

June 2012



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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-fourth Session of the Council

Rome, 11-15 June 2012

Report of the Joint Meeting of the 111th (Special) Session of the Programme Committee and 145th (Special) Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, 31 May – 1 June 2012)

Executive Summary

The Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees of 31 May-1 June 2012 brings to the attention of the Council its findings and recommendations on:

- Further adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13 (paras. 4-6)
- Outline of the reviewed Strategic Framework (paras. 7-10), and
- Structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices (paras. 11-14).

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings and recommendations, of the Joint Meeting.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

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**REPORT OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH (SPECIAL) SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE
AND HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH (SPECIAL) SESSION OF THE FINANCE
COMMITTEE**

Rome, 31 May – 1 June 2012

INTRODUCTION

1. The Joint Meeting submitted its Report to the Council.
2. The Joint Meeting was chaired by Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden) during the morning session of the 31st of May, and by Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon), Chairperson of the Finance Committee for the remainder of the session. In addition to the Chairpersons, the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	Mr F.G. Cramer (Germany)
Mr M. Mellah (Algeria)	Mr S.K. Pattanayak (India)
Mr G.O. Infante (Argentina)	Mr H. Yamada (Japan)
Mr T. Power (Australia)	Ms M. Sabah Mohammad Al-Sabah (Kuwait)
Ms S. Afroz (Bangladesh)	H.E. M. Ruíz-Cabañas Izquierdo (Mexico)
Ms M. van Dooren (Belgium)	Mr Y. Farhat (Morocco)
Mr O. Vieira (Brazil)	Mr R. Elkhuisen (Netherlands)
Mr L.D. Couliati (Burkina Faso)	Mr N. Fraser (New Zealand)
Mr M. Valicenti (Canada)	Mr G. Vega Berrio (Panama)
Mr H. Guo (China)	Mr Vladimir Navara (Russian Federation)
Mr E.O. Fayed (Egypt)	Mr M.E. Elfaki Elnor (Sudan)
Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)	Ms K.E. Johnson (USA)

Programme Implementation Report 2010-11¹

3. The Joint Meeting welcomed the presentation of the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2010-11, but decided to defer discussion to its next regular session due to the late availability of the document. It requested:
 - a) the Secretariat to resubmit the Report to its next regular session for fuller discussion, noting that such timing would be consistent with the required submission of the Report for approval by Conference in June 2013; and
 - b) the Chairpersons of the Programme and Finance Committees to consult with the Independent Chairperson of the Council on how to handle the PIR 2010-11 at the 144th Session of the Council (11-15 June 2012).

Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13²

4. The Joint Meeting expressed general satisfaction with the Further Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2012-13. It supported the vision for transformational change put forward by the Director-General including four main components: i) the Strategic Thinking Process; ii) enhancements to the structure and functioning of the decentralized offices; iii) critical review of the established post structure; and iv) institutional strengthening and functional improvements.

¹ C 2013/8

² CL 144/3

5. In reviewing the document, the Joint Meeting:
- a) was satisfied that the USD 6.5 million of previously unidentified savings had been found as a priority and predominantly in Functional Objectives X and Y, in line with Council's guidance;
 - b) welcomed the further savings identified of USD 19.3 million, including through the critical review of posts, which allowed for the reallocation of resources from administrative to technical areas of work, as well as from headquarters to decentralized offices;
 - c) welcomed the reallocation of savings for interdisciplinary activities, and requested that detailed information on the Multidisciplinary Fund, including the process and criteria for selecting projects, be provided to the next regular session of the Joint Meeting;
 - d) generally supported the measures for institutional strengthening, but requested further clarification from the Secretariat before formulating its position on the transformation of the existing Human Resources Management Division; and
 - e) underlined the need to maintain sufficient resources for the Organization's normative work.
6. While considering its findings and requests, the Joint Meeting generally:
- a) welcomed the fact that the guidance and decisions of the Council had been followed in preparing the further adjustments to the PWB 2012-13;
 - b) appreciated the overall shift of USD 21.2 million from Functional Objectives X and Y to the Strategic Objectives resulting from the further adjustments;
 - c) supported the revised post establishment, and the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in Table 4 of document CL 144/3; and
 - d) noted that further proposals for institutional strengthening within the context of transformational change of FAO would be submitted to the 145th Session of the Council via the Programme and Finance Committees.

Outline of the Reviewed Strategic Framework³

7. The Joint Meeting welcomed the presentation of the outline of the reviewed Strategic Framework containing five proposed strategic objectives for the future work of the Organization. In this regard, the Joint Meeting:
- a) supported the Strategic Thinking Process launched by the Director-General in order to determine the future strategic direction of the Organization, and to inform revision of the current FAO Strategic Framework, as well as preparation of the Medium Term Plan 2014-17;
 - b) welcomed the start of the broad and consultative Process, and encouraged further involvement of the staff and informal consultations with the membership; and
 - c) took note of the roadmap of major planning documents during 2012-13 and looked forward to receiving more details on the remaining steps.
8. In addition, the Joint Meeting reviewed the:
- a) eleven global trends expected to shape the conditions under which agricultural development is foreseen to take place;
 - b) seven main challenges extrapolated from the trends, which the Joint Meeting noted applied to Members, partners and agricultural development globally, and did not represent necessarily areas of focus for the work of FAO alone;

³ CL 144/14; CL 144/14 Corr.1

- c) FAO's basic attributes, core functions and comparative advantages in relation to the main challenges, derived from the Organization's Constitution, and identified within the context of prevailing global development principles; and
 - d) five draft strategic objectives for the future work of the Organization, extrapolated from the main challenges and the analysis of FAO's comparative advantages.
9. In providing comments on the Outline of the reviewed Strategic Framework, the Joint Meeting:
- a) welcomed the fact that regional priorities and specificities had been taken into account in the formulation of the outputs of the Strategic Thinking Process;
 - b) urged the Secretariat to further subsume guidance from all the Regional Conferences, including the Informal Regional Conference for North America, into the outputs of the Process;
 - c) welcomed the identification of fewer and more cross-cutting strategic objectives;
 - d) underlined the importance of the concept of comparative advantage in the review of the Strategic Framework and preparation of the next Medium Term Plan;
 - e) noted that it would be critical to identify and develop meaningful partnerships with other UN agencies, research institutions, civil society organizations, cooperatives and the private sector, in order to achieve the future strategic objectives;
 - f) highlighted the need for a clear line of sight between FAO's strategic objectives and work on the ground, in order to align FAO's normative and standard-setting work with country-level priorities; and
 - g) emphasized that the action plans should be developed using a robust results-based framework, with clear definition of roles, outputs, outcomes and indicators.
10. The Joint Meeting also provided feedback on further development of individual strategic objectives, and looked forward to their elaboration in the reviewed Strategic Framework to be submitted to the 145th Session of the Council in November 2012 via the Programme and Finance Committees.

Structure and functioning of Decentralized Offices⁴

11. The Joint Meeting commended the Secretariat for the quality of the document. It supported the general thrust of the document and the proposals contained in it.
12. The Joint Meeting underlined:
- a) the need to institute suitable arrangements for accountability and transparency in all fields of administration, in particular in human resources, recruitment and management, and in impact assessment;
 - b) the importance of enhanced internal cooperation at all levels, as budgets and responsibilities are decentralized;
 - c) the desirability for greater interaction with regional economic integration bodies and other regional bodies, and enhanced partnerships with national and regional institutions, other UN and non-UN international agencies, including the Rome-based agencies, as well as with the private sector, universities and research organizations, and civil society;
 - d) the importance of Country Programming Frameworks for prioritization, and requested that they be instituted to the extent possible by the end of 2012 so as to inform the preparation and implementation of the next PWB;
 - e) the importance of fully integrating gender concerns in all areas of work at all locations;

⁴ CL 144/15; CL 144/15 Corr.1

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- f) the need for well-defined criteria for the opening and closing of individual country offices; and
 - g) the importance of capacity building at decentralized offices, both for ensuring accountability and for provision of technical expertise.
13. Furthermore, the Joint Meeting:
- a) commended the process to recruit and maintain FAO Representatives on merit and underlined the importance of mobility of professional staff between headquarters and the field;
 - b) supported the transformation of subregional offices into technical hubs, and noted that the expertise provided would need to be adapted to local needs;
 - c) supported the integration of development and emergency operations, and looked forward to a report on lessons learned in the process, integrating elements of a control and accountability framework, by the end of 2012;
 - d) requested additional information outlining the controls and accountability frameworks of decentralized offices for the next regular session of the Finance Committee; and
 - e) requested a paper outlining the comprehensive post structure, and related funding sources, of the decentralized office network.

Any other business

14. There was no discussion under this item.