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para la
Alimentación y la
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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-sixth Session

Rome, 22-26 April 2013

Report of the 113th Session of the Programme Committee (18-22 March 2013)

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:

- Reviewed Strategic Framework
- Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15
- Mid-term Review synthesis report – 2012
- assessment of internal evaluation function

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.

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

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**REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH SESSION OF
THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

Rome, 18 – 22 March 2013

Introduction

1. The Committee submitted to the Council the following report of its Hundred and Thirteenth 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 Jingyuan Xia (China)
Mr M. Mellah (Algeria)	Mr M.A. Hassan (Egypt)
Mr G.O. Infante (Argentina)	Mr A.G. Aseffa (Ethiopia)
Ms N. Feistritz (Austria)	Mr N. Fraser (New Zealand)
Dr M. Rahman (Bangladesh)	Ms C.E. Grieder (Switzerland)
Mr Eric Robinson (Canada)	

3. The Chairperson informed the Committee that Ms Andrea Repetti had been designated to replace Mr Gustavo Infante as the representative of Argentina for the afternoon session of 21 March. A summary of the qualifications of the substitute representative can be downloaded from the FAO Governing and Statutory Body Web site at:

www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/programme-committee/en/ .

Election of the Vice-Chairperson for 2013

4. The Committee decided unanimously to elect Mr Gustavo Infante as Vice-Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the calendar year 2013.

Programme planning and priority setting

Reviewed Strategic Framework¹

5. The Committee welcomed the fact that document C 2013/7 Reviewed Strategic Framework accurately reflected the guidance provided by Council, and:
 - a) recommended that Council endorse the reviewed Strategic Framework for approval by the Conference;
 - b) noted that the success of the reviewed Strategic Framework lay in its application by Members through FAO;
 - c) recalled that the five Strategic Objectives represent the areas of work in which FAO will focus its efforts in support of member countries, with the indicators and targets of achievement;
 - d) underlined the importance of maintaining and measuring the technical quality, knowledge and services of FAO's work; and
 - e) recalled the need to maintain the focus on decentralization.

¹ C 2013/7

Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15²

6. The Committee considered the Medium Term Plan 2014-17 and Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15. In appreciating the document and the clarifications provided by the Secretariat, the Committee:

- a) emphasized the importance of the sixth objective on technical quality, knowledge and services and the need to develop clear performance indicators for this work;
- b) stressed the continuing importance of FAO's role as a main global player in the provision of public goods in the areas of food, agriculture, fisheries and forestry;
- c) recalled that effective management and a shift to a results-focused business mindset were important in ensuring the success of the programmatic matrix approach, and requested an assessment of associated risks;
- d) stressed the need for clearer delineation of roles, responsibilities, accountability and resource management amongst Strategic Objectives Coordinators and managers of organizational units;
- e) underlined the importance of measurable, cost-effective and attributable indicators of achievement for all objectives;
- f) highlighted the importance of gender-related activities, and requested to be kept informed on progress and challenges;
- g) expressed its opinion in favour of retaining the word "gender" in the title of the Social Protection Division;
- h) requested further clarification on the distribution of resources and posts between headquarters and decentralized offices; and
- i) requested further clarification on work in the area of social protection, and on natural resources in relation to the proposed organizational structure.

Evaluation

Evaluation of FAO's role in investment for food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development³

7. The Committee commended the quality of the Evaluation of FAO's role in investment for food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development, its participatory methodology and its timeliness given the transformational change process underway at FAO, and noted with appreciation that Management accepted all recommendations. The Committee:

- a) agreed on the need for FAO's work in investment to be strengthened and linked to its work on policy assistance, especially within the decentralized context;
- b) in endorsing the recommendation for the Secretariat to undertake an investment strategy, emphasized the need for it to be subsumed within the Strategic Framework and consistent with FAO's strategies for partnership with civil society organizations and the private sector;
- c) regarding support to private investment in agriculture, underlined the importance of conserving FAO's neutrality and independence, to prioritize activities and to focus on FAO's comparative advantages;
- d) highlighted the role of oversight, monitoring and evaluation of investment activities;
- e) encouraged reinforcing partnerships, and particularly the relations with the regional financial institutions;
- f) cautioned that capacity development for investment is an activity which requires Organizational-level support;

² C 2013/3

³ PC 113/2; PC 113/2 Sup.1; PC 113/2 Add.1

- g) noted that the accepted expression to be used is "food security, nutrition, agriculture and rural development", rather than "food and nutrition security, agriculture and rural development"; and
- h) emphasized the need for strengthening collaboration between the Investment Centre (TCI) and other FAO units, and encouraged more TCI-led investment missions.

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia⁴

8. The Committee welcomed the comprehensive, forward-looking Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Europe and Central Asia and appreciated the consultative methodology used. The Committee endorsed the Management Response, and:

- a) acknowledged that decentralization in this region is still work in progress;
- b) supported the delegations of authority made thus far, while noting that FAO must continue to work as one;
- c) noted that the matrix approach proposed in the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15 may entail further challenges for decentralized offices;
- d) stressed the importance of strengthening work on gender in the region;
- e) requested that relevant linguistic competence, as well as gender be taken into consideration for recruitment in the region, while recognizing the paramount importance of technical competence and the importance of wide geographic representation;
- f) called on the 2014 European Regional Conference to discuss governance issues raised in the Evaluation;
- g) did not endorse the suggestion of having European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and Regional Conference for Europe (ERC) meetings in alternate years, but recognized that this was a decision for the ERC;
- h) suggested that the ERC should have a control function vis-à-vis the regional technical commissions;
- i) agreed with Management that the National Correspondent Scheme should be abolished gradually; and
- j) underlined the importance of host country commitment and support to offices established in the region.

9. In addition, the Committee recalled that the format of this particular Evaluation report was a step towards more sustainable use of resources within the context of cutting translation costs discussed by the Committee at its 112th session.

Rapid assessment of internal evaluation function⁵

10. The Committee took note of the update on the rapid assessment of the internal evaluation function and indicated that its deliberations could have benefited from more comprehensive information. The Committee:

- a) encouraged the Secretariat to continue bolstering quality assurance and performance monitoring functions necessary for effective management, while cautioning against creation of unnecessary and burdensome organizational layers;
- b) looked forward to continued discussion on the matter at its October session based on more comprehensive information; and
- c) questioned the need for a comprehensive assessment of oversight functions at FAO.

⁴ PC 113/3; PC 113/3 Sup.1; PC 113/3 Add.1

⁵ PC 113/4

Follow-up to the evaluation of FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and Subregional Office for North Africa⁶

11. The Programme Committee appreciated the actions taken in follow-up to the evaluation of FAO's Regional Office for the Near East and Subregional Office for North Africa. The Committee welcomed the progress made in the context of changes taking place in the region, and encouraged FAO to:

- a) further enhance the performance of country offices;
- b) ensure that the expertise mix of the regional and subregional offices be based on needs of countries as documented in Country Programming Frameworks and Regional Conference priorities;
- c) further integrate emergency and development work;
- d) address gender mainstreaming; and
- e) engage member countries in mobilizing support for the Near East and North Africa Solidarity Trust Fund.

12. The Committee looked forward to continued discussions on the regional evaluations and their follow-ups.

IPA implementation within the PWB

Mid-term Review synthesis report – 2012⁷

13. The Programme Committee welcomed the Mid-term Review Synthesis Report for 2012, which it deemed to be both informative and useful. The Committee:

- a) commended the progress made in implementing the approved Programme of Work and Budget 2012-13, and in meeting related targets;
- b) welcomed the achievements in relation to decentralization and efficiency savings;
- c) highlighted the importance of gender-related activities;
- d) noted that in future the Mid-term Review synthesis report could benefit from more information on indicators, timelines and specific examples of achievement; and
- e) agreed that “food security and nutrition” was more appropriate construction of the terminology which appeared in the report as “food and nutrition security.”

Standing Items

Date, place and items for discussion at next session

14. The Committee was informed that the 114th Session would take place on 21 to 25 October 2013.

Any other business

15. There was no discussion under this item.

⁶ PC 113/6

⁷ PC 113/5 – FC 148/9

Annex I: Documents for information

- PC 113/INF/3* Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's work through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
- PC 113/INF/4* Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's effectiveness at country level: A synthesis of evaluations in large, rapidly-developing countries (India and Brazil)
- PC 113/INF/5* Implementation of deliberations on Article XIV Bodies
- CL 146/INF/12* Evaluation of UN-Oceans JIU/REP/2012/3