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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-ninth Session

Rome, 16 - 20 June 2014

Report of the 115th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 26 – 30 May 2014)

Executive Summary

The Programme Committee examined a number of matters relating to evaluation and to programme planning and priority setting, in particular with regards to:

- a) Progress on the Medium Term Plan 2014-17: results framework, regional priorities and budgetary adjustments from work planning and efficiencies (para. 4)
- b) Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Asia and the Pacific (para. 5)
- c) Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean (paras. 6-7)
- d) Evaluation of FAO's role in support of crop production (para. 8)
- e) Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources (para. 9)
- f) Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy (paras. 10-11)
- g) Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's response to the 2010 floods in Pakistan (para. 12)

The Committee brings its findings and recommendations on these and other matters to the attention of the Council.

Suggested action by the Council

The Council is requested to endorse the findings of the Programme Committee, as well as its recommendations on matters within its mandate.

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 26 – 30 May 2014

Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Fifteenth session.
2. In addition to the Chairperson, Her Excellency Cecilia Nordin van Gansberghe (Sweden), the following representatives of Members were present:

Mr R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)	Mr J.A. Carranza (Ecuador)
Ms K. Boubekour (Algeria) ¹	Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)
Mr G.O. Infante (Argentina)	Mr V. Sharan (India)
Ms N. Feistritz (Austria)	Mr R. Rajasekar (New Zealand)
Mr E. Robinson (Canada)	Ms C.E. Grieder (Switzerland)
Mr Jingyuan Xia (China)	Mr H. Shoja'adin (Yemen) ¹

Election of the Vice-Chairperson for 2014

3. The Committee decided unanimously to reconfirm Mr Gustavo Infante of Argentina as Vice-Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the calendar year 2014.

Progress on the Medium Term Plan 2014-17: results framework, regional priorities and budgetary adjustments from work planning and efficiencies²

4. The Committee commended the progress on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2014-17 following endorsement by the 148th session of the Council of the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2014-15, and:
 - a) recognized the dynamic and evolutionary nature of the results framework, noted the need for solid baselines to enable development of measurable targets, and supported continued refinement of meaningful indicators used for monitoring and reporting;
 - b) requested a brief note for the forthcoming session of the Council describing the links between objectives, outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets to enable better understanding of accountability for delivery of results;
 - c) appreciated the programmatic consolidation arising from work planning, and the implementation arrangements put in place;
 - d) encouraged the acceleration of efforts to implement the MTP 2014-17 and the PWB 2014-15, and recalled the importance of partnerships in this regard;
 - e) noted the need for continuity in the strategic direction of the Organization in order to realize the full impact of the reviewed Strategic Framework;

¹ As silent observer

² PC 115/2 – FC 154/9

- f) welcomed the identification of regional priorities and the endorsement of the 15 regional initiatives by the 2014 Regional Conferences contributing to achievement of the Strategic Objectives;
- g) supported the 15 regional initiatives as delivery mechanisms to ensure effective country level impact in a time-bound manner, as well as for mobilization of extrabudgetary resources within the context of the 11 areas of corporate resource mobilization;
- h) stressed the need for implementation of regional initiatives to be tailored according to the specific priorities and requirements of the relevant regions and subregions, while recalling the need for consistency in the articulation of the regional initiatives in line with the Strategic Objectives;
- i) underlined the value of experience sharing among regions, for example work in Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems;
- j) requested that the inputs of the Informal North American Regional Conference be considered by the Council, along with the reports of the other Regional Conferences; and
- k) recognized the need to continue decentralization efforts, including in relation to the coverage of decentralized offices, and taking into account accepted recommendations arising from the evaluations of regional and subregional offices.

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Asia and the Pacific³

5. The Committee commended this well-crafted evaluation along with the Management's positive response, and:

- a) welcomed the decentralization efforts undertaken by the Organization and noted their importance as instruments for meaningful results and impact in the region;
- b) encouraged further analysis and action in relation to decentralization, including on country office coverage;
- c) underlined the importance of clear working links between offices at all levels - global, regional and national;
- d) recalled the need to monitor human resources capacity building, gender balance and staff morale to support effective delivery;
- e) stressed the importance of timely and substantial engagement by the Regional Office and the country offices with government counterparts, including interministerial meetings and partners in the formulation and implementation of the Country Programming Frameworks;
- f) encouraged the building of partnerships with regional and subregional economic and other organizations, international financing institutions, inter-governmental bodies, civil society and the private sector;
- g) reiterated the importance of South-South Cooperation including Triangular Cooperation in the region; and
- h) encouraged particular attention by the Organization to challenges faced by the Pacific Island States.

³ PC 115/3; PC 115/3 Sup.1

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Latin America and the Caribbean⁴

6. The Committee welcomed the evaluation, especially its quantitative assessment of effectiveness and efficiency, and appreciated Management's positive response. The Committee:
- a) welcomed the fact that the implementation of the recommendations had already been started;
 - b) welcomed the decentralization efforts undertaken by the Organization and noted their importance as instruments for meaningful results and impact in the region;
 - c) encouraged further analysis and action in relation to decentralization;
 - d) underlined the importance of clear working links between offices at all levels - global, regional and national;
 - e) stressed the key role of Member Governments in the formulation and implementation of the Country Programming Frameworks and appreciated the work of interministerial groups in this regard;
 - f) underlined the importance of timely and substantial engagement by the Regional Office and country offices with government counterparts and partners, including civil society and the private sector, in the formulation and implementation of Country Programming Frameworks;
 - g) noted the value of monitoring the effectiveness of FAO's work in relation to Country Programming Frameworks;
 - h) recognized the greater importance of middle-income countries in the region with regard to South-South Cooperation and stressed the contribution of FAO in this regard;
 - i) noted nevertheless the need for appropriate support to middle-income countries in order to address their own development needs;
 - j) recalled the importance of FAO's work in the region relating to food security and the access to food, in line with the recommendations of the Regional Conference;
 - k) underlined the need for a proactive approach to fully incorporate gender, including into Country Programming Frameworks; and
 - l) highlighted the need to streamline gender equity in regional and country offices.
7. The Committee looked forward to the synthesis paper of the five evaluations of regional and subregional offices, due to be submitted to the Conference in 2015. In this regard, the Committee:
- a) suggested that the synthesis paper identify the common critical issues concerning decentralization across regions;
 - b) encouraged the synthesis paper to be forward-looking, in particular with regard to further actions relating to decentralization aimed at enhancing the support FAO provides to Members; and
 - c) looked forward to Management's views on issues identified in the synthesis paper.

Evaluation of FAO's role in support of crop production⁵

8. The Committee welcomed the comprehensive and thought-provoking evaluation, as well as the rigorous Management Response, and requested that future evaluation reports contain single themed recommendations. The Committee:
- a) appreciated the basis for Management's non-acceptance of recommendation 1 of the evaluation, while noting the need for balancing technical expertise requirements relating to crop production in the field with preserving a critical mass at the global level;

⁴ PC 115/4; PC 115/4 Sup.1

⁵ PC 115/5; PC 115/5 Sup.1

- b) acknowledged the important role of FAO as a neutral broker, which must be preserved, as well as the Organization's capability of providing a discussion forum for all stakeholders in line with guidance from its governing bodies;
- c) recognized the important role that science-based technologies can play in meeting sustainable agricultural production challenges;
- d) noted the resource constraints in implementing recommendation 5, and requested Management to prepare a paper for further considerations;
- e) encouraged building more strategic partnerships in relation to recommendation 6; and
- f) highlighted the importance of gender considerations.

Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's work in tenure, rights and access to land and other natural resources⁶

9. The Committee appreciated the information provided and noted that work related to the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) was progressing in the right direction. The Committee:

- a) concurred that VGGT was integrated across the span of FAO's work;
- b) appreciated the FAO's outreach to Members on VGGT both in Rome and elsewhere;
- c) underlined the importance of integrating VGGT into the work of the Committee on World Food Security, such as on the Agenda for Action;
- d) noted the need to further step up resource mobilization efforts, for information sharing and lessons learnt, building capacity and policy coherence, as well as further awareness raising;
- e) underscored the importance of work with civil society and the private sector;
- f) stressed the need for effective monitoring; and
- g) looked forward to updates in future.

Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in food and agriculture policy⁷

10. The Committee welcomed the update provided, and:

- a) recognized the importance of FAO's work in food and agriculture policy in the pursuit of its goals and objectives, as well as in its outreach programmes;
- b) appreciated the ringfencing of resources for flagship publications and Article VI and XIV Bodies;
- c) welcomed the use of Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) for the identification of required policy support;
- d) encouraged continued strengthening of policy capacity of the Organization, both at headquarters and at country level; and
- e) noted the establishment of the governance and policy support unit in the Economic and Social Development department, and of multidisciplinary teams to *inter alia* support the building of an impact and accountability culture.

11. The Committee requested that an updated organizational chart be made available on the FAO Internet Web site soonest feasible.

⁶ PC 115/6

⁷ PC 115/7

Follow-up on the Evaluation of FAO's response to the 2010 floods in Pakistan⁸

12. The Committee welcomed management's follow-up report, and:
- a) expressed its appreciation for the implementation of the evaluation's recommendations in support of its Members' efforts to increase resilience to threats and crisis; and
 - b) encouraged the continued attention to staff capacities and deployment of adequate skill mix in disaster responses.

Any other business

13. There was no discussion under this item.

⁸ PC 115/8