- **Key achievements include:** National leadership and ownership; improved transparency of the UN System; improved role of Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs); enhanced understanding and harmonization of business models and mandates; increased involvement of line ministries; access to global funding mechanisms.
- **Key challenges:** predictability of funding; up-front transaction costs; reporting burden; the implementation of the “functional firewall” in UNDP of the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, being a non-resident agency.
- **In 2009-2011 a focus will be on 90 additional countries** that are offered the possibility of working with a lined-up UN system in accordance with the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (TCPR) as new UN programmes are being prepared.
- **Opportunities for FAO** that accrue from its involvement in UN Reform and participation in inter-agency mechanisms are also important in FAO’s own reforms. **Examples** are the stronger emphasis in the UN System on policy assistance and capacity building, which are already at the centre of FAO’s mandate and work, and a growing awareness of the

importance of including the Specialized Agencies' competencies in the coordinated work of the UN System in the field.

VI. FAO collaboration with the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

36. FAO collaboration with the AU and NEPAD has principally been in the following areas:

37. **The formulation and implementation of the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP):** at the very first meeting of the NEPAD Heads of State Implementation Committee in Abuja (Nigeria, October 2001), FAO offered to assist in the formulation of the NEPAD Agricultural Programme. A first draft was reviewed by the African Ministers for Agriculture (as well as members of the NEPAD Steering Committee) at a meeting on the margin of the "World Food Summit: *five years later*" held in Rome in June 2002. A series of consultations jointly organized with the NEPAD Secretariat, the African Regional Economic Communities and other key partners was subsequently undertaken to (i) galvanize political and financial support; and (ii) identify flagship projects for early action. The programme, now named Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), was formally adopted in July 2003 by African Heads of State and Government as a framework for enhancing agricultural development and food security in Africa.

38. Since 2002, FAO has continuously provided technical support in the development of implementation plans and related investment operations for CAADP pillars, as well as in enhancing the capacity of the NEPAD Agriculture Unit through secondments of senior experts. Currently, FAO has two experts assigned to the NEPAD secretariat in Pretoria.

39. **Support directly targeted at the AU:** outside the NEPAD process, FAO remains a leading technical partner of the AU, assisting the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture in designing (2005), and currently revising, its Strategic Action Plan. FAO has also consistently provided technical support in the organization of high-level meetings and summits in which food security and agricultural development were on the agenda. FAO has drafted the technical background document for the AU Summit to be held in Sirte, Libya in July 2009.

40. **FAO support to African Union and NEPAD in the context of the UN Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM):** FAO convenes the UN Cluster on Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development which is aimed at coordinating UN support to the AU and NEPAD agriculture agenda.

41. **FAO collaboration with NEPAD within the framework of the global food crisis:** in response to the global food crisis, FAO together with other agencies cooperated with NEPAD in inter-agency assessment missions, during which FAO assisted in the organization of a NEPAD workshop on this crisis. Moreover, with regard to the Comprehensive Framework of Action (CFA), developed under the auspices of the High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis (HLTF), both FAO and the HLTF Secretariat use CAADP as the operational framework for Africa.

42. **Advocacy and resource mobilization:** FAO has been actively engaged in resource mobilization for the implementation of the CAADP by involving regional and international financial institutions, as well as bilateral and multilateral donors.