



联合国
粮食及
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Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

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
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session - Cent soixante-quatorzième session -
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

**Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL**

**Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
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**TENTH PLENARY SESSION
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(8 December 2023)**

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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session Cent soixante-quatorzième session 174.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2023 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
FIRST PLENARY SESSION PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
4 December 2023

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:40 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 40
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 09.40
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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CHAIRPERSON

Good morning, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, great to see that we have a full house or a full Council, almost, but also good morning, good afternoon and good evening for those who are following this Council via the virtual room.

A special welcome to the Vice-President of Bolivia who is participating today. Very much welcome, Sir. A warm welcome to the Director-General as well. Just came back from Dubai. I will call this first meeting to an order.

Our actions are our future and, unfortunately, the world is not on track to achieve food security and to hit and deliver the sustainable developments. In fact, the world is failing this mission. We have to face the uncomfortable truth. We know our challenges with Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, and we know the solutions, or at least we think that we know the solutions. But what about how? How are we going to do it? How are we going to implement the actions most needed? And often it became silent in the room.

How is it possible that 27 years after the first World Food Summit in 1996 in Rome, where we were discussing 800 million people in hunger, we still are having more or less 800 million people in hunger in 2023. And the number is still growing. How is it possible that we lose every year one-third of our produced food? We could feed the world with this lost food. And it has a value of USD 1 trillion. Think what we could do with that amount of funding for food security.

And more than 3 million people do not have access to safe, affordable and nutritious food. Furthermore, conflicts, terrorism and other violence taking place in the Middle East, most particularly in Gaza and, worse, amongst others, in the Ukraine, has severe consequences for global food security. It adds suffering in many countries above the suffering already there. Of course, I adhere to the statements made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of FAO about this.

Conflicts, terrorism and other violence, as I said, especially in the Middle East, in the Gaza Strip, and, worse, in particular Ukraine, have taken a heavy toll in those regions and as people. It will have serious effects on the food security for millions of people around the world. An enormous catastrophe is unfolding. We have seen that the most vulnerable, the poorest and the most secluded people and communities are hit hardest.

Today we are here at the Council to discuss the consequences for food security all around the world, and to see what we can do as Council, what we can do as FAO to find and to help those who have suffered the most and, of course, to do it within the mandate of FAO. Before going into the Session, I would like to call a minute of silence for all those who have lost their loved ones, including UN staff, and for all victims of conflicts, wars, terrorism and other violence all over the world. May I ask you a minute of silence.

Minute of silence

Minute de silence

Minuto de silencio

Dear friends, we know that our current pathways are not getting us where we have to be in 2030. We need, as we also say, transformative change of our food systems. We need transformative actions to make sustainable agrifood systems as part of our future. It seems to be a mega and impossible task. So, us, as Council, we have to think out of the box. We need to change directions and we have to take more concrete actions. The magnitude of the challenges we are facing in our achievement of food security is calling us to bring everything up to scale, to coordinate our actions with the objective to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the world.

Our beloved FAO is in a unique position to make this change happen. With the commitment of the Director-General and his staff, we know that we can do it. To support actions on the ground, especially at country level, not here in Rome but especially at country level. Of course, with all necessary partners at the country level – private sector, the youth and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

With this Council this week, we can show the world that we are living up the challenge and task. Our Action Our Future. We have to show that we can overcome our differences and that we stand united to support especially all development countries in the national pathways, of course considering regional and national differences and priorities.

During this Council we will decide on the important issues, such as the adjustments to the Programme of Work, global food security and the recommendations of our Programme and Finance Committee and Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. But at the end of the day we all know that we can only make a success if we translate them at the country level.

With the incredible challenge we are facing, I would ask you to overcome our differences and stand united behind each other, make strong conclusions this Council and give us a strong outcome of this Council.

Dear Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, let us also honour the wonderful and great staff of FAO. They, especially at national level, have to work under even more difficult circumstances and there are often confronted with the direct suffering of so many people in the countries. We have to complement them for everything they are doing day to day.

And a special thank this time goes to all the staff of the Conference services, protocol, interpreters, translators, technicians, messengers and security. Never in the history of FAO we have had so many meetings, would it be in person, would it be virtual, here in Rome. And they all stand every day ready for us, sometimes even working 24/7 hours and, for example, these people, these FAO staff, have been working now for six weeks in Rome without having a free weekend, to serve all the meetings, the Conferences and now the Council. What a dedication. Excellent work we have always seen, and they always do it with a smile. May I ask you to join in a standing ovation for all FAO staff.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Last but not least, also as your friend, may I urge you. We are going to discuss also very difficult issues this Council, but may I urge you to do your work this week with respect, with dignity, with integrity and with solidarity, focusing on the mandate of FAO as well as focusing on the leadership of the Council. In this way we can show unanimity and we can show the integrity of this Council.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

Point 1. Adoption de l'ordre du jour et du calendrier

Tema 1. Aprobación del programa y del calendario

(CL 174/1 Rev.1; CL 174/INF/1; CL 174/INF/3; CL 174/INF/5; CL 174/INF/5 Corr.1)

CHAIRPERSON

There is a little bit of change in the programme now. I am not giving the floor now to the Director-General, because first we have to adopt the Agenda of this meeting. As indicated in document *CL 174/INF/5, Methods of Work for the 174th Session of the Council*, and *CL 174/INF/5 Corr.1, Methods of Work for the 174th Session of the Council – Corrigendum*, the arrangements and procedures proposed for this hybrid Session are submitted for the Council endorsement under Agenda Item 1.

Under this term, the Council is invited to suspend all rules incompatible with this hybrid setting, especially Rule II.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council. This rule provides that each Session of the Council shall be held at a seat of the Organization in accordance with Rule XIII of the Rules and Procedure of the Council.

I also would like to propose the addition of two Sub-Items under Item 22, *Any other matters*. I would like to propose Sub-Item 22.2, and that is why we do it now, before the statement of the Director-General, *Appointment of the Deputy Director-General*, which will be presented by the Director-General shortly.

I also would like to propose the addition of Sub-Item 22.3, *Statement of representative of the FAO Staff Bodies*, in line with established practice.

We know the procedures but I would like to remind all of you that to make sure that we end on Friday afternoon with this Council, that we have a speaking slot and time for three minutes for Council Members and five minutes for Regional Groups or sub-groups.

May I take that the Council can approve the Agenda and Timetable for this Session with these adjustments as well as with the Methods of Work of the Session?

I do not see any objections.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

Thank you very much.

Now, I very much will extend my warm welcome again to the Director-General, Dr QU Dongyu, and my honour to give him the floor to address the 174th Session of this Council with many Items to discuss and one Item especially.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Good morning, everyone, from Rome. Dear Independent Chairperson of the Council, dear colleagues and Members of the Council, this is the first Council Session since my re-election and it is significant because it will kick-off the next phase of our journey together as we progress from the first term founded on the Four Es, Version 1.0, *Efficiency, Effectiveness, Extraordinary and Excellency*, and we move on to Version 2.0, to the four Rs now guiding our internal changes – *Recovery, Reform, Rebuild and Renaissance*.

So, you can see my scientific and systematic thinking, I always create a curriculum for all of us to follow. It is a certainty of management.

I say that because I just come back from the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28). After four years - from COP25 in Madrid, COP26 in Glasgow, COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, and now at COP28 in Dubai the topic of food and agriculture is the key topic - it is a historical turning point.

Agrifood systems is not only a challenge, but also the solution for climate. As we said, climate action is our future. When I participated in the opening panel to discuss these issues in front of Heads of State and other high-level participants after the Opening Session where we listened to HRH King Charles and also His Excellency President Lula, among others, we had this important panel discussion - the first in the history of the COP.

I am pleased to report to you on fresh progress made, together with DDG Maria Helena Semedo and the Chief Economist Máximo Torero. He arrived early morning, I think, at around 4:45 hours. The three of us just came back. I came back last night, to ensure to be here this morning, but I let the Chief Economist take a risk, and I am happy to see that he made it back on time.

So, we walked the talk and tried our best. I know you increased the budget by 5.6 percent and gave the push and the incentive for my colleagues to work more and better. You can count on us.

Since my statement was already released about one hour ago, I am not going to read it because it is time-consuming for you. So, I will highlight the issues where I will ask you to think together, design together, work on together and contribute together.

This Council Session will especially consider the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025 for which the Ministerial Conference in July approved in general the budget level and now we come to the details, design, deliverables, and implementation plan, in my opinion.

So, more than ever, as the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) already pointed out, we now face so many challenges, I do not want to repeat all of them, but there are three categories. One is development. That is why we have sped up and scaled up works towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and all the programmes. Then, the humanitarian and emergency actions. We face so

many hotspots and challenges. And third is the environment. These three categories fall within all the global agendas, and they face all of us. That is the message.

But, as I said in my statement on the Gaza issue, the right to food is a basic human right. I had a discussion with several leaders at the COP28. That is why it was timely for them to put agrifood systems on the highest agenda of COP.

And peace is a prerequisite for food security. Before October, on the Gaza Strip about 40 percent of the people were suffering from food insecurity. Now, all of them are, including in the other surrounding regions. Even Egypt and Jordan are much worse than before. So, peace is a prerequisite for food security.

As well as for rural development, and youth and women's empowerment. It is a big movement now at the COP, including Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples were very happy with the World Food Forum, even if they could not come physically, they joined virtually. So, whatever we do, the world is watching us. They not only listen to what we say, they are watching what we are doing. What we are going to deliver.

I think next time we need to understand each other more, to act coherently - action we have to design and deliver on the ground. So, that is my general thought. That is why FAO, for the first time, launched the report on loss and damage in agrifood systems. We designed it three years ago, and now they have a Loss and Damage Fund. This is a first in the COP history.

Do we want to have concrete results? It is not as much as we expected, but there were at least USD 30 billion of pledges. So, that is really a substantial effort. We are the only UN specialized agency who designed bigger in advance. So, it makes us more accountable, more reliable for our Members, and for relevant colleagues and agencies in the future.

And another report we will launch during COP28 will be "*Achieving SDG2 without breaching the 1.5C threshold: A Global Roadmap.*" So, I will ask the Chief Economist to go back to the COP on 9 December for the launch.

But you can see there it is only one concrete road map. Action should be led by the road map and by the implementable plan on the ground, not only on the design at Headquarters, in the office. Of course, we need design, but we need more deliverables on the ground.

I do not want to mention too many details because during the last meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, I already set out many timelines of actions, from the Strategy on Climate Change and the Action Plan and so on and so forth.

Prior to COP28, I travelled to London for the Global Summit on Food Security. So, we really helped the organizer of the COP28 Presidency to get agrifood systems and rural development on the big major stages before this COP opened.

On 14 November, I participated in the UN Secretary-General meetings with the UNSDG Principles and Resident Coordinators. Because we support the Resident Coordinators financially and they should play a coordinator role.

So, after the PC/FC, we now have some new adjusted reports to hear now.

And we also held the Global Forum for Animal Feed and Feed Regulators. During COP28 many people asked why did you not invite the animal production industry people to come here. I said, maybe at the next COP, but we should prepare ourselves better. For this reason, we had a Global Livestock Sustainable Conference, for the first time ever, in late September, as you already know.

So, all these things we should design holistically, including of course water issues, soil issues and others.

I also appreciate all the Members who support us.

On 6 November, we launched the 2023 Edition of the State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, for the first time focusing on "*Revealing the true cost of food to transform agrifood systems*". That is also revolutionary because many people ask what the real cost is. Direct cost, indirect cost,

environment cost. I said that the Report may not be perfect, but it is a real good start to build on in the future.

So, I really salute my colleagues who took this revolutionary step. The global community expected it for so many years, like the report we released last year on rural women, and now my colleagues have been asked to focus on rural youth next. So, we have to do things in an innovative way, to meet the demand and be fit for the purpose.

We continue to be focused on several hotspots. In Afghanistan, through a range of measures, including the supply of wheat seeds and fertilizer, livestock feed and animal vaccines, among others, the situation of over 2.4 million people has improved in the pre-harvest period, with the numbers improving even further since April 2023. Now, the big donors and partners appreciate what we have delivered in Afghanistan. With additional funding, we can do more and reach even more people.

In Gaza, there is limited production, but there are very critical smallholder farmers who produce local fresh vegetables and fast-growing food, and others, as well as livestock. Fodder and feed is also very important for them as they depend on animal products, especially lamb, sheep, and so on.

In Ukraine, in 2023 FAO delivered emergency agricultural support to more than 145 000 rural households across 30 oblasts mostly affected by the war, with mixed vegetable seeds, poultry packages, livestock feed, cash transfers and other support. FAO has also supported 6 000 large-scale farmers with value chain support.

To boost action ahead of El Niño, FAO launched an Anticipatory Action Response Plan to support the most at risk population, prioritizing action in 34 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also support the communities in the Dry Corridor of Central America and Southern America to deal with those drought impacts with water harvesting, drought-tolerant crop seeds, soil conservation and veterinary supplies.

Dear colleagues, since the last session of the Council, FAO hosted and I participated in, a number of the key international fora, in line with FAO's mandate, which include all these. I do not want to repeat them all, as you can read my statement online to save time.

I attended a high-level UN Townhall Meeting held in New York on 10 July during the 2023 High-Level Political Forum, where I outlined six actions needed to transform agrifood systems ahead of the 2023 SDG Summit in September.

Of course, in the next biennium, as I said at the last PC/FC meeting, the establishment of a new Office of Youth and Women would continue strengthening FAO's capacity to better serve its Members through advocating for youth and women.

You now know that the UN Secretary-General and Under Secretary are so appreciative that we established the Office of SIDS, LLDCs, LDCs, because in the coming two years they have a UN Summit on these three categories, but only FAO offers systematic support.

So, we have designed a little bit in advance strategically. That is why I expect that when we establish the Office of Youth and Women it will be another first in the UN and that will bring revolutionary change, a leading role for youth and women, especially in the rural areas because that is our mandate.

The Office would help ensure that youth and women act as channels, both internally and externally. At the beginning my colleagues thought they will only focus internally. No. We are lucky. We were born in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, but there are so many Members for whom there are still big challenges for women and for youth, who have less access to the resources and assets and economic and social rights, even cultural rights.

So, in FAO, we work for the vulnerable people, especially in the rural areas. So, we must not only support our staff internally, by supporting women and youth career enrichment, but externally by gathering innovative ideas and approaches, even from the policy consultations and dialogues, through FAO's support the Members. That is collective action and provides a professional neutral platform for

Members to learn from each other. That is the value of FAO as a UN specialized agency, in line with FAO's mandate.

As an Office, it would have a cross-cutting function within the Organization to ensure that youth and women are effectively mainstreamed across all of FAO's work and take forward and further institutionalize the work of the FAO Youth Committee and the FAO Women's Committee, which have been operating and delivering since 2020, but without a structural home in the Organization.

The Office would also engage with relevant global initiatives, the UN wide system and other partners, further enhancing advocacy for and engagement of youth and women in agrifood systems.

We will continue to strengthen partnerships, including through the establishment of regional Knowledge Hubs, which will have distinctive features and complementary functions and will be hosted in countries that have specific knowledge and capacity and tools to offer both regionally and globally.

A modern and efficient FAO Decentralized Offices Network is key to support countries. We need to strengthen the Headquarters, of course, but we should also strengthen the Country Offices because the Headquarters is like the head but we also need the legs and we need the bodies to work organically, otherwise it is not a real functional Organization. But you cannot have the wrong head to control a good body or legs. It is impossible.

So, that is why we started to reform Headquarters with the first mandate three years ago. You can see a very soft landing. I almost did not fire people. That I can assure you, during the past 40 years, that I was personally involved in four important reforms. We do not want to attack any individual people because it is a systemic reform. We just want to change the efficiency factor of the Organization to fit the purpose. I have no special feeling to any one individual staff. We just want to ensure FAO is moving in the direction we need, a modern, agile, efficient and effective Organization. So, in Headquarters, of course we needed to improve it, but now we are ready to go to the country level.

Following the restructuring of Regional and Subregional Offices in 2022, the Decentralized Offices now need to position themselves strategically within the UN system.

To address the evolving context and the challenges and gaps identified, discussions will take place during the 2024 Regional Conferences. Some Members push us to go fast, but we are a rule-based Organization. We have to respect our Governing Bodies and channels.

The Regional Conferences are our boss. That is a feature of agriculture – agriculture should be regionalized. We are not like the ITU or others that you can get apply the same criteria globally. Agriculture and food are related to natural resources and environment. So, the Regional Conferences can define more specifically what they need. We are therefore waiting for their decisions and recommendations first and then, I promise you, by the end of next year we will have a solid implementation plan.

I always believe you need to take time to sharpen your knife first and then you can cut the meat or cut something fast. So, do not waste your time. Sharpen your knife, first. Now it is the process of sharpening our knife, first.

In preparation for the Regional Conferences, I have convened, for the first time in FAO's history, again, a meeting of all FAO Representatives (FAORs) from all five FAO Regions in Rome next week to develop a concrete action plan to strengthen the network and capacities and the learning lessons and experiences among themselves.

FAORs are our window people for deliverables. If they do not understand the vision, mission and action, and even the business model, how can we build the global big team to make it more efficient, more effective? That is why I will convene the first Global Working Conference of FAORs that will also include sub-regional and regional representatives together. So, that all together we can build a bigger team spirit.

Dear colleagues, in line with the Call for Action launched at the High-Level Ministerial Event in June 2023, FAO will increase its support to SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs, as I mentioned the UN has not found FAO's value in this. We prepared almost for four years for getting solidarity with the UN big families.

The first ever global normative Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture were endorsed by the Committee on Fisheries' Sub-Committee on Aquaculture in May this year. Europe and other regions now also appreciate aquaculture much more than ever before. Aquaculture is a solution for improving animal protein, especially in the developed countries. Scientifically and environmentally, they are more efficient than any animal protein. 1.2 kilos can convert to one kilo of fish. So, that is why we should base it on science, not on emotional feeling. You like or you do not like – that is your personal feeling. We have to base it on science and data.

On forestry, during the World Food Forum we established a FAO Forest Park in Villa Pamphili together with the Italian Government and the city of Rome. So, any Minister and leader who visits FAO, I strongly encourage you and your Ambassador to bring any Minister or leader visiting FAO to also take them to plant a tree or donate some sculpture and whatever else as a memory of the visit and to show the commitment to FAO and to its global mandate.

The Mountain Partnership has also become a highlight. The Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Guterres, the day before yesterday, together with the Prime Minister of Nepal and others participated in an event on mountains at COP28. The Mountain Partnership is not only about water or grass, but also about energy. Mountains are our home, our original place. Before the mountains disappear, it is the last rescue for the human being. Please protect the mountains. Protect our future, our long-term future. That is why I always support Mountains.

There are also other big initiatives initiated by the United States, and by the US Secretary of State Mr Antony Blinken, at COP28.

In all the initiatives of Members, FAO tries its best to offer the technical support, including with money, with resources, with capacity, whatever is needed, because we need Members to work together, to support each other. FAO is just a platform and provides support through technical expertise.

So, I encourage all the big and small initiatives to work with FAO through the Triangular Cooperation or other channels, if you like. It is open and flexible, in my opinion. Recently we got another USD 5 million from China to support the One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) initiative. Because we need to lead change through the commodity, not through the general policy. On general policy, the Members, they have their own consideration, but FAO, we can lead in the transformation.

We also received support from Members for Transborder Animal Diseases. On Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), I personally engaged, and even chaired an AMR One Health seminar at COP28, where we got strong support from Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. They all really want to expand efforts to do more.

One Health is not only zoonotic diseases. For years and years, FAO only focused on zoonotic diseases included as One Health. No. One Health is about plant health, animal health and human health and, of course, the environment. So, that is what I really want to promote.

Now, dear colleagues, this year FAO continues the positive trend on mobilizing voluntary contributions.

My Core Leader Beth Bechdol gave me a prediction that by the end of November, or maybe end of this year, we will have USD 1.55 billion, yet the current forecast is to close the year with USD 1.8 billion. It has not been easy, and it is the result of a great, great cooperation among the colleagues, not only colleagues from resource mobilization, but also from the relevant country offices and the technical divisions and offices, and also our partners. They understand what we are doing and then they support us.

Of course, we need more holistic ways to design and to advocate collectively. For years and years, FAO focused on the small silos business with four or five people in the one unit preparing the proposal, asking USD 1 or 2 million. It was big money for them. But now we are working as a big team. So, that is a business change and a leadership change.

Of course, we depend on multilateral financing institutions like the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Fund (GEF), the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Yesterday, I

signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). They are now more focused on agricultural infrastructure. Not only roads in the rural areas, but also cold chain and facilities. We will try every possibility to support our developing countries. The institutions have the money, but they need to be informed, especially on what is relevant between FAO and the financial institutions.

With the African Development Bank, we have the largest project in South Sudan, to restore their facilities and capability to grow rice. It is the biggest staple food for South Sudan and the region. So, I think it is a big change, with the support from the African Development Bank. We must not forget those people who are willing to support us, and we should prepare ourselves to offer opportunities for them. They are willing to support us. The question is whether we are ready.

Dear colleagues, we can do more. How? In short, we need real solidarity, solidarity among Members, solidarity with the international UN agencies, programmes and funds, solidarity with the private sector, the scientist community, and civil societies.

And partnerships. Partnerships with big or small organizations, agencies who are willing to strengthen collaboration. I can tell you a very concrete story on how to build a partnership with some that you thought is small, but they became very big. I think that we have many potential areas, like some foundations, original, bigger ones, like Rockefeller Foundation and now the Bill Gates Foundation.

People know that. But there are also some small ones from the Near East, or even in Italy, that we can work with. And some farmer organizations. So, partnership is key. At FAO, we have our comparative advantage. We try to convince them to recognize our comparative advantage. That is why we need an professional and experienced approach.

This year's World Food Forum - you have already read all the impacts - but one feeling was key: youth lead the change! Youth give the energy to this cold house. Even the young kids, young students, when they come here you can feel much younger because you get a real positive reaction. You forget your age; you forget you are pessimistic. You become more optimistic. That is what I learnt from them. I said, youth, we should listen to them first. Do not teach them too much. Be friendly with them, first, and then get to understand each other because youth is our future. Young staff are our future. We should help them in a systematic way. Of course, we cannot meet all their demands, like your young kids. You cannot meet them all, but we have to convince them how to change, how to be independent, very well prepared by themselves.

Science and Innovation is another key. The Innovation Office. We even tried to recruit a Chief Scientist. We are very demanding on the Chief Scientist. Now, the first Chief Scientist, now she is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGAIR). So, now she is our strategic partner. She now understands FAO more than ever before. So, she is our goodwill ambassador, and our strategic asset.

So, FAO is not only working for farmers, but it should be getting scientists and professionals and potential investors to be our friends. Most of you are diplomats. What is the highest diplomacy? You meet once and you are willing to see them again. This is diplomacy. If we meet someone once and you forget them or you do not want to talk to them again, then there is no diplomacy. That is my 44 years of learning.

I always try to be friends with anyone who is willing to be in contact with me. No matter if you are rich or poor, farmer or scientist, or politician or leader. King Charles, he has been a friend of FAO for 50 years. I have not met him many times personally, but each time we met we really have a kind of positive chemistry. I am a humble person. I am a humble son of a smallholder farmer. He is a royal, the highest. Not high, but the highest. I also met the cousin of the Dutch King at the Africa Pavilion at COP28 and I did know him, so he introduced himself.

I will stop here.

Item 22. Any other matters**Point 22. Questions diverses****Tema 22. Asuntos varios**

Item 22.2 Appointment of the Deputy Director-General

Point 22.2 Nomination du Directeur général adjoint

Tema 22.2 Nomination du Directeur général adjoint

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I have one concrete issue today, as the ICC already mentioned to you. As I have already said publicly, I appreciate the support, the cooperation from the former Deputy Director-General (DDG), Mr Laurent Thomas. He spent 34 years in FAO, starting from his first assignment in Angola in very challenging situations, you can imagine how it was 33 or 34 years ago.

So, FAO staff, the young staff, should learn from those senior ones who committed themselves for a global agrifood mission, I should say it is a mission. No matter how many challenges. As well as other senior colleagues who are still here. ADG Beth Crawford has been at FAO for 26 years ago – she also started in Africa.

But Laurent Thomas, as he approached retirement, I discussed with him that it was time to shift responsibility to the younger generation. He is happy, and he accepted my offer to be my Special Representative for another year, if he is willing to contribute with his experience and institutional memory to make FAO better.

And now, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to inform you that I have selected Mr Maurizio Martina for the position of Deputy Director-General. His curriculum vitae is available as a Council document already. The selection decision is the result of a rigorous, competitive and transparent process. In view of the retirement of Mr Laurent Thomas, a VA was issued for the position of DDG on 11 August 2023 and it closed on 18 September 2023.

We received 391 applications. Nine candidates were shortlisted for interviews. Those interviews were conducted by a panel, consisting of the two Deputy Directors-General of FAO, the Director of the Cabinet, Director of Human Resources, and external members. Based on the recommendations of the panel, they identified two applicants that were considered to be the most relevant candidates and I personally interviewed both of them.

Now, I am very pleased to inform you that I have selected for the appointment to the position of Deputy Director-General, Mr Maurizio Martina. You all know him as Assistant Director-General at FAO during the past two years. He always does more and says less. That is the deputy I am really looking for. Because we do not always know who the people are who deliver or not, but delivery is the number one criterion. Like myself, I always behave like a deputy because I never became the principal before I become the FAO Director-General. For 40 years I was the deputy. I was always the youngest member at any level, but I always did more, and said less. I really like his personality, based on deliverables.

Before that, he has also been a Member of Parliament and a Minister of Agriculture of Italy. I read the history during the past 15 years. He served the longest as the Minister of Agriculture in Italy. Four years. As Minister, he has the highest survival rate in the complicated politician's life. I could not have made it, I would have lasted maybe four months.

This is a real criterion. Do not laugh. In Europe, especially Italy. Before 2010, I do not know what time he started, but he had 20 years of observing. So, do not listen to the talk, look at the historical record. He is not an experienced person. He is still young. You can imagine 12 years ago he was 33 and now he is 45 years old. So, it is all the experience and lessons he learned from a complicated Italian political life. Now we harvest and we use it for our purpose.

Thanks to the Italian Government. Thanks to the Italian people. Thanks to all the colleagues who made him more mature, more experienced. I am sincere. At that stage, many people still behave like typical

young people. But he behaves like a very experienced politician, like a 65-years old. So, that is the criteria.

I am confident he will perform the function of DDG complementary, and this is another consideration for me, for the same reason I appointed Beth Bechdol. We need a complementary Core Leadership, with different mentalities from different education backgrounds, expertise and political wisdom and experience. So, he is more a complete mentor to the other Core Leaders, with energy, efficiency and effectiveness and, of course, a European background. It was not necessary to pick a DDG from Europe, but by appointing him it was complementary to the other Core Leaders.

I shortlisted four people. They are from all over, from different continents, but I personally said we need someone who understands Europe, especially European Ministries of Agriculture. He can make a phone call to any minister in Europe, not only the European Union. I could not, Beth Bechdol could not, Maria Helena Semedo could not – to be honest. So, I think we need to work as a big team, with energy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In line with established Rules, I would like to invite the Council to confirm my appointment of Mr Maurizio Martina as Deputy Director-General.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

First of all, thank you so much Director-General for your strong statement focusing on actions needed, work to be done, focusing on partnerships so much needed for action on the ground, especially at a national level. And also focusing on the youth, because they are our future and they have to do better than we have done.

I was at the World Food Forum in the morning, you were there as well, when we had Italian schoolchildren in this room. And I was amazed what they were doing. It is a pity that we did not have a video of that but they are understanding the issues, they are engaged, dedicated, but they were also singing and dancing in a way you get inspired. You get the energy to do more than we are doing now. It was so great.

Thank you so much.

Formally we have to approve your proposal for the new Deputy Director-General.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Not approve, endorse.

CHAIRPERSON

Sorry, confirm, not endorse.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, following the Director-General's introduction to Sub-Item 22.2, to which document *CL 174/LIM/6* refers, may I take formally that the Council confirms the appointment of Mr Maurizio Martina as Deputy Director-General.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

Director-General, I will go to Mr Martina but we have to congratulate you as well because you have a strong new Member in your team. I have to congratulate Maurizio and had the pleasure and honour to already working with him when he was Minister of Agriculture, especially within the context of the European Union. And I have known him as a dedicated person, a hard worker, knowing the issues and, of course, experienced and as a person, also when he was in the European Council, Minister of Agriculture, he was a person with less words but more action, focusing on getting things done.

And indeed he served as the longest Minister of Agriculture within the Italian Government. And he is even a very nice person, you can certainly speak with him, get a cup of coffee with him. It is great to work with him, it is great to work with him also that he always has a smile on his face. So congratulations Mr Martina I am looking forward on behalf of all to work with you.

I will give now the floor to Italy, the Ambassador of Italy.

Mr Bruno ARCHI (Italy)

Italy welcomes very much the appointment of Dr Maurizio Martina as Deputy Director-General. I would like hereby to express our heartfelt congratulations to Dr Martina and wish him all the best on his new assignment. I have been knowing Dr Maurizio Martina for a very long time and I know first hand his dedication to work and important results really he can achieve. His commitment to FAO's mandate and targets is undoubted and so is ours.

Italy's commitment to food security is plain and very well known, we are actively engaged in fight against hunger and malnutrition. We believe in food systems transformation to achieve a more sustainable and equitable world. We work together with all FAO's Members, the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and the UN system to eradicate hunger and because with multilateralism we do believe it is the only way forward. So please keep counting on Italy as a really true partner.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, we have to turn to our business because we have a very full Agenda of this week and I think that nobody wants to go beyond Friday afternoon. We would like to thank the Director-General for being with us this morning we certainly will see him later this week.

Item 2. Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee

Point 2. Élection des trois vice-présidents et nomination du président et des membres du Comité de rédaction

Tema 2. Elección de los tres vicepresidentes y designación del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to first to continue our work, the election of three Vice-Chairpersons and designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee. Following discussions amongst the regions and regional groups the following proposals have been sent to us for the three posts of five Chairpersons.

First, his Excellency Ennio Vivaldi Vejar. He is the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations (UN) Organizations.

Secondly, Ms Erma Rheindrayani, Counsellor and Alternate Permanent Representative for Indonesia to FAO.

And, thirdly, Ms Ivania Constanza, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN Organizations here in Rome.

Can I assume that you can agree to these three Vice-Chairpersons?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Now we go to the Drafting Committee. We have reserved the proposal as Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Anatoliy Shatkovskyy of Canada. And as Members of the Drafting committee: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Morocco, Peru, Spain and Sudan, 18 Members of the Drafting Committee. Can we agree to the Chair and the 14 Members of the Drafting Committee?

It is so decided.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Item 3. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25

Point 3. Programme de travail et budget 2024-2025: ajustements

**Tema 3. Ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25
(CL 174/3; CL 174/3 Corr.1; CL 174/3 Annexes 1-7)**

CHAIRPERSON

Now we continue with Item 3 and that is the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025 and the documents before you are CL 174/3, CL 174/3 Corr.1, CL 174/3 and you have seen, based on the request of the Programme Committee (PC), Information Note 1 CL 174/3 Annex 1.

The introduction for this important Agenda Item by Ms Beth Crawford, Assistant Director-General and Director of the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget (OSP) has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 3: Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25

Ms Beth Crawford, Assistant Director-General/Director of the Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget

The *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25* (APWB) presents refinements to the PWB 2024-25¹ endorsed by Conference in July 2023 for consideration and approval by the Council in December 2023, following review by the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting, in line with the established programming and budgeting process.²

Programmatic adjustments

The year 2024 is the beginning of the implementation of the second biennium of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 with its overarching *four betters* – *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life* for all, leaving no one behind.

FAO has put in place strong pillars to anchor its work under the Strategic Framework, including the key thematic strategies on Private Sector Engagement; Science and Innovation; Climate Change; and on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors.

In line with the emphasis placed by Members on the important role of science and evidence-based normative and standard setting work, as well as data and statistics to inform decision-making, FAO will continue to leverage its normative strengths and emphasize support to the development and implementation of normative and standard setting instruments.

The Conference emphasized the importance of oversight, internal control and support functions³ and it is recalled that within the PWB 2024-25, USD 22.7 million of incremental support cost recovery was re-allocated to fund strengthened programming and programmatic support, management and oversight, and support services.

The APWB presents the integration of statistical functions of the Chief Statistician into the Statistics Division (ESS) and the realignment of the Joint FAO/WHO Centre, as well as the transfers of private sector partnerships functions from the Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnerships Division (PSR) to the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU) and of the Global Farmer Field

¹ C 2023/3

² Basic Texts, Volume II.F, *Implementation of the IPA regarding the reform of the programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system.*

³ CL 172/REP paragraph 9 (h)

School (FFS) Platform team from the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) to the Office of Innovation (OIN) which were supported.

In relation to the establishment of a new proposed Office of Youth and Women (OYW), the Governing Bodies supported strengthening the mainstreaming and advocating for youth, gender equality and rural women's empowerment, both internally and externally, and requested the preparation of *Information Note 1* before the Council to provide further information on options and budgetary implications of OYW.

The APWB includes an overview of achieved and foreseen savings and efficiency measures, in line with guidance from the Conference, and Management will continue to report on this topic through the established reporting mechanisms.

The Members also stressed the importance of Management and Members continuing dialogue on all sources of funds with full spectrum of financial resources.

Conclusion

The Council is requested to consider the Adjustments to the PWB 2024-25 and: approve the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in *Table 1, Corr 1*; review the revised budgeted post establishment (*Annex 6*); and approve the revised Organizational Chart (*Annex 7*).

CHAIRPERSON

You are well aware when you went through the document, and perhaps you were present, that this Item was discussed at the 173rd Session of the Programme Committee, 198th Session of the Finance Committee (FC) and a Joint Meeting.

In line with the timetable and my pre-Session letter I invite Members now to make interventions on this topic and I would like to ask first the Regional Groups if they are going to make a statement to take the floor before we go to the Members.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, Pakistan is honoured to present this joint statement on the Adjustments to the FAO Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25.

We commend the Director-General's vision for a dynamic, modern and action-oriented FAO, particularly in addressing hunger, poverty and inequality. This vision aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we fully support the strategic approach reflected on the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25.

We welcome the proposed budgetary and post adjustments, including the establishment of the new Office of Youth and Women (OYW) which will take forward and further institutionalise the work of FAO Youth Committee and FAO Women's Committee which have been operating and delivering since 2022.

The emphasis on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is also well received, crucial for enhancing FAO's global impact as it approaches its 80th Anniversary. In particular, we take note of the integration of the Chief Statistician function into the Statistics Division (ESS) with the Director of the Statistics Division taking on the additional role of Chief Statistician. While we appreciate that the streamlining exercise is budget neutral we must stress that it is utterly important that FAO's statistical work, its Reporting Member Countries to be further strengthened.

We commend FAO's initiative towards achieving significant savings and enhancing efficiency, particularly in travel policy and office restructuring. These measures demonstrate FAO's commitment to fiscal responsibility and operational excellence.

The focus on enhancing technical work, especially in livestock and veterinary services is crucial for improving food safety, animal health and sustainable agricultural practices in our region. We advocate for continued strengthening in these areas to address the challenges faced across Asia.

The reinforcement of the Office for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) are particularly commendable, while primarily focused on island nations the initiatives and strategies developed by this office have significantly benefitted landlock and least developed countries in Asia addressing unique agricultural challenges and sustainable development goals.

We also appreciate the impact of farmer field schools in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25. These schools play a vital role in disseminating practical sustainable agricultural practices and knowledge enhancing livelihoods and food security at the grass root level in our region.

The Asia Regional Group reiterates its support for the range of programmatic and operational adjustments within the Programme of Work and Budget. These adjustments include SSTC, globally important agricultural heritage systems and the Office of Youth and Women align well with our priorities for agricultural development and sustainability. The adjustments in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 reflect the diverse needs and priorities of the Asia Region. We value their field efforts in addressing these varied needs through its comprehensive and inclusive approach.

The Asia Regional Group agrees with the pragmatic budgetary and Organizational adjustments, these changes are pivotal in enabling FAO to better serve its Members and effectively tackle the multifaceted challenges of agricultural development and food security in our region. We endorse the adjustments of Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025.

Mr Mohamed Elmouataz Jafar Eltayeb OSMAN (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

On the Adjustments to the Programme and the Budget (APWB) for 2024-2025 we would like to share our appreciation for the work that has been done by FAO. In addition, we welcome the information that has been provided on the opportunities and challenges in the agricultural sector. We also welcome the programme priorities for sustainable development they will allow us to face global and regional challenges to food security.

We recognize the increase in resources and the other budgetary adjustments. We welcome the allocation for resources for programmes for improvement, including improving nutrient, life production and the environment. We also would like more information on the new post created within the Organization and their budgetary impact. We welcome the establishment of Centres of Excellence.

We agree that the implementation of the programme and the budget are also connected to technology, innovation and other changes that we are seeing currently. We also stress the importance of science and of evidence based working making use of tried and tested data in various sectors within FAO. These include sanitary and phytosanitary measures and certification, these will allow us to have systems that are more comprehensive and more resilient.

We welcome the measures that are being taken by the Organization to have strategies based on innovation for climate change, we need to find solutions.

In addition we also would like to note the importance of respecting differences and respecting the various contexts that we see in different countries. The levels of food insecurity vary from place to place and we need to have standards that take into account the diversity between regions.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

Tengo el honor de hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (EU) y sus 27 Estados Miembros.

Antes de comenzar, quisiéramos manifestar que nos hubiera gustado que en los documentos de trabajo de algunos puntos de la Agenda hubieran sido publicados con anterioridad para facilitar y acelerar el trabajo de preparación del Consejo por parte de los Miembros, sobre todo de las delegaciones más pequeñas.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros recuerdan la decisión de la Conferencia de aumentar el presupuesto de la FAO en un 5,6%. Los Miembros subrayaron claramente sus prioridades para la FAO y solicitaron que la dirección identificara ahorros y eficiencias e informara sobre ellos. Los Miembros también solicitaron un plan a más largo plazo sobre cómo se abordarán y cuantificarán estas cuestiones.

Tomamos nota de los ajustes del documento al *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para 2024-2025 (CL 174/3)*. Agradecemos a la FAO por abordar varias cuestiones importantes y tomamos nota de las nuevas propuestas del Director-General.

También observamos que varias recomendaciones y prioridades del 172º período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO no se implementan plenamente en el *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para 2024-2025*, con recursos adicionales, tales como: importancia de las funciones de supervisión, control interno y funciones de apoyo, protección y financiación del trabajo normativo y técnico de la FAO. La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros apoyan varias de las propuestas, como trasladar la Escuela de Campo para Agricultores a la Oficina de Innovación (OIN) para aumentar así el impacto y el efecto catalizador; o la propuesta de separar el trabajo sobre asociaciones de la movilización de los recursos. Sin embargo, hay otras propuestas para las cuales la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros necesitan más claridad y una mejor comprensión de hasta qué punto cumplirían realmente sus objetivos. La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros también quisieran destacar que nos hubiera gustado ver como las orientaciones de los Miembros, expresadas en el 172º período de sesiones del Consejo y en el 43º período de sesiones de la Conferencia, se reflejaran mejor en los ajustes del *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para el 2024-2025*.

Tenemos los siguientes comentarios sobre las propuestas en el documento de la FAO:

En primer lugar, la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros queremos enfatizar que la incorporación de la perspectiva de género y el enfoque en la juventud son muy importantes y agradecemos que la FAO subraye su importancia. Acogemos con satisfacción el hecho de que tenemos una visión compartida sobre la necesidad de la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y los jóvenes. Estamos así mismo dispuestos a debatir la mejor manera de alcanzar estos objetivos. En este sentido, apoyamos firmemente el trabajo realizado por la unidad técnica para la Transformación Rural y la Igualdad de Género (ESP) y continuamos apoyando su papel de brindar orientación y métodos para lograr un cambio cultural transformador.

También reconocemos el papel de la división de Recursos Humanos (CSH). Sin embargo, creemos, a pesar de la nota informativa divulgada sobre el tema y expresada también por el Comité del Programa (PC) y la Reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas, que se necesita más información para comprender plenamente la propuesta de establecer una Oficina para jóvenes y mujeres, especialmente la naturaleza dual de la Oficina, abordando, por un lado, la gobernanza interna y, por el otro, su papel en la ejecución y la divulgación de la FAO. Aún no está claro cómo contribuirá a la integración de la igualdad de género en la Organización, en particular sus vínculos con las estructuras existentes, y consideramos que la propuesta sobre recursos y la información sobre los resultados previstos es insatisfactoria y no está en línea con las orientaciones de los Miembros. Por lo tanto, solicitamos una presentación clara de alternativas, teniendo en cuenta la recientemente creada Oficina de la Juventud de las Naciones Unidas y los flujos de trabajo de ONU Mujeres, para evitar la superposición y duplicación de actividades en el sistema de las Naciones Unidas (ONU). Además, la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros quisieran más aclaraciones sobre los vínculos entre la Oficina y el Foro Mundial de la Alimentación (WFF), recordando que los Miembros han subrayado que el Foro Mundial de la Alimentación debería financiarse mediante financiación voluntaria.

Tomamos nota de la ambición de la FAO de establecer centros regionales de conocimiento y subrayamos que los órganos rectores deben participar en este proceso. Los órganos de gobierno deben supervisar un proceso de selección competitivo y transparente.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros apoyan la integración del papel de Jefe de Estadística (ESS) en el mandato del Director de la ESS con el fin de consolidar las funciones estadísticas. Sin embargo, nos gustaría pedir que se aclare cómo se garantizará la capacidad y la calidad del trabajo estadístico de la FAO, que es un área de trabajo importante y en crecimiento, como serán aseguradas tras la reducción prevista en el personal estadístico.

En cuanto a las medidas de ahorro y eficiencia, observamos que la sección del documento describe el trabajo en progreso, en lugar de un plan sobre cómo la Organización pretende informar a los miembros y qué resultados prevé. Por lo tanto, reiteramos nuestra solicitud de informes anuales más estructurados sobre la implementación de las iniciativas planificadas a través de un plan de negocios

sólido, que detalle las inversiones esperadas y los resultados y beneficios esperados, así como la forma en que la FAO pretende medir este éxito. Alentamos a la FAO a buscar buenos ejemplos de presentación de informes anuales en otras Organizaciones del sistema de las Naciones Unidas como fuente de inspiración, a fin de lograr una mayor transparencia, rendición de cuentas, responsabilidad e inclusividad de la Organización.

El equilibrio entre las contribuciones asignadas y las voluntarias sigue siendo un desafío, sobre todo desde el punto de vista de la gobernanza. Se necesita una recuperación de costes clara y realista donde los servicios centrales, financiados con cuotas asignadas, también prestan servicios a iniciativas que se financian con contribuciones voluntarias, como, por ejemplo, la Iniciativa Mano de la mano (HHH). Alentamos a la FAO a continuar analizando diferentes escenarios futuros y cómo abordar los riesgos y oportunidades.

Apoyamos cambios que fortalecerán la capacidad de la Organización para salir del pensamiento aislado y aplicar un enfoque sistémico para enfrentar los desafíos. "Una sola salud" para combatir la resistencia a los antimicrobianos (RAM) es una de las áreas de trabajo donde es de primaria importancia.

Esperamos contribuir a un proceso estratégico e inclusivo entre de los Miembros y la administración durante el próximo bienio, de modo que la FAO pueda actuar como organización de conocimientos y optimizar su contribución a la Agenda 2030. Alentamos a la Dirección a continuar el proceso inclusivo de movilización de recursos que se inició esta primavera mediante reuniones con los Miembros.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

En primer lugar, permítame agradecer a la Secretaría, a la Señora Beth Crawford y a su equipo por el proceso de consultas realizadas con los Miembros en relación a los ajustes del *Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP) 2024-2025* y notas informativas recordando que la Conferencia de la FAO en su resolución ha fijado la cuantía en relación al *Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto para 2024-2025* y entendemos que los ajustes al PTP presentados derivan de las orientaciones de la misma en correspondencia a las necesidades expresadas por los Miembros para hacer frente a sus prioridades en línea con el mandato de la Organización.

Nuestra delegación desea reiterar la necesidad de aprovechar la ventaja cooperativa de la FAO y considerar en su planificación el aumento de financiamiento hacia la labor normativa en especial al establecimiento de normas basadas en la ciencia, dato empírico y las estadísticas; entre estas, la Comisión del Codex Alimentarius (CAC) y la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria (CPIF), sin perder de vista la importancia del Programa de Cooperación Técnica (PCT), aspecto fundamental para los países en desarrollo. Si bien reconocemos la importancia del trabajo normativo, es igualmente fundamental reconocer que se debe ser accesible y facilitado a los Estados Miembros que lo requieran para su implementación. Por ello es crucial potenciar el Programa de Cooperación Técnica como mecanismo catalizador.

En cuanto a la labor de la FAO en el ámbito de la salud, coincidimos que esta debe considerarse en modo transversal. En ese sentido, recordamos la importancia de incorporar cada vez más el tema de la sanidad vegetal para la lograr un nuevo equilibrio e integralidad. El pasado periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia también alentó a la FAO a continuar afianzando sus políticas para promover un enfoque sostenible a las cuestiones de género con miras a potenciar la igualdad de oportunidades y participación, por lo tanto, consideramos que la propuesta de creación de una oficina de la juventud y la mujer vaya en línea con la recomendación del periodo de sesiones de la Conferencia. Si bien se han dado pasos importantes sobre ese tema, es necesario impulsar aún más los esfuerzos en favor de la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y los jóvenes en las iniciativas de la FAO.

Por último, para la realización de todas estas iniciativas es necesario aumentar los esfuerzos, la búsqueda de mayores contribuciones voluntarias y financiación alternativa y flexible dirigida a los programas e iniciativas identificadas por los países en lograr una recuperación inclusiva y accesible para todos en cumplimiento con el Marco Estratégico 2022-2031. De igual forma, instamos a la FAO a continuar sus esfuerzos en la búsqueda del fortalecimiento y aplicación de las asociaciones y alianzas

estratégicas, entre estas la Cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular para alcanzar las esferas programáticas prioritarias.

Con estos comentarios, Nicaragua aprueba el ajuste *del Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP) 2024-2025*. Instamos a la dirección a supervisar sistemáticamente su desempeño y solicitamos el recibir oportunamente informes sobre los avances.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

It is my privilege to give this statement on behalf of the Southwest Pacific Regional Group.

Southwest Pacific Members were pleased to join consensus at Conference this year to deliver FAO a Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) with additional resources for its core budget to implement the Organization's important mandate. During Conference and in Governing Body processes that have followed FAO Members have given Management clear guidance on our priorities for this Organization. And this has included the importance of funding science and evidence based normative work and statistics, as well as standard setting work such as Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), to name a few.

However, despite this consistent and repeated guidance from Members the key initiative for the proposed adjustments to the PWB is to establish a new Office of Youth and Women. We query how this allocation is responsive to the stated priorities of FAO Members that I have just recalled. Indeed, it appears the statistics work, which Members have indicated as a priority will have some posts reduced to fund this proposed office.

The Programme Committee recommended FAO Management explore alternative proposals for the proposed office, including budgetary implications to be presented to this Council. We acknowledge the information note dated 28 November, however, in our view this document did not outline any alternative proposals, despite the clear request from Programme Committee. I am not sure if Members can be clearer in articulating our priorities and recommendations to management under the mechanisms established under the basic texts.

There is no question that the Southwest Pacific Region recognises and supports the important contribution of Women and Youth To FAO's mandate. However, we do continue to question the prioritisation of this office and the value of its establishment on top of the resources and mechanisms that FAO already has in place for both gender and youth.

We are unaware of any independent evaluation that has recommended the establishment of the proposed office. And unfortunately in our view the information note does not justify a clear need for the creation of this office nor the benefits the office would provide to Members. We remain unclear on how this office relates to the work of the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division, known as (ESP).

We are wary of introducing duplication into FAO structure, indeed, Southwest Pacific Members consider that many of the functions outlined in the note should be and perhaps are already being done by FAO's Human Resources and ESP Divisions, the Gender Office and FAO's Leadership Group more broadly.

With these comments our position is that any genuine savings from the budget, i.e. savings that do not reduce resources in the priority areas stated by Members, including statistics, should be redirected towards priorities consistently stated by Members. We also identify the biennial theme of integrated water resource management which we understand is under resourced as we enter the biennium is another worthy area of investment instead of the creation of this new office.

A further comment relates to the strengthening of the office of Small Islands Developing States (SIDs), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developed Countries (LLDCs), with one additional post in 2024-25. The work of this office is very important to our region and we welcome additional resources that are targeted towards improving services and indeed the livelihoods and outcomes for people within our region and SIDs, LDCs and LLDCs more broadly. But as the DG has said this morning strengthening at headquarters must also be complemented by strengthening and enhancing areas at the decentralised office level.

In closing, I would like to highlight two key recommendations from the Finance Committee, being sub paragraph 14 (f) recommending the development of a business plan and roadmap on efficiency gains and savings. As well as sub paragraph 14 (h), requesting management develop an in-depth analysis of different funding scenarios relating to voluntary and assessed contributions.

These conclusions go to the very heart of FAO ensuring it has a fit for purpose funding model and approach to saving and efficiencies to meet the challenges ahead. I hope that Council can support these conclusions and that management can recognise and duly respond to these requests from Members.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Our delegation would like to provide initial comments on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (APWB) following input provided through the Programme Committee (PC) and the Joint Meeting.

This Council has an essential role in steering the Organization in providing guidance and oversight to management as it allocates resources and in helping to ensure decisions of the Conference are implemented. This is a Member driven, Member owned Organization and the guidance provided by Members through its governing bodies must be respected.

We appreciate the documents prepared by the Secretary including the information note on the creation of an Office of Youth and Women (OYW). Canada strongly supports the empowerment of women and youth and agrees with the Director-General in his opening remarks that this is a must. But note that there are different means to this end and we have concerns about the approach taken from a governance perspective.

The Secretary was asked by the Programme Committee to explore alternative proposals to develop the programmatic actions expected from the creation of an Office of Youth and Women, including budgetary implications based on the assessment that the APWB did not fully reflect Conference guidelines.

Regrettably no alternative proposals appear to have been presented, nor alternative budgetary implications presented that consider the creation of an Office in the broader context of priorities outlined by the Conference. The creation of the Office is the single largest reallocation by far in the APWB, absorbing reductions proposed in many other budgetary chapters, including on topics identified by Conference as a priority such as normative work, statistics and oversight.

This would not appear to be in line with recommendations by one of the Organization's governing bodies and guidance in this instance from its highest body, the Conference.

Continue en français

La FAO est censée être guidée par le cadre stratégique 2022-2031 approuvé, le plan à moyen terme et les contributions de la Conférence sur le PTB. À partir de ce document, les membres ont déterminé vers où les ressources doivent être dirigées et non pas réaffectées à des éléments qu'ils n'ont pas approuvés.

Je le répète, l'engagement du Canada au chapitre de l'égalité des genres et de l'autonomisation des femmes demeure inébranlable, et c'est pourquoi les nouveaux investissements, si l'on veut qu'ils soient durables, doivent être étayés par des processus établis et des résultats mesurables. Nous réaffirmons que l'Organisation est dirigée par ses membres et que le Secrétariat, qu'il soit d'accord ou non avec les membres, doit suivre les directives de ceci.

Nous souhaitons toujours avoir des réponses aux demandes du Comité du Programme et de la réunion conjointe, afin d'assurer l'alignement avec les directives fournies par la Conférence, afin de nous permettre d'aller vers l'avant.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We align ourselves with the European Union Statement.

We meet at a very serious moment for global food security, for global warming and climate change, for conflict affecting food systems and food security and for biodiversity, these serious situations must and should inform our work and the proceedings of this Council.

We take note of the document Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (APWB) 2024/25. With a view to the decision by Conference to strengthen the budget by 5.6 percent it is important for the Nordic Countries to ensure that it is spent in line with priorities and guidance provided by Members.

I noted the Director-General's four Es and now the four Rs but I would like to underline in this context the fundamental importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular SDG2 for all activity at FAO.

It is critical that FAO build on its comparative advantages within the areas of its mandate and we recall the guidance of the Conference emphasising the important role of normative and standard setting work, as well as data and statistics to inform decision making. We want FAO to continue to be a global knowledge Hub of excellence.

We would have liked to see the guidance of the Conference more clearly reflected in the adjusted PWB. We take note of the proposed reduced resources to statistics and data work and ask for further clarifications on FAO's priorities in this area. We reiterate that oversight functions must be prioritised.

It is also vital that the PWB supports operational action and contributes to results at country level. FAO's work must be aligned by action by the broader UN system, the UN Common Country Analysis and the UN Sustainable Development Corporation Frameworks. Furthermore, we would like to comment on the following specific proposals in the document.

First, we take note of the proposal to establish an Office of Youth and Women (OYW). We appreciate the new information provided, yet the rationale for establishing the new office remains unclear and we agree with other speakers on this point.

Empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming, including youth, are absolute key priorities for the Nordic countries. We wish to emphasise the importance of applying a programmatic approach for this work, in this respect we like to underscore the important work of the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP) in ensuring the effective implementation, coordination and Reporting on FAO's cross cutting work on inclusion, youth, gender equality and women's empowerment. The Nordics would support to strengthen this division.

Second, we underline the importance we attach to the work on One Health in FAO. We expect that the changes to the Joint Centre of World Health Organization (WHO) and FAO are made in a way that ensures the centre's cross cutting work. The One Health approach needs to be to influence all parts of FAO's activities and the results of this needs to be monitored and evaluated.

Third, the 43rd Session of the Conference requested further information on efficiencies and savings, we are pleased to see a section on efficiency measures in the adjustment of the programme. We see this as a first step in a more transparent and complete Reporting from management on what you intend to do to improve performance, delivery and efficiency in key areas. We look forward to annual Reporting on results in a format where we can follow and monitor with respect to a concrete plan for the work with expected outcomes and benefits.

Fourth, we also welcome the emphasis on the need to manage balance between assessed and voluntary contributions as well as to the influence of new forms of funding. We note the commitment by management to continue the constructive dialogue with Members on this important and also challenging issue.

Fifth, we reiterate that it is essential for FAO to increase its efforts towards attracting more flexible funding. Building trust with resource partners and exploring different funding modalities that meet the Reporting needs and visibility of donors are essential. We appreciate the efforts done in this regard with the flexible voluntary contribution mechanism and a special fund for emergency and rehabilitation activities but further work is still needed. Improved financial flexibility could increase FAO's effectiveness and should be a priority for the Organization.

Let me add that we need to avoid that FAO becomes a “*service provider*” for earmarked initiatives and projects that might impact FAO’s delivery of its core functions and the implementation of the agreed strategic framework. We would like to see clearly how the budget supports priorities in the strategic plan.

Sixth and almost last we support the ambition and focus of FAO in producing normative products based on science and in cooperation with leading scientific institutions, we look forward to being able to see how these knowledge products can lead to real results.

And, finally, the Nordic countries stand ready to engage with management and with all Members on discussions aimed at improving transparency and building trust. We encourage management to continue and indeed to strengthen an open dialogue with Members during the biennium and leading up to the formulation of the next Programme of Work and Budget.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States thanks Management for the updated Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and appreciates the details on proposed adjustments.

I would like to echo the point made early on in this discussion by the delegation Nicaragua and repeated by others on the importance of funding science and evidence based normative work and welcome assurances that FAO will continue to leverage its comparative advantage in science and evidence based normative and standard setting work including, for example, through the Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

The United States supports the modernisation of the global Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to advance science and innovation for smallholder farmers, farmers need these tools now more than ever.

Regarding efficiencies and savings we align with the Joint Meeting and Finance Committee recommendations and request that management provide annual Reporting on efficiencies and cost savings, focusing both on what gains are being achieved each year along with a forward looking roadmap. And as we move forward with the approved budget increase making continued progress on efficiency will assure that all funds are used as effectively as possible.

We also appreciate the additional information provided on the Office of Youth of Women (OYW) and we in general support that proposal. However, given the importance of both internal and external work relating to youth and women would just like to ask a question on how management will ensure that both pieces are adequately addressed. Will the whole office focus on all of these issues or is the plan to have some positions working primarily internally and others externally, we would welcome a little bit more information on that.

Mr Defu GUANG (China) (Original language Chinese)

We would like to thank the Joint Statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. China agrees with the Adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) proposed by the Director-General. We appreciate FAO’s implementation of the Conference decisions is a clear response to Member States’s concerns and the congress solutions provided.

We welcome FAO’s further reform and restructuring. We support the programmatic and operational adjustments and welcome the strengthening of the Office of Innovation and the Office for Small Island Landlock and Least Developed Countries (OSL).

Furthermore, we believe that it is important to focus on the work on youth and women. We noted the creation of the new Office for Youth and Women (OYW) and we recognise its importance for the related work of FAO.

Furthermore, we emphasise the role South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in realising the 2030 Agenda and strengthening and expanding partnerships and encourages FAO to further deepen its cooperation with all parties.

Moreover, China welcomes the construction of the Global Museum of Food and Agriculture and its network and is of the view that the Global Museum of Food and Agriculture is of great significance in ensuring and safeguarding food and livelihood security, preserving biodiversity and responding to

climate change and hopes FAO will continue to mobilise more countries to participate in GS related work.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

La Argentina agradece la presentación del documento y los correspondientes Anexos, así como las correcciones allí presentadas, y deseamos expresar:

En primer lugar, reconocer que la labor de la FAO debe continuar siendo guiada por los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) de la Agenda 2030.

En el documento se expresa la idea de que siendo el comienzo del segundo mandato del Director General al frente de la Organización, la aspiración es construir una FAO dinámica y moderna para un mundo mejor, objetivo que obviamente compartimos, ello debe ser construido con transparencia en base al **consenso** de los miembros, sin dejar a nadie atrás. Por eso que Argentina colaboró con flexibilidad al consenso logrado.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, Argentina desea reiterar la importancia de otorgarle mayores recursos financieros a la labor normativa de la FAO, basada en los conocimientos científicos y los datos empíricos.

En este sentido, foros como CODEX o la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria (IPPC) son sumamente relevantes por su importancia sistémica, por lo que alentamos a que ocupen una posición más central en la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

En particular quisiera resaltar la necesidad de apoyar una herramienta muy valiosa creada en el ámbito del IPPC como es la solución e-phyto, que permite un eficiente y seguro intercambio de certificados fitosanitarios, indispensables para el comercio internacional.

Analizando más en detalle el documento y siguiendo los debates sobre la propuesta de esquema del futuro del CODEX (*“Proposed blueprint on the future of CODEX”*) que tuvieron lugar en el 46° período de sesiones de la Comisión, resulta fundamental que el CODEX preserve su independencia en la nueva estructura propuesta, asegurando así la continuidad de su labor, basada en estándares internacionales y rigurosidad científica.

Destacamos la creación de la Oficina para la Innovación (OIN), que sin dudas constituirá un pilar fundamental para impulsar el programa de innovación de la FAO y poner en práctica la Estrategia de la FAO para la ciencia y la innovación.

Pero particularmente, celebramos los 3 pilares: la agricultura digital, las biotecnologías y la Plataforma de las escuelas de campo de agricultores.

Agradecemos la nota informativa y acogemos la creación de la Oficina de la Juventud y la Mujer, toda vez que se procure una efectiva y eficiente gestión de los recursos de la Organización.

Para estas nuevas unidades, resulta sumamente relevante contar con balance regional en lo que respecta su composición.

Además, aguardamos expectantes los avances de la FAO con relación al establecimiento de los centros de conocimiento regionales, para aprovechar el potencial de los países y continuar profundizando la estructura descentralizada de la FAO a escala regional.

Al respecto, quisiera destacar que la Argentina cuenta con la CONABIA, centro único de referencia mundial de la FAO en materia de bioseguridad y biotecnología agropecuaria y estamos listos para empezar una activa cooperación con los países en desarrollo junto a la FAO.

Asimismo, alentamos a la FAO a fortalecer y ampliar las asociaciones y alianzas estratégicas en el marco de la Cooperación Sur-Sur (CSS) y Triangular (CT).

Por último, ratificamos que los procesos voluntarios y/o de participación restringida de los miembros deberán ser financiados por contribuciones voluntarias.

Con estos comentarios, agradecemos la posibilidad de continuar discutiendo el documento, a fin de que pueda contar con el consenso y respaldo de todos los Miembros.

M. Henri OKEMBA (Congo)

Nous intervenons au nom du Cameroun, la République Unie de Tanzanie et naturellement, la République du Congo. Le Groupe Régional Afrique note que la décision de la Direction d'apporter des ajustements à son programme de travail 2024-2025 sur la base des crédits budgétaires nets ouverts pour un montant de 1 021,7 millions de dollars est conforme à la résolution 4/2023 de la Conférence et que cet exercice vise à garantir à la FAO une distribution et une utilisation optimale des ressources de l'Organisation dans la perspective de la mise en œuvre de son cadre stratégique 2022-2031 et la réalisation des objectifs de développement durable.

Concernant la répartition des ressources par région, le Groupe Régional Afrique prend note de l'ouverture des crédits nets de 160,462 millions de dollars et de l'affectation des ressources extra-budgétaires de 883,348 millions de dollars pour une prévision budgétaire de 2979,347 millions de dollars pour le compte du Bureau Régional de la FAO en Afrique. Eu égard à ce qui précède, le Groupe Régional Afrique, tout en se félicitant de l'alignement du programme de travail et budget 2024-2025 au cadre stratégique de la FAO et de la protection du budget, du cadre normatif et du programme de coopération technique, tiens à formuler les commentaires ci-après.

S'agissant de la création du Bureau des Femmes et des Jeunes, nous prenons note de ce projet, mais nous restons ouverts à la discussion pour une solution consensuelle. Concernant le Bureau de l'Innovation, le programme de coopération technique, la coopération sud-sud et triangulaire et les centres mixtes, le Groupe Régional Afrique estime que ceci présente des domaines d'impact pour la FAO.

C'est pourquoi il encourage la FAO, en collaboration avec les membres, à mobiliser des ressources extra budgétaires supplémentaires, tel que les financements innovants, en misant sur son avantage comparatif afin de promouvoir les centres d'excellences et les champs-écoles d'agricultures. Ceux-ci auront l'avantage de restructurer la recherche et la vulgarisation agricole et contribuer ainsi à la mise en œuvre des plans d'actions relatifs à la stratégie sur les changements climatiques et la stratégie sur la science et l'innovation.

En ce qui concerne, la rationalisation des fonctions statistiques, le Groupe Régional Afrique espère que le cumul des fonctions au niveau du poste statisticien en chef n'affectera pas l'efficacité des données statistiques, car ceci est important pour nous. Quant à la structure des effectifs du personnel de la FAO, notre groupe rappelle que la plupart des bureaux décentralisés, surtout les bureaux des pays de la FAO sur le continent, sont en sous-effectif. Nous invitons donc la Direction à adopter une approche équilibrée de gestion des ressources humaines et des carrières des cadres entre le siège et les bureaux décentralisés en tenant compte des priorités spécifiques de l'Organisation au niveau de chaque région et de chaque pays.

Le Groupe Régional Afrique appelle les membres du Conseil à accompagner les efforts de la Direction de la FAO à travers les conclusions constructives dans son élan de renforcer l'efficacité de la gestion des ressources et d'améliorer l'efficacité opérationnelle de l'Organisation. Dans cette optique, le Comité du Programme, le Comité Financier et les participants à leurs réunions conjointes ont examiné les ajustements apportés au programme du travail et budget 2024-2025 et donnés des indications au Conseil.

Avec ces commentaires, le Groupe Régional Afrique prend note des ajustements apportés au programme de travail et budget 2024-2025 du cadre des résultats révisés, du montant estimatif des ressources extra-budgétaires, des postes inscrits au budget, tels que révisé et enfin, la répartition révisée des ouvertures des crédits nets entre les chapitres du budget, tel que figure au tableau 1 et à l'organigramme révisé.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Costa Rica agradece la elaboración del documento *CL/174/3* y sobre el cual quisiéramos hacer algunos comentarios.

Costa Rica apoya el papel de FAO en cuanto a la labor normativa y el establecimiento de normas basada en el conocimiento científico y datos empíricos. Es de gran importancia el financiamiento que la FAO de al programa de cooperación técnica (PCT) así como a toda la labor técnica y normativa.

Hacemos hincapié en que las contribuciones voluntarias deben ser flexibles y deben armonizarse con el marco estratégico de FAO.

Consideramos menester que se impulse más la Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular para el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030, así como dotar de recursos suficientes a las oficinas descentralizadas para una mayor ejecución de forma eficiente.

Apoyamos las labores que FAO realice para la aplicación de las soluciones integradas de restauración de tierras y gestión de los recursos hídricos para las cuatro mejoras y estamos de acuerdo en que se dé prioridad a los sistemas agroforestales resilientes y con capacidad de adaptación.

En lo que respecta la creación de la Oficina de la Juventud y la Mujer, consideramos que estos deben verse de forma transversal en todos los trabajos de la organización y coincidimos en la idea de que la FAO refuerce enfoques innovadores de jóvenes y mujeres en los diferentes ámbitos de mandato de la FAO.

En todo caso, deseamos obtener más detalles de las funciones que desarrollará esta oficina, de manera que no traslape con funciones que ya ejercen en otras divisiones, para un uso eficiente de los recursos de la organización.

Sobre el trabajo de FAO en colaboración con el sector privado, estaríamos de acuerdo con el ajuste propuesto y que se centralicen la colaboración de FAO con actores no estatales y que se fortalezcan las alianzas estratégicas.

Apoyamos el incremento otorgado a la oficina para la innovación y que se establezcan los tres pilares clave interrelacionados: agricultura digital, biotecnología y plataforma de escuelas de campo de agricultores.

En lo que se refiere al reajuste del Centro Conjunto FAO-Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), reiteramos la importancia de la independencia del CODEX, cuya secretaría continuará en la sede de FAO y tal como dice el documento, "mantendrá su independencia". Solicitamos a la FAO que se brinden más recursos y una debida dotación de fondos para que ejecute su programa de trabajo.

Sobre la creación de museos agrícolas y redes mundiales, nuestra delegación considera que es de importancia poder intercambiar información, prácticas agrícolas tradicionales y experiencia de países que cuentan con sitios Sistemas Importantes del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundial (SIPAM) para que otros países puedan también incluir o sumar nuevos sitios SIPAM. Estos sistemas son de gran importancia para la conservación de los conocimientos ancestrales.

Defendemos que sea respetado el porcentaje del presupuesto dedicado al programa de cooperación técnica de FAO y que haya un equilibrio entre las cuotas ordinarias y las contribuciones voluntarias para llevar a cabo el marco estratégico de FAO y los respectivos ajustes que se establezcan y concreten medidas de ahorro y eficiencia para la optimización de los recursos.

De esta manera, Costa Rica aprueba la distribución revisada de la consignación neta por capítulos presupuestarios, la plantilla presupuestada, el organigrama revisado. Reiteramos la necesidad de que las contribuciones voluntarias tengan una visión de financiación voluntaria flexible, sin fines específicos o con condiciones limitadas.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá)

En el nombre del gobierno de Panamá, extendiendo un saludo a todos los Miembros y participantes y agradezco la oportunidad de dirigirme al Consejo 174 de la FAO. Nos entusiasma que Panamá vuelva a ser un Miembro pleno de este 172 período de sesiones del Consejo luego de casi 15 años. Panamá agradece los documentos para consideración y deseamos hacer los siguientes comentarios.

Vemos positivamente la creación de la Oficina de Juventud y de la Mujer para que el Comité de Juventud y el Comité de las Mujeres tengan mayor estructura e integración en la Organización. Agradecemos la nota informativa donde se exponen los objetivos de la oficina, sin embargo, vemos necesario mayor explicación en las funciones de esta nueva oficina versus la División de Transformación Rural e Igualdad de Género (ESP) que actualmente cuenta con un equipo de 43

colaboradores con miras a que la nueva oficina no tenga dualidad de funciones sino transversal en el organismo.

Sería importante para el conocimiento de los Miembros que se nos presente un desglose de los 1.5 millones de dólares (USD) para la creación de esta oficina y considerar los diferentes escenarios de la contratación de las siete personas nuevas, ya sean contrataciones nuevas o reasignaciones con personal actual para términos de ahorro al organismo. Nos queda la duda si actualmente el Comité de la Juventud y de la Mujer cuentan con personal. Esperamos que esta oficina observe y promueva las recientes aprobadas directrices voluntarias del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA) sobre la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición.

Acogemos con agrado los cambios en la plataforma global de las escuelas de campos de agricultores, de la división de producción y protección vegetal y de la oficina para la innovación logrando mayor sinergia y quedando con tres pilares, agricultura digital, biotecnologías y las plataformas de las escuelas de campos de agricultores. Avalamos el ajuste en el presupuesto para la contratación de nuevos puestos profesionales para fortalecer la Oficina para los pequeños estados insulares y en desarrollo, los países menos adelantados y los países en desarrollo sin litoral y la Oficina de ética (ETH), la cual atiende el llamado en el acto ministerial de alto nivel celebrado en junio de 2023 en aumentar el apoyo de la FAO a estos grupos vulnerables de países.

Panamá no tiene objeción con los reajustes en el Centro conjunto de la FAO y de la Organización Mundial de la Salud(OMS) que no incide en el presupuesto para tener sinergia entre el CODEX, la División de Sistemas Alimentarios e Inocuidad de los Alimentos (ESF, pero reitera al igual que otros Estados Miembros la necesidad de mantener la independencia del CODEX y que sus decisiones se basen en sustentos científicos y datos empíricos. Alentamos a los Miembros a seguir aportando contribuciones voluntarias, así como los pagos de las cuotas asignadas para posibilitar el cumplimiento y la ejecución de este *Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP) para 2024-2025*. Por último, respaldamos a que la Administración presente qué cambios podrían ser necesarios para mejorar el modelo de financiación de manera que la labor del organismo sea más sostenible.

Con estos comentarios, Panamá acoge los ajustes *al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto para 2024-2025*.

Mr Blaz GERMSEK (Slovenia)

In recent years, the global food system proved to be extremely sensitive. Food insecurity can lead to destabilising households, communities and even entire nations. This can result in social unrest, migration and political instability, which can have long-term global impact. Nowadays, food security has become a critical global challenge. Not only do we witness surge in global food prices, but we also face the effect of climate change, which represents an additional threat to the stability of the global food system.

Developing countries and their most vulnerable population groups, such as women, children and the elderly, are threatened the most. Therefore, we welcome the proposed FAO Adjusted Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025 period aiming to promote the establishment of the FAO Office of Youth and Women (OYW). This measure will support and encourage innovation and opportunities for these vulnerable groups.

This past year was difficult for Slovenian agriculture. In August, our country was hit by several floods and landslides, causing extreme extensive damage to agriculture, forestry and aquaculture. Extreme weather events, such as frost, abundant precipitation, heavy floods and strong winds, severely affected agricultural production and threatened national and global food security.

Investment in Research and Development (R&D), the development of new technology and the modernisation of agriculture are crucial for increasing productivity and innovation in agriculture. Only with close cooperation, sustainable partnership and solidarity, we will be able to create a better future. Unfortunately, the growing number of conflicts across the world further aggravate this situation. Building peace is not only our duty, it is also the precondition of food security and the exercise of the right to food.

With a great deal of responsibility, I call to exploit all possibilities of taking action of enabling the environment of basic human rights - the right to food, which was ensured already in 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is impossible, however, for one organization to eradicate hunger and poverty by itself. Cooperation and effective partnership remain our most important tool to achieve common goals for the 2030 Agenda, namely, to eradicate hunger, food shortage and all forms of malnutrition by 2040. Global partnership, cooperation and solidarity are crucial in this respect.

I would like to conclude by expressing sincere gratitude to the World Food Programme (WFP) for its dedicated work to the good of those who are most vulnerable. As we live in the global connected world, it is our shared responsibility to work together and find all possible solutions to affect positive change to the global food security. Only with close cooperation, sustainable partnership and joint efforts, we will be able to create a better future everywhere, everybody, regardless of their status or geographical location.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines aligns with the Asia Regional Group Statement delivered by our distinguished delegate from Pakistan in supporting the refinements made to the Programme of Work and Budget endorsed by the Conference in July 2023.

The Philippines looks forward to seeing these adjustments translated to further improvements in FAO's effectiveness in supporting Members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including through support from country offices, and through the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

Like other Members, the Philippines values the catalytic role of the TCP in resource mobilization, improvements in farming systems, strengthening institutional capacities, instituting policy and regulatory reforms for agricultural development and improving forms of collaboration at the regional and international levels in accordance with the country's national development plan.

We support FAO through this adjusted program of work and budget for 2024-2025, so that it can conduct its core activities as a specialized agency to support the achievement of the SDGs, within its mandate, using its comparative advantage in the UN System.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

We would like to thank the Secretariat for providing us with detailed information on the proposed adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). I would also like to reiterate our satisfaction with the approval by the Conference of an increase of 5.6 percent of the budget level after a period of 12 years, without any changes. Brazil endorsed that proposal since the beginning of our discussions in April. We believe FAO's work is central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in such a critical crisis like the scenario we now face, its capacities should be strengthened.

Brazil emphasises the need to protect and adequately fund the normative and standard setting work of FAO, related to the Codex Alimentarius and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), as delegations of Nicaragua, the United States, Costa Rica and Argentina, among others, have also stressed, as well as the work of intergovernmental arrangements, such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). As such, we regret the limited budget allocated to CFS, which is not in line with its importance to discussions on global food security. We also share China's view about the importance of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) and the South-South triangular cooperation (SSTC).

Besides that, we believe that FAO's current high-level dependency on extra budgetary resources must be followed very closely, taking into account the bulk of these is tightly earmarked and highly concentrated, as pointed out by document *CL 174/3*. The possibility of fragmentation of the true nature of multilateralism cannot be overlooked.

Mr Hyungsik KIM (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea fully aligns itself with the joint statement of Asia Regional Group delivered by Pakistan. Within our national capacity, we commend the Director-General's vision and priorities in the

Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and would like to emphasize the following points in relation to the adjustment to the PWB. First, the Republic of Korea recognizes the need to continue promoting the mainstreaming of youth, gender equality and capacity building for rural women across the FAO mandates and structures.

We take note of the importance of establishing a new Office of Youth and Women (OYW). However, we anticipate the additional information on the proposed resourcing and intended outcomes of this office, including how it will contribute to achieving our agreed goal of mainstreaming gender and youth, and how it will achieve synergy effects between women's policy and youth policy. Second, the Republic of Korea recognizes the significance of flexible soft earmarked and unearmarked voluntary funding to bolster the priorities outlined in the integrated Programme of Work.

Flexible contributions of available flexibility and adaptation are allowing the FAO to strategically allocate funds based on emerging priorities. While this approach is streamlining administrative processes, concerns such as the perceived lack of donor control and transparency challenges may arise. To address these issues, FAO should enhance communication and Reporting mechanisms, engaging with donors regularly to align priorities, provide tailored updates on project impacts, and establish feedback channels.

Third, we commend FAO's initiative towards achieving significant savings and enhancing efficiencies. Paragraph 56 of the PWB properly outlines three main forms of efficiencies, cost saving, time saving and effectiveness improvement.

The Republic of Korea, recognizing the importance of these efficiency measures, request that FAO provides regular updates on efficiencies and savings categorised under these three main areas.

Last but not least, we also underscore that in the execution of the PWB, FAO, being a Membership-led Organization, should consider the direction provided by Governing Bodies. We emphasize the need for greater transparency and accountability throughout the implementation process.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Japan echoes comments made by other Members in that we attach importance to FAO's normative work, such as Codex and the International Plant Protection Convention, and welcome also the work on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). Regarding the issue of voluntary contributions, we would like to encourage FAO to explore a mechanism to ensure appropriate implementation of the projects funded by those contributions, for example, setting up steering committees for large multi-donor contributions.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom (UK) would also like to thank FAO for the paper on adjustments of the budget and for the discussions that we have had on this in the Committees. This paper is particularly important given that the Conference agreed the first increase in FAO's budget for over a decade. Conference, the supreme Governing Body of this Member-led Organization, was clear in providing strategic direction for the next biennium, and we would have welcomed this being just as clearly reflected in the adjustments paper.

So, for example, although water was the agreed priority for the biennium, resourcing is not increasing. We also note that statistics and data work was underlined as a priority, but resourcing in this area is being reduced. We would like to reiterate the question posed by Congo on behalf of the Africa Regional Group, seeking reassurance of the capacity of FAO to deliver in this critical area as the world depends on the data and analysis that FAO provides in so many areas.

On the proposal of an Office of Youth and Women (OYW), while, of course, the United Kingdom strongly supports FAO's work on both youth and gender, and fully agrees with the Director-General on the importance of women and youth empowerment, we do have some outstanding questions on the structure proposed, including the links to existing structures such as the Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP), and links with the Human Resources Division (CSH).

We look forward to hearing more from FAO on how it is proposed that the office support the implementation of the strategic plan, and how success will be monitored and measured. Another area

we would like to hear more from FAO on are the proposed Regional Knowledge Centres and how they will be developed.

The United Kingdom joins others in underscoring the importance of FAO's normative work, including Codex Alimentarius and Plant Health. The UK also strongly supports FAO's continued prioritisation of One Health, and we encourage the continued strengthening of focus on antimicrobial resistance.

We support the joint FAO/WHO centre and better synergies between CODEX, One Health and other related areas, as Panama and a number of other Members have also highlighted. Efficiencies were requested by Conference, but the response so far on that could be stronger. We urge FAO to follow up without delay on the Finance Committee recommendation on developing a more strategic response to that, with a future plan that can be monitored.

We also support the proposed review on the structural organisational implications for FAO on the continued shift between the core assessed budget and voluntary contributions. We look forward to a strategic discussion on that to ensure that FAO continues to be fit for purpose as we move forward, demonstrating leadership across the system also in further strengthening transparency and accountability.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

At the outset, I would like to extend Egypt's support for your leadership of these works of the Council, and we hope that this Session will achieve the desired results.

It is essential, yet it is our responsibility when we discuss this PWB 2024-25, especially when it comes to the creation of the Office on Youth and Women, it is essential to clarify Egypt's efforts in this regard.

Regarding the empowerment of women, this sector has really witnessed a boom during the last decade and thus, thanks to the political will at the highest level in the state, that is convinced that the empowerment of women is a national responsibility. Therefore, the empowerment of women was integrated in the Constitution and the various strategies and legislations.

Also, His Excellency President El-Sisi has adopted the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women, as of 2017. This is considered a roadmap for the government of Egypt to implement the various activities related to women empowerment, and this Strategy includes 34 SDG indicators, and it is based on four axis: political empowerment, economic empowerment, social empowerment and social protection.

Egypt also during the past years has achieved the greatest representation for women in the government. The Egyptian women now represent 25 percent of the seats in the Parliament. Also, we have achieved 25 percent of the executive Members in the cabinets. Also, the representation of women in the Foreign Ministry has reached 50 percent.

At national level, the government has adopted the Decent Life Initiative that seeks to improve the livelihoods of citizens in the rural areas, and women are at the heart of the targeted groups in this Strategy, and this includes work in over 4 000 villages.

Regarding the empowerment of youth, I would like to mention that youth constitutes 60 percent of the population and the government counts on the youth in implementing the plans. The political leadership has convened the first youth Conference in 2016, in Sharm el-Sheikh where it has witnessed the participation of all the sectors of the government.

His Excellency, the President, was keen on participating in the various activities and Sessions of the Conference, and the youth has received the message that there is a new language and a new direction for the state, and this has paved the way for the participation of the youth in facing the challenges of the government. Another edition of this Conference was convened two years later, and it has seen the participation of the Director-General of FAO through the new, and the vision to reject violence and to establish peace was launched during this event.

We can spend hours talking about the efforts of the Egyptian government regarding the empowerment of women. However, we will suffice ourselves with what has been said and we would like to say that the delegation of Egypt supports the proposal to establish a new Office for Women and Youth in FAO.

Mr Thesele John 'MASERIBANE (Lesotho)

Lesotho aligns itself with the statement that was made by Congo. Lesotho welcomes the Office of Youth and Women to help ensure that the important topics of youth and women continue to be mainstreamed across all the work of the Organization. Women are instrumental in rural livelihoods, and the youth are our future. So, we must ensure that their voices are heard. This should be done in line with the Conference guidance to strengthen decentralized functions of FAO to enable mainstreaming of women and youth in the regions.

Lesotho therefore requests again that the Director-General must implement what he promised us for his reappointment, which is to strengthen this decentralization, which is about the work at regional level, for feasibility and direct support to Member States.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Chile agradece los ajustes programáticos y operacionales para garantizar el uso y prestación óptimos de los recursos de la Organización. En particular, hay dos puntos que mi delegación desea subrayar. En primer lugar, apoyamos la propuesta del establecimiento de una nueva Oficina de la Juventud y la Mujer. El gobierno de Chile ha definido como prioridad alcanzar la igualdad de género y trabajar en pro de medidas que fomenten la equidad junto con relevar el rol de la juventud y trabajar para desarrollar mecanismos que permitan su permanencia y desarrollo en el mundo rural. En segundo lugar, mi país desea, tal como lo han expresado otras delegaciones, especialmente de mi región, dejar constancia de que entendemos que el cambio de dependencia del Codex al interior de la Organización de manera alguna ha de afectar su independencia.

Ms Swantje NILSSON (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Germany would like to thank FAO for the information provided in the document on the adjustments of the PWB for the biennium 2024-25. In times of multiple crises, such as the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis and the food security crisis, it is important to provide FAO with the appropriate means to fulfil its challenging mandate. Therefore, and together with the needed information from Members on efficiency savings, we agreed to the budget increase of the PWB at the 43rd Session of Conference in July.

As a long-standing voluntary contributor, Germany also acknowledges that there is a need to keep the balance between assessed and voluntary contributions in view of governance and administrative challenges. All efforts to provide transparency, support to Members for a thorough understanding of the Organization's activities are therefore highly appreciated. Having said this, we would appreciate further information on some proposals, such as the value-added impact areas as work areas under the four betters which are not self-explaining, unfortunately, and where it is difficult to find further information.

Germany is pleased that the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee in the joint Session have also reiterated the importance of science and evidence based, normative and standard setting work such as Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention, along with its e-phyto solution. For all of these areas of work, it should be ensured that adequate funding is provided from the core budget.

Germany has noted with great interest the realignment of the joint FAO/WHO Centre, and we are looking forward to hearing more about the collaboration of the agrifood systems and food safety division with the Codex Secretariat in the near future.

In line with the Conference decision that stressed the importance of protecting and funding the normative and technical work, including the treaty bodies, Germany supports the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) - that, at its

recent 10th Session, encouraged FAO to increase the contribution to the international treaty and mobilise additional financial resources for its work.

Finally, we want to add our voice to the points raised by the European Union regarding the proposal to establish an Office for Youth and Women. While we fully support the goal of mainstreaming gender, we would also like to get a better understanding of the role and resources foreseen. Existing structures, such as the recently established Youth Office of the United Nations and the workstreams of UN-Women should be taken into account to avoid overlap and duplication of activities in the UN system.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCÍA WINDER (México)

Quisiera comentar que me parece muy difícil que México pudiera agregar algo adicional sobre los ya múltiples comentarios y apoyos que se han dado a la propuesta.

En ese sentido, mi intervención solo quiere preguntar dado a mi ignorancia, ¿cómo vamos a proceder? ¿Qué debemos esperar después de hacer estos comentarios? ¿Cuándo vamos a recibir respuesta y cómo vamos a proceder para aprobar la propuesta final de esta *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) para 2024-2025*? Lo digo porque ha habido muchas discusiones. Voy a poner dos ejemplos. El ejemplo de la Oficina de mujeres y jóvenes. En realidad, nadie se ha manifestado en contra de esta oficina, pero todos hemos pedido que para aprobarla se nos dé mayor información. Lo mismo hemos hecho ya desde hace mucho tiempo sobre las contribuciones voluntarias. Hemos pedido que se haga un compromiso serio para definir cómo las vamos a manejar en la institución. Lo comento porque me preocupa que esta tarde o mañana cuando discutamos si debe ser un verbo o un artículo la declaración, llegamos a una conclusión como esta: “*Con todas estas observaciones el Consejo aprueba el Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto*”. Si ponemos eso en la declaración tácitamente estamos dando carta blanca a que aprobamos todo y, pues, nos podrán decir después cualquier cosa, pero ya no tendremos derecho a cambiarlo porque nosotros mismos lo aprobamos.

Entonces, ¿cuál es el proceso? ¿Cómo vamos a seguir? ¿Cómo vamos a pedir que todas estas observaciones tan valiosas que los Miembros han presentado sean realmente incorporadas? Estamos contra el tiempo porque, además, el tiempo es urgente. El 2024 empieza en aproximadamente 30 días. Mi duda es cómo vamos a proceder y evitar dar una carta blanca aquí y que tengamos frases como esa en la discusión.

Mil disculpas por esta intervención, pero las sugerencias han sido muy valiosas y queremos saber cómo se van a incorporar y cuándo las vamos a aprobar. México no podría aprobar hoy una discusión en la tarde que diga, “*con todas estas discusiones el Consejo aprueba*” porque no tenemos claridad en qué estamos aprobando”.

CHAIRPERSON

Of course, it will be a step-by-step approach, this Council. We first will hear the reactions of Management by Ms Beth Crawford, and then we will take it from there.

I give now the floor to the Observers, but I ask them to be very brief so that we can finalise our speaking this morning, because we need some time to address also the draft conclusions.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France) (Observateur)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom de l'Union Européenne et de ses 27 États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. La 43^e Conférence de la FAO, après une période de croissance zéro a accepté une augmentation du budget de la FAO, cette augmentation a cependant été consentie avec des objectifs précis qui ont été fixés par le Conseil 172, puis la Conférence. La FAO est une organisation dirigée par ses membres. Le respect, par le Secrétariat et la Direction de la FAO, des demandes et orientations de l'organe suprême de l'Organisation n'est pas une option, il est impératif.

À cet égard, la France, comme plusieurs délégations, regrette que les ajustements présentés au programme de travail et de budget ne remplissent les objectifs et demandes formulées par la Conférence. Les mesures d'efficacités et d'économies que la Conférence avait demandées à la FAO de produire n'ont pas été précisés. Ces mesures doivent être chiffrées, et les objectifs précisés année par

année. La procédure annuelle qui sera mise en place doit permettre de programmer et d'évaluer réellement les mesures d'économies et d'efficacités.

La Conférence avait rappelé et endossé des priorités thématiques, les statistiques, les activités normatives, les fonctions de surveillance et de contrôle interne. Or, ces priorités ne reçoivent pas de financement supplémentaire, elles sont pourtant au cœur des activités de la FAO. Au contraire, nous avons vu apparaître de nouvelles propositions qui n'avaient pas été annoncés ni au Conseil 172, ni à la Conférence. La création de pôles régionaux de connaissance, la création d'un Bureau des Jeunes et des Femmes. Nous demandons donc un redéploiement des ressources humaines et financières à destination des priorités identifiées par la Conférence, ainsi que la réduction des postes supplémentaires de niveau D.

En tout état de cause, la création et les modalités de ces pôles régionaux de connaissance dont nous ne connaissons ni les futures implantations, ni l'impact budgétaire, devront être soumis à l'approbation des Comités concernés et au Conseil. Des alternatives à la création du Bureau des Jeunes et des Femmes avaient été demandés par le Comité du Programme, elles sont toujours attendues. La France estime donc que le Conseil ne peut pas valider en l'état la proposition budgétaire. Nous estimons que la promotion d'une politique véritablement féministe que nous appelons de nouveau passe par d'autres moyens plus efficace et moins bureaucratique.

Des consultations approfondies sur le modèle de financement de la FAO sont souhaitables, les missions essentielles doivent rester prioritaire et être intégralement couvertes. Les conclusions des évaluations en cours, que ce soient celles du corps communs des Nations Unies ou celles du réseau d'évaluation des performances des organisations multilatérales, MOPAN, seront rendus en 2024 et devront être mise en œuvre pleinement par la FAO.

En conclusion, la France souligne à nouveau la nécessité d'une plus grande transparence et redevabilité de l'Organisation.

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

At the outset, India compliments the work of the Governing Bodies for making constructive recommendations with regard to the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25, both jointly and severally. We believe that the proposed adjustments are in line with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31 with its overarching objectives.

India joins other Members in encouraging FAO to continue to leverage its normative strengths and emphasise support to the development and implementation of evidence based normative and standard setting instruments.

We welcome the Governing Bodies have stressed the importance of Management and Members continuing dialogue on all sources of funds with full spectrum of financial resources. We appreciate and welcome the adjustments aimed at strengthening the Office of Innovation on the concept of Knowledge Hubs. While we compliment FAO for this initiative, we also request FAO to develop clear criteria for establishing these Hubs to ensure transparency of selection, and the countries in need are actually benefitted out of this initiative.

With regard to the establishment of new proposed Office of Youth and Women, we have noted the additional information provided by the management to clarify the roles and responsibilities of this office. We thank the management for their efforts. However, no alternative options has been shown by the management in sync with the recommendations of the Programme Committee. Further, we have noted that the seven new position would be created in this office at a cost of almost USD 1.4 million per biennium. Already, FAO has more than 3 000 staff, and they can very well cater to the needs of this office by drawing them from the existing pool of staff and without the need for the creation of new posts. While we continue to view that the intended purposes may have been achieved without the creation of the new offices, we encourage management to provide regular updates on the performance of the proposed Office of Youth and Women, vis-à-vis the intended objectives.

We urge FAO to undertake periodic review of the need for such offices, or, for that matter, any office or centre of FAO within the true spirit of achieving savings and efficiencies. Since the document articulates that the purpose of the adjustments is to align with larger vision of building a dynamic and

modern FAO for a better world, with an action oriented focus in line with its core competencies, we should be ready to close such bodies in case they fail to achieve the intended purposes after rigorous and transparent review.

We have noted the governing body has intensely reviewed the subject concerning efficiencies and savings and request a regular update from the management of accrued and anticipated savings and efficiencies. We reiterate our request for the management to take stock of this important matter and provide details of substantial measures for efficient savings through the established Reporting mechanisms.

With this, we endorse the Adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 for consideration and approval of the Council.

Ms Praiya SAVETJINDA (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by Pakistan. We congratulate FAO for the consistent increase in voluntary contributions and recommend that expenditure of voluntary contributions be aligned with FAO Strategic Framework. We support the strategic approach reflected in the Medium-term Plan 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25.

With regards to the FAO normative work, we support the development and implementation of normative and standard setting instruments, especially Codex and Codex high-priority areas of work for a more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood system.

We believe that decentralized offices are the key to the implementation of FAO strategies on the ground and observe that no budget increase is proposed for the field offices. We similarly observe that no budget increase is proposed for the Office of Statistics and the *four betters*, although statistics are a global public good, and the *four betters* are at the heart of FAO's Strategic Framework.

We take note of the updated Results Framework as reflected in Annex 1 of the document, *CL 174/3*.

Mr Luis COELHO-SILVA (Portugal) (Observer)

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Firstly, we would like to stress the importance we attach to the programme and budget cycle that is presented in the *Resolution 10/2009* included in the Basic Texts of the Organization.

It is clear from the rules that the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) is a duty of the FAO's Secretariat, and the Director-General is the ultimate responsible for the PWB.

In this regard, we take the opportunity to express our gratitude to the FAO's Secretariat, for their work preparing, presenting, and reporting on the PWB. One word acknowledging the work done by Ms Beth Crawford and its team in those tasks all over the years, but also to the whole FAO's staff.

We also would like to thank the Director-General for putting forward its vision to FAO, taking full responsibility of the Strategic Framework and the PWB, thus fulfilling its responsibilities in accordance with the Basic Texts of the Organization.

We are fully convinced that this way of working leads to clearness and accountability. It is for the Director-General to present the PWB proposal and it is for the Governing Bodies to participate in the process of preparation, adjustment, and evaluation of that proposal. We attach importance to maintain clarity in this regard.

Secondly, we would like to highlight the role of FAO as a provider of statistical data, and especially the critical importance of the long statistical series, for instance the series of data on singular agricultural products and commodities. In this regard, we will be very grateful to know, from the FAO Secretariat, how long the series data will be maintained, assuring the quality of data, and the compliance with the data collect in past decades.

Mr Ramadan Mohammed ABDALLAH GOC (South Sudan) (Observer)

South Sudan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of Congo on behalf of the Africa Group on the Adjustment of the Programme of Work and Budget of 2024-2025.

We approve the adjustment of the programme presented for consideration by the Programme and Finance Committees to the Council. We also welcome the formation of the Office of Youth and Women, because we do believe that youth and women have a greater role to play. South Sudan advocates for youth and women to be given a space in the society, and not only in FAO organisational structure, but also in other international fora. We do believe also that the creation of the new office will help building capacity of youth and women.

South Sudan also supports the role of that FAO is playing to support the partnership with the private sector, and also on the establishment of the Global Food and Agriculture Network and museum because we do believe that it will help different countries in showcasing and celebration of different traditional heritages of food and agriculture.

On general food security in our country, the situation in South Sudan remains relatively stable, but some parts of our country actually are facing heavy rains and the heavy rains led to flooding, and that flooding also in different parts of the country led to shortages in terms of food.

Also, our country is affected by the ongoing crisis in the neighbouring Sudan because we are facing influx of refugees and returnees, that is our own people who were there in Sudan. Now, we have received over 400 000 from the refugees and 447 000 returnees from Sudan, and we are still receiving more because of deteriorating situation in Sudan. That is why we call upon all the humanitarian organizations, being FAO or World Food Programme and the rest, to come, actually to give more support to these refugees through South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia and Egypt.

To conclude, let me say that the creation of more offices in FAO should not be on the expense of the programme of the FAO, because we do believe that let the programme and the service remain the same.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

I would like to welcome all delegations in the room and also those taking part online. In the context of this Agenda point, the adjustment to *the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025*, we would like to make the following comments.

The Russian Federation supports the work of the Secretariat to fulfil decisions of the 43rd Session of the Conference to find additional sources of resources and savings with the aim of improving the Organization's effectiveness for 2024-2025. We think we need to continue this work, including taking into account the recommendations from the Finance Committee (FC). The Session took place in November this year and the recommendations referred to providing additional Reports on measures that have been taken on savings and the expected results of those savings.

We would particularly like to note the situation with the financial difficulties the Organization faces. We think there is an imbalance between the assessed and voluntary contributions, and we think this is a crucial issue for the work of the Organization, which needs a predictable budget. And a quarter of that budget comes from assessed contributions and three quarters from voluntary contributions.

This might have a negative effect on the Organization's work. Relying excessively on voluntary contributions causes problems for the Organization, and it means that the Organization is at the whims of certain interests.

We would like to note the recommendations from the Finance Committee on a comprehensive analysis of the sources of additional budgetary financing for the Organization, with the aim of guaranteeing stability and continuity in the Organization's activities. We think it is particularly important in this context to involve the views of all states that contribute to the budget of the Organization in the process.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we have concluded our first round of interventions on the proposed adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). But before we break, because we have a special event, I would like to give the floor to the Vice-President of Bolivia to announce the special event.

Su Excelencia David CHOQUEHUANCA CESPEDES (Bolivia, Estado Plurinacional de) (Observador)

Hoy vivimos las consecuencias de la aplicación de un modelo de desarrollo occidental y capitalista y que tenemos pobreza, desigualdades, guerra, crisis energética, crisis financiera, crisis climática, crisis hídrica, crisis sanitaria, crisis de valores.

Ya nos había advertido Einstein de que la muerte de esta civilización empieza con la desaparición de las abejas. Hay incertidumbre en el planeta, desorden mundial, vivimos el caos. Nuestra madre tierra está herida de muerte. Todo está en riesgo, nuestros ríos están en riesgo, nuestras abejas están en riesgo, el futuro de las generaciones entrantes está en riesgo, la vida misma está en riesgo. Cada día en el mundo hay más hambre. Cada día en el mundo hay más malnutrición. Millones de seres humanos mueren por enfermedades cardiovasculares por culpa de la alimentación, o la comida transgénica, comida chatarra, comida sintética. No es igual comer que alimentarse. Hoy comemos, pero ya no nos alimentamos.

El propio Informe de la FAO estima que en 2023 habrá 828 millones de personas que van a padecer de hambre, lo que representa un aumento de 150 millones desde 2020. Esto nos tiene que llamar la atención a todos, a nuestros pueblos, a nuestras organizaciones, a la sociedad civil, a las autoridades, a todos. No podemos mirar indolentes lo que está pasando en nuestras narices. Los líderes del mundo deberían de reunirse en una asamblea de la tierra para salvar a nuestra madre tierra y en esta asamblea, así como en uno de los mensajes ha manifestado el Secretario-General de la Naciones Unidas, estos problemas ocasionados por este modelo de desarrollo occidental y capitalista deberían ser abordados, ya no desde un punto de vista antropocéntrico. El Antropoceno nos ha hecho mucho daño.

El tiempo ha llegado para volver al camino de la verdad, de la complementariedad, del equilibrio y de la armonía. El tiempo ha llegado para reparar todo el daño ocasionado a la vida, a nuestra madre tierra. El tiempo ha llegado para volver a nuestras raíces, a la cultura de la vida. Solo reconociendo nuestras raíces la humanidad será libre. Negándose a sí misma seguiremos siendo sometidos y dominados.

Hermanos, a tiempo de augurar éxitos en esta reunión, voy a terminar mi intervención invitándolos a asistir al lanzamiento del Año Internacional De Los Camélidos 2024 posteriormente.

Mr Faisal AL SUBAIE (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

Saudi Arabia would like to thank the Council for the excellent preparation for this 174th Session. We wish the Council every success.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia (KSA), I would like to mention a very important livestock sector which is camelids. I thank Bolivia for giving us the opportunity to co-chair this event. This is a precedent as one International Year is shared by two regions trying to raise awareness on this sector. We are aware that partnerships among regions will ensure the success of this International Year.

Camelids are an important resource. They have contributed to the lives of peoples, especially when it comes to the trade of silk and spices between Yemen and Damascus. Camelids is a source of income, and it can resolve famine in many countries.

Regional and International Organisations are interested in camelids. Many research centres are working on showing the benefits of camelids in achieving food security, eliminating hunger and poverty and combating climate change. This will contribute to the elimination of food insecurity as camelids can be a solution for dry countries. We need to raise awareness on this and disseminate knowledge among all countries to make sure that the sector will become a pillar of our future. The Ministry for Agriculture in KSA is very interested in camelids, and it is trying to conserve these species by disseminating their products based on technology and science.

The aim of this International Year for Camelids is to raise awareness on the role of camelids among societies, and to show the importance at nutrition and economic levels. We need to raise awareness on this resource when it comes to sustainable environment. Camelids have capacities to be a choice for

future advantages, as they can provide nutritional values from milk, meat, and they can help us combat the famine and the various diseases around the globe.

It could be a source for medicine and food. Lately, the International Community is focused on camelids, particularly by many countries and entities, and this shows the cultural role and economic aspects of camelids.

In the end, I would like to confirm that this Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is trying to preserve this sector, to develop it so that camelids will become a culture and an authentic civilization. We hope that we will be able to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through events like the event of the international year for camelids.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we have concluded our morning session. I really would like to thank you all for your hard work. It is an intense morning. We went a little bit of overtime, and I would like to thank the interpreters for giving this overtime. Thank you so much.

To give you also the necessary time to recover, all of you, we will start this Session at 14:15 hours. Have a very good lunch.

We continue our Item, Adjustments to the *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025*. I wish you a very good lunch and I will see you back in this room at 14:15 hours. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:36 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 36

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.36

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session Cent soixante-quatorzième session 174.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2023 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
SECOND PLENARY SESSION DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA
4 December 2023

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:24 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 24
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.24
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 3. Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 (continued)**Point 3. Programme de travail et budget 2024-2025: ajustements (suite)****Tema 3. Ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2024-25 (continuación)
(CL 174/3; CL 174/3 Corr.1; CL 174/3 Annexes 1-7)****CHAIRPERSON**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, I hope that you are re-energized with a good lunch. I hope that we have a very fruitful afternoon on the issue of the Adjustments to Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

What we will do first, I will give you the floor to the Management, especially Ms Beth Crawford, Ms Beth Bechdol and Mr Máximo Torero on some of the questions you asked answers for. Then, we go through the draft conclusions and I try to find a compromise for things that were tabled and some of the sensitive issues and try to find a way forward in the draft conclusions.

May I give, firstly, the floor to Beth Crawford for starting the answers on the many questions that were asked to you.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Assistant Director-General/Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget)

Thank you so much for the interesting discussion this morning on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget. I will start and then will be supported by others, in particular the Chief Economist and the Director of the Human Resources Division to answer some of the questions on the Office of Youth and Women, but I will try to touch on all of the very good points that have been raised this morning.

So, firstly, the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), as you know, this is now the final document in the planning for the next biennium, which begins of course in January 2024. This document should be seen together with the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-25, the main Medium-Term Plan (MTP), PWB document. Because, of course, in that document the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-25, which has the approved budget by Conference, there was much more detail in many areas.

Many of the distinguished delegates have mentioned the importance of the 5.6 percent increase in the assessed contribution for 2024-25. We indeed are very appreciative of that increase, which is the first change in the budget in 12 years. Now, that increase, of course, is not what I would call a real increase, like for additional programmatic areas, but it does fully cover all of the cost increases for 2024-25.

So, this means that that USD 56.4 million that was approved with the cost increases that that amount was distributed across the entire programme structure in order to cover the cost increases for all locations, all posts, all areas of work. And further information on that, that is presented in Web Annex 11 of the main Programme of Work and Budget but shows how those cost increases are distributed.

Everything that is in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget is after that cost increase distribution with the 5.6 percent increase that we have gained in our assessed contributions this time around.

I also just wanted to give an example of how we try to follow the guidance over multiple biennium because sometimes I think with all the information that is presented that important things maybe are not highlighted as much as they could be. So, for example, since 2020 the budget of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has been increased by USD 3.5 million. This is the largest increase in any one particular area.

So already in 2021 in the Adjustments to that PWB additional non-staff resources were added to strengthen the investigation function. In the PWB 2022-23 an additional USD 1.1 million was added for two new investigation posts. And then in this PWB, 2024-25, USD 2 million has been added in addition to the cost increases that everybody has received to the Office of Inspector General, and that now is for both investigations and audit functions.

So, this is how we are working very closely, for example, with the Office of the Inspector General to make sure that the needs there are met within the overall resources that we have at our disposal and taking the importance of these types of oversight functions that the Office of the Inspector General undertakes.

Of course, in this PWB, 2024-25, resources have also been provided for the Office of Evaluation, additional resources, and additional USD 8.4 million to strengthen support services, so that includes HR, finance, IT, procurement.

So, this is just to stress that much of the guidance of the Members over the years has been included in this next Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-25. We fully agree with and understand and support all of the comments about the standard setting and normative work. In that regard in the Adjustments to the PWB 2020-2021 USD 1 million each in addition was provided to International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and to CODEX Alimentarius (CODEX), that has been maintained throughout all of these subsequent budgets, including 2024-25 and cost increases have also been added to those budgets.

Moving on then these were examples that I just wanted to give of ways that we are incorporating the priorities to the best extent possible. On CODEX the other thing I was going to mention was what is presented in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget is not additional resources but it is a way of reorganising ourselves within the Organization to make sure that we both provide all the support needed to CODEX Secretariat but also that we benefit from the work, so that we have a two way stream of work between the Organization and the CODEX Secretariat, and that is what is described in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget. Of course, with CODEX maintaining fully its independence the way it has been set up.

Now, moving on to savings and efficiencies, indeed, thank you, many of you have commented on the importance of that, again, this is an area that we fully agree with and agree that we have not been presenting as much on that topic as we could have in just the recent years and we will be making a change to that. So, the document now indeed is a first step towards responding to your guidance and questions on savings and efficiencies.

So here in the Adjustments to the PWB we have outlined definitions and principles which are cost savings, time savings and effectiveness improvements. So it is a broad way that we will be looking at efficiencies and we have then given an overview in this document of the efficiencies that have been realised and the efficiencies that are planned. And we confirm that we will continue to Report on the planned initiatives in a comprehensive manner.

The next first Reporting that you will be seeing would be in the Programme Implementation Report 2022-23, which will be going to your next Session next year. But we will also be taking that forward-looking approach that you have asked about and we will be including reporting on that in our upcoming planning and reporting cycle.

Many of you also mentioned the importance of the optimal balance between the assessed contributions and voluntary contributions. Similar to what I just said about savings and efficiencies, we will be beginning to report more fully on that and discuss with you more fully how we see that in the future. We have started that discussion in this Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget, in particular there in paragraphs 48 through 53, and we thank you for some of the feedback that we have been getting on that section.

Then, moving to some of the more specific proposals in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget, we thank you for the support that many of you have expressed to the strengthening of the Office of Innovation, the Office of Small Island Developing States (SIDs), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and the Ethics Office.

There were also quite a few comments on the streamlining of statistical functions, and I know that the Chief Economist will say a little bit more about this, but I just wanted to touch on this to explain from a budgetary perspective how we see this.

So, what has been presented in this document is a streamlining of the function, but we fully agree and endorse all of the comments that have stressed the importance of statistics and data. We believe that

these changes will help us to perform stronger in this area. As you know what happened, what we are proposing here is the abolition of the Office of the Chief Statistician, together with that abolition of that office the post of the Chief Statistician, which was a D2 post, has been abolished along with a few other posts which we believe are not needed as posts in the combined structure.

However, 80 percent of the resources of all of these posts, so that includes the D2 post, has been added to the budget of the Statistics division. This means that while you are correct that there is a decrease in posts there is an increase in non-post resources for the Statistics division (ESS). We believe that this adds agility, flexibility for the Office to perform further in this important area.

We have taken your feedback though very carefully and we will be looking at this carefully during the biennium to make sure that, indeed, this change results in an improvement and that it is not hindering the work of the Statistics. If any further adjustments in future would need to be made we would report back to you on that.

Then I think the last point that I would like to make then is on the Office of Youth and Women before I hand it over to my colleague. So, thank you to many of you for the interventions on the Office of Youth and Women and I think all of you stressed the importance and of youth and in women in our work and the way we do our work at the country level, and also how we organise ourselves here at the headquarters level.

One thing I wanted to remind again is the role of an office. The offices of the Organization have a cross-cutting function within the Organization, so this is similar to an office like the Office of SIDs, LDCs, and LLDCs, where I think that we have seen that that establishment of an office like that has really helped to bring focus to that very important area of work. So, it does not take over the work of the technical and the professional units within the Organization but it adds a cross-cutting, mainstreaming function to that work. Another example of an office is the Office of Climate Change and Biodiversity, which I believe you also have seen how that has really highlighted and strengthened FAO's visibility in this important area.

So the Information Note, thank you also, many of you mentioned that, we tried to provide additional information in that Information Note but we heard many interventions also around the ways of how would this office interact with other units of the Organization.

I would like to hand it over to the Chief Economist who will speak some about both Statistics and the Office of Youth and Women, and also the Director of HR who can speak about the relationship to the Office of Youth and Women and HR work.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Well let me start first with the Office of Statistics. As we mentioned during the Programme Committee and the Joint Committee, it follows the recommendations of the latest evaluation, obviously this is at FAO. What we are doing of the merge of the Office of the Chief Statistician with the Office of Statistics is something similar that happens in International Labour Organization (ILO), in the World Bank, in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in Eurostat where there is one joint post called Chief Statistician. So, in that sense the idea is to increase complementarities and efficiency on how the Office operates.

None of the posts that have been abolished in this new Office of the Chief Statistician together with the Statistical Office affects at all the data collection processes that we have in place. All the data collection processes and the functions, all the statistical office remain the same.

Our major design of the abolishing of the Chief Statistician Office to merge with the Office of Statistics was to assure that the design incorporates a clear mechanism that could also avoid any potential conflict of interest between the role of the Director of Statistics, now also the Chief Statistician, and assessing the quality of all the statistical activities that we do across FAO.

So, the design incorporates two elements which are central, one, in the case of technology methodologies those are merged with the Office of Statistics because that is where we gain efficiencies and complementarities. And in the case of governance and the statistical governance and dissemination and quality assessments and control those remain as another function that will be under

the Chief Statistician but will also report to the Data Coordination Group. In that way we assure independence and we assure that we continue to have the quality assessment and the quality control of all the data being produced in the different statistical units at FAO.

In terms of the Office of Youth and Women, the first thing that was mentioned by Beth it is a cross-cutting function, it tries to institutionalise the role of the Youth and Women Committees, both internal and external. It will not perform any technical work, all the technical work and the technical committees related to youth and women are handled by the Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division (ESP) Division. It will enhance youth participation and engagement and also help on learning.

If we go specifically to the roles that the technical division has in addition to the technical work, like the flagship that was produced on women in the agrifood system and the new publication that is going to come on youth. In addition they also have specific roles in technical committees. This division is a focal point for the Inter-agency Network of Youth Development headed by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). It is also the focal point for the annual reporting of the youth score cards at the UN level.

And it holds specificity on youth with a respective focal point and coordinator managing implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the rural youth action plan and its technical capacity will continue in that role. So all the technical committees and all the technical work will continue to be done by the Division, as it was explained in the difference between office and divisions, the divisions are the ones doing the technical work.

Now if we look at the two roles I will only talk about the external role of the youth and women engagement under this office and the Director of HR will talk about the internal role. In terms of the external role today we have three major activities that will be part of this office, the youth action, the innovation and the location and culture.

Youth action is providing a dedicated space for youth to discuss agrifood systems, policy issues, presenting a united voice through our Youth Action Assembly and policy compendia and to identify additional actionable solutions, locally and globally. In terms of innovation, it will empower youth to find groundbreaking solutions and scientific approaches through a start-up and innovation competitions, a hackathon and master classes that the previous Youth Committee have been also doing as well as the Women's Committee.

And in terms of education, it will use knowledge as a key driver for systemic change with the students and educators through activities such as teacher labs, Youth and UN Global Alliance, UN World Food Day and many other activities. And in terms of culture, it will continue engaging and inspiring youth around the agrifood system challenges through the power of art, including film festivals, musical concerts and culinary activities, which were basically the roles that the Youth Committee has already in place.

Finally, a link to CODEX and its independence, as it was mentioned by Ms Beth Crawford, CODEX will keep absolute independence and this is assured. The only role that the Food Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF) Division will have, and the Food Safety Unit which is inside the ESF Division, is to provide evidence and knowledge which CODEX can use in their process of decision-making.

For example, in the last CODEX meeting there was an interest in trying to use a systems approach and the Division of ESF is working on documents to develop conceptual papers and evidence on how systems should be developed. So, basically, it will provide inputs, both on the food safety and on the systems work that that division is doing and CODEX has the freedom to use it or not but keeping absolute independence in the actions that they do.

Ms Greet DE LEEUW (Director, Human Resources Division)

The way the Office and Women and Youth would work together with Human Resources. The HR would continue to be spearheading initiatives to do with HR policies and rules, such as parental leave, measures and recruitment, the policy on sexual harassment or, for example, the insurance provisions that we introduced a while back for our affiliate workforce who have now coverage during absence for maternity.

The HR also already have in place a number of leadership programmes and training. But this Office would amplify the awareness around the HR policies and initiatives through internal communication and campaigns, really influencing organizational culture and setting the tone at the top. The Office could, for example, step up efforts in learning to more targeted audiences, for example, hold sessions around unconscious bias or the facilitation of senior leadership dialogues on how to create an empowering work environment for women and youth.

The Youth and Women's Committees are already leading on the mentoring programme, matching more experienced staff with young and female employees but we could do much more in this area, including at a time of the onboarding.

In addition, as this Office will engage with relevant global initiatives on youth and women in agri-food systems they would be very well-placed to enhance our efforts in attracting qualified women and youth for FAO through career fairs, for example, of course in coordination with HR around substance of the processes and entitlements.

They could be active on social media, develop partnerships with academia and civil society or, for example, develop a referral programme including for those from none- and under-represented Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much for these answers on sometimes very detailed questions. If there are no other questions or remarks, I would like to continue now with the draft conclusions.

I explained to you that in the draft conclusions I tried to find a solution for the issue of the Office of Youth and Women. Although there looked to be opposite sides, I think a solution can be found but what we have to decide now is the establishment of the Office because we have to approve it for the organizational structure as well as dedicated funding.

Some of the more detailed elements of the Office could be discussed in more detail, for example, when we are going to implement it at our next Council, so that we at least can start to work with the budget. We can start with the Office and there was some support for the establishment of the Office, but we can start then when it comes to the detail we can see much more work in detail to be discussed, also for guidance, in our next Session.

With that explanation, I will present my draft conclusions and I will promise you this is a little bit more than one page but, there are many issues. But all the other conclusions, at least those which I am going to prepare, will be around half a page, to be brief. But these are several issues also on the Office of Youth and Women which need to be included in these draft conclusions so I do apologize a little bit for the length but, at the same time, it is necessary for the guidance given by the Council.

So I will put them as usual practice on the screen and I thank already the interpreters for the hard work you are doing after an intense morning. We count on you also for the rest of the week, but I know, as I said this morning, we can always count on you.

9. The Council endorsed the Reports of the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and the Joint Meeting with respect to the *Adjustments the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025*.

10. The Council:

- (a) noted the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and highlighted the guidance and decisions of the Conference on the Medium-Term Plan (Reviewed) 2022-25 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025;
- (b) stressed the importance of advancing science- and evidence-based normative work and the need to maintain funding for CODEX Alimentarius and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), data and statistics and public goods, including streamlining of the statistical functions;
- (c) noted the additional information received on the Office of Youth and Women (OYW) and provided that its staffing would have no negative impact on the capacity of normative work, statistics and climate, endorsed the establishment of the Office of

Youth and Women, emphasizing the need to continue strengthening, mainstreaming and advocating for youth, gender equality and women's empowerment, both internally within the Organization and across FAO's mandate;

- (d) highlighted the guidance given by the 43rd Session of the Conference on Priority Areas as referred to in subparagraph (c), and has called that the establishment of the Office for Women and Youth should not go at the expense of, staffing for these priority areas, should avoid overlap and underscored its cross-cutting nature;
- (e) looked forward to an update on the implementation of the Office to Council at its next Session, for guidance on its implementation;
- (f) endorsed the proposed transfers of the Private Sector Partnerships function from the Resource, Mobilization and Private Sector Project Divisions (PSR) to the Partnership and UN Collaboration Division (PSU) and of the Global Farmers Field School (FFS) Platform team for the Plant Protection and Protection Division (NSP) to the Office of Innovation (OIN);
- (g) appreciated the information provided on savings and efficiency measures and recommended that Management develop a robust business plan and roadmap detailing planned initiatives and expected efficiencies, gains and savings, together with clear measurement indicators, and requested regular annual reporting on efficiencies and savings both accrued and anticipated;
- (h) supported the update results framework 2022-2025 in (Annex 1);
- (i) endorsed a revised budget post establishment, (Section III.B and Annex 6), and a revised Organizational Chart (Annex 7);
- (j) noted the estimates for actual budgetary sources, (Table 2), and encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate the achievement of FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and implementation of the integrated PWB;
- (k) underscored the importance of strengthening and expanding partnerships and strategic alliances, recognized the importance and instrumental role of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and reiterated the importance of strengthening partnership arrangements to achieve the Programme Priority Areas (PPAs);
- (l) stressed the importance of Management and Members continuing dialogue on all sources of funds with full spectrum of financial resources and recommended Management to develop a comprehensive approach for the funding of the Organization and provide regular updates to Members, including through the Programme Implementation Report (PIR);
- (m) looked forward to Reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget for 2024-2025 in line with the established Reporting process.

11. The Council approved the revised resolution of the next appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in Table 1 of document *CL 173/3 Corr.1*.

As I said, this will be the only lengthy conclusions of this Council hopefully.

I go to paragraph 9. Can we agree to paragraph 9? I do not see any objections, thank you.

We go to paragraph 10 (a).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is the final stage of the planning process for this biennium and then we need to be very alert in what we are deciding.

So here in subparagraph (a), may I suggest that "*noted the adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget*" and so on and at the end add something relating to the fact that we recognize that the guidance of the Conference was followed in this chapter. I think it makes sense for the rest.

CHAIRPERSON

I was hoping that you would give already the concrete language but... Is this in line with what you are proposing?

Can we agree to this additional text?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think in the morning we heard lots of interventions and several of them were not entirely in agreement with that addition and that is where the discussions through Programme, Finance and Joint meeting asked additional questions, because there was a sense that perhaps the guidance of Conference was not entirely followed. So, I do not think we would be comfortable with that addition, and we might actually have another paragraph to suggest between (a) and (b) for consideration of the Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we not say “*was taken into account*”? Was that not anyhow what we did?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

“*Was considered*”, perhaps. “*Taking into account that the guidance of the Conference was considered*”.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

With my neighbour, Canada, we have a different view on this. Because we read the document. We were in charge of preparing the statement for Africa, so you should make sure that we read the total document. We continue to believe that the guidance of the Conference was followed.

Now, interpreting that the way it was followed is different, if it was the amount, the net appropriation. Does it differ from what is here? No. That was the guidance of Conference. Do we preserve the normative, Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) work of FAO? Yes, we preserve. The guidance of the Conference was followed.

So we have a different understanding of how we intend to work on that but I would prefer that we not even “*take into account the guidance that...*” We can go along with “*taking into account the guidance of the Conference*” and we stop there.

CHAIRPERSON

Would it be agreeable to Canada? I see nodding. India. I think we have an agreement so I hope you will not spoil the agreement.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I was just trying to suggest that in the second line, “*staff highlighted, taking into consideration the guidance and decision of the Conference on medium-term plan*” and the third line is as it stands and the bracketed portion gets deleted. In place of “*highlighted, taking into consideration the guidance and decisions*” and we delete that last portion, which is in the bracket. And “*highlighted*” can be there after that “*taking into consideration.*” Yes, I think that is enough, I think. But I am flexible for any of your guidance. I thought this is a better language.

CHAIRPERSON

You know that mostly I will be the most flexible person in this room as long as we get consensus. We could say “*highlighted*” and “*taking into consideration.*” At least we have both because it was also highlighted, we did not only take into consideration. Would that be a way out, that we have it a little bit shorter and then we remove the last part?

I do not see any objections.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

It is not an objection. I just want to make clear that here we would have preferred the words of “*the guidance of the Conference was followed.*” That is our preference. Now, we are trying to be flexible by accepting “*taking into consideration*” but what we want to see here is that the guidance of the Conference... Because this is what we think. It was done. So, if you want to water it down, we will not block that, but I just wanted to make sure that everybody understands that that is where we want to go.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

With India’s proposal I am a little bit confused about whether it is the Council that was taking into consideration the guidance of Conference and the Medium-Term Plan or, as it was put before, that the Adjustments to the Programme of Work were taken into consideration. I think this formulation confuses things. We could live with the previous formulation developed by Canada and in consultation with Cameroon with the addition of “*taking into account the guidance of the Conference*” and removing the word “*that.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Then I prefer also to go back to the previous text because that is indeed a little bit more clear. So we will delete in the second sentence “*and taking into consideration*” and, of course, it is clear for everybody what the purpose of the African Group was in this respect.

With that I think we have a consensus on this subparagraph.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I understand that Canada has an additional subparagraph after (a).

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

For consideration, to insert a subparagraph here and I will read at dictation speed. “*recalled that Council and its Programme and Finance Committees has an essential role in steering the Organization, in providing guidance and oversight to management as it allocates resources, and in helping to ensure decisions of the Conference are implemented.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is a statement of fact, it is okay. But I prefer that we leave “*Council*” on that because Finance Committee (FC) and Programme Committee (PC) are Advisory Committees to the Council. So, whilst we have the Council there is no need to call the other two Committees.

CHAIRPERSON

The proposal is to delete “*Programme and Finance Committees*”. I see nodding from Canada, but I see that India has asked for the floor.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I think this is already a fact, so I think there may not be a requirement of at all this paragraph in here. I think it can be deleted if Members agree.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I do not think this subparagraph is needed because everybody knows the role of the Council. I mean, the Council has been in existence almost as long as the Organization, so Members know what the role of the Council is. Do we have to recall what that role is every time?

Mr Defu GUANG (China)

We echo what India and Pakistan said. We do not think it is necessary to reiterate the importance of the Council. It is a fact. Yes, we agree to delete this.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We also agree with India, China and Pakistan. Perhaps if everybody wants to make sure that this is the role, maybe the Legal Counsel can give us an answer, if this is really the role. And if it is written there, then we do not need it.

M. Henri OKEMBA (Congo)

Il y a une porte qui s'est ouverte, nous allons nous engouffrer. Nous ne pensons pas que ce soit nécessaire de rappeler le rôle du Conseil. Je me joins à la déclaration de l'Inde, la Chine sur cette question.

CHAIRPERSON

Given there are several requests for deleting this paragraph, I look to Canada if there is flexibility.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We understand the sentiment in the room, we do think that sometimes it bears repeating what the role of the Council and its Committees has. And that is not because we as Members necessarily forget that but sometimes it is worth bringing that to the top of our mind in this hall. So, recognizing that many Members suggest its deletion, we can go along with that, but we do note for the record that we believe that this is an important point for all of us to recall.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Canada, for your flexibility and your remarks about the role of Council as well as the Committees are duly noted.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b)?

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just one small change on this. We would request the deletion of "*the need to maintain*" so it just says stressed the importance essentially of funding. So, just "*and funding*" deleting "*the need to maintain*" leaving the word "*and*."

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

I was about to propose something between maintain and funding but I think we can go along with what has been proposed by the United States. And then we have a question on "*global public goods*" because I understand that FAO understands data and statistics as global public goods so I do not see why we should need to repeat that, unless we are referring to FAO flagship publications.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us not go into that discussion now. But perhaps I have the same question before we started because I was thinking about a comma, et cetera, but perhaps it is better to delete "*and global public goods*" because that is what related to data and statistics and everybody knows that.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

I was wondering whether we could reflect in this paragraph the fact that some Members refer to Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and maybe add at the end of the sentence "*while noting the importance of protecting and funding intergovernmental arrangements such as the Committee on World Food Security*."

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

If it is possible also to include here "*the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme*", if we could add it somewhere, maybe before "*data and statistics*" or after it or whatever order, just to mention that we also stress the importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP).

CHAIRPERSON

No, I would not prefer to put it at the end because the proposal was to put it, for example, even before or after "*statistics*".

Before I give the floor, let us not make this subparagraph a Christmas tree of all issues which are in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) and the Adjustments. Because then we will have conclusions of two pages.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am just speaking after the Philippines because I had a different way of adding the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in a different paragraph after that. If you do not mind, Mr Chair, I will try to read what we think is another subparagraph, "*Further stressed the importance of preserving and adequately funding the technical work of FAO including the TCP.*"

CHAIRPERSON

With, hopefully, the support of Philippines, we remove the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in subparagraph (b) because it is reflected now in subparagraph (c).

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Two suggestions. Firstly, when we refer to funding for CODEX Alimentarius and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), I think we should have a qualitative element there. So my suggestion is "*and adequate funding for CODEX Alimentarius,*" inserting the word "*adequate.*"

The second suggestion is to remove the words "*including streamlining of the statistical functions.*" I think this is a paragraph where we are really talking about what is important to Members and what we are looking to retain so my suggestion is to remove those words that are in brackets now.

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

I think I also wanted to echo the views of my colleague from Australia, that there is a need to stress on the funding for CODEX Alimentarius. That was the view of the Members in the Governing Body, so I think that "*adequate*" is an appropriate word to be included there.

And if my colleague from Australia is flexible, I suggest that including "*streamlining of the statistical functions*" can be retained because that is the most important. We think that the statistical functions needs to be streamlined, data should be authentic.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

I was also going to suggest the same thing as what our colleagues from Australia had the word "*adequate.*"

But I also have one more addition. Perhaps after "*data and statistics,*" instead of deleting "*the global public goods*" we can use "*data and statistics to serve the public good.*" This is taken from the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Data.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Yes, of course, we prefer the option put forward by Cameroon on reflecting the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) in a different subparagraph. And concerning (b), as it is right now we can accompany as well.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

With regards to the edits on funding, perhaps given there is a qualitative question perhaps of what adequate is perhaps "*and sustained funding for CODEX.*" I think we can go with the suggestion from Indonesia, "*to serve the public good,*" and I think with regard to the consideration of deleting or not "*including streamlining of statistical functions,*" I think there are two questions there, whether it is streamlining an efficient collection of data and statistics versus the streamlining of the structure underpinning it.

So we can go in the understanding that it is around the structural question, I think going with the deletion, that is fine, but I think there may be a lack of clarity on exactly what that is driving at.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I am sorry to disagree with my colleagues on this but by adding “adequate” or “sustained” back in, you are just putting the need to maintain back into it. Our whole point was taking that out.

Because the point that many of us, and the majority of people in this room, the overwhelming majority, made is that it should be increased. I do not think we can have the word “increased” in there, so by just putting “stressed the importance of funding for CODEX Alimentarius” is in my mind better than “adequate” which is undefined, or “sustained” which means keeping it where it is.

So, we cannot agree with either one of those. We would prefer to keep it as nothing or the word “increased” if somebody feels the need to have some sort of qualifier on there.

I worry a little bit about the words “to serve the public good” because they are not really defined but I can live either way with it. I just worry that people can define that in lots of different ways and many of us might in the future.

And then, actually, now that there is this new subparagraph (c), the “Committee on World Food Security” addition that Brazil put in is good but it seems out of place in this paragraph and I think would work better at the end of the new subparagraph (c) “, and noted the importance of protecting and funding...” you know, putting that on the end of that paragraph, which seems like a better place to put it than at the end of this paragraph, which talks about things that are not related to that.

So with those three, “adequate” and “sustained” I do not think that I can agree to.

M. Henri OKEMBA (Congo)

Avant la proposition des États-Unis, nous voulions proposer, à la suite de “TCP”, qu'on puisse ajouter “les champs-écoles des producteurs”. Maintenant qu'il y a la proposition des États-Unis, il faut regarder.

CHAIRPERSON

If I can remind you that later on in the text we have the Farm Field Schools (FFS) mentioned.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

En primer lugar, estamos de acuerdo con el término. Como lo dijimos en nuestra declaración, hay una necesidad de aumentar los recursos para las actividades normativas, así que nosotros nos sentimos más cómodos con el término “aumentar”. En segundo lugar, estamos de acuerdo con la propuesta de Camerún porque entendíamos, en nuestra declaración también, que la actividad de la cooperación técnica vendría a reforzar la actividad normativa. Apoyamos la idea de que se use el término “aumentar” y compartimos la propuesta de Camerún.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Queríamos apoyar la propuesta de redacción para el subpárrafo (b) que ha formulado Estados Unidos, así como también incluir en un subpárrafo independiente, además del TCP al CFS. Es decir, apoyamos ambas propuestas de Estados Unidos.

Y también en la segunda línea del subpárrafo (b), después de la palabra “funding” y antes de “for CODEX”, incluir “for normative work, including CODEX”.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Just a very quick comment, after the word “statistics” there is no comma.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Can we address the proposal of Congo first? I do not see it is on the screen here. There is mentioned “farmers field” after “TCP” and now if we can add that... Now, the other thing is we have been told many times here that the Committee on World Food Security is not per se a Committee of FAO. So, I am wondering if it should not be treated differently in this context. Not that it has nothing to do here but it should be treated differently from what is the work of FAO itself.

So if we suggest that being put in a different subparagraph, probably a new subparagraph (d), and I would be reluctant because they have outlined CFS, but there are other Bodies that need to be taken into consideration, the Treaty, for example, and the Commission on Genetic Resources.

These are things that we need to... Probably that are part of the work of FAO. So, my suggestion, if I may, is that we separate those inter-governmental arrangements on a different para.

And then, when we say “*such as the Committee on World Food Security*” I would have... I do not know how to treat the other one, probably you may help me here, other bodies like the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Because if we are financing that Treaty or that.

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

I will just support the Spanish language or normative work.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Concerning the proposal from the European Union, including “*for normative work*”, it would be repetitive because we started the phrase saying, “*We stress the importance of the advance in science and evidence based normative work – funding for normative work.*” So I believe that perhaps we can say “*science and evidence based normative and standard setting work*” and then just have “*and funding for colleagues, humanitarians and IPPC.*” Then we are flexible whether colleagues want to retain, increase, adequate or sustain. But the second inclusion of “*normative work*”. It does not look good.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I agree with the comments which Cameroon made because I do not see why we are singling out the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and this comment that it is not a Committee of FAO is quite right; it used to be a Committee of FAO and then there was some reform and the Basic Texts was changed, and now I believe it is a Committee in FAO. So why are we just singling the CFS when there are other inter-governmental...? Is it necessary?

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree in the first and second lines including “*and standard setting work.*” Is that agreeable? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to the most far stretching proposal. Can we go along with “*increased*”?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

We support “*increased*”. We are agreeable to delete “*adequate and sustained.*” And there is no need for “*normative work*” again.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us keep it to the end. Can we go with “*increased*”? I see no objections.

So can we delete the word then for “*normative work?*” Because it has now been captured already. I do not see any objections.

And then of course “*including*” should stay there as well.

Then we go to “*to serve the public good.*” Can we maintain that in the text?

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I would like to go back to the word “*increased*”. I prefer the wording which the United States of America (US) had suggested. Leaving it at funding. By saying “*increased funding*” you are predetermining the next budget preparation. So the wording which the US suggested would be more appropriate, it gives flexibility for the preparation of the programme and budget. Here we seem to be predetermining what we are going to do at the next funding exercise.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just a technical thing but the “*comma, including*” was also part of the proposal from someone else that should have been deleted with the rest of that thing. “*Increased funding, including*” is just “*funding for CODEX.*”

Mr Su GUO (China)

I think what the delegate from Pakistan just said, also proposed by the United States of America (US) delegate, I think is reasonable for us. I think to just keep a simple word, “*funding*” I think is more meaningful and flexible. So we prefer the word only “*funding*”.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am sorry to take you in a different direction but we were in support of the word “*increased*”. This is an opportunity for the Members of this Council to indicate the importance of funding, “*increased funding*” is what we have heard from several interventions this morning and I think that is an opportunity.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

I would like to echo my colleague from Australia and please do not kill me but I would like to add a little present to the Christmas tree, if you allow me, this is the language by the way, it is not approved but it was approved in the joint meeting, so the small addition is after International Plant Protection Convention, “*IPCC*” so it would be “*along with its e-phyto solution*” and we should delete the “*comma*” after the brackets.

CHAIRPERSON

Now we are caught in between. Either there is strong support for “*increase*”, but there is also support for say nothing about it.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Ahora añadimos 27 apoyos más a “*increase*”.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

To solve the problem, I have a suggestion. In the first line after “*advancing*” we can have “*advancing and funding*”. So, it is coming with stressed, so it naturally says that, stressing on the funding as well. Then we can remove the word “*increasing*”. In fact nothing needs to stand after that. I think the rest can be deleted if Members agree. “*Stress the importance of advancing and funding science and evidence based normative and standard setting work.*” It can stop there, or we can qualify it, including correct elements.

CHAIRPERSON

But let us not make it more complex now to leave half of the text because then we are. let us stick to it and get an agreement on the sparer. So now the proposal is to delete the word “*increase*” but put in the first line “*and funding*”. Would that be a way out?

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

That would be fine with me, but I do not agree with the word “*increased*”.

CHAIRPERSON

That is clear, let us keep it like this. Can we agree with adding the word “*and funding*” in the first line and delete the word “*increased.*” I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to what was proposed by Argentina along with its *e-phyto solutions.*” I do not see any objections.

We only have to have “*to serve public goods*” Was that agreeable? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to “*including streamlining of statistical functions.*” Can we agree to maintain this in the text? I do not see any objections. Then we have another agreed subparagraph.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). Can we agree to the new subparagraph a (c)? “*preserving and adequately funding the tactical work of FAO including the TCP and Farmer's Field Schools (FFS)*”. Can we agree to this subparagraph?

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

You know maybe we need to take a step back. Now we have changed subparagraph (b) to just be “*the importance of advancing and funding everything*” and not adding. So either we just get rid of (b), (c), and (d) completely because there really is no need for it, it is already in the budget, and it is there in the budget, it is completely there in the budget with all of the ideas there with it. Or we continue going on about this.

Because as it is currently written I do not think it makes sense grammatically, but also I am a little confused about what we are saying now – are we stressing the importance of advancing and funding everything? Because that does not seem to go along with what is in the budget.

So I think probably as a good solution here, rather than continuing to add stuff, we just delete (b), (c) and (d) and move on to (e) and talk about the things that are not clear in the budget, where we are not clear about our agreement. We are all clear in this room about our agreement for funding all of these things - CODEX Alimentarius , International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), the Farmers’ Field Schools, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) , International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) – all of that, we all agree about that, and it is already in the budget, so why do we even need these paragraphs? So I propose deleting (b), (c) and (d).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We want to thank the United States of America (US) but we are not so much in favour of the radical solutions. We prefer to have wording that gives guidance, and as long as you are not giving guidance then we are not bringing our role as a Governing Body. So we prefer to keep them, (b), (c) and (d), and then work on the language that we can use.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Yes, we would prefer to retain the three paras, I think that many delegations have expressed their interest in reflecting not only CODEX or IPCC, but also the Decentralized Cooperation Platform (DCP). So for us it would be important to keep it.

CHAIRPERSON

With that I think if we want to maintain it we have to bring it in line with subparagraph (a). So then I would support “*further stress the importance of advancing and funding of the technical work of FAO including the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) and Farmer Field Schools (FFS)*”.

Because then at least it is in line with (b).

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I do not agree with that, but on the first one I think I do not agree with putting “*and funding*” and then dropping it off later. The whole point was just “*the importance of advancing science and evidence based normative and standard setting work, including funding for CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CODEX) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) along with its e-phyto.*” So I would delete “*and funding*” in (b), and then say “*including funding for*” as it was before, “*CODEX Alimentarius and the IPPC*” The rest of that subparagraph is okay with us.

CHAIRPERSON

Do we have now an agreed subparagraph (b)?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

In the Governing Body there is a lot of discussion, how this discussion went on these paragraphs. Everybody wanted the spirit and the stress was to enhance the funding for these bodies. So just we are reverting to the first paragraph which was initially proposed from your end. So we see there is a need

for “*increased funding*”, so “*including increased funding*” is okay for us, because just “*funding*” either we stress funding, but increased funding would be better because it does not serve the purpose.

CHAIRPERSON

We saw that increased funding did not meet consensus in the room and we have to find consensus in the room and we already stood for more than 20 minutes on this subparagraph.

So we need to find a way forward. We need to find a compromise.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I will be flexible on that, but “*increased funding*” is one which I think many Members agreed in this room and we can consult further with the Members if they are agreeable. If they are not agreeable, then we are okay with that.

CHAIRPERSON

We had a round of discussions almost two times, and it was clear that “*increased*” did not meet the consensus of the room. That is why we came now to this proposal.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Coincido con la apreciación del colega de India y de otros colegas porque el *funding* ya existe, lo que estamos solicitando es que se aumente el *funding* para el CODEX. Ese es el punto y lo hemos dicho varios en estas intervenciones. Yo no veo en qué momento no se aprobó en el nuevo consenso. Yo creo que perfectamente se puede incluir la palabra “*increase*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much but I think we are going for a third round now of “*increased*” because I already have five extra speakers when we went to “*increased*”. But I follow you, we go for a third round.

Mr Su GUO (China)

I think the language proposed by the colleague from United States of America (US) is okay for us. We know that the normative work is important, the fund must keep going, but the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) is also important, you can also ask for “*increase*”. So, all the other things increased will be increased. So, I think “*funding*” is okay, it is just important to fund them, to guarantee some work.

CHAIRPERSON

Unless we want to increase the budget again with USD 5.6 million, which I do not think will meet consensus in this room. I have now six speakers on my list, and the list is growing already. Could we not agree to subparagraph (b) as is now on the screen? I think that is how far we can get with this to subparagraph at this moment.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Perhaps this could be a solution, we would like to propose, because someone wants increased, someone wants just adequate, so we would like to suggest “*a standard setting work and ensure funding for...*” So it just means it can be increased, but it is just “*ensure funding.*”

CHAIRPERSON

I do not want to create problems because I already saw not happy faces, no smileys. So I think if we look to the subparagraph, this is how far we can get with the subparagraph. So not “*ensuring*”, but as it was, with “*including*”.

Japan, could you go along with?

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Our position prefers “*increased funding*”, but in order to let us say establish consensus, in the split, the sense of this room that funding signifies or connotes increased funding, so in that space I agree with the current that is on the screen.

CHAIRPERSON

I will go through the list but hopefully very quickly because it is the first day and we know what we still have to discuss.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just one last chance to see if it gets us somewhere, instead of “*including funding*” for, “*bearing in mind the need for future increase.*”

CHAIRPERSON

We have gone ten rounds, thank you for the try but I will keep the subparagraph as it is now because I think not even in 20 rounds will we get there. I give the floor to Cameroon. Only to subparagraph (b), not the other two.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Yes, it is subparagraph p(b). We should not lose the fact that this is the final step of the planning process. We have already budgeted everything. So that is why what the United States of America (US) said, we are comfortable with that, because we can say this when we are beginning the process, the planning process, probably next year, when she will be reporting on the... She will be bringing up the Programme Implementation Report to us, and then we can start thinking of how, if we had to increase or whatever. But we are at the final step of the planning process. So, what is interesting is that we see that the money that is earmarked is efficiently used and adequately put in good use. That is what we are wanting, so that is why we agree we want the proposal from the US.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I agree with the comments made by China and before that the US, and now Cameroon. We do not support the word “*increased*”.

Mr José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

We would like to support the word “*increased*” as well, that no other words replace the meaning of this term. So, we would like to go back to the presentation that was made by Argentina and Australia some minutes ago.

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, are you really suggesting that we are going for a vote on this? Come on. It is clear that we will never get consensus in this room with the word “*increase*” because many are in favour but with no consensus. So we can continue with putting our positions forward but we will not get a consensus on it.

So I will call upon your flexibility to go along with the text as it is now. We know that many are in favour of more increased funding, but we can do that in our next round of the next Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). The Conference did not give us guidance to increase the funding for the CODEX, for example. Guidance as stated in this to subparagraph.

These are the adjustments, so please may I call on you to go along with this compromise? And it is a compromise, and I always say, you know me, the best compromise is when everybody is equally unhappy, and I know that equally is a little bit difficult now.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I do not want to add anything more, but I want to subtract after the word “*comma*”. After “*work*” in the second line, the comma can be deleted, and including funding. So it says we are stressing on both.

CHAIRPERSON

Is it a go now? Once, twice, agreed. We go to to subparagraph (c).

Mr Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (Spain)

We will show flexibility.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you so much. Let us keep that in mind also, that I ask of everybody the same flexibility when we come to other subparagraphs or issues.

We go to subparagraph (c). Can we agree to subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

Mr Su GUO (China)

Just one word I want to change, “*preserving*” into “*protecting*” in line with the decisions of the Conference. We stressed the importance of “*protecting*” the technical work.

CHAIRPERSON

I always very much support agreed language.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Based on the philosophy we had regarding the discussions we had about funding of the previous subparagraph, we simply suggest that we further stress the importance of funding, the technical work, without those qualitative elements that we could not agree to in the context of CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CODEX) and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

CHAIRPERSON

I always support consistency in the text. Can we agree now to this subparagraph? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Here I am a little bit hesitant but let me put it. “*Noted the importance of intergovernmental arrangements such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) in supporting the work of FAO*”. So, there we remove “*the importance of protecting funding.*” So, we delete “*importance of protecting funding*” so that the message is clear, which is sent to the Secretariat to look into that.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

As it was said, that you favour agreed language, the language that we had introduced is in CL 174/7 subparagraph (d), and it says, “*while noting the importance of protecting and funding intergovernmental arrangements such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)*”. So it is agreed language.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us stick to agreed language, I would say. And we need it because later on we come to other agreed language as well. Could we agree to this text?

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

So, I am kind of confused here. So this will replace the first line of subparagraph (d) is it? Or is it two separate ones? But it is not the same, the two?

CHAIRPERSON

No, it would be a separate subparagraph, and I think we should just state “*noted the importance*” because it is a bit strange with this.

The idea would be in subparagraph (d) we say “*noted the importance of protecting and funding intergovernmental arrangements, such as...*” So we include “*protecting and funding*” in subparagraph (d).

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to add “*After the work of the FAO*” and it would read, “*taking into account their respective administrative and budgetary matters.*” Because they also have their own mechanism, and so we would point out that they do have that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much for making sure that we are correct.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I support what the Cameroon intervention was. In fact, we are almost sitting here as if we are preparing the next Programme of Work and Budget. We give importance to these bodies but we are prescribing increased funding, funding, protecting. This is not, I think, the Council’s job.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Queríamos apoyar la propuesta brasileña que nos parece muy razonable.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

We also want to support Brazil since Brazilian colleagues just share our language and we are fine with our language so it would be okay for us. And of course, we can go along with what was being proposed by Indonesia. But in the part that it says “*In supporting the work of FAO*” we would prefer it to say “*in supporting FAO’s mandate on agriculture and food security.*”

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I would just say looking very closely at the document that was quoted by Brazil as agreed language, I was a little bit reluctant, because this is part of the discussion of the Joint Meeting. It is not a document for the Council. So, the Report of the Joint Meeting, it was said in the Joint Meeting, so it is up to us here to agree whether we should incorporate it in the Report of the Council.

So the Joint Meeting is an Advisory Body to the Council, and then I have a problem really, putting that, but, we need some consistency in the way... Because some of these bodies are Article 6 bodies and then also not even a body of FAO, so pushing FAO to finance something that is not really inside FAO. So that is why I say we note the importance of those bodies in the work of FAO and then we send a message to the Secretariat to that effect.

CHAIRPERSON

I agree of course that the Programme Committee (PC), the Finance Committee (FC) and the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee and also the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) are advisory bodies to the Council. But what I understand from the Members of the Council is that they want to include the advice in this text. And I hope that we are almost there now because we use more or less agreed language.

Mr José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Very briefly, just to support the Brazilian proposal with the merits on it, and also the language suggested by Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this text now? I do not see any objections. So agreed. Thank you so much.

It is almost 16:00 hours, we have done four or five subparagraphs, we still have ten to do today. So may I ask you to be a little bit more flexible on the rest of the subparagraphs?

We go now to subparagraph (d). Can we agree to subparagraph (d)?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We just have a question about whether the establishment of the Office of Youth and Women needs the formal endorsement or not? I see nodding.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

In accordance with the General Rules of the Organization, changes or modifications to the general, and here I quote from Rule XXIV paragraph 3 (j), which calls upon the Council to “*consider and approve recommendations of the Finance Committee [...] on the general structure of the administrative and technical services of the Organization*”. It is within that context that this is put forward for your consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this subparagraph?

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Japan has does not have any particular problem with this subparagraph, but there is one thing I liked about the Management response in the Information Note and the explanation by the Human Resources Division Director. So, I would like to establish one subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first finalize subparagraphs, before adding new subparagraphs.

Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)

A very quick one. We want to replace “*noted*” by “*welcomed*”.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just a proposal for a phrase at the end. “*And called for FAO to develop the measurement of results achieved by the Office and request it to Report back on its activities at a future Session.*”

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

Because it is the capacity we are kind of afraid of, so we would like to have the words “*gender mainstreaming.*” before the “*statistics and climate*”. I am aware that that comes later in the subparagraph also but it is here we are thinking about it directly to the capacity.

CHAIRPERSON

Canada, did we capture your text on the screen?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

No, “*and request it to Report back on its activities at a future Session of Council.*” We would say the next Session of Council, but that is probably too soon.

CHAIRPERSON

And we are already going to deal with a different paragraph with the next Sessions. I do not have any other requests for the floor.

Let us go to the additions. Can we agree to include “*gender mainstreaming*”? I do not see any objections.

Can we go to the last part of the sentence? Can we agree to this?

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

We can accompany that, but as you mentioned we have very similar language in (f), so perhaps we can merge, if my understanding is correct, and we can say, “*and request an update on implementation of the Office to Council at its next Session*” or something like that.

CHAIRPERSON

Argentina, may I then not propose that I would like to bring it into subparagraph (f) because subparagraph (f) also has meaning for guidance on its implementation, which was crucial to find I would say a compromise with what was said this morning.

My suggestion would be, Canada, to put it to subparagraph (f) and leave the subparagraph as it is. I see nodding from Canada, so I think with that we have an agreed subparagraph. But of course we have already looked to the subparagraph.

Can we agree to subparagraph (e)?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I was thinking about the previous paragraph you know deleted, I was going to suggest “*encourage the...*” That was the purpose I raised my flag. I will come back.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to subparagraph (e)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (f). Canada, would you like to include it here, because here we say not only on the implementation, but I think the crucial part, why I put it here, is that also because we have so many questions about workplan, about all those things that we can give in our next stage, is more detailed guidance for the implementation.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think that makes sense to have that here, so I think shifting it from (d) to (f). I mean that is something that we will want to have, that Reporting against the measurement and recording of results.

CHAIRPERSON

We have put it now in this subparagraph.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just if we could make a note for the Drafting Committee that in (e) the Priority Areas as referred to in subparagraph (c) they are going to need to look at that later. So if they could just make a flag of that for later, that would be great.

CHAIRPERSON

We go to subparagraph (f).

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am just trying to work out which sub paragraph we are in at the moment. So you have guided us towards (f). let me address that first. Supporting the addition from Canada, we would suggest “*and called for FAO to develop a workplan including measurements of results achieved by the Office.*”

And then just looking again at subparagraph (e), the language “*the Office of Youth and Women should not go at the expense of*”. Perhaps “*should not be at the expense of*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I will put you also in the Drafting Committee.

Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am very sceptical about the first part of this sentence. The next Council is six months from now, and reflecting on how you will put in place that Office, staffing it and everything by that Council, is not feasible. And that is why I say I am a bit sceptical.

So can we work on the proposal of Canada, because the first part really is not feasible. So let us work on the part of Canada and I think that we can support it, but not “*in the future Session of the Council*”, probably in “*future Sessions*”. So we are flexible to see whether it will be 77 or 76 Session, and we will see that in the workplan definitely.

CHAIRPERSON

I do hope you did not miss the work “*update*”. I did not say that everything should be in place by the next Session. It states that it is an update on the implementation. So it is not that it calls for everything in place on the next Session, it calls for where are we with establishing, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. But I will leave it at that.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I would like to suggest that in place of “*next*” we can replace it with “*future Session*”.

And we suggest that in the second line maybe “*called for*” may be replaced by “*encouraged*”.

And on the third line, the paragraph will read as “*Encouraged FAO to develop a workplan including measurements of results achieve by the Office and look forward to an update on the implementation.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Let us start now a new subparagraph which starts with the second part and then adds the first part.

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

Perhaps on the second line, after Office, “*and requested that they Report back at future Sessions of Council*” may not be required there. Instead, I suggest it should be “*Office and looked forward...*” because it is a repetition, because the second part captures that. “*look forward..*” – there in the third line.

CHAIRPERSON

Did we capture it now India?

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

The second line, after “*office*”, that portion may be deleted. And the second line after “*office*”, “*and requested its Report back in a future Session of the Council*” That may be deleted. “*And look forward to an update on the implementation to Council at its future session*”.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Para hacerlo breve, creemos que la mejor redacción hasta ahora es la propuesta originalmente por Canadá, que apoyamos. En ese sentido, en la primera parte de la frase, consideramos que el término “*próximo*” (“*next*” en inglés) es más adecuado, mientras que, para la segunda parte, podríamos emplear el término “*futuro*” (o “*future*”).

CHAIRPERSON

I think we now have two proposals because we are getting mixed up in this text. The proposal of Canada, which we lost now in this subparagraph. So either we work with two subparagraphs or we work with one subparagraph, because I cannot even follow, because the of both subparagraphs are now being lost.

We have a completely new subparagraph which was not there yet so let us be careful, also I ask India, we tried to bring the most perfect English text, but in the end we do not have a perfect English text. So I think we have to go back to what we had from Canada and settle now. Because we lost too many elements of the previous text.

One of the reasons I think why we have to at least have two elements, it is up to you of course, but let us also be honest, what was said by Cameroon I think it is impossible if we start implementing what was already a full ready far fledged workplan at this next Session. So that is why I think it was important that if we ask to go for a workplan including measurements of results achieved, that we say that it will be dealt with in future Sessions. So that is not the next Session.

We can of course delete it but why I introduced a text on guidance was because there are so many elements tabled or questions made this morning which could be discussed in the next Council. But now we have the idea of a workplan, but it can also wait till we have the workplan with the measurements in the next Session. So then we do not have to do it two times, but that is up to you.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

In fact, what is on the screen now actually seems to work relatively well and has the timing right of when things should happen. Because I think what we are interested in is having an update on the implementation – because between now and six months from now there will be action, we do not doubt – and we would love to hear about it.

We would love to know what that is, and we would like to see a workplan and measurement of results at some time in the next year, ideally. Like probably a year from now we will hear from it. But

probably in June, when we have our next Council Session will be the opportunity for us to assess what the best timing is to have that feedback received.

So we can live with what is on the screen right now. I know you will not like it but just a suggestion for subparagraph (e) because right now it sort of leaves us hanging in terms of what it says. *“It should not be at the expense of... and staffing for these priority areas”* So just want to insert something there so that it is more clear what it is not at the expense of. *“Not at the expense of staffing and implementation of...”*

Then we are fine with (e) and (f).

CHAIRPERSON

I hope that everybody could be satisfied now.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I am not in disagreement with our colleague from Cameroon on the difficulty for management to do this, but I think the spirit behind this is important. I wonder if to kind of allay the fears from Cameroon it could say something like *“look forward to a progress update on the creation to the Office of the Council at its next Session for guidance on implementation.”* You know, so a progress update on implementation or on the creation of the Office. That might then kind of allay the worries that the representative from Cameroon had about the impossibility of being able to provide full ideas, while still making sure that we have the information we need to provide guidance.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I think the US has a point there, we can go along with this, but if we can change the word *“implementation”* to *“by setting up”*. Because if we implement something which is planned, a workplan or whatever, we are setting up this Office, or establishment or whatever. But not *“implementation”*, change that word, *“establishment of the Office”*.

And the second part is we may use the word instead of *“measurement of results”*, results measurement or framework or something like that, because when it is measurement of results you know, it sounds a little bit for me in my head not... *“probably results measurement framework”* and then we leave *“related to this Office, and Report back on these activities at a future Session of the Council.”*

So we delete, in brackets at the end *“requested that it Report”*. So you bracket that *“requested that it”* and we put *“and Report back on its activities at future Sessions.”* Is that okay? If it makes sense. English is not my language, but sometimes I try.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I do not know if this is a point of order or not, but I understand that this is difficult for the Secretariat to keep up with everything that is going on, but sometimes things are getting deleted instead of bracketed, and so we are losing some of the essence of what is happening. I wonder if we could take a moment just to make sure that when something new is proposed it is just put on the screen but just not deleting the stuff that is proposed to be deleted? It might make it easier for the discussion.

CHAIRPERSON

We will certainly take on board this guidance. But I think we are close to a consensus. So could we go with the latest proposal of Cameroon so that we have instead of *“requested that it”* that we say, *“to this Office and Report back on these activities, etc”* Would that be agreeable?

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I think we are heading in the right direction. My proposal would be to simplify even further and just simply say *“including a results framework”* and that will of course capture measurement.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we are, when I look to the faces, near to an agreement.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India is flexible but I just want to suggest that instead of “*framework*”, “*outcomes*”, so “*including outcomes related to this Office*”. However, we are flexible with the existing language as well.

CHAIRPERSON

May I call upon your flexibility because we always speak about a Results Framework. Also within my past experience with the Programme Committee (PC), we always speak about the Results Framework. Could we maintain Results Framework? Do we have an agreement if we say, “*including a results framework*” and we say, “*Reports back on its activities.*” Would that be, if we clean the text now, so that we see what is there.

Is this agreeable? I see no objections. Thank you so much.

Then we go to subparagraph (g). Can we agree to subparagraph (g)?

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Before going to the next issue, can we just go back to subparagraph (d)? I am not going to ask modification of subparagraph (d). I would like to insert one new subparagraph between (d) and (e), if other Members can agree.

Subparagraph (e): “*Welcomed the Management’s clarification that OIG will, in coordination with Human Resources Division, welcome empowerment of younger professionals within the Organization with due consideration for under-represented countries.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Let everybody read the subparagraph so that they consume it a little bit. Can we agree to the new subparagraph proposed by Japan, subparagraph (e)?

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Just a question – did Japan mean empowerment or employment?

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this subparagraph? I do not see any objections.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I was just thinking that this is the Report of the Council, so making reference to Management clarifications does not suit very well in a Report of the Council. We are okay with this but it should be re-drafted differently. I may suggest that probably noted that this office, Office of Inspector General (OIG) will work in coordination with Human Resources and so on. Because this is a Report of the Council and so it is the Council speaking. That is what I wanted to say. So, we should be very neutral in a sense, not single out the reply of Management.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we agree to this addition? I see Japan nodding. I do not see any objections, thank you so much.

Then we go to subparagraph (h). Can we agree to subparagraph (h)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (i).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Can we remove the word “*robust*” because, you know, qualifying it here with a developed business plan and roadmap, planned activities and expected efficiency gains and savings, together with measurement indicators, not clear.

CHAIRPERSON

This was the advice of the Finance Committee (FC), but of course we can do with the advice what we want to do, but that was the exact language of the advice of the Finance Committee.

The proposal is to delete the word “*robust*”?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

“Robust” and “clear”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to that? I do not see any objections.

Then we continue with subparagraph (j). I do not see any objections.

Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Not to confuse with the Results Framework that we used earlier, so this one is the FAO Results Framework. So, I think we need “FAO” there, because it may be confusing with the Results Framework for the Office of Youth and Women.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to subparagraph (k)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (l)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (m)?

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

I would like to make a small comment on paragraph (l), if we could go back there, because I think I heard in the Plenary saying multiple times that maybe we should have regular updates on how extra budgetary resources are aligned with the mandate. I also think I heard Ms Beth Crawford explicitly saying that she is working on it, so I was wondering whether we might reflect that on this paragraph? I would suggest putting, “*regular updates on implementation of extra budgetary resources*”.

CHAIRPERSON

It is agreeable to Brazil. And of course, if so, we have to delete in the first line of where it ends, if I am correct, but I will look to that.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am just looking down at what is subparagraph (n), which talks about the full spectrum of financial resources which we take to include extra budgetary resources and the request for the Organization to provide regular updates to Members. I am just trying to understand from Brazil if that is enough to cover their request or if it is a separate request?

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

We are okay with it the way it is. I think it is covered.

CHAIRPERSON

So can we keep it like this?

Then we go to subparagraph (m) again. Can we agree to subparagraph (m)?

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Si no me equivoco, hasta ahora mismo no ha habido ninguna referencia a los centros de conocimiento regionales, si es que lo he visto todo en el texto. En ese sentido, querríamos proponer la adición de un párrafo específico a los mismos y lanzamos la siguiente propuesta, en inglés, para referirnos a estos centros regionales de conocimiento. Lo digo en inglés a velocidad de dictado *Note FAO’s ambition to establish regional knowledge hubs and underline that the Governing Bodies must be involved in this process*. Pero, bueno, “*establish*” o “*develop*”, podemos ser flexibles.

CHAIRPERSON

I look around the room – can we agree to this subparagraph?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I recall in, I do not know if it was in the Programme Committee or the Joint Meeting, there was a similar reference to the regional knowledge hubs. So, we can go with this, but perhaps at the end “*and recalled that these would be funded by voluntary contributions*”?

And perhaps, just on the... We were really slow on the earlier paragraph from Japan. If we could just add two words potentially to that.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with this one so that we do not have to move back and forth.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India supports this subparagraph but we just wanted to add “*to request FAO to develop clear criteria for establishing these hubs*”. And after “*underline*” “*the need for FAO to develop a clear criteria for establishing these hubs to ensure the Members in need, or countries in need, are benefiting out of this initiative, including involving Governing Bodies in this process*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this subparagraph, Cameroon?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is very complicated, but I would like to shorten it because we know that FAO is a knowledge organization, so creating knowledge hubs is long overdue. So, what we want to do here is to acknowledge or welcome the – I do not know whether it is an ambition “*Welcomes FAO’s programme in developing knowledge hubs.*” I wanted to have it as short as possible because everything is explaining criteria and so on. We know that you cannot create a hub if you do not negotiate with countries who are part of that hub. That is how it is, it is a knowledge hub – it is not an office that you are creating.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Indeed from our point of view we would prefer to retain the original proposal, however, on the last amendment made by India, for us it is quite difficult to understand the criteria to identify countries in need because if we are going to develop indicators to establish which countries are in need, perhaps we can create some coalition with other indicators that we already have within the Agenda 2030. Perhaps we can say, “*to ensure the transparency of this initiative (countries in need of...)*”. We can accompany the rest of the text as it is.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I just repeat my plea that when things are added to language that is put up there, that they are put in perhaps brackets when they are added so that we are clear as to what is what. I just want to support the original author of this. I think it needs to be a little bit more than what Cameroon was saying. I think we do need to talk about the Governing Bodies and the voluntary contributions in this as well.

CHAIRPERSON

I look to India. Is there flexibility to go back to the original proposal of Spain with the inclusion of the voluntary funding?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

In the language suggested by Cameroon at the end, I suggest that after “*hubs*”, “*including criteria for establishing these hubs*”. “*Including the criteria for their establishment*”. Something like that.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just to express a preference for the original, and as you just asked for our – the original as proposed by you and amended by us.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I was just going to ask what it was that we were discussing because there are two subparagraphs on the screen that seem to be repetitive of each other.

CHAIRPERSON

I asked India's flexibility to go back to the original proposal of Spain with the addition made by Canada, but I got new added language. So, I repeat my question to India. To make progress, could we not go back to the original proposal of Spain with the addition of the funding by Canada?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

Can the Secretariat put up the original proposal? It is all that in brackets and it is all in difference colours, so everything is new.

CHAIRPERSON

Spain, could you repeat because we put it in a different way.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Vaya por delante nuestro acuerdo con lo aportado por Canadá. Pero, en cualquier caso, repetimos la propuesta original "*Noted FAO's ambition to establish regional knowledge hubs and underline that the Governing Bodies must be involved in this process*".

CHAIRPERSON

And it has to be "*and that its Governing Bodies*" and because I think there was a general agreement that we should add also the text of Canada, and we will work later on that, but I recall that it is "*would be funded by voluntary contributions*". I think that would be, I would say, the most clear subparagraph at this moment.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

If we are going back to the original proposal, I made that first alternate proposal, I do not know how we can involve the Governing Bodies in such a process, which is purely a managerial process. So if we want to involve the governing bodies, we should say how the Governing Body would be involved and what are the governing bodies that are supposed to be here.

Will it be Regional Conferences, will it be the Council, the Conference? What Governing Body are we talking about here? That is the problem I have with this proposal, underline that the governing body must be involved in the process. This is a management process – we will suggest that if we keep that, we should rearrange the way it is put. We are not against the proposal itself, but involving the governing bodies, that was our problem.

Mr Su GUO (China)

Actually, what the comrade from Cameroon has already said, we would want to express that we are not quite clear about what governing body should be involved in this and what they are going to do. If the colleague from Spain can clarify what exactly the governing body want to do, the establishment or regional hubs will be very good for us to make decisions.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

We can support the formulation that is currently shown in subparagraph (o). In that sense we wonder if there is some concern about what role the Governing Bodies play. We could perhaps say, "*the Governing Bodies must be consulted throughout the process*".

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I support what Cameroon has said about what the Governing Bodies will do, which Governing Bodies, and at what point in time, all this would happen. I think we are heading more and more towards, rather than guidance from Governing Bodies, to micro-management from Governing Bodies, because every para has an element of micro-management in it.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

A nosotros no nos parece que esto sea incurrir en ningún caso en una cuestión de microgestión, sino que lo que abordamos y, creo que la propuesta australiana es muy clarificadora, es apostar por una transparencia en la mayor implicación de la Organización en su conjunto. Pero no es, a nuestro juicio, desde luego, en absoluto una microgestión.

CHAIRPERSON

Cameroon, has Australia helped to bring us closer to a consensus?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

It is too difficult. We want to delete that whole sentence. That is the final step that we would like to suggest. It does not add value to our Report.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I go by my colleagues, Cameroon, and if Spain is flexible we need not have this para at all.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I will just repeat my colleague's language from earlier in the day, that we do not want to move to drastic solutions immediately. I really like the way that the Governing Bodies must be or should be consulted throughout the process, lasered out in such a way that we recognize that FAO wants to create these. We are supporting that, and that the Governing Bodies should be consulted throughout the process, and "*recall that they should be funded by voluntary contributions*".

That all makes sense to me because at that point we are still showing support for the Director-General's ambition to do this whilst still maintaining a certain degree of oversight that we are meant to do as a Council, which I think this does. I would encourage us to continue to look at this subparagraph through those eyes.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Yes, I think as it has evolved, this subparagraph adds value. I think there is still enough that we do not know about the regional knowledge hubs and so to be consulted as that concept reaches maturity would be helpful, and so as it is formulated now with the various edits, it seems to be a useful bit of guidance for us and a request to come back to us over time, so we support what is there right now.

Mr Su GUO (China)

China supports what Cameroon and Pakistan said. I think it would be very difficult for us to make a decision before we have clear definition or clear meanings of which procedure the Governing Bodies should be involved in this.

Also, I am a little bit confused about the wording "*recall that these would be funded by voluntary contributions*." I do not see where it comes from. I read the paragraph 37 from the document CL 147/3. It does not say from anywhere that this would be funded by voluntary contributions. I do not remember if it is proposed by our colleague from Canada, that these would be funded by voluntary contributions. I do not know where it came from.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us think carefully and give the floor at the moment to the United Kingdom. Let me think carefully because if we are now going to state that it is coming from the regular budget, and there is no concrete proposal yet from Management, then I think consultation with Governing Bodies would be weak. Because I think it is up to the Governing Bodies to decide over the regular budget, and if there is no concrete proposal, what can we decide?

I think we have to be very careful about at which stage we are with the ambition and the proposal, the funding and the consultation. In that respect I am looking forward to a compromise where I think consultations would help because we do not know where we are yet.

I would not propose, as Independent Chairperson of the Council, that if we do not know whether it is regular budget or voluntary funding, that we give just a *carte blanche* not including the Governing Bodies, because I would say by the Basic Texts it has involved the Governing Bodies.

Mr Alexander James MCCLEERY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

It is just to say that we would support the language as is, bearing in mind what you, yourself, have just said, including the Australian language around consultation. We also think that consultation would add value because ultimately Members can then support the hubs through that consultation process.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just to note where that reference came from, it was from Programme Committee Report under Section 3, paragraph 5, subparagraph (n) – “*appreciate confirmation of the knowledge hubs and a global food and agriculture museum and network would have no regular budgetary implications*”. So saying the same thing the other way around is that it would be funded by voluntary contributions. That was where the reference came from, Programme Committee Report.

Mr Arnaldo DE BAENA FERNANDES (Brazil)

I was reading the proposal and the document regarding the Adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget. It is paragraph 37 – it seems that the Director-General is still considering about how to implement that, so maybe just this Session of the Council is taking a first step to establish something that does not exist.

Paragraph 37 of the adjustment says that “*in 2024-2025 FAO will aim to establish regional knowledge hubs with distinctive features and complimentary functions to leverage FAO’s full potential in advancing innovation driven transformation. The knowledge hubs which will compliment and expand the current centralised structure will be hosted in countries that have specific knowledge and tools to offer both regionally and globally, for example, on tropical agriculture on food safety. Further information will be provided when partnerships for potential hubs are in progress*”.

I believe that it is still a work in progress – we need more information from the Director-General, from FAO, to how this new initiative will be implemented. So in that case, the involvement of Members is welcome, but we do not need, according to my knowledge, to be very prescriptive right now, right here. The proposal to be more general on the reference to these regional knowledge hubs should be welcome.

CHAIRPERSON

May I make a proposal before I give the floor to Pakistan? Could we not say the following, “*welcomed FAO’s ambition to establish knowledge hubs and look forward to further information including about the involvement of Governing Bodies, and look forward to further updates at future Sessions*”? And of course, on the first line you would have to delete the word “*and*” otherwise you would have too many “*ands*”. Could that be a way to move forward? Because there are many questions about it.

And thank you, Brazil, for reading out the part of the document which informs us a little better.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

In fact, I prefer your suggestion to the previous one, and in this respect, I mean, are we being too prescriptive? All the proposals which the Secretariat has, they come to the governing bodies, why are we prescribing every step?

We have got the Finance Committee, we have got the Programme Committee, we have got the Council, all proposals from the Secretariat come to these Bodies, so why are we listing everything as if it does not come to these Bodies, and now we are insisting that they should? I think it is all superfluous.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I have the same intuition as Pakistan. If you say, “*welcome FAO’s ambition to establish the hubs, and look forward to further information in this regard*”, you are already entrusting the Council to be the proponent in this development, so I do not know why we should go into the details of the involvement of the governing bodies. Council is asking to receive information.

The Council is already involved. So we do not need to say again, add governing bodies and so on. Our preference was to delete that but if it is not viewed that way in the room, then we should work on what you are proposing, so I will rightly suggest that we say, “*we welcome...*”

I am still wondering whether it is an ambition, so Secretariat should help us here if it is an ambition or a proposal. “*Welcomes FAO’s proposal to establish regional knowledge hubs and look forward to further updates on the progress on establishing these hubs*”.

If we are sure that it is the Council that is entrusting, which is working, so we do not have to put involvement of Governing Bodies.

CHAIRPERSON

The latest proposal is, “*welcomed FAO’s ambition to establish regional knowledge hubs and look forward to further updates at future Sessions*”. Of course, you do not have to repeat again... Would that be a simple sentence that meets the concerns of the room? I do not see any objections.

So, if we can clear the text to show everybody what we have now? So this would be the compromised proposal – would that be agreeable?

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

I just want to make a proposal on the alternative you gave and indicate, “*welcomed FAO’s proposal to establish regional hubs and look forward to further information on criteria of establishment and future updates on this initiative*”.

CHAIRPERSON

But could we not keep it – because my concern is that if we use “*criteria*”, that we get Governing Bodies involvement as well, that we keep it simple, but we will see what we will get. We do not want to be too prescriptive.

I thought that we had almost got an agreement. But we will put it in the text and we will see – because I see more and more flags coming up now, and I am sure that they will insert there more language as well. But we will put it in the text. Could you repeat your proposal?

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

It is okay.

CHAIRPERSON

Okay, so we will keep the text as it was. So, I hope that everybody can now agree and not add new text to it.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Would it be possible to include... But this is brief and has to do with the previous discussion on whether these initiatives should be funded by voluntary contributions...

CHAIRPERSON

We will see. Because I know for sure if you add this, the others will come back to... Let us go with a simple subparagraph.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Could it be possible to say, “*further updates including budgetary implications*”?

CHAIRPERSON

Let us keep it as simple as it is.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Perhaps “*noted FAO’s plans for establishing*” – because we do not yet know what the plans are, that is part of what we are going to hear in the future, and the previous two versions of the paragraph had

noted... I think at this stage we are ready to note rather than welcome, so “*noted FAO’s plans for the establishment of...*” and then continue on as it stands.

CHAIRPERSON

Is that agreeable, this latest version? I see nodding.

We will try to finalize this text before the snack because I think the others are hopefully not that contentious. We will clean up the text later on, but we go to subparagraph (r). Can we agree to subparagraph (r)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (s). I cannot imagine that this will be problematic. I do not see any objections.

Then we go to the last subparagraph. Can we agree to this? Thank you so much, it is agreed. Congratulations to all of you and also to Ms Beth Crawford for her hard work. Thank you so much.

Now we break until 17:35 hours. The meeting is adjourned until 17:35.

The meeting was suspended from 17.05 to 17.48 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 05 à 17 h 48

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.05 a las 17.48

Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers

Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes

**Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends, good evening to the interpreters again. I promise you, at least for today, I will not stretch too much this evening, or this end of the afternoon Session. I will certainly not go beyond one second after 19:30 hours. We are ahead of schedule, but at the same time we have certainly tomorrow, very difficult issues to discuss.

Let us continue our work, in the spirit of this morning, and certainly in the spirit of this afternoon, and I really would like to thank you and complement you for your flexibility to work, to get to a consensus, which asks a lot of everybody, but we have seen that asking this but with your willingness to compromise, we will get there. We will get there hopefully on all Items by consensus, because it is my strong belief that we can conclude all Items by consensus if the mood which was here this afternoon, would remain in the room the next couple of days.

We will continue now with Item 4, *Global food security challenges and drivers*. I remind everybody already now, we take the Item 4. Tomorrow as planned, we will discuss the global food security related to Gaza and the global food security related to the Ukraine. I would really like to ask you not to go into those terrible situations, because we will address those issues tomorrow, but focus on the global food security in your statements on Item 4.

The relevant document before you is Council document *CL 174/4*, and an introduction by Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, our Chief Economist, has been circulated to you. Of course in the document you see also two chapters about Gaza and the Ukraine, but again, those chapters we will deal with them tomorrow.

Introduction to Item 4: Global food security challenges and drivers

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

As the world was beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine rattled the already volatile food and energy markets, amplifying the impact of existing drivers and posing new challenges for global food security. Encouraging signs of economic recovery from the pandemic and projections of a decline in poverty and hunger were tempered by rising and more volatile food and energy prices. Building on the Council document CL 172/5 (April 2023), the present document (CL

174/4) provides an update on the global food security situation. Drivers of hunger and food insecurity are presented, including conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns, and climate variability, as well as the impact of urbanization. Current and longer-term threats to global food security are also identified. The last section of the document presents an update on the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

No progress has been made on global food insecurity, according to the most recent assessment presented in the 2023 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)*. Hunger and food insecurity remain far above pre-COVID-19-pandemic levels and are far off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. Global hunger, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment (SDG Indicator 2.1.1), remained relatively unchanged from 2021 to 2022, affecting around 9.2 percent of the world population in 2022, compared with 7.9 percent in 2019. It is estimated that between 691 and 783 million people in the world faced hunger in 2022. Considering the midrange (about 735 million), 122 million more people faced hunger in 2022 than in 2019, before the global pandemic.

The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity at the global level (SDG Indicator 2.1.2) remained unchanged for the second year in a row after increasing sharply from 2019 to 2020. About 29.6 percent of the global population – 2.4 billion people – were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, of which about 900 million (11.3 percent of people in the world) were severely food insecure. Worldwide, food insecurity disproportionately affects women and people living in rural areas.

Since 2017, the SOFI report has identified and analysed the major drivers behind the increasing trends of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the world. Strong evidence has emerged pointing to conflict, climate variability and extremes, and economic slowdowns and downturns as the three major drivers external to agrifood systems that are behind the food insecurity of millions of people. The adverse effect of these drivers is exacerbated by poverty and inequality, which are structural causes of food insecurity, and by the unaffordability of healthy diets, a driver internal to agrifood systems.

These drivers are not only behind structural, long-term chronic food insecurity. Conflict, economic shocks and weather extremes are also the main drivers of the current high levels of acute food insecurity situations that require urgent humanitarian response. This can be expected, as chronic and acute food insecurity are not unrelated phenomena; in fact, shocks and protracted crises that drive acute food insecurity can occur so often and repeatedly that they provoke deterioration in chronic, more long-term structural food insecurity.

Both the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine are manifestations of these major drivers on a global scale. The COVID-19 pandemic and efforts to contain it unleashed one of the worst global economic recessions in decades. The war in Ukraine has had significant economic repercussions in terms of global food, agricultural inputs and energy prices.

In the last ten years, conflicts, climate extremes and economic shocks have been increasing in frequency and intensity and are more often occurring in combination in several countries. Most chronically undernourished people live in low- and middle-income countries affected by multiple drivers. Countries affected by multiple drivers have shown increases in the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) that are up to 12 times larger than the increase seen in countries affected by only a single driver.

There is no doubt that the major drivers of food insecurity will continue, requiring countries to take actions to build resilience against them. However, urbanization is a megatrend that must be factored into our efforts to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms. By 2050, it is projected that almost seven in ten people will live in cities, but even today the proportion is about 56 percent. New global estimates show that while food insecurity is higher in rural areas (affecting 33 percent of adults), it is also very high in peri-urban areas (28 percent) and urban areas (26 percent).

Urbanization is increasingly driving changes in agrifood systems across the rural-urban continuum, creating both challenges and opportunities for food security and access to affordable healthy diets. Urbanization is leading to rising and changing food demand and shifts in patterns of food supply – especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, the two regions exhibiting the highest urbanization rates.

CHAIRPERSON

The floor is open now for the Members, let us first give the floor to the Regional or Sub-regional Groups before going into the Members. And again, you know our respectful time setting – five minutes for Regional Groups, three minutes for Members.

Sr. Gonzalo EIRIZ GERVÁS (España)

Tengo el honor de hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (EU) y sus 27 Estados Miembros.

Antes de comenzar, quisiéramos manifestar que nos hubiera gustado que en los documentos de trabajo de algunos puntos de la Agenda hubieran sido publicados con anterioridad para facilitar y acelerar el trabajo de preparación del Consejo por parte de los Miembros, sobre todo de las delegaciones más pequeñas.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros recuerdan la decisión de la Conferencia de aumentar el presupuesto de la FAO en un 5,6 %. Los Miembros subrayaron claramente sus prioridades para la FAO y solicitaron que la dirección identificara ahorros y eficiencias e informara sobre ellos. Los Miembros también solicitaron un plan a más largo plazo sobre cómo se abordarán y cuantificarán estas cuestiones.

Tomamos nota de los ajustes del documento al *Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto (PTP) 2024-2025 (CL 174/3)*. Agradecemos a la FAO por abordar varias cuestiones importantes y tomamos nota de las nuevas propuestas del Director-General.

También observamos que varias recomendaciones y prioridades del 172º Consejo de la FAO no se implementan plenamente en el *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2024-2025*, con recursos adicionales, tales como: importancia de las funciones de supervisión, control interno y funciones de apoyo, protección y financiación del trabajo normativo y técnico de la FAO. La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros apoyan varias de las propuestas, como trasladar la Escuela de Campo para Agricultores a la Oficina de Innovación (OIN) para aumentar así el impacto y el efecto catalizador; o la propuesta de separar el trabajo sobre asociaciones de la movilización de los recursos. Sin embargo, hay otras propuestas para las cuales la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros necesitan más claridad y una mejor comprensión de hasta qué punto cumplirían realmente sus objetivos. La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros también quisieran destacar que nos hubiera gustado ver como las orientaciones de los Miembros, expresadas en el 172º Consejo y en el 43º período de sesiones de la Conferencia, se reflejaran mejor en los ajustes del Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP).

Tenemos los siguientes comentarios sobre las propuestas en el documento de la FAO:

En primer lugar, la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros queremos enfatizar que la incorporación de la perspectiva de género y el enfoque en la juventud son muy importantes y agradecemos que la FAO subraye su importancia. Acogemos con satisfacción el hecho de que tenemos una visión compartida sobre la necesidad de la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y los jóvenes. Estamos así mismo dispuestos a debatir la mejor manera de alcanzar estos objetivos. En este sentido, apoyamos firmemente el trabajo realizado por la unidad técnica para la Transformación Rural y la Igualdad de Género (ESP) y continuamos apoyando su papel de brindar orientación y métodos para lograr un cambio cultural transformador.

También reconocemos el papel de la división de Recursos Humanos (CSH). Sin embargo, creemos, a pesar de la nota informativa divulgada sobre el tema y expresada también por el Comité del Programa (PC) y la Reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa y el Comité de Finanzas (¿acrónimo?), que se necesita más información para comprender plenamente la propuesta de establecer una Oficina para jóvenes y mujeres, especialmente la naturaleza dual de la Oficina, abordando, por un lado, la gobernanza interna y, por el otro, su papel en la ejecución y la divulgación de la FAO. Aún no está claro cómo contribuirá a la integración de la igualdad de género en la Organización, en particular sus vínculos con las estructuras existentes, y consideramos que la propuesta sobre recursos y la información sobre los resultados previstos es insatisfactoria y no está en línea con las orientaciones de los Miembros. Por lo tanto, solicitamos una presentación clara de alternativas, teniendo en cuenta la recientemente creada Oficina de la Juventud de las Naciones Unidas y los flujos de trabajo de ONU Mujeres, para evitar la superposición y duplicación de actividades en el sistema de las Naciones

Unidas. Además, la Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros quisieran más aclaraciones sobre los vínculos entre la Oficina y el Foro Mundial de la Alimentación (WFF), recordando que los Miembros han subrayado que el Foro Mundial de la Alimentación debería financiarse mediante financiación voluntaria.

Tomamos nota de la ambición de la FAO de establecer centros regionales de conocimiento y subrayamos que los órganos rectores deben participar en este proceso. Los órganos de gobierno deben supervisar un proceso de selección competitivo y transparente.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros apoyan la integración del papel de Jefe de Estadística (ESS) en el mandato del Director de la ESS con el fin de consolidar las funciones estadísticas. Sin embargo, nos gustaría pedir que se aclare cómo se garantizará la capacidad y la calidad del trabajo estadístico de la FAO, que es un área de trabajo importante y en crecimiento, como serán aseguradas tras la reducción prevista en el personal estadístico.

En cuanto a las medidas de ahorro y eficiencia, observamos que la sección del documento describe el trabajo en progreso, en lugar de un plan sobre cómo la organización pretende informar a los miembros y qué resultados prevé. Por lo tanto, reiteramos nuestra solicitud de informes anuales más estructurados sobre la implementación de las iniciativas planificadas a través de un plan de negocios sólido, que detalle las inversiones esperadas y los resultados y beneficios esperados, así como la forma en que la FAO pretende medir este éxito. Alentamos a la FAO a buscar buenos ejemplos de presentación de informes anuales en otras Organizaciones del sistema de las Naciones Unidas como fuente de inspiración, a fin de lograr una mayor transparencia, rendición de cuentas, responsabilidad e inclusividad de la Organización.

El equilibrio entre las contribuciones asignadas y las voluntarias sigue siendo un desafío, sobre todo desde el punto de vista de la gobernanza. Se necesita una recuperación de costes clara y realista donde los servicios centrales, financiados con cuotas asignadas, también prestan servicios a iniciativas que se financian con contribuciones voluntarias, como por ejemplo, la Iniciativa Mano de la mano (HIHI). Alentamos a la FAO a continuar analizando diferentes escenarios futuros y cómo abordar los riesgos y oportunidades.

Apoyamos cambios que fortalecerán la capacidad de la Organización para salir del pensamiento aislado y aplicar un enfoque sistémico para enfrentar los desafíos. "Una sola salud" para combatir la resistencia a los antimicrobianos (RAM) es una de las áreas de trabajo donde es de primaria importancia.

Esperamos contribuir a un proceso estratégico e inclusivo entre de los Miembros y la administración durante el próximo bienio, de modo que la FAO pueda actuar como organización de conocimientos y optimizar su contribución a la Agenda 2030. Alentamos a la Dirección a continuar el proceso inclusivo de movilización de recursos que se inició esta primavera mediante reuniones con los Miembros.

Ms Praiya SAVETJINDA (Thailand)

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, Thailand has the honor to deliver following joint statement:

At this critical juncture of the global food security, FAO's role is crucial. Given the multifaceted nature of the global food security challenges, the Asia Group highly appreciates comprehensive set of initiatives and responses by FAO. Toward better global food security, in this opportunity, we would like to outline our expectations to FAO as follows.

Monitoring of Impacts: The Asia Group once again emphasizes the role of FAO in monitoring and assessing the impacts of crises on global food security, with focus on root and fundamental causes. We also expect FAO to continue keeping Members regularly informed on the highlights. In this regard, we appreciate the undertaking by Management to provide updated information on the food security emergency in Gaza and other conflicts as noted in paragraph 11(c) of the Programme Committee Report and stress the importance of timely and regular reporting to Members in this regard.

Resilience Building: Given the increasingly frequent climate shocks on agrifood systems, the Asia Group encourages FAO to continue its work to assist Members with resilience building. This would

facilitate more sustainable and stable food production, easing fluctuations.

Market Analysis: Timely and credible market information on food commodities and agricultural inputs are cornerstones for more stable and predictable food production. For this purpose, the Asia Group emphasize the role of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) amongst others, as well as the FAO's analysis efforts with its expertise.

Policy Proposals: The Asia Group welcomes the FAO's policy proposals and technical initiatives in response to the global food security challenges, such as exploration of financing mechanisms in the context of minimizing risks to agrifood systems. We look forward to further updates, following the changing situations.

Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration: Toward elimination of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in a global, regional and country level, the Asia Group urges FAO to continue strengthening the collaboration and coordinated actions with all the relevant counterparts, in particular with other RBAs.

It is difficult to achieve the best all at once, but at least we can achieve better, step by step. Not only relying on FAO, as Members, we should move forward too.

With this in mind, we are ready to contribute to better global food security including through the Asia Pacific Regional Conference scheduled in February 2024, with each Member's unique viewpoints and experiences. We look forward to collaborating with FAO and other regions for better global food security.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

En primer lugar, permítame agradecer a FAO, en particular al Señor Máximo Torero Cullen, por la preparación de este documento; en particular, por las actualizaciones de los principales eventos recientes a nivel mundial.

Como bien lo describe la edición 2023 del estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo no se han logrado progresos en la lucha contra la inseguridad alimentaria mundial encontrándonos por encima de los niveles anteriores a la pandemia de COVID-19 y muy lejos de alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible. En relación con los desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria y factores coadyuvantes contenidos en este informe, tomamos nota de los datos comprobados que señalan que los conflictos, la variabilidad del clima, los fenómenos climáticos extremos y las situaciones de la desaceleración económica y debilitamiento de la economía a nivel mundial, son considerados entre los principales factores que inciden sobre el sistema agroalimentario e impulsan la inseguridad alimentaria de millones de personas.

Sin embargo, consideramos que existen otras variables que afectan directamente la seguridad alimentaria que deberían ser tomadas en cuenta para lograr un análisis integral de los desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria y sus factores coadyuvantes. En particular, nos referimos a los efectos de las ilegales medidas unilaterales, coercitivas y sancionatorias que impiden avanzar en los logros de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) 1 y 2. De la lectura de este documento evidenciamos algunos datos de los ocho países considerados puntos críticos del hambre muy preocupante; o sea, aquellos con un gran número de personas que hacen frente a inseguridad alimentaria aguda, emergencia fase cuatro de la CEF/CH. Cinco de ellos son objeto actualmente de las medidas unilaterales, coercitivas y sanciones.

Podríamos también referirnos a los más de 30 países Miembros de la FAO, algunos de los cuales integran este Consejo, que en su conjunto representan miles de millones de personas afectadas directa o indirectamente en su seguridad alimentaria como producto de esas medidas. En tal sentido, reiteramos nuestra preocupación sobre las repercusiones negativas de la aplicación sistemática y sostenida de medidas coercitivas, unilaterales que siguen perjudicando el comercio internacional, el abastecimiento de alimentos, las operaciones internacionales de los sectores financiero, energético y de transportes, sacudiendo importantes pilares del sistema alimentario mundial en un contexto ya por sí muy precario.

Estas criminales medidas han sido rechazadas por 128 países en el 78 periodo de sesiones de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas., alentamos a que FAO en su próximas evaluaciones e informes sobre la situación de la seguridad alimentaria a nivel mundial aborde las repercusiones no secundarias de estas medidas que afectan e impiden de forma discrecional la plena realización de los ODS 1 y 2, analizándolos de forma integral junto a los factores ya identificados para conocer su real incidencia en la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional mundial.

Por último, agradecemos las actualizaciones sobre la situación de la seguridad alimentaria en Gaza y nos sumamos al llamamiento urgente de ayuda humanitaria internacional para proporcionar asistencia de emergencia a esta población.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines would like to thank the Chief Economist for document *CL 174/4* and his presentation updating us on the global food security situation. We align with the Asia Group Statement delivered by Thailand and would like to offer further comments.

It is regrettable that there is no progress in combating global food insecurity according to the most recent assessment.

It may be recalled as well that in 2022, around 25 countries have reacted to higher food prices by adopting export restrictions affecting over 8 percent of global food trade which aggravated supply chain disruptions. This contributed to global food supply and price speculation which worsened the food insecurity of net food importing developing countries like the Philippines. This year, as noted by the FAO document, world prices of rice, a staple for a large part of the global population, increased significantly in 2023, mostly on account of export bans imposed by major exporting countries. FAO is urged to renew its call for governments to remove export restrictions to help minimize supply disruptions and lower prices. We also call on all members to support the reform initiatives in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to enhance the multilateral rules on export restrictions including on transparency.

We note that strong evidence has emerged pointing to conflicts, economic slowdowns and downturns, and climate variability and extremes, as the three major drivers external to agrifood systems that are behind the continuing food insecurity of millions of people.

Moreover, poverty and inequality and sociocultural stratification, including gender and power dynamics, magnify the negative effects of these key drivers of food insecurity, while urbanization is a megatrend creating both challenges and opportunities for food security.

It is disappointing to note that, among others, investment in innovations, which is crucial to agricultural productivity that benefits the poorest farmers, is insufficient. There is a need for a strong boost in agricultural productivity growth, including through appropriate technologies in a sustainable manner, to avert the vicious cycles of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, especially in low-income countries.

The global food insecurity situation calls for an integrated and coordinated response led by Member countries at the national level, with the support of FAO, the UN and international organizations. We should harness the opportunities while addressing the challenges.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me gustaría comenzar destacando la calidad y amplitud del informe elaborado por el Economista Jefe, que presenta un claro horizonte sobre cuáles son los desafíos estructurales, recurrentes y contemporáneos para alcanzar el hambre cero.

Tal como lo señala el documento, la inseguridad alimentaria y malnutrición no es un fenómeno nuevo y, de hecho, sus orígenes son multicausales, incluyendo conflictos, crisis prolongadas, shocks económicos, inflación global y cambio climático, solo por nombrar solo algunos. Es decir, parte de este andamiaje pluridimensional se explica por la reiterada profundización de las desigualdades en el mundo.

Por su puesto, los feroces impactos de la pandemia del COVID-19 y el conflicto en Ucrania, como se menciona en los párrafos 65 y 74, no han hecho más que agravar estas tendencias. En este punto, el Mapa de la FAO y el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) sobre los “puntos críticos del hambre” demuestra que, en mayor o menor medida, todas las regiones están atravesadas por focos de inseguridad alimentaria grave.

En América Latina y el Caribe se materializa esta situación en Haití y los países del Corredor Seco. África ejemplifica esta crisis, por ejemplo, en la región del Sahel. Y no solo, El Medio Oriente presenta los casos de Yemen, Siria y Gaza como apremiantes. En Asia se señala la situación de Afganistán y, por supuesto, en Europa enfrenta los impactos del conflicto en Ucrania.

Por lo tanto, a raíz de una multi-causalidad de factores enfrentamos una pluri-dimensionalidad de contextos acuciantes en materia de hambre que, lógicamente, necesitan de respuestas de la FAO. Este trabajo es, a su vez, extremadamente complejo porque la priorización de las respuestas podría llevar a la discriminación de los hambrientos, lo cual no sería aceptable.

Nunca estuvimos de acuerdo en colocar una crisis por sobre todas las demás. No estuvimos de acuerdo en el pasado y no estamos de acuerdo hoy tampoco. Frente a este tremendo desafío, entendemos que la FAO ha desplegado una serie de iniciativas no sólo para ofrecer iniciativas técnicas y cooperación en el terreno, pero también para estabilizar los mercados de los alimentos y facilitar el suministro de granos hacia los países en desarrollo evitando la extrema volatilidad de los precios globales. Incluso vemos que, a través del trabajo con Instituciones Financieras Internacionales, se han lanzado programas que buscan atender la necesidad de flujos de recursos para fortalecer economías erosionadas por las crisis.

De todas maneras, sabemos que falta mucho por hacer y que todavía no resulta posible proyectar un horizonte claro de recuperación. Incluso, pensamos que, ante la multi-causalidad de factores, no se le puede exigir a la FAO que provea respuestas que escapen a sus posibilidades reales. En este contexto, pensamos que como aporte constructivo, sería bueno evaluar: primero, la importancia de establecer un marco claro de cooperación entre la FAO, el Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA) y el PMA para abordar los puntos críticos de hambre, para distribuir tareas sin generar solapamientos y construir resiliencia o atender necesidades humanitarias según cada caso; segundo, de qué manera podemos mejorar la priorización de situaciones en función de los datos que aporta el mapa de puntos críticos del hambre, teniendo en cuenta las crisis prolongadas y que todos los escenarios de este tipo merecen atención.

Con estos comentarios, acompañamos el documento.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you to FAO for this background paper. Indeed, it is completely unacceptable that 2.4 billion people (almost 1 in 3 in the world) – were moderately or severely food insecure in 2022, of which about 900 million were severely food insecure.

The United Kingdom (UK) also considers it unacceptable that as per the current trajectory, 600 million will still go to bed hungry every night and be undernourished in 2030.

This is why we held a Global Food Security Summit in London on 20 November to focus attention on the global food security and nutrition crisis, with a strong call to action, in partnership with other leaders on food security and nutrition around the world, on helping boost efforts to achieve Zero Hunger and end malnutrition.

The world needs to better understand how many people are food insecure, how badly, where and why – for this we have the global gold standard for food security monitoring and analysis, the IPC, here in FAO. We are pleased that this is now a global consensus, driving increased coherence, and that other global actors, including the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) are now recognising this gold standard. We now need to secure the funding for IPC to be able to deliver and scale up its excellent work.

We need to all work together to galvanize action for longer term solutions to prevent food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, including through cutting edge science and technology for climate-smart, more nutritious crops and food systems.

The UK highlights support for earlier action, disaster risk reduction and resilience building to prevent famine and improve wider food insecurity. FAO has a key role to play in supporting the international community in this: to act earlier, address the underlying causes of food insecurity, and to build more resilient agriculture and food systems in the face of climate change – using all our shared expertise, finance, science, political and other levers.

The UK urges FAO to continue strengthening its strategic partnerships to deliver better results at country level – including with WFP (and we welcome the joint work on the hunger Hotspots report) and IFAD. Indeed, the document highlights conflict and climate change as key drivers of global food insecurity and we encourage the Rome-based Agencies to provide progress reports on their joint implementation and delivery of results through the Joint Sahel programme in response to the challenges of COVID-19, conflicts and climate change, contributing to the implementation of the G5 Sahel strategy for development and security, and consolidating the livelihoods of small producers, in particular women and young people living in cross-border areas of the region, which, as we have been discussing today, are so critically important.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Let me begin by joining others in thanking the Office of the Chief Economist for the preparation of the paper that we have before us today. Australia remains deeply concerned at the lack of progress made in combating global food insecurity, and we note that achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 will remain out of reach if we do not redouble and better target our efforts.

The 2023 *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report* demonstrates that current policies and programmes aimed at addressing inequities in access to food must be improved.

While we are heartened by the improvements in reducing hunger in some sub-regions in Asia and Latin America, Australia highlights the food security challenges facing Small Island Developing States in the Pacific.

Paragraph 4 of *CL 174/4* indicates Oceania has a relatively low proportion of hunger compared to other regions, and without minimizing the concerns in other regions, we recognize the scarcity of data on Pacific Island countries. This figure for Oceania, which includes Australia and New Zealand, masks a strong regional variation, as well as countries and areas of concern. For example, the prevalence of undernourishment rates in Melanesia are over 21 percent, which is on par with the rates in Africa. We encourage FAO therefore to collaborate with partners to commit resources to improve annual data collection in the Pacific, and provide more disaggregated reporting that notes sub-regional variation.

Australia also emphasizes the inter linkages between climate change and food insecurity. Agriculture across many regions globally continues to be under threat from changing weather patterns. In the Pacific, the effects of climate change are already causing major disruptions and threatening the viability of agricultural production in the region. Therefore, we encourage FAO to invest further resources towards climate adaptation in the Pacific and other Small Island Developing States.

We note the paper emphasizes the need to improve agricultural productivity and increase investment in innovations, to provide a much needed strong boost in agricultural productivity growth, which in a sustainable manner, can help reduce pressure on natural resources and break the cycle of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition.

Australia reiterates the opportunities to repurpose environmentally harmful and trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and support, which are at record levels of over USD 800 million in 2023. This support can be repurposed towards policies, research and development into innovations that promote sustainable agriculture and productivity growth that can deliver safe and nutritious food for current and future generations.

Finally, there are several references in the *paper* to the impacts of trade policies on food availability and affordability. I am not the first today to highlight the example of the increase in rice prices in 2023, which were largely attributed to export bans implemented by some countries. Barriers against open trade of agricultural commodities actively undermines our shared goal towards increasing the global availability of nutritious food. Australia therefore emphasizes the role of predictable, transparent, open and fair markets, underpinned by an effective multilateral trading system as a key element in achieving global food security.

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic Countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country Norway. We fully align ourselves with the EU statement.

The Nordic countries are very concerned about the lack of progress in combating global food insecurity and recognise that conflicts, climate extremes and economic downturns and slowdowns are the main drivers.

Hunger affects around 9.2 percent of the world's population, and nearly 20 percent of the population in Africa, which is extremely concerning.

The humanitarian needs are consuming a large part of international development assistance. The funding gap is increasing. Increased food security and local food production as well as open and predictable global value chains are vital to alleviate humanitarian needs.

There is need for strengthened efforts at local, national, regional, and global levels, and to prioritise the countries and hotspots of highest concern.

Armed violence, in particular increased targeting of civilians, underpins food insecurity and the ongoing upward trajectory in global displacement.

The Nordic countries emphasise that prevention and resilience building are crucial to improve global food security, and that a food systems approach is of utmost importance.

To do so:

We must ensure food security within planetary boundaries. The challenges of development and climate change are highly interlinked.

We have to transform our food systems to reach the goals of the Paris agreement, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Biological Diversity Framework.

We must cultivate the synergies between the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. One good example is the well documented synergy between food security and gender equality: A food secure world requires gender equality and women's empowerment.

As referenced in the document, food insecurity disproportionately affects women in every region of the world, which underlines that women must have equal access to productive resources, services, markets, and institutions to reach full potential.

To do it right, the gender gap must be analysed and addressed.

We emphasise the need for a rights-based approach, in particular the right to food. Human rights and the right to food is not just a moral obligation, but also gives concrete guidance to realise our commitment to leaving no one behind.

It is also important to include fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry interventions in our strategies. This is in line with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy recommendations on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition.

We encourage FAO to continue monitoring the rising levels of global food insecurity, and to provide regular updates, recommendations, and technical advice to support countries' efforts towards achieving sustainable food systems transformation.

We underline that FAO has an important role to play, within humanitarian-development-climate-peace nexus, through collaborative action with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and the wider UN system.

Leveraging comparative advantages to ensure complementarity is essential for successfully delivering results and impact on the ground, as One UN.

In this regard we encourage FAO to continue its work on agriculture in emergencies and we encourage other Members to make financial contributions to the Special Fund for Emergency Activities (SFERA).

Thank you for giving us the floor on this very important topic and for giving us the opportunity to convey our appreciation for FAO's vital contribution to combat global food insecurity.

Mr Su GUO (China) (Original language Chinese)

We agree with the intervention made by Thailand on behalf of the Asia Group.

We express our grave concern about the increasingly serious global food security situation, especially the problem of hunger and malnutrition in developing countries. We agree with the analysis of the global food insecurity situation, extreme weather conditions, economic slowdown and other factors are compounded, we cannot exaggerate one factor, we should have complete and scientific perspective.

We appreciate FAO's specialized analysis on food insecurity, especially the multiple factors which have had greater impact on countries. We also see the challenges and the opportunity that urbanisation has. We encourage FAO to carry out more research on urbanisation demographic changes.

China attaches great importance to food security, while solving the problem of feeding more than 1.4 billion people at home, China has also safeguarded the global food security by successfully putting forward the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and International Cooperation Initiative on food security.

China has donated USD 130 million to the FAO South-South Cooperation Trust Fund in three phases, helping developing countries to raise their food production levels. We have contributed with our efforts.

We are ready to continue to strengthen communication and cooperation with FAO and its Members for more international consensus, and cooperate in the implementation of more practical projects, so as to make positive contributions for global food security.

FAO, as a specialized agency for global food and agriculture, is not an appropriate venue for discussing regional political issues. We should encourage FAO to focus on its mandate, devote resources and energy to substantive Items and avoid politicizing its work.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

Brazil would like to thank FAO's Chief Economist and his team for preparing document *CL 174/4*. As stated in the document, progress in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 has not improved much, and according to the latest *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report*, the number of people facing severe food and nutritional insecurity reached approximately 745 million people in 2022.

Hunger is the perverse manifestation of persistent structural poverty and inequality, the absence of effective policies, resources, capacity and safety nets to address and alleviate poverty, enable hunger by leaving poor people without the means to purchase or produce sufficient nutritionally adequate food.

The cascading crisis the world has been facing showed that economic and climate related shocks, as well as pandemics and conflicts, can halt or even undo progress in eradicating poverty and hunger and reducing inequalities.

Shocks and crises throw large contingents of people into poverty and food insecurity through interlinked channels such as loss of employment, livelihoods, reduced food production, food inflation and supply chain disruption. The uneven impact of those shocks across the world demonstrates that even in countries severely affected by food shocks, it is never the rich and almost never the middle classes who are affected by hunger and deprivation.

On 1 December Brazil began its year mandate at the Group of Twenty (G20) presidency. Brazil is proposing a global alliance against hunger and poverty, and has established a specific G20 task force to discuss it, linking both the Sherpa and finance tracks. The alliance is expected to launch at the G20 Summit of Rio of 2024. It will be open to Member and non-Member countries, to private sectors, to donors, to international financial institutions that commit to the three pillars, the national pillar of implementation, the financial pillar and the knowledge pillar.

We are very glad that we can count on FAO in this endeavour. FAO has been one of the 12 international organizations that has been invited to work with the G20 during this year. It is FAO's work, including by preparing studies on supply, adequate and nutritional food for all, while contributing to poverty reduction that will help us. FAO will also contribute to a Report on funding and resource mobilization to fight hunger and poverty.

In the challenging context we now face, countries should join forces and help FAO's work on reducing food insecurity and achieving SDG 1 and 2.

Mr Anatoliy SHATKOVSKYY (Canada)

The trends reported in the 2023 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report*, and the *Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC)*, should be deeply concerning to us all. We need to address underlying drivers of hunger, acute food insecurity, and malnutrition, if we are to make any progress in the coming years on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.

While the gender gap in food security, which had widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, was reported to have narrowed in 2022, we should recall the FAO's findings from the *Status of Women in the Agrifood Systems Report*, and note that more remains to be done to regain the progress we expected.

First, we must continue to focus our diplomatic networks and efforts on preventing and resolving conflicts, as this remains integral to fighting hunger and addressing food insecurity. We welcome FAO continuing to play a role at the humanitarian development peace nexus.

Second, on climate variability, we expect extreme weather events will continue to intensify in severity and frequency, resulting in communities facing recurrent crises of food availability and affordability. As such, we cannot tackle food insecurity without climate action, which is why Canada's USD 5.3 billion climate finance commitment continues to invest in climate-smart agriculture as one of its four pillars.

Similarly, the promotion of biological diversity will help ecosystems adapt to a changing climate. Canada was the first country to commit USD 200 million to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Fund this year, and we encourage others to also contribute. We believe FAO has an important role to play in promoting climate and biodiversity efforts in agri-food systems, demonstrating their inter linkages, and fostering and disseminating innovative practices.

FAO is also in a unique position to bring key stakeholders together towards an integrated approach for our common challenges.

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Enfin, le Canada croit que le renforcement de la résilience des systèmes agricoles élémentaires mondiaux aidera les collectivités à résister aux chocs économiques et à la volatilité, comme ceux qui ont découlé de l'invasion de l'Ukraine par la Fédération de Russie ou des restrictions liées à la pandémie. Ces efforts doivent aussi comprendre des investissements dans l'autonomisation économique des femmes.

Le Canada demeure déterminé à lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire partout dans le monde. Au cours de l'exercice 2022-2023, nous avons déboursé 672 millions de dollars en aides à long terme pour le développement de l'agriculture et des systèmes alimentaires. Cette année, le Canada a annoncé une contribution de 10 millions de dollars au Mécanisme africain de financement de développement des engrais (MAFDE), afin d'améliorer l'accessibilité et l'abordabilité des engrais pour les petits exploitants agricoles en Afrique.

Nous devons faire tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir et utiliser les leviers à notre disposition pour mieux nous approcher des cibles liées à l'Objectif de Développement Durable 2 et endiguer les inégalités et les conflits croissants afin de favoriser un monde plus pacifique et durable.

Mr Oliver MELLENTIN (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. Germany is strongly concerned about conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the climate and biodiversity crisis, economic slowdowns and turn downs, and increasing inequalities as key drivers of hunger and malnutrition in the world.

We are strongly committed to tackling the global food and nutrition security crisis. In response, we released a record sum of EUR 5 million related to food security in 2022. The Global Alliance for Food Security (GAFS) provides a platform of solidarity that enables swift, agile and coordinated action to tackle the global food security crisis, and should be further strengthened.

Germany advocates for the human right to adequate food, for the holistic, inclusive, multi sectoral approach to food security and nutrition, by increasing our global efforts to put it into action through a transformation towards sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems.

We should build on the results of the United Nations (UN) Food Systems Summit, its stocktaking moment, as well as the multilateral agreed and inclusively developed policy guidelines and recommendations of the Committee of World Food Security (CFS).

The voluntary guidelines on the realization of the right to food were adopted by FAO Council in 2004 and have not lost any of its relevance in the 20 years of their existence. We have to protect the most vulnerable whom the food and nutrition crisis is hitting the hardest, and promote a multi sectoral approach for tackling food insecurity, health and malnutrition. Women and children are more likely to be affected by food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition.

We further welcome measures to promote research for diversifying agricultural production and promoting traditional and neglected crops, with a high potential especially for smallholder farmers, to contribute to enhanced food security and improve nutrition, climate adaptation, drought resilience, amongst many other aspects.

Finally, for Germany, sustainability is fundamental for ensuring food systems resilience. Therefore Germany has significantly increased its support of projects focusing on sustainable food systems transformation, considering the local needs in 2023.

We ask FAO to intensify cooperation with other UN organizations and create synergies in order to accelerate food systems transformation.

Mr Hyungsik KIM (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea fully aligns itself with the joint statements of the Asian Regional Group delivered by Thailand. While positive economic recovery signs and reduced poverty and hunger projections were evident post-pandemic, these gains were overshadowed by escalating and unpredictable food and energy prices. Factors such as conflicts, economic downturns, climate variability, continue to drive hunger and food insecurity.

The Republic of Korea urges FAO to diligently monitor global food security and agricultural commodity markets, reporting regularly in line with its mandates as a specialized knowledge institution.

Collaborating with initiatives like the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), FAO should analyse global food prices and supply, providing accurate and timely information to Member States for informed decision-making.

Recognizing FAO's pivotal role in analysing and reporting on the current situation, we stress its importance as a neutral technical platform for policy, dialogue and coordination. This ensures evidence-based decision-making and minimizes risks of food supply chain disruptions, allowing efficient global trade in food and agricultural commodities.

We request FAO to collaborate closely with other United Nations (UN) agencies and relevant bodies, including Rome-based agencies, to offer policy recommendations and support humanitarian assistance. Special attention should be given to internally displaced people and migrants, focusing on the recovery and resilience of the food and agricultural sector worldwide. The Rome-based agencies (RBAs), led by FAO, should offer comprehensive and practical solutions to vulnerable countries through close collaboration.

Additionally, FAO should focus on collecting and disseminating best practices, policy consulting and technology transfer. Through these efforts, FAO should concentrate on providing long-term solutions, such as enhancing resilience and capacity-building to countries facing food crises.

We also emphasize the need to maintain the proper functioning of global food supply chains, discouraging measures that disrupt international trade. All countries are encouraged to keep their trade open, particularly for food and agricultural products, fertilizers, and other inputs, avoiding unjustified restrictions.

In these challenging times, maintaining the functionality of the global food supply chain is crucial for food security. The international community, including Members, must unite efforts to provide practical support to the vulnerable countries and groups.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Japan aligned itself with the Asia Group statement delivered by Thailand, and Australia's comments on the importance of open and unrestricted trade. Japan in particular strongly believes that comprehensive, accurate, and timely provision of data and analysis is the cornerstone for any work done by FAO to contribute to global security.

Japan firmly supports the work of Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and related FAO's analysis efforts with its expertise. Along with such efforts to build a solid basis for market analysis, we are also keen to support FAO's increased resilience-building efforts in countries with fragile situations, in collaboration with other Rome-based agencies (RBAs) and agencies, avoiding duplication and exploiting the synergies to the maximum degree.

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

We thank FAO for circulating the comprehensive update on the global food security challenges and its drivers.

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2023 Report portrays a dim picture and reaffirms the urgent need to redouble and better target our efforts towards ending food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in all its forms by 2030, otherwise our goal will remain remote and elusive.

As indicated in the *SOFI Report*, the intensification of the combination of major drivers of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, that is conflict, climate extremes, economic slowdowns and downturns, and growing inequality, continue to pose challenges to our efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030. There is no doubt that these threats will continue requiring the world to be steadfast in building resilience against them.

Food insecurity affects women more than men in every region in the world, however we take note that the gender gap in food insecurity at the global level, which had widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, narrowed from 3.8 percent in 2021 to 2.4 percent in 2022. This suggests that the disproportionate impact of pandemic on women's food insecurity continue to ease globally and in some regions.

We take note that the major external drivers behind the increasing trends of hunger, food insecurity and nutrition in most regions in the world and affecting millions of people, COVID-19 lockdowns, extreme events, conflict, high fuel prices have been immense. Strong evidence has emerged pointing to the conflict, climate variability and extremes as major drivers.

Kenya has faced many foods insecurity shocks or triggers, including cyclic occurrence of droughts, floods and conflicts, which threaten to undo all the development gains and our efforts to address food insecurity. Kenya's economy continues to rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2022, but

with real gross domestic product increasing by 6 percent in the first half of 2022. However, consecutive failed seasons, prolonged drought and other global crises, prolonged the humanitarian crisis, thereby weakening our capacity to respond.

In 2022, over 4.5 million people were in crisis and 2.5 million heads of cattle were lost. In response, by February 2023, Kenya had spent billions of shillings on humanitarian response from both public, private sector and development partners' efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of drought in saving lives and livelihoods.

We welcome the United Nations (UN) Secretary General's High Impact Initiative on Food Systems Transformation, transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger launched during the SDG Action Weekend. Kenya has enhanced partnerships and collaborations towards these two initiatives, and we believe that FAO should follow this initiative closely.

We support a strong collaboration with the UN and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, Rome-based agencies (RBAs), and other relevant stakeholders, enhance synergies relevant for high impact and to avoid duplication in terms of financial time and human resource matters. This will allow us to move towards the effective, sustainable transformation of food systems to deliver for people, planet and prosperity, in a way that improves access to healthy diets conducive to the realization of the right to adequate food.

The Government of Kenya has prioritized food nutrition security and rolled out a bottom-up transformation agenda, which is targeting activities and sectors that have strong economic transformation impact, with agriculture taking the lead through increased agricultural competitiveness and productivity.

Healthy, diversified diets also promoted youth and women inclusivity and empowerment, climate action for conservation of our natural resources and resilience-building, including digitization of our cultural processes and systems and transaction. This also includes enhancing partnerships for joint action and building synergies.

Kenya has also the 10-year bold and ambitious agriculture sector growth and transformation strategy, that draws on the status of our culture today to address challenges, and informs our food systems transformation agenda. This will transform our agriculture sector in Kenya to drive 100 percent food and nutrition security and ensure food security is affordable, especially for those in need.

Kenya takes note of the global security challenges and its drivers and urges FAO to take appropriate action within its mandate to support this initiative.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá)

Panamá agradece por la preparación de este documento que nos actualiza en los desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes y concordamos con los factores que impulsan el hambre y la inseguridad alimentaria, entre ellos los conflictos, las situaciones de desaceleración y debilitamiento de las economías, así como la variabilidad del clima.

En ese sentido, queremos hacer un llamado para que la FAO dedique mayores recursos técnicos para apoyar a los países en la preparación sobre los efectos más destructivos del clima, como son las sequías e inundaciones que, como indicó mi colega de Argentina, es una situación repetitiva en todas las regiones del planeta. Actualmente nos encontramos a las puertas de una sequía prolongada que amenaza la disponibilidad de agua que reducirá los rendimientos de los cultivos.

Por otro lado, también se pronostican inundaciones que causarán pérdidas en los cultivos y afectarán la infraestructura agrícola. Ambos son efectos extremos del cambio climático y que afectan negativamente la producción, distribución y acceso a los alimentos. Ante esta problemática, exhortamos a la FAO para que desempeñe un papel fundamental en acompañar a los países en la preparación contra sequías e inundaciones en el marco de la seguridad alimentaria donde se requiere una respuesta coordinada a nivel internacional.

Mr José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Chile concuerda en la necesidad imperiosa de seguir trabajando de manera prioritaria sobre los factores coadyuvantes de las causas del hambre y la inseguridad alimentaria, en particular, los conflictos, las desaceleraciones y recesiones económicas y la variabilidad del clima, así como las repercusiones de la urbanización como lo puntualiza el informe. Ello, en un ámbito tradicionalmente marcado por la inequidad de género y que exige mayores y mejores esfuerzos en términos de inclusión.

Tal como lo reflejan los datos del reporte La Seguridad Alimentaria y la Nutrición en el Mundo (SOFI) 2023, lamentablemente no se han registrado avances en cuanto al nivel de seguridad alimentaria mundial y nos encontramos lejos de la consecución del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 2. Sobre este punto, Chile quisiera recordar que en julio de 2024 se celebrará el foro político de alto nivel sobre el desarrollo sostenible bajo los auspicios del Consejo Económico y Social, ECOSOC, que mi país preside y que ha definido como tema rector justamente el reforzar la Agenda 2030 y erradicar la pobreza en tiempos de crisis múltiples, la aplicación eficaz de soluciones sostenibles, resilientes e innovadoras. Esto representa una oportunidad para avanzar en nuestra meta común y también para resaltar en la declaración política de este foro el trabajo de los Estados en el Consejo de la FAO, quienes a través de la búsqueda y promoción de soluciones multilaterales impulsamos medidas que nos permitan avanzar en la Agenda 2030 y en el cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

En cuanto al impacto del cambio climático en la seguridad alimentaria estamos muy atentos a los resultados de la conferencia de las partes en la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Cambio Climático, la COP 28 en Dubái, y a dar soporte a las iniciativas regionales que promuevan las acciones de fortalecimiento entre sistemas alimentarios y la acción por el clima. En este sentido, no caben dudas de que, en la búsqueda de soluciones resilientes para asegurar sistemas alimentarios sostenibles, un elemento principal lo constituye la transición energética hacia nuevas fuentes renovables, tema en el cual, Chile está muy dispuesto a compartir sus buenas prácticas en conjunto con otros actores internacionales, incluido el mundo académico, el mundo científico, el sector privado y el conjunto de la sociedad civil.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns itself with the Asia group statement made by Thailand. As the leading organization that leads international efforts to defeat hunger, we are moving further and further away from the goal. We ignore all the warnings, defy all scientific evidence, and often adding fuel to the fire. By September of 2023, 238 million people have already faced food insecurity are in need of urgent assistance.

The last eight weeks, this number has increased by at least 2 million amongst of them are Palestinian civilians, including women and children are suffering as a result of the attacks in Gaza. Last year, nearly one in 10 faced a lack of food. As these distressing trends remain unchanged, the world will not achieve the goal of ending hunger by 2030. In this regard, three points need to be strengthened further. First, looking ahead FAO needs to explore how to implement its programs and activities in the wider context of humanitarian development peace Nexus.

FAO programs on resilience should be adapted to the reality some are now operating under the fragile or peace building context. These should be further strengthened. Of course, FAO cannot do this alone. FAO must work with other United Nations (UN) agencies to succeed. Second is to keep the food transformation on track and ensure protection and resilience for small holders. Just three days ago at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Indonesia, along with 134 other countries agreed transforming food systems in the face of climate change and to put agrifood systems at the heart of our climate plans.

More needs to be done concretely in implementing FAO climate change strategy and ensuring small holders could get technical assistance, skills, capacity and technology to adapt and mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. Third, stronger cooperation with regional and sub-regional organization is a must. We appreciate the increasing number of partnerships at the regional and sub-regional levels that are collaborating on the ground from production side, institutional strengthening,

capacity building of farmers to joint funding. Indonesia as the chair of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 2023 is ready to continue our good work in this regard.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India recognizes the importance of food security and nutrition to all in the context of global, regional, and national food security. While several nations have made commendable progress in reducing extreme poverty, it is evident from *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report* that we remain considerably distant from realizing the goals outlined in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of achieving Zero Hunger.

While the three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) are working relentlessly with nations and international organizations to create crisis resilient food systems, we believe the scale of the problem demands coordinated policy responses through multifaceted approach, supported by concrete actions.

The *SOFI Report* for the first time highlights the relationship of urban and rural areas in food security and nutrition. While the Report is a good beginning, we believe more work with deeper analysis is required to better understand the multi-dimensional facets of food security in rural-urban continuum. We hope *SOFI* will continue to come out with newer insights.

Given the responsibility to feed 1.4 billion population, India addresses the food topic of food security and nutrition with great commitment through policies and programs aimed at inclusive, resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems. We implement some of the world's largest food safety programs, targeting vulnerable groups through a lifecycle approach.

We are providing free food grains to the cost of \$24 billion for 800 million population on a monthly basis. And recently we extended this for another 5 years at a cost of \$24 billion. We provide school meals to 120 million children on a daily basis.

India is at the forefront of promoting agriculture diversity, adopting climate smart approaches, strengthening infrastructure, empowering women and youth, promoting women-led development, promoting inclusive and resilient value chains, one health approach, accelerating innovation and digital technologies, scaling up public-private investments, research and research and development.

We are moving from crops to crop plus strategy, underscoring the importance of horticulture, livestock, dairy, and fisheries in building resilience and sustainability. We believe financial inclusion, access to agriculture credit and crop insurances are three important instruments for building resilience.

This year we are happy to say that we are earmarked \$250 billion for providing agriculture credit, forging resilience, necessary strengthening and collection of data and related analysis tools for evidence-based decision making. Developing countries often face challenges in accessing new technology and data collection analysis. We see an important role for FAO in this regard. We also see the need for more engagement by the agencies bringing out important Reports like *SOFI* with countries to better understand, reflect the views of the later while publishing country specific data.

Lastly, we look up to FAO for guiding our collective actions through technical cooperation and policy recommendations to address the complex and interconnected challenges of food security and nutrition, particularly for the nations of the global south where the issue of food securities is of paramount importance. India would be happy to continue to contribute its part to it.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America (USA) appreciates FAOs' efforts to produce this comprehensive Report, which is a stark reminder of the essential role of FAO in combating hunger around the world. It highlights the imperative for this governing body to do all that we can to ensure FAO is able to deliver on its mandate for the world's most vulnerable populations.

As we all know, little progress has been made in combating global food insecurity according to the 2023 version of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report*. Alarmingly, as we've already heard from many others here today the *SOFI Report* estimates that Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, will result in an additional 23 million more people suffering from

hunger by 2030. We plan to discuss this and the situation in Gaza in more detail during Agenda Items 5 and 6.

The FAO and World Food Programme (WFP) *Hunger Hotspots Report* released last month presents a somber outlook for 18 identified hunger hotspots and further demonstrates the complexity and interaction of conflict, climate change, and economic slowdowns and downturns on global food security. The *Report* highlights that conflict will continue to exacerbate already limited access and availability to food as well as livelihoods contributing to deepening and protracted food crises. The *Report* also highlights a common theme among many of the hunger hotspots.

The intensity and frequency of climate related events are severely impacting agricultural production in areas that are already grappling with acute food insecurity. We've seen the impacts of floods, droughts, and extreme temperatures on agricultural production and global food security. Around the world farmers confront soaring temperatures, eroding soil and disappearing groundwater that reduces yields. It makes crops less nutritious. By 2050, climate change could cut output by as much as 30 percent, even as global food demand increases by over 50 percent. While land degradation will place additional constraints on food production and exacerbate climate change impacts. And we know that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by all of this.

Globally, 126 million more women than men are food insecure and that gap sadly, is growing. As urgent as the situation is now, we can also see what's coming if we don't take the necessary steps to address it. Mitigating climate impacts is central to the United States of America response to strengthening global food security.

Just a few days ago in line with our work to support long-term efforts through Feed the Future, our global hunger and food security initiative, Secretary Blinken announced at the Conference of the Parties (COP28) a USD 50 million USA contribution to support the work of the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) initiative pending congressional notification and availability of funds. The support to reverse soil degradation and support for nutritious traditional crops starting on the African continent comes at just the right time.

This is in addition to the USD 17.5 billion that the USA has already provided since January, 2021 to combat hunger and strengthen food security worldwide. We remain committed to responding to continued needs for emergency humanitarian and agricultural assistance and to building more resilient, sustainable food systems that can withstand shocks, including from the cascading effects of climate change and conflict. While the global food security outlook is dismal, the USA remains hopeful. We see encouraging signs of recovery even though those are tempered by rising in more volatile food and energy prices.

However, we cannot continue with business as usual. We must strengthen global collaboration and coordination on food security to reach new heights in our giving. The status quo is not enough to meet the unprecedented needs facing us now. In conclusion, Secretary Antony Blinken said at the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit on September 19th, the USA remains unwavering in our commitment to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

That commitment includes SDG-2 and we will continue to do our part in close partnership with other Members, with countries from around the world to end hunger working together we can make a better world. So, let us get it done.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Please allow me to read a message from our Deputy Minister of Agriculture and food which is planned for this afternoon. Allow me on behalf of the Ministry to greet the Members of the FAO Council and observers.

The state of the world's economy can be characterized at the moment as turbulent. We can see this as a high level of instability in the global economic system and under these conditions, food security remains one of the priorities for socioeconomic policy in any state. It is linked to the achievement on a national level of the sustainable development goal too. The Republic of Belarus in achieving this goal has demonstrated some positive results on the basis of the sustainability. Its national food system and the priority of developing its agriculture.

The sector is 7 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and it creates more than 250 000 jobs. The National Standardization Certification System on the basis of international requirements guarantees the production of safe food products. We are implementing new resource saving innovative technologies. This is aimed at forming competitive advantages for Belarusian goods. First and foremost, in improving quality and reducing the cost and developing human resources, Belarus is significantly contributing to ensuring global food security.

The country exports agricultural products and food to more than a hundred countries in the world. Belarus's share of the global supply of potassium fertilizers is round about 20 percent. Despite the fact that in 2022 we saw an unprecedented sanction pressure and a number of external challenges, the country managed not only to increase its production volumes, but it increased its export through expanding the geography of its supply and diversifying its goods.

In 2022, the export of Agrifood goods was USD 8.3 billion and achieved a maximum level in the history of the independence of the republic. Belarus is one of the largest exporters of milk in the world, also of hay feeds, fiber Grape seed, oil sausages, sugar and poultry meat.

Given that the unstable international economic situation and uncooperative behavior by a number of other states, we continue to progress. We are implementing innovative and investment projects. We are working together with partners from the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and with the Russian Federation for selection and sea breeding and livestock breeding and so on.

Belarus has often drawn attention to the fact that the introduction by the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) in contra circumvention of the UN Security Council of unilateral coercive measures against the Belarusian potassium undermines the basis of global food security. So, we believe that a policy of such restricting measures could be rejected. This was discussed at the 43rd Conference of the FAO and countries who did not have access to fertilizers called for this.

It was also mentioned the FAO systems telling it and also at the it in the declaration of the international Conference on food security. Almost a third of the people on the planet are encountering food insecurity problems and this is a problem which needs to be resolved through joint actions. Member states, the FAO can and must take swift measures, which in the near future will have a positive impact on global food security.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I turn the floor to the Observers, is there any other Member of the Council who wants to take the floor?

Sra. Claudia GONZÁLEZ TOLEDO (Cuba) (Observador)

Agradecemos la información proporcionada en el documento *CL174/4* sobre los desafíos de la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes. Reconocemos la calidad del documento que expone una alarmante situación global e identifica a los conflictos, la variabilidad del clima, los fenómenos climáticos externos, y las situaciones de desaceleración económica y debilitamiento de la economía como los tres principales factores externos a los sistemas alimentarios que impulsan a la seguridad alimentaria a millones de personas.

Si bien coincidimos en la importancia de abordar esos factores, algunos de los cuales también inciden de forma directa a mi país, notamos que no se mencionan las medidas coercitivas unilaterales contrarias a derecho internacional, como impulsar la inseguridad alimentaria en las poblaciones que la padecen. Resulta contradictorio que varios de los países señalados como puntos críticos del hambre en los párrafos 18, 19 y 20 están sometidos a la imposición de estas medidas.

En el caso de Cuba, el bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de América ha ocasionado afectaciones en la rama de la alimentación y la agricultura estimadas en 273 390 800 USD solo en el período comprendido entre marzo de 2022 y febrero de 2023. El impacto negativo del cerco económico en el acceso a insumos, materias primas, productos químicos y tecnologías para los procesos productivos ha ocasionado una considerable disminución de

la producción nacional. Al propio tiempo, la inclusión de Cuba en la lista arbitraria y unilateral de países patrocinadores del terrorismo dificulta transacciones y acceso a créditos.

Hacemos un llamado a poner fin a las medidas coercitivas unilaterales contrarias a derecho internacional y respetar el párrafo 30 de la Agenda 2030 y el resto de los acuerdos multilaterales. Instamos a la FAO a realizar un estudio sobre cómo este tipo de medidas impactan los sistemas alimentarios de los más de 30 países que lo sufren, la mayoría países en desarrollo.

Agradecemos la actualización sobre la situación en Gaza. Reiteramos nuestra profunda preocupación por las graves violaciones del derecho a la alimentación y al derecho internacional que se cometen contra el pueblo palestino sobre lo que nos referiremos en el tema cinco de la Agenda.

Reafirmamos nuestro compromiso de continuar trabajando mancomunadamente para fortalecer el multilateralismo, la solidaridad y la cooperación internacional incluida la cooperación Sur-Sur y triangular.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the United States for a right to reply.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

First of all, economic pressure measures including sanctions are a legitimate, important, appropriate, and effective tool for responding to harmful activity and addressing threats to peace and security.

The United States of America (USA) is not alone in that view or the practice. I will say that in cases where the USA has applied sanctions, we've done so in accordance with international law and with specific objectives in mind, including as a means to promote a return to rule of law or democratic systems, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, or to respond to threats of international peace and security.

We also regret that another Member state has decided to use a multilateral forum to raise bilateral issues. I will exercise my right of reply to call out Cuba's statement on the embargo. There are multiple exemptions and authorizations under the US embargo in Cuba and the USA has four decades permitted the export to Cuba of USA agricultural products, medicine, medical devices, and other humanitarian supplies. Furthermore, the embargo does not prohibit other countries from trading with Cuba.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Belarus right to reply.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

There cannot be any legitimate basis for introducing sanctions against agricultural fertilizers. It is a genocide when it comes to the population of the countries that use these fertilizers. The only legitimate basis for introducing sanctions can be a decision of the United Nation (UN) Security Council, but we are not the right forum to discuss this problem. And once again, I would like to repeat opposition, there cannot be any justification for sanctions against agricultural fertilizers.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Cuba for the right to reply, but it is getting late, distinguished delegates, dear friends. 82e tus focus on the issue.

Sra. Claudia GONZÁLEZ TOLEDO (Cuba) (Observador)

Respecto a las medidas que Cuba enfrenta hace más de 60 años, resulta innegable el efecto que tiene sobre el pueblo cubano y además que es Estados Unidos el que viola por más de 30 años una resolución de Naciones Unidas. Este año, la Asamblea General adoptó por vez 31 con 182 votos a favor y solamente 2 en contra y 1 abstención el levantamiento del bloqueo comercial, económico y financiero.

Además, la FAO, este organismo que centra sus labores en la seguridad alimentaria ha respondido una nota del Secretario-General de las Naciones Unidas donde ha reconocido en sus respuestas que, y voy

a citar, *“en conjunto el embargo tiene implicaciones muy negativas para la balanza comercial y los ingresos de divisas en Cuba, así como para el suministro de productos alimentarios y agrícolas del país”*.

Uno de los cuellos de botella a los que se enfrenta el gobierno de Cuba en su actual proceso de actualización económica es su aguda escasez de divisas. La principal fuente de gastos de divisas es la compra de productos agrícolas que representa alrededor de 800 millones USD anuales. Como ve, es un informe que ha hecho este organismo, no informes que hizo nuestro gobierno.

Sra. Madah Haifa AISSAMI (Venezuela) (Observador)

Desearía iniciar expresando nuestro agradecimiento tanto a la FAO como al equipo de esta y, particularmente, al Economista en Jefe, por la presentación y elaboración de este documento referido a los desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y los factores coadyuvantes. Solo voy a referir que el reporte es, sin duda, una fotografía de un momento, como hemos dicho en oportunidades anteriores. Pero esta fotografía no estaría completa si no referimos a un elemento que no está incluido en este informe pero que consideramos es un factor decisivo o coadyuvante, al menos para algún número importante de países, y al cual han referido algunas delegaciones, primeramente, mi distinguida colega y hermana, la Embajadora de Nicaragua y algunos otros distinguidos oradores que les sucedieron. Me refiero a las medidas coercitivas unilaterales.

Esta no es la primera vez que hacemos mención a ello, no obstante, vamos a insistir, Toda vez que los demás elementos que están citados en el informe presentado a la consideración de este Consejo, que a ellos haremos alusión más adelante, en otros puntos de Agenda, particularmente destaco la inclusión de la dramática situación que se está viviendo en los territorios ocupados de Palestina y me refiero específicamente al tema de Gaza. Pero como dije, hablaremos de ello en otro punto del temario.

Nos preocupa y, por ello, insistimos en que en la FAO no se está visibilizando el efecto perverso que tienen las medidas coercitivas unilaterales en la seguridad alimentaria mundial.

Por ello, debemos señalar que apenas hace unos días, en el marco de la Asamblea General de Naciones, 132 países aprobaron una resolución. Me refiero, no a la citada por mi colega de Nicaragua, sino la A/C3/78/L45 del 31 de octubre de 2023, en la que se hace mención a los graves daños económicos a escala global y, en particular, a los países en desarrollo, entre otras cosas. Y, en este sentido, desearíamos destacar que las medidas coercitivas unilaterales han sido un instrumento perverso aplicado por algunos países que han optado por el unilateralismo desconociendo acuerdos internacionales y, tal como reseña esta resolución a la cual referí anteriormente, las medidas coercitivas unilaterales son contrarias al derecho internacional, al derecho internacional humanitario, a la Carta de Naciones Unidas y a las normas y principios que rigen las relaciones pacíficas entre los Estados.

Estas medidas, en la práctica, significan la congelación de activos, el bloqueo económico, sanciones comerciales y financieras, restricción a las importaciones y exportaciones de bienes, incluidos alimentos y medicinas. Y voy a insistir en ello, incluidos los alimentos y las medicinas, así se pretenda negar o matizar esto. Y, entre otros, esto está afectando directamente a más de 30 países que representan el 28% de la población mundial. Estos más de 30 países son Miembros de esta Organización.

Cuando refiero que esto nos afecta, es porque incluso aquellos que no están sancionados ven con dificultad cualquier intercambio comercial con los países sancionados por el over compliance o sobrecumplimiento de las sanciones y esto es un efecto aún más perverso. Estos elementos referidos anteriormente son motivo suficiente para que una Organización como la FAO integre en sus estudios las repercusiones de las medidas coercitivas unilaterales y cómo estas impactan negativamente la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de los países sancionados. No pueden seguir siendo invisibilizadas y, mucho menos, sus efectos perversos.

Concluyo recordando una frase muy célebre de un político mexicano, *“El respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz”*.

Ms Ekaterina VYBORNOVA (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian) (Observer)

The Russian delegation supports the intervention over the delegation of Nicaragua and that by Belarus, Cuba and Venezuela. The expansion of the practice of introducing unilateral economic coercive measures and sanctions in violation of the United Nations (UN) Charter and existing international law is a serious challenge to the right, to food and it exacerbates the existing inequality in the area of food security and nutrition in the voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to food in the context of national food security, which were adopted by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2004.

The following is mentioned, "*States are strongly urged to take steps with a view to the avoidance of and to refrain from any unilateral measure, not in accordance with international law and the charter of the UN that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the populations of the affected countries and that hinders their progressive realization of the rights to adequate food*". As was already said. At the moment more than 30 states are subject to unilateral economic coercive measures, but what is more dangerous is the regime of unilateral sanctions has recently become trans-border, that means they extend a third countries now.

The position of Russian Federation on this issue can be found in the specially prepared material which the Russian delegation distributed at before the Session. In this connection, we have called on more than one occasion and we will continue to call on the FAO Council to evaluate this monstrous phenomenon in international relations. And finally, in responding to Canada's intervention, I would like to support the statement made by China that the FAO is not a place to resolve political issues.

And it is indicative that when American sanctions are mentioned, that is politicization, but when we talk about the situation in Ukraine, that is not politicization, where's the consistency? And a response to the accusations of the United States of America (USA), I would like to say for your information that the USA is in the third place for the amount of fertilizer bought from Russian Federation.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia)

Malaysia appreciates the informative document *CL 174/4* prepared by FAO. We are concerned that no progress has been made in combating global food insecurity. According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report 2023* and its projection that almost 600 million people will be chronically undernourished in 2030 far off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. Global food security is in a state of emergency due to the results of catastrophic risk worldwide, and we only have a short window time to act and respond to the food insecurity.

The significant need to reverse this trend towards sustainable and resilient global food skill system cannot be understated since we are eating at the expense of the planet. The world continues to face the unprecedented catastrophic level of acute food insecurity and that acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in the hotspots of highest concern, such as Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan, the Sudan, and Palestine according to latest *Hunger Hotspot Report* by FAO and World Food Programme (WFP).

All these hotspots have a high number of people facing critical level of acute food insecurity and humanitarian actions are critical in preventing further starvation and death. Thus, urgent humanitarian assistance for countries in crisis and to scale up assistance is crucial to protect livelihoods, increase access to food, and improve food security and nutrition.

In this regard, Malaysia urges FAO to work closely with WFP, another relevant United Nations (UN) organization in its emergency and resilience program. Malaysia assured its commitment to improve the food system through a robust food security strategy.

In national budget 2024, Malaysian government has allocated USD 85.5 million to implement the food security strengthening program that will focus on increasing local food crop production, which is currently reliant on external imports. Optimizing land use for enhanced crop and livestock yields, supplying bio and organic fertilizers to farmers to improve soil fertility, and in providing compensation of up to 50 percent of the loss value due to disasters and the agriculture disaster fund.

Additionally, achieving a balance between providing support and promoting innovation within the agricultural sector is crucial for long-term sustainability and efficiency in addressing food security in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, urban farming is gaining popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic and it continues to help low-income household in reducing the cost of living by producing food products for own consumption or for sale. In support of these, Malaysia government allocated USD 11.3 million for the community farming, which is an urban farming initiative that has benefited more than 200,000 people involving individuals, communities, schools, institutions, and at more 36 locations worldwide.

To conclude, Malaysia takes note of the document of the global food security challenges and its drivers and underscores the importance of FAO to assess the need for urgent humanitarian assistance and interventions in order to provide effective social protection majors and protect livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations.

Ms Jenny Louise REID (New Zealand) (Observer)

I want to support the intervention from my regional colleague Australia and wanted to reinforce one or two points that was made. Firstly, New Zealand fully supports the need for FAO to report on regional and national food security that is based on robust regional and national data. As explained by my colleague from Australia that the fact that the data is very limited means that a number of our Pacific Islands are represented inaccurately in the true food security cost to their country.

So, we call on FAO to be strengthening its data collection, particularly at a national level that can be aggravated at that level. Secondly, we would like to reiterate the opportunities that there are, if we repurpose environmentally harmful subsidies, we support repurposing these harmful subsidies towards policies and research development that promote sustainable agriculture and growth productivity.

CHAIRPERSON

United States of America, I give you the floor for the right to reply.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just want to make clear that one of our objectives in the Russian Federation sanctions programme was to ensure that global markets continue to function. It is important for the overall success and sustainability of both our sanctions and the global market.

We have taken very clear steps to make it clear to commercial actors that we do not sanction any Russian food or fertilizer, so those industries can continue to function. So, together with our treasury department, we provided clarification as needed so that Russian Federations's customers know that they are allowed to buy that grain and fertilizer.

I would just like to thank the Russian delegation today for making clear that that is working and it is working quite well.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Belarus to reply.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I would like to ask a question which was asked half a year ago, but has not been responded to, but what about Belarus? What about the sanctions against Belarus and fertilizer, which were introduced after beginning of conflict in Ukraine? What is happening here is hunger and death.

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, how to conclude this evening. If you were sitting here and you could look to all your faces, the mood was really down, and the atmosphere, for the last half hour. And I always thought, and I believe I said it this morning, the Council is there to unite, to overcome differences, to find each other, certainly because we are dealing with one of the most pressing issues at this moment, and that is food insecurity and malnutrition. So, the Council should be a forum where we try to find each other, not accuse each other, but to see how we can overcome our differences.

We all know the political situation in the world, but we have in New York the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to deal with those general policy

issues. Here we have to focus and to work within the mandate of the FAO, focus on food security, focus on malnutrition and to see how we can help those who need it the most.

Tomorrow morning, and I would like to close with a positive note, to thank you for your hard work of today. I think we are ahead of schedule, which has also never been seen on the first day within FAO. We have concluded our work on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget.

Tomorrow, we finalize this Agenda Item because there will be one or two more speakers before I give the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen to respond to questions and remarks, but first there will be one or two Ministers who will address the Council.

Ennergize yourself, have a very good rest because certainly you deserve it because of your hard work.

I hope we go fresh tomorrow to the Council in which we will discuss the very difficult issues besides this issue of the unbelievable situation in Gaza and the unbelievable situation in Ukraine. And I do hope tomorrow that all our interventions will be done. There are a lot of emotions related to these issues. But I do hope that all these interventions will be done with respect, with dignity, with integrity, and with solidarity focusing on the mandate of FAO.

I really would like to thank, again, the interpreters, the messengers and the technicians. Give them a round of applause for today.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

And of course, the team sitting here next to me, but we will address them later on, at the end of this week.

Dear friends, thank you so much. See you tomorrow morning at 9:30 hours sharp. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 19:30 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 30

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.30

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatorzième session
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023**

**THIRD PLENARY SESSION
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 December 2023

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:43 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 43
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 09.43
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers (*continued*)**Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes (*suite*)****Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes
(*continuación*)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning, distinguished delegates, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. Very much welcome to our interpreters, as well as the messengers and the technicians.

Let us try to find consensus on the most difficult issues which are in front of us. After informal consultations on those issues yesterday, after our Session, and also this morning, I have the feeling that consensus is within reach. I will explain later how we can try to get there but if we make all this attempt, I think the 174th Session of the Council could be the first United Nations (UN) body within the United Nations which decides with consensus on these issues.

It would be a milestone for FAO to get it to the place in the international community where it should be. But we are not there yet. We can only make it if we do it together, if we are united, if we are respectful, if we have solidarity together.

First, we have to finalize Item 4. I think we had a very rich discussion and we have two remaining speakers.

His Excellency Gabriel MBAIROBE (Cameroon)

Cameroon, Eritrea and Mali speak on this Agenda Item on behalf of Africa Regional Group. We welcome this third edition of global food security challenges and drivers which aims at updating Members on the global food security situation.

From the narrative of the challenges to global food security and the drivers outlining current and long-term threats to global food security and exploring actions needed to mitigate their impact, it appears that the threats are even more serious than a year ago and hunger is on the rise everywhere because of various protracted conflicts, climate variability and weather extremes, rapid urbanization, soaring food prices and economic slowdowns.

As some projections suggested last year, the situation has effectively worsened. In fact, according to the 2023 Edition of the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World*, hunger and food insecurity remain far above the COVID-19 pandemic levels and far off track to achieve Sustainable Development Goal, SDG2 (Zero Hunger).

Continue en français

Pour éviter de répéter l'argumentation de l'année dernière contenue dans la déclaration du Groupe Régional Africain sur le même point de l'ordre du jour, et compte tenu du fait que j'interviens en ligne, je souhaite intervenir par anticipation sur le point V de l'ordre du jour pour mettre l'accent sur deux facteurs principaux, à savoir le conflit russo-ukrainien et le conflit israélo-palestinien, en me focalisant sur leurs conséquences sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale.

Nous sommes conscients du fait que la crise entre la Fédération de Russie et l'Ukraine de février 2022 et son intensification ont provoqué de graves perturbations sur les marchés et le commerce mondiaux et ont eu un impact sur la logistique commerciale et les routes de transport, compte tenu de la place prépondérante qu'occupent ces deux pays sur les marchés agricoles mondiaux. On ne saurait prédire la fin de ce conflit, mais force est de reconnaître que de nombreuses économies, y compris africaines, dépendent fortement des produits alimentaires importés et des engrais, et ces pays continuent d'être les plus touchés et subissent les conséquences négatives de cette crise.

La mise en œuvre de l'initiative céréalière de la mer Noire ainsi que les autres initiatives telles que les voies de solidarité ont contribué à apporter une bouffée d'oxygène aux pays de novembre 2022 à 2023. Nous apprécions le travail entrepris par la FAO qui a abouti, grâce à des évaluations plus

approfondies, à une meilleure compréhension de l'impact de la guerre sur le secteur agricole, entraînant une baisse de la production agricole en raison de l'augmentation de coûts de production et la réduction de la disponibilité des intrants.

Nous réitérons en conséquence notre appel à des pourparlers politiques pour mettre fin à la guerre et encourageons la FAO à continuer de fournir un soutien opérationnel, programmatique et technique sur le terrain.

En ce qui concerne la situation de la sécurité alimentaire dans la bande de Gaza, l'aperçu de la situation telle que présentée dans le document dépeint une image triste et catastrophique de la situation sur le terrain. Nous sommes préoccupés par l'escalade du conflit, qui fait un nombre considérable de victimes et entraîne le déplacement massif des personnes., la réduction de la production et la disponibilité de nourriture et de carburant. Nous craignons que le conflit entraîne des répercussions négatives à long terme sur la sécurité alimentaire, la nutrition et l'agriculture. Nous encourageons la FAO à évaluer le soutien apporté à la bande de Gaza en termes de logistique et d'approvisionnement en intrants agricoles et à travailler sur les procédures de logistique et d'approvisionnement en fourrage.

Nous encourageons la communauté internationale à répondre positivement et rapidement à l'appel du Bureau de coordination des affaires humanitaires (BCAH) qui identifie un besoin financier d'un environ 1,2 milliard de dollars pour répondre aux besoins essentiels, y compris le besoin financier pour soutenir l'intervention d'urgence de la FAO. Monsieur le Président avec les commentaires ci-dessus, le Groupe Régional Africain prend note des informations contenues dans le document.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

On behalf of the Bahamas and the Caribbean Region, I extend our gratitude to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Director-General and his leadership team, for their continued support in the strategic regional projects addressing food insecurity in our region.

As Small Island Developing States, the Caribbean Region requires adequate support as it continues to be adversely affected by climate change and other external shocks which affect its agriculture and fisheries sector.

In the Caribbean, most of us have been heavily reliant on food imports to feed our nation. In the Bahamas we import more than 90 percent of the food we consume, which compounds the problem of high food costs for our citizens. Notwithstanding the natural increase in prices due to inflation, the COVID-19 pandemic was among the plethora of world events that reminded us of the danger in not having a mature agricultural sector from which to feed ourselves.

In 2023, the Caribbean Food Security and Livelihood Survey conducted by the World Food Programme revealed that 3.7 million people, or 52 percent of the population of the English-speaking Caribbean, remain food insecure. This survey also highlighted the fact that the pandemic was among the reasons for the high rise in costs of living.

Concerns like these were discussed among Caribbean leaders at a high-level meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Agriculture and FAO, which was hosted in Jamaica in September of this year. The meeting was facilitated by the Government of Jamaica through its Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Floyd Green, and was attended by FAO Subregional Coordinator, Dr Renata Clarke, and the FAO Assistant Director-General for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr Mario Lubetkin.

This high-level Ministerial meeting was used as a platform to discuss areas for further cooperation with FAO, including cooperation related to food security, climate change, and further development of the regional agricultural sector. The Ministers also highlighted some of the challenges experienced in bringing focus to the unique needs of the Caribbean countries while being represented with the Latin American countries whose priorities sometimes significantly differ, not to mention the great language barrier that exists in the grouping.

At the end of the meeting, I was given a mandate to speak on behalf of the Caribbean in this forum to ensure that moving forward, the Caribbean secures permanent representation on the Council. On this

note, I wish to raise the Caribbean Group's call for increased South-South Cooperation and enhancing collaboration with regional funding and development institutions.

Among the region's priorities are key areas related to technological application in irrigation, protecting agriculture and aquaculture for further development of the industry in our region.

The Bahamas and the Caribbean Region wish to express its gratitude to the Assistant Director-General, Mr Mario Lubetkin, and Dr Renata Clarke, the Subregional Coordinator, for giving extraordinary support to our region and we look forward to further development in this area.

Mr Ayman RAAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you for the way you are conducting this work. And I also congratulate the Secretariat for its work. We would like to thank the Senior Economist and the team that has employed all these efforts in preparing for our Session and for this document, given the high level of detail that it contained so that Member States can have a clear idea and to evaluate the situation and set forth the plans to face the various challenges.

The primary objective of this Report and of the work carried out by the team is to convey the real picture so that we may cooperate and mobilize efforts to find solutions to our crisis. However, we are all aware that we have one report after another, year after year. The food security situation worsens in the world and the number of food insecure and malnourished people is increasing steadily despite all the efforts that are exerted by countries and international organizations.

This begs the question, "why is it so?" I believe that we are deploying great efforts to tackle the impacts without addressing the real reasons and causes. If we address the causes, we will be able to reverse this trend and improve the food security situation in the world while achieving the savings and efficiencies that can help us achieve sustainable agrifood systems. There are causes for crises that are not within our control, such as climate change and natural catastrophes. The international organizations deploy great efforts to address those, especially by transforming the agrifood systems and by benefiting from science and technology advances.

However, there is a great deal that we can do to address manmade or artificial crises. An example is my country, Syria. If we are to address the problem of terrorism and terrorist groups and if we can stop the aggressions and lift the occupation as well as the unilateral coercive measures, Syria will recover its previous position and it will also contribute to achieving international food security as well as helping other states.

We are hopeful that countries will unite efforts along with FAO in order to support the efforts of the Syrian Government to enable the resilience of the population and provide the main inputs for agriculture, while focusing on early recovery that is likely to enhance the economic situation and resilience of the Syrian population.

CHAIRPERSON

We have concluded the statements of the Members. Now I turn to Management, first to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, to reply to the questions and remarks.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

If you allow me, I will share some slides to answer the questions. There have been several points raised, but the first one is the importance of the problem that we are facing. This graph shows the historical evolution of food prices, energy prices, and fertilizer prices. As you can see, in real terms, this is not the only shock that we had. If we go back in history, we also have shocks in the 70s, which means that there are structural problems.

In the energy sector, in the last years since COVID-19, there has been a significant improvement because of the diversification of supply. We have to do the same in the agrifood system. Our supply and our exports are too concentrated, and the same in the input sector, which makes the sector very vulnerable, and that is a way to improve also our resilience.

The second point that was raised was on trade, and this is extremely important because what we see is that the trade restrictions since the COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine played a significant role. In this

graph, on the horizontal axis you have the weeks since the shock happened, and in the vertical axis the share of calories traded.

You will see that during the Ukraine crisis, we have a significant shift and then we lower down, but still we are far. And if we look by commodities, we can see that there is still a significant level of export restrictions. and rice also has an increase, which added to the issue of less area planted because of the increasing input prices last year. This exacerbated the price increases, which is why still we see a problem in the case of the price of rice.

Now, these are commodity prices, but we also need to look at what we consume and the evolution of food prices. On the left-hand side, you can see the nominal food inflation which still has not been resolved, especially in the countries of the South. If we put it in real terms to differentiate from other prices or global inflation, there are some improvements but still we are not yet there, which shows to us that the final commodity prices, the ones we buy in the markets, in the wholesale markets, the retail markets, are more resistant to go down, despite that commodity prices have gone down.

And that is really important to understand because that is what reflects the effect on the food import bill that we have been talking about and that is the significant increase in the food import bill that we have observed before.

Now, we ask of the urgency as there was a comment on the urgency of the problem, and this was in The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), which clearly shows that if we continue with the current trend, there will be 600 million people chronically undernourished by 2030. Not only in terms of chronic undernourishment but also if we look at the hot spots map, we see significant problems in terms of the countries that will be or are going to be in significant challenges.

And here comes the IPC, which was commented on, and the importance of the IPC. We have a high-level agreement that the IPC will be the one providing the acute food insecurity numbers in the world so that we have a consistent methodology. And that was agreed at the UN Secretary-General level with all our partners, with all the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

The challenge we are facing right now is that we do not have yet for IPC the funding necessary to be able to expand the coverage of countries to the 80 level number of countries that we need, and that is where we need significant support to be able to comply with this mandate, which is central, so that we do not have multiple reporting of a concept which is very clearly stated in the IPC and with a very clear methodology. So, that is really important, the reference that was made to the IPC. But then comes the issue of urgency that was mentioned, which is extremely important.

FAO just published a flagship report on the cost of these shocks, of these disasters, and it is USD 3.8 trillion from 1981 to 2021, which is more or less USD 128 billion per year. Now, this brings more urgency beyond the huge increase in undernourishment is because we are violating six of the planetary boundaries and the agri-food system is responsible of most of these impacts on the planetary boundaries, which, of course, opens an opportunity to attract climate finance into the agri-food system but also opens a big problem that we could be facing because we could be facing different dynamics.

And the frequency of these shocks for which we have already measured a significant cost, could increase substantially and exponentially and those are the climate risks that we will be facing in this agri-food system. So it is central that we bring this up and it is central that we keep supporting entities like the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), for example, that tries to bring transparency on information systems and thanks to all the countries that have been supporting AMIS in the last year, because now it is strengthening and we have more monetary resources to be able to strengthen the capacity and the early warning tools that we need to put in place.

Let me finalize with two elements. This is basically what we as FAO and with our partners, because partnership was mentioned a lot - we not only partner with RBAs. We are being very efficient with how we partner with RBAs on the topics that we are working on right now. We are also partnering with the World Bank, with the regional banks and with International Monetary Fund (IMF) because we need to bring also the financial machinery behind the activities that we have to do.

But it is clear where we will have to look to transform the systems to increase the resilience that was mentioned in several presentations. We need to become inclusive and we need to make healthy lives

affordable. It requires building early warning systems and it requires building absorption capacity and recovery mechanisms. We need to integrate the humanitarian development and peacebuilding policies, protect households and values, scale up climate resilience, address specific challenges related to water, on which we have been working, focus on value chains and realign policy incentives, which was one of the comments also related to harmful subsidies.

That Agenda repurposing in the correct way of the food support will be central. And for that we also have been working on identifying those hidden costs, and that is the latest State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) that we just published, where we try to bring better policies and investments in more sustainable agrifood systems so that we can reduce the hidden costs that we create within these agri-food systems.

So, that is the whole core of the activities we are doing, the whole core of the concept that we have for “good food for today and tomorrow”, which I think brings the urgency and the importance of resilience.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

I would like to come in with just a few comments specific to some Member points raised on the Humanitarian Development Peace (HDP) nexus and our collaboration to take action against global food insecurity with other partners.

We are, as Máximo indicated, fully committed to contributing to the multistakeholder best in class data reporting through the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and, as was mentioned by the UK and others, we too consider it to be the gold standard and hope that others feel the same, as they describe the global, regional and national circumstances for acute food insecurity.

Just one point to share with Members related to current IPC numbers. We typically focus our attention on IPC levels 3, 4 and 5 but I would also draw your attention to IPC2, those populations that are stressed, that are borderline in terms of their chronic acute food insecurity.

The most recent IPC Report shows that 285 million people in 39 countries are in this tipping point category. This is a greater number of people in the three categories of IPC3, 4 and 5 combined. We cannot lose sight of this large group of people, many whom are in rural villages and communities who are right on the cusp of food insecurity.

FAO takes very seriously its role in the HDP nexus, focusing on emergency agricultural assistance that is especially needed at the onset of a response. This support, which is unique to agricultural production, must be strategic, must be scaled, and also has to be timely in its delivery. It is also important to recognize that it is often more cost-effective.

We discussed the HDP nexus and the recent evaluation of this approach and Management response in the Programme Committee just in November and there FAO committed to taking more steps to institutionally anchor the HDP nexus approach in the Organization and to focus on strengthening partnerships at all levels.

This means cooperating not only with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) on initiatives focused on the hunger hot spots Report, the joint Sahel programme, but also with other UN agencies, the IFIs, private sector and other groups like the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on topics such as internally displaced persons, famine prevention, disaster risk reduction, among others. We appreciate very much the references and the support that was offered by Members in FAO’s efforts to take on and adopt more of these important practices.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we turn now to the draft conclusions for Item 4, *Global food security challenges and drivers*, and I will ask the Secretariat to put the text on the screen. As the practice is, I will first read out the conclusions, then we go one by one.

The Council appreciated document CL 174/4, *Global food security challenges and its drivers*, and in particular:

- (a) noted with concern the lack of progress on improved food security at the global, regional and national levels, noted with concern the growing rate of acute global food insecurity and highlighted to make more and immediate progress on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG2 (Zero Hunger);
- (b) recognized the urgent need for countries and the international community to work together to address the main drivers of undernourishment and food insecurity in the world: conflicts, war and geographical tension, extreme and more frequent climate events, economic slowdowns and downturns and persistent inequalities;
- (c) stressed the need for policies and programmes to address higher levels of food insecurity among women compared to men in all regions of the world and higher levels of food insecurity amongst children of rural areas in many countries;
- (d) recognized that the challenges are enormous and require concerted and sustained efforts to meet both the short and longer-term objectives, including through urgent and inadequate humanitarian assistance, social protection programmes, increased investments in agri-food systems, world development, trade, data, information and technologies;
- (e) stressed the need for continued urgent humanitarian assistance, including the scaling up of agriculture interventions and longer-term investments in FAO's resilience building activities, and this provides those who need it with urgently needed lifesaving and cost-effective agriculture assistance;
- (f) reiterated its support of transformation towards sustainable and resilient agri-food systems in line with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031;
- (g) expressed appreciation for the statistical work of FAO as the leading agency producing timely and evidence-based data and information of food and agriculture and efforts for monitoring the food security and nutrition situation;
- (h) underlined the importance of keeping open the trade of food and agriculture inputs and products in order to avoid the negative impact of global food security, while also preventing trade distortions and unjustified trade barriers in this respect; and
- (i) recognized FAO's efforts to address hunger and food insecurity in the world and encouraged its continued responsiveness, emphasizing the value of its normative work and global role as a science and evidence-based knowledge organization for food security and agriculture.

Now we turn to adopt by consensus all those paragraphs and hopefully with not too many Christmas tree elements.

First the chapeau. Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then I go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). Can we agree to subparagraph (d)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (f).

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Can we go back to (e)? We would like to add in the first line "*stressed the need for continued urgent humanitarian assistance in the wider context of humanitarian development and peacebuilding nexus.*"

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to sub-paragraph (e) with the addition of Indonesia? I do not see any objections. So adopted.

Then we go to sub-paragraph (f).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

¿Podemos incluir el *caveat* en “*transformation*”, que es lenguaje acordado en todos los Consejos? Después de “*transformation*”. Si podemos incluir el *caveat* en “*transformation*” que nosotros solemos incluir en todas las resoluciones donde se refiere a transformación.

After “*transformation.*” “*In accordance with, and dependent on national context and capacities to achieve the 2030 Agenda.*”

CHAIRPERSON

And it is agreed language, so I assume that the Council can agree to this. I do not see any objections.

Then we go to sub-paragraph (g). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to sub-paragraph (h). And sub-paragraph (h) is the exact agreed language of the 172nd Session of the Council. So, I do hope that we can agree to this.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Ours is for an additional subparagraph between (g) and (h). I can read it out at dictation speed.

The paragraph will read, “*encouraged FAO to enhance data collection and analysis, and build capacity at the regional and subregional levels, to produce disaggregated reporting that can identify subregional variations and priorities.*”

CHAIRPERSON

I assume that Philippines and Nicaragua asked for the floor on subparagraph (i), so I will come back to you later. So, first, can we agree to the text proposed by Australia? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (i) and I would like to highlight and underline that this is agreed language from the 172nd Session of the Council.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

I just would like to request a minor addition here, after “*unjustified trade barriers*” “*such as export restrictions*”, as mentioned by several Members in their statements yesterday and as highlighted by a couple of slides by our Chief Economist this morning.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Nicaragua, después del subpárrafo (i), quisiera agregar otro subpárrafo.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with subparagraph (i) and then come back to you for a new subparagraph.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Lamento no coincidir con mi querida colega de Filipinas en este tema. Prefiero mantener el lenguaje acordado. Cuando se habla de distorsiones, las distorsiones están incluidas en todo, por lo cual no creo que sea necesario abrir la caja de Pandora y seguro mantener lo que ya hemos acordado. Me parece que sería una buena práctica. Así que sugiero mantener el lenguaje acordado.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Indeed, “*unjustified trade barriers*” do go beyond just export restrictions. I think we should keep to the wording that we already have or we would have to begin to list all of the different versions, but I do not think that would lead to anything good, so I think we should keep to the version that we already had.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We would also like to maintain the agreed language. We do not believe that we need to open or add more to the Christmas tree this morning.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

Sorry for going back to subparagraph (h). I just had a question. Would there be resource implications for FAO in agreeing to subparagraph (h)? Could the Secretariat perhaps give us some clarification?

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Mr Màximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

Yes, clearly we would love to do this but this will require a significant amount of resource implications because of the existing lack of data for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). That is why we need to put an effort but it will require an important level of resources to be able to accomplish it.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India has a point to make on subparagraph (i). We suggest that the text in the brackets should be deleted and the existing one is adequate and it covers all aspects.

CHAIRPERSON

So, is the Philippines flexible to stick to the already agreed Council language?

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

In the interests of solidarity and so we can move forward, the Philippines can be flexible, although we would like to highlight that it has affected the Philippines.

CHAIRPERSON

We have another agreed subparagraph.

Then we go back to (h).

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

In fact, I was going to go back to (h) to see how we should deal with this question of additional resources.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia sees this as an opportunity to highlight the importance of this for the Southwest Pacific region. It has been acknowledged, I believe, by the Chief Economist, that this is an area in which there is capacity to do more and that will actually help us understand food insecurity challenges in regions and at the subregional levels in not only the Southwest Pacific but across the world.

To address the concern about the immediate and direct impacts on FAO's resources, we could encourage FAO to work collaboratively to enhance data collection and analysis, which will mean that it will work with other organizations who are already present and active in doing this. I will put that for Members to see if that would be something but we cannot avoid that this would send a signal that more resources need to be put here, ultimately.

CHAIRPERSON

We always have the way out with extra budgetary resources but I give the floor to Canada. And to be in line with the rules and procedures, although I would love to give the floor to New Zealand, it is tech negotiations now, so that is only for Council Members.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think we can go with the proposal from Australia, including with the last edit, and just to note that yesterday we heard from the Chief Economist that with the change in resourcing in terms of the human capacity, the flexible resources were provided, and 80 percent, that would enhance their agility and ability to deliver on enhanced data collection and analysis. So, in that regard, I think having it, is still stated as being encouraging, so I think we can go with what is there right now.

CHAIRPERSON

With the latest remarks and with the addition of “*work collaboratively*”, could we agree to this text?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

We support this text with one request, that it be “*work collaboratively with Member countries*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor first for an explanation, not for text suggestions, to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

What I explained yesterday, so that we do not misunderstand what I was saying, is that in the efficiency gains, what allows us to keep doing is what we are doing today. The request here is an additional amount of data collection which, as you know, is extremely costly.

So, we are happy to do it but we need to understand that this will have important budget implications because data collection is not just an issue of collaboration, we need to have common standards to be able to collect the level of data that we have at this point. So, those efficiency gains are to keep doing the work we are doing today but additional work which we would love to do would clearly require additional resources.

If not, it would be impossible for us to comply to the quality of standards that we have agreed, and you Members have agreed on.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We would like to add one more, just “*encouraged FAO to work collaboratively with Rome-based Agencies and Member countries,*” because we believe that enhanced collaboration with RBAs, as we have been always encouraging for a couple of years, this can be supportive to the RBAs and as well the Members.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

In fact, we have just heard a clarification from the Chief Economist, and he used the words quite costly with data collection, etc. We are not saying how it will be done. Just mentioning Rome-based Agencies and all does not assist. It is still data collection. I think we need to take care of this question of resources. By just saying work with other organizations or work with countries, it does not help that issue.

CHAIRPERSON

I was thinking about a text based on the availability of additional extrabudgetary resources because that could help to find a solution for this because we cannot go back to the current Programme of Work and Budget that we yesterday agreed to. Could the Secretariat put it on the screen at least for a moment? After “*priorities, based on the availability of additional extrabudgetary resources,*” between brackets.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

We have taken note of the Chief Economist’s view on this but, let me tell you that we have to find resources. This is the key paragraph, in our view, as because if we look at *SOFI Report*, the entire Report hinges upon the data collected and the information and we are making global decisions regarding the status of food insecurity and nutrition across the world.

Therefore, we thought proper data information availability at granular detail which can be better analysed, better explained based on the regional context. I think we will not achieve the purpose. In fact, sometimes we may overestimate our problem or sometimes we may underestimate the problem.

So, it is the most important paragraph, in my view. If we have to agree this paragraph, I will be very happy for all the Members’ support. We have to find solutions for the lack of resources. Definitely, I am confident that the Member countries will come forward to support FAO in this regard.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I think that your proposal is a really elegant way of solving this with the “*based on availability*.” It also gives us the flexibility, for those of us who are part of the Finance Committee, to discuss at the next Finance Committee and start to work toward a solution to what our colleague from Pakistan is pointing out, that there are not resources for this right now but perhaps we can start to look at this and whether it is something we want to discuss or move in the direction of. So, I think that this is a good solution.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Thank you for those Members who have spoken on this issue and for your proposed solution as well, which I think the point is made about the need for this data. That has been acknowledged by the Chief Economist and I think your solution addresses the resourcing issue for this Report and, as the United States has stated, something we can consider further in the Finance Committee going forward. We support this.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think with that edit, we can go forward with that. I would recall that we did have the opportunity to allocate resources to this from existing budgetary resources yesterday in our discussion to an area that has been identified as a matter of priority and there was the decision in the end not to do so. But this is exactly the kind of core mandate area that we were referring to in our discussions yesterday. But we can live with the paragraph as it stands.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the subparagraph now on the screen? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to Nicaragua for an additional subparagraph after (i).

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

La propuesta de nuestra delegación sería la siguiente: “*Tomó nota de los puntos de vista expresados por algunas delegaciones sobre los impactos negativos de las medidas económicas, financieras y comerciales sobre la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición durante la crisis alimentaria mundial, en consonancia con el párrafo 30 de la Agenda 2030 para el desarrollo sostenible*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I look around the room, whether or not we can agree to this subparagraph.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I think in a lot of ways this is just a repetition of the subparagraph above but with some of the points that some delegations made but other delegations disagreed with. We cannot agree to this addition for a lot of different reasons. I am happy to go into those in detail, if we want to take the time to go into those in detail, or I can just leave it at that.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

We agree with the addition of this subparagraph by Nicaragua. We can see the negative impact and how it is affecting many countries in the world during conflict.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus)

It seems that this text has been seen a number of times and we can adopt it.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia proposes just to maintain subparagraph (i) as it currently is and not include subparagraph (j) as proposed.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Queríamos expresar nuestro acuerdo con lo expuesto por Estados Unidos y por Australia. Creemos que es innecesario y, por tanto, debemos mantenerle.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I think the subparagraph (i) eloquently captures the intent of subparagraph (j). We do not support the subparagraph (j) too.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to support this as an agreed language from both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

I also would like to assess that here it says, “*took note of the views expressed by certain delegations*”, so there is a *caveat* here and so we would like to support the subparagraph.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We are largely in line with India, Australia and others in preferring to stick with (i) and not going forward with the proposal of (j) and this is largely because (i), as you noted, was a text that covers largely the same topic but that had achieved a consensus.

Subparagraph (j), in contrast, is in a sense a minority view, reflecting views expressed by certain delegations and I think we seek, within the Council, to find text that is agreeable by all rather than views expressed by a few, and so in that regard (i) is preferable because that is something that we had all agreed on previously.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

We fully support the language proposed by Nicaragua.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

We want to maintain this subparagraph because this subparagraph clarifies certain points of view and certain observations from Members.

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, we can sit here for another two hours and we go around in circles on the argument which we have had many times at the Council when it comes to the issue of trade and we will not find consensus, that is clear, because we never could find consensus on the broader political issue on this.

My proposal would be, as we have done in previous Councils, that we make on subparagraph (i) a footnote with the text, “*took note of the different views expressed by delegates on this Item.*” Could you please bring the text as it was proposed by Nicaragua, put it in brackets and have as an alt, as a footnote, “*took note of the different views expressed by Members on this Item.*”

That is a way to try to find an out with it because we can sit here for many hours and we will not reach a consensus on this subparagraph, as we never reach a consensus on this subparagraph, and we always then make a reference to what was expressed by the Members because of the political nature. It is only partial within the mandate of FAO.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

As you have proposed, this is not something that we can support. You are pretty much just saying look at the Verbatim. That is why we have a discussion in here. That is why we do this. If you want to put that at the bottom, literally as a footnote to every paragraph, that you took note of different views expressed by Members on this Item, you can do that but to pull out one Item to express that there were different views, there were different views on a lot of things over the course of our discussion. That is why we had this discussion.

But in the end, we adopt the Items that we agree on by consensus and the rest of the Items continue for discussion. So, we cannot support leaving this in here as a footnote. We have an agreed upon subparagraph. We have agreed upon that subparagraph before. We agreed upon it today and now we want to repeat it in another paragraph or point out that this information was spread by different Members. No, we cannot support that.

CHAIRPERSON

Any Christmas gift to me on this sub-paragraph? Because, as I said, we are stuck and I do not foresee any possibility to even make an attempt to find consensus on the latest additional subparagraph because we never found it, not even within New York. And I do not think we should do the work of New York here.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Unfortunately, no holiday gift for you at the moment. But, just to reiterate a point from earlier, that because we have had the same discussions around the same text previously, that is how we ended up with subparagraph (i), and that was a consequence of that discussion, which I think, to use your words, left us all potentially equally unhappy, when we agreed to (i) in Council 172 but that took us forward.

And so to rehash that same conversation just seems unfortunate when that was our way out previously and in that regard the footnote does not seem to add when it is a paragraph that we had previously agreed on.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we not stick to the wording of the 172nd Session of the Council where we had more or less the same discussion, where we came as far as we have now on subparagraph (i). I leave it at this.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

No, Nicaragua no está de acuerdo con esta decisión. Esto quiere decir, entonces, que hacemos un Consejo y vamos copiando de Consejo a Consejo todas las deliberaciones. O sea, aquí estamos frente a unas nuevas discusiones y los países se han expresado, algunas delegaciones en este sentido, y como estamos en una democracia, sería importante tomar en cuenta el punto de vista de todos. Si no logramos un consenso, Nicaragua sugiere que vayamos a una votación sobre este subpárrafo rápidamente.

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

The Nordic countries agree that we should not insert the subparagraph suggested by Nicaragua for a number of well-stated reasons, stated by India, Australia, the European Union, United States, Canada and others. I would also like to add to my dear colleague to my side here, the representative of Nicaragua, if I may, without spending too much time on it, but what we said yesterday in our meeting, that we meet at a very serious moment for global food security with global warming, conflict affecting food security and threats to biodiversity. And that means serious situations should, in our view, impact and inform our work and the proceedings of this Council. And that includes not spending unnecessary time on things that do not really in substance add to the proceedings.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Nos parece muy acertados los argumentos que acaba de expresar nuestro colega noruego. Creemos que ese subpárrafo no debe estar. También estamos de acuerdo con los argumentos empleados por Estados Unidos y otros de que, es verdad, no deberíamos estar incluyendo en cada momento una nota a pie de página, pero también es cierto que este asunto tiene unas dimensiones particulares. Por tanto, en principio, como me parece que es desacertado ir a una votación si fuera la única fórmula la de la nota a pie de página, a lo mejor podríamos aceptarlo como un mal menor.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Let us not kid ourselves – there is no consensus on this issue in the Council. The situation is clear and probably even the result of the vote would be predictable. Nonetheless, I do not think there would be anything bad about going to a vote and in that way reflecting the lack of consensus on this issue and the lack of willingness of countries to find that consensus. Let us not waste any more time. We can just have the vote and move on.

CHAIRPERSON

I am not ready to vote on this yet because we will lose about two hours. And if we are now going to install a practice that on every Item where we do not meet consensus we will have a vote, we do not

preserve the integrity of the Council anymore. So, I keep this subparagraph pending for further informal consultations and we come back to it. Because I foresee that if we now vote on this, we have at least another week to go to for Council decisions on the Items which still come on the Agenda.

I will pause this discussion, leave it open for informal consultations and then I will come back.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Como una sugerencia a considerar por los Estados Miembros a fin de buscar una solución, mi delegación se permite proponer ya sea la forma de pie de página o la que se estime conveniente, una referencia en la letra (i) al párrafo 30 que se aludía en la letra (j) de la Agenda 2030. Me parece que el párrafo 30 de la Agenda 2030, que es lenguaje acordado, permitiría simplemente como referencia en el texto encontrar una salida y dejar satisfechas a varias delegaciones. Lo dejo para consideración de la sala.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

How about if the footnote simply said, "*please see the Verbatim for the views expressed by Members on this Item*". That way it indicates that there were views expressed by Members. We do not have to show a difference. With that, I think it is factual but to the point of a lot of our colleagues here, expresses what we all said on this Item numerous times throughout the course of this discussion and could perhaps be the way out of this.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

A mí me parece una gran falta de respeto. Entonces, hagamos todo lo contrario. Todo lo que expresa durante las deliberaciones Estados Unidos, vamos a poner eso, que se vaya a leer las actas literales de lo que ellos dicen y expresan. Esta es una propuesta, digamos, de Nicaragua que ha sido apoyada por diferentes Miembros y no entiendo tampoco por qué eso demoraría dos horas. No sé si acaso tenemos un sistema de votación, además que no es secreto, es muy fácil. Aquí tenemos una pantalla. El tiempo sería de media hora al máximo. Es más tiempo de las discusiones que lo que sería una votación. Así que mi propuesta queda firme, si no logramos salir ya con una votación.

CHAIRPERSON

To explain the voting procedures, because it is a hybrid meeting, it means that we have to have a roll call. We have to prepare and we have seen in past Councils that it always takes about two hours. But it is not only about a procedural issue, because we set a precedent for next Council. So, I would like to make every attempt, as we are going to do on other issues today as well, to find consensus before we go to a vote. I do not exclude a vote because that is always the prerogative of the Council to vote, but I think we have to use all sources to find a way out of this issue with a text which could meet the concerns of all.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Efectivamente, yo creo que está en el común deseo de toda la sala el tratar de evitar, en la medida de lo posible, las votaciones y llegar a los consensos. Eso es importante. Desde esa base, abogar por medidas flexibles puede ser una solución. Nosotros ya hemos reconocido que se podría aceptar esa nota a pie de página si fuera la solución, la original que hemos hablado en un principio, pero también me parece correcto lo que ha expresado la delegación de Estados Unidos. Hacer una nota a pie de página más simple en la que revierta al verbatim. Ahí estará perfectamente recogida con toda su fuerza la exposición de las distintas opiniones.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I have a procedural question. Do I remember our Rules correctly, that countries can suggest an issue for the vote or am I mistaken?

CHAIRPERSON

I always say it is a last resort and what we have seen in the past Councils, probably you have first a vote whether or not we want to have a vote and then a vote on the vote issue. So, that is why I want to do my utmost to still find a way out on this before we, if necessary, go to a vote. If there is no

consensus to be found, the ultimate source is that we go for a vote. But I am always looking to the bright side of life and will do my utmost with the involved Members, to find a solution for this before we take the ultimate procedural possibility of a vote.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

In the spirit of consensus, if it is agreeable with people, we can agree with your footnote proposal.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

We have been down this path before and we resulted in subparagraph (i). That is agreed language. We prefer to stick with that. In the sense of trying to come towards a consensus and move forward and trying to avoid a vote, we would stick with your footnote. It is with reluctance, but we would do that if that was to make a pathway forward for all of us on this.

CHAIRPERSON

I will keep this Item pending and we will come back to this later on during this Council.

With this, we go to Item 5 and, as you know, during the last two weeks but also yesterday, during the course of the Council, as well as today, there were informal consultations on the draft decision on the situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

I have seen that all involved Members are seeking for a consensus. As I said by the opening of today, it will be the first UN body who could find consensus related within its mandate, on this issue. And we are almost there. And for that reason, I will make a last attempt with the negotiations which were negotiating to find a consensus text, and for that we need a little bit of time.

My proposal to you would be that we suspend the meeting on Item 5 until 14:00 hours this afternoon to give us the possibility for a last attempt, and we are almost there, and I am really hopeful that we can find this consensus text. For that we need a little bit more time and I will sit together and make a nice proposal to build the bridges needed in order that we can present to you the consensus text at 14:00 this afternoon.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to clarify, because things moved really quickly there at the end. You are proposing to end our discussion on Agenda Item 4 early and not continue our discussion on the conclusions, and then pick it up some time later in the week. Is that accurate?

So, you are ending discussion on the rest of the decision and stopping where we are and we will just pick up from the beginning again on some other point during the week, rather than have the discussion, even though we have time now. Is that accurate?

CHAIRPERSON

My proposal is now to suspend the Council until 14:00 hours to give the negotiators the time, hopefully under my guidance, to come forward with a consensus text.

The meeting is adjourned until 14:00 hours.

The meeting rose at 10:59 hours

La séance est levée à 10 h 59

Se levanta la sesión a las 10.59

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatorzième session
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023**

**FOURTH PLENARY SESSION
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 December 2023

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:10 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 10
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 14.10
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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- Item 8. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, November 2023)**
- Point 8. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (137^e session) et du Comité financier (198^e session) (Rome, novembre 2023)**
- Tema 8. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 137.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 198.º período de sesiones (Roma, noviembre de 2023)**
- (CL 174/7)*

CHAIRPERSON

Welcome back. You know how much I fight for the integrity of the Council to make sure that we can get decisions by consensus, and I am still trying to aim at that, for all Items, not only on Items 5 and 6 but also Item 4 and any other issue.

We had informal consultations again during the break. We made progress, but not yet enough progress. So, I ask again to all involved, to go back to their groups and capitals to see whether or not there is more flexibility to arrive at consensus because everybody said, “*we want to find consensus on those Items.*”

Because the foresight, if we do not find consensus and if we go to a vote you know how it will probably go, if there is a draft decision first we go to the amendments. So if there is an amendment you have to vote on the amendment, but an amendment could trigger another amendment or amendments. Or you can have partly voting on the amendments.

And seeing the text – and I know if we do not find a solution on Item 5 and also have a vote on Item 6. So in a worst case scenario already on Item 5 we could have 20 hours of voting because we are in a hybrid setting and the Rules of Procedures state we need to have a roll call vote. So it is not just pushing a button yes/no but we have to have a roll call vote. And it means around at best probably one and a half hours and at most two hours. I have seen it in the past.

So if you have for example eight amendments, and after all the amendments you still have to vote on the new draft decision, you know how it gets I clearly see that with willingness together – but we are not there yet. So that is why I propose to you to give a little bit of time to go back to groups and capitals.

We first start now with the Programme Committee (PC), the Finance Committee (FC) and the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), and hopefully today go back to Item 4 to finalize that Item.

With your approval, I would now like to bring to the Council Item 8, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee*. The relevant document is *CL174/7*, and I would like to remind you that all the elements in those Reports related to the *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25*, are already dealt with yesterday. So we do not have to address those.

The introduction by the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting, Ms Yael Rubenstein, has been circulated to you already.

Introduction to Item 8: Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee (Rome, November 2023)

Ms Yael Rubenstein, Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee. This Report is submitted to the Council in document CL 174/7.

The Joint Meeting examined, among others, the *Implementation of integrated water resources management: progress and needs*, the *update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities*,

and the *Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. I would like to highlight the following matters for the attention of the Council.

The Joint Meeting acknowledged the progress made on FAO's work on integrated water resources management (IWRM); appreciated FAO's engagement and coordinated actions in global fora; recognized the needs identified for accelerating and scaling up FAO interventions on IWRM from global to local level; and recommended FAO to provide updates on IWRM including on the programmatic initiatives, resources, partnerships and collaboration to Governing Bodies during the biennium 2024--2025.

The Joint Meeting commended FAO for its ongoing efforts and encouraged the Organization to further strengthen and deepen its collaboration across the UN system, acknowledging the foundational importance of Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration.

The Joint Meeting welcomed the *Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*; stressed the need to ensure that safe and confidential decentralized-level complaint and feedback mechanisms are in place and readily available; and encouraged FAO to be even more proactive in its public communication on its policies and accountability mechanisms, including via the Organization's homepage, social media and websites of responsible units.

The Joint Meeting took note of the follow-up report on UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2).

I would like to invite you to review the full *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee*. For your convenience, this report includes an executive summary and suggested action.

I am pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding this Report.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, I would like to give the floor to the Members to make comments on the Report of the Joint Meeting of the of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and 198th Session of the Finance Committee.

Of course, we will start with the Regional Groups and then we go to the Members.

Ms Danielle A. MANISCALCO (United States of America)

The United States welcomes the recommendations and conclusions of the Joint Meeting and endorses its Report. As noted in subparagraph 5 (d) of the Report, we want to reiterate the importance of funding science and evidence based normative work and welcome the assurances that FAO would continue to leverage its comparative advantage in science and evidence based normative and standard setting work, such as Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

The United States strongly supports the Joint Meeting recommendation to Council requesting regular annual Reporting on efficiencies and savings, both accrued and anticipated.

We look forward to seeing the revised Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, which we understand FAO will issue before the end of this year. We welcome FAO Management's reassurance that the Organization is finalizing a revised policy on Sexual Harassment.

As noted in the Joint Meeting Report, we stress the need for FAO to be even more proactive in its public communication of its policies and accountability mechanisms, including via the Organization's home page, social media, and websites of responsible units.

With regards to FAO's implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management, we encourage FAO Members to revisit the Evaluation Department's recent recommendations from 2022, to improve

FAO's water programming, in particular the need to strengthen FAO's capacities for programme monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Finally, we encourage FAO to recommit to transparency and accountability as core elements of the Organization's culture, particularly given ongoing structural changes in FAO and significant shifts in portfolios.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea y de sus 27 Estados miembros además de otros 9 Estados que se adhieren a nuestra declaración y que son, Islandia, Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina, Mónaco, Moldavia, San Marino y Georgia.

En primer lugar, nos gustaría agradecer a la presidenta de la reunión conjunta, Sra. Yael Rubinstein, su excelente liderazgo en la dirección de la reunión conjunta y la buena colaboración entre los Miembros de los Comités. Apoyamos las recomendaciones formuladas por la reunión conjunta con respecto a los ajustes del Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto.

Acogemos también con satisfacción los progresos realizados en la implementación de la gestión integrada de los recursos hídricos y, en términos más generales, la creciente atención prestada por FAO al papel del agua en todos sus programas y políticas. El agua es fundamental para los sistemas agroalimentarios sostenibles y los sistemas alimentarios sostenibles son esenciales para materializar la Agenda de acción para el agua de la ONU. En cuanto al seguimiento del momento para hacer balance de la Cumbre de Naciones Unidas sobre los Sistemas Alimentarios, apoyamos el enfoque adoptado por el centro para complementar, en lugar de duplicar, las estructuras existentes y trabajar en estrecha colaboración con los coordinadores residentes y los equipos de Naciones Unidas en los países para apoyar la aplicación de sus respectivas rutas nacionales.

El enfoque basado en los sistemas alimentarios está demostrando ser una herramienta analítica bien acogida para muchos países en su camino hacia sistemas alimentarios más sostenibles, inclusivos y capaces de garantizar la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional.

Celebramos las continuas mejoras de FAO en materia de políticas e iniciativas con un enfoque integral centrado en la prevención de cualquier forma de acoso y conducta sexual inapropiada, así como la promoción y el refuerzo de los medios de denuncia. Celebramos, igualmente, que FAO se haya centrado en lograr un cambio cultural clave para combatir el acoso y las conductas indebidas a largo plazo en consonancia con la política de tolerancia cero.

En este sentido, alentamos a la Organización a abordar los principales factores que impulsan el acoso y las conductas sexuales inapropiadas como se expone en el siguiente paso. De hecho, el acoso y las conductas sexuales inapropiadas son devastadoras para las personas implicadas y la prevención es clave para reducir los riesgos.

Por último, apreciamos el valor añadido de celebrar una reunión conjunta de los Comités de Programa y de Finanzas. Los Miembros de los Comités se benefician así de las perspectivas de los demás sobre los puntos del orden del día en que coinciden. Hemos tomado nota con interés de la propuesta de mejorar la interacción de los Comités mediante un calendario adaptado y esperamos con interés su implementación.

A la vista de las conclusiones del Comité de Finanzas, nos gustaría siguiera debatiendo la reinversión de los ingresos por recuperación de costes con el fin de apoyar de forma financiera los costes de gestión en el bienio 24-25. Hay que tener en cuenta que la recuperación de costes es dinero que otras agencias, fondos y programas, dinero aportado por los Estados Miembros a la Organización por lo que cualquier reserva pertenece a los Estados Miembros y debe devolverse. Subvencionar los costes administrativos no es una solución sostenible sino otra desventaja para otras entidades de Naciones Unidas.

Con estos comentarios, la Unión Europea, sus Estados miembros y los Estados que se adhieren apoyan el Informe de la reunión conjunta del 137 período de sesiones del Comité de Programa y del 198 período de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas.

Sr Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

En primer lugar, nos gustaría destacar el trabajo realizado por todas las Delegaciones durante la Sesión Conjunta. El diálogo y el espíritu de compromiso nos permitió abordar de forma eficiente la agenda de trabajo.

Adicionalmente me gustaría realizar las siguientes consideraciones.

Primero, con relación al punto sobre *Ajustes al programa de trabajo (PTP) para 2024-2025*, nos gustaría insistir en la importancia de dotar al Codex Alimentarius (CODEX) y a la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria (CIPF), incluida la iniciativa e-phyto, de mayores recursos para amplificar su trabajo transformador en materia de seguridad alimentaria. Como lo vimos la semana pasada en el 46° período de sesiones de la Comisión del Codex Alimentarius (CAC46), el Codex Alimentarius es un bien global público reconocido por su aporte científico a la inocuidad alimentaria y comercio internacional. FAO debería potenciar esta herramienta a través de mayor apoyo presupuestario. Al mismo tiempo, en línea por lo indicado durante la CAC46, nos gustaría tener más claridad sobre la visión de FAO para el futuro del Codex, puesto que no queda claro cómo las dinámicas de transformación de los sistemas alimentarios podrían articularse con el mandato que ya posee Codex.

Escuchamos excelentes explicaciones por parte de la Señora Maria Helena Semedo durante la reunión que hemos tenido, pero me parece que sigue siendo importante poder clarificar para que todos los Miembros podamos estar absolutamente tranquilos al respecto del futuro del Codex.

En referencia a las líneas de trabajo sobre agua, como lo mencionamos oportunamente, acompañamos la idea de crear capacidades, fomentar la transferencia de tecnología y el acceso a financiación, para que los países en desarrollo puedan avanzar en políticas para enfrentar el estrés hídrico y las inundaciones. Al mismo tiempo, esta iniciativa institucional debería estructurarse bajo los parámetros aprobados por los miembros en las nuevas Estrategias de Cambio Climático y Ciencia e Innovación. Finalmente, alentamos a la FAO a que continúe brindando actualizaciones sobre este punto a través de los Órganos de Gobierno y Comités competentes de FAO.

Por último, sobre el trabajo realizado en el Momento de Balance de la Cumbre de Sistemas Alimentarios, en seguimiento de comentarios de varias Delegaciones durante la Sesión Conjunta del Comité de Programa y el Comité de Finanzas, nos gustaría indicar, primero, la necesidad de evaluar el valor agregado o los beneficios de contar con una oficina de Coordinación y, segundo, la importancia de evitar crear espacios de debate que carecen de inclusividad y transparencia.

Con estos comentarios, acompañamos el documento.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Excellences, mesdames et messieurs, la présente déclaration est faite par le Royaume du Maroc, la République Unie de Tanzanie et la République du Congo, au nom du groupe Régional Afrique au titre du point huit de l'ordre du jour de cette session du Conseil.

La réunion conjointe du Comité du programme et du Comité financier, qui s'est tenue les 6, 8 et 10 novembre 2023, a abordé, outre les ajustements apportés au Programme de travail et budget (PTB)2024-2025 et la mise en œuvre de la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau, qui font l'objet des points spécifiques de l'ordre du jour de la présente session, les questions suivantes :

(A), la suite donnée au bilan, deux ans après le sommet de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU) sur les systèmes alimentaires. (B), les informations actualisées sur la collaboration de la FAO avec les autres organismes de l'ONU. (C), le rapport annuel sur les politiques, procédures, et mesures mises en place par l'Organisation en matière de prévention du harcèlement, du harcèlement sexuel et de l'exploitation et des abus sexuels.

Le groupe Régional Afrique prend note des recommandations de la réunion conjointe et se félicite des efforts fournis par la FAO dans l'organisation du sommet bilan. Sa collaboration avec les autres organismes des Nations Unies et la mise en place des mesures en matière de prévention du harcèlement et de toutes les formes d'abus au sein de l'Organisation.

Concernant le sommet bilan, le groupe Régional Afrique tient à rappeler que le continent africain a eu à présenter une position commune dans le cadre du processus de transformation des systèmes

alimentaires. Notre groupe se félicite de l'appel du Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies à accélérer l'action pour la transformation des systèmes alimentaires, ainsi que l'établissement, au sein du fonds commun pour les Objectifs de développement durable (ODD), d'un nouveau guichet y afférant.

Par ailleurs, nous tenons à relever que le sommet bilan devait être une occasion donnée aux membres de présenter les progrès accomplis, les défis et les mesures correctives prises dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de leurs feuilles de route nationales, ainsi qu'une opportunité pour les organisations intergouvernementales de présenter leurs visions globales pour soutenir les membres à résorber les difficultés rencontrées. À cet effet, un temps de parole suffisant devait être accordé aux chefs des délégations et des recommandations formulées au Secrétaire Général des Nations Unies sur la manière d'accélérer la mise en œuvre des ODD.

S'agissant de la collaboration avec les autres organisations de l'ONU, le groupe Régional Afrique se félicite des priorités stratégiques des organismes de l'ONU ayant leurs sièges à Rome, présentées dans le nouveau mémorandum d'accord mondial tripartite signé au Soudan du Sud le 1 août 2023. Le groupe Régional Afrique apprécie l'approche systémique des systèmes agroalimentaires, préconisant des partenariats multipartites et des investissements novateurs pour répondre aux crises complexes adoptées par les OSCR, ainsi que la définition des six domaines thématiques de cette collaboration.

Par ailleurs, notre groupe suit avec intérêt les coalitions thématiques qui jouent un rôle moteur pour les activités des plateformes de coopérations régionales entre les institutions de l'ONU et attend un retour d'expérience du programme SAIL qui est le premier programme de collaboration du genre sur le continent. En ce qui concerne les politiques, procédures, et mesures mises en place par l'Organisation en matière de prévention du harcèlement, du harcèlement sexuel et de l'exploitation et des abus sexuels, le groupe Régional Afrique salue les efforts entrepris par la direction et l'encouragement à en faire d'avantage.

Il s'agit de combattre ces déviations en interne, mais également en externe pendant la mise en œuvre des projets. Le groupe Régional Afrique attend d'avoir des informations actualisées concernant la nature et l'échelle des sanctions prises la direction. Avec ces quelques commentaires, le groupe Régional Afrique prend note du rapport de la réunion conjointe du Comité du programme et du Comité financier.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia would like to begin by thanking and congratulating the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting for a very efficient Session last month. There are just two elements that we would like to highlight from this meeting.

First is on FAO's work on Integrated Water Resource Management, in which we appreciate FAO's ongoing work on this important topic during the forthcoming biennium. In particular, we emphasize the value of that work at the local country, sub-regional and regional levels and we look forward to updates on this programme during the biennium 2024-2025.

Second, we welcome the presentation of the Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures, on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

We encourage FAO to continue its processes for updating relevant policies, with a victim/survivor-centred approach, as well as strengthening fit for purpose complaint and feedback mechanisms at all levels, and in particular at decentralized offices.

These are important elements of creating an inclusive culture of respect in all aspects of FAO's work and ensuring a safe workplace for all FAO employees.

With these comments, Australia endorses the recommendations made by the Committee in full.

Mr Su GUO (China) (Original language Chinese)

China recognizes the Chairperson and Members of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee, and the Secretariat for their in-depth discussions and recommendations on relevant issues. China agrees with the Joint Meeting's conclusions and the recommendations regarding the implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management: progress and the needs, the follow up

from the UN Food Systems Summit +2 (UNFF+2) Stocktaking Moment, the update of FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities under the Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

China highly affirms FAO's work in Water Resources Management, recognizes FAO's efforts in hosting the UNFSS+2 Stocktaking Moment, and encourages FAO to continue with the measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment and sexual harassment, discrimination, and abuse of power.

With these comments, China supports the Council's endorsement of the relevant conclusions of the Joint Meetings Report.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation is speaking to support the recommendations of the Joint Meeting of the Committees, and we would like to talk about the Agenda Item on Cooperation between the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). Unfortunately, this topic, in the framework of the Joint Meeting, was not fully considered in our view at this meeting.

We would like to draw attention to something: The traditional Agenda Item of the December Session of the Council was, in fact there was an Agenda which was an Annual Report on the cooperation of the Rome-based Agencies. It was considered the last one and as we know it was reduced to an exchange of written comments. However, we would like to note that the current document which is being considered, of the Joint Meeting, does not really go into the topic of cooperation of the RBAs fully. The emphasis is placed on cooperation with other Rome-based Agencies and Organizations of the UN.

We support the aim of FAO to cooperate with all UN system agencies, however we do think there is a need to keep the format of the document which has been kept to date.

I would also like to draw attention to the following: the topic of the memorandum of organized understanding between Rome-based Agencies. We believe it was renewed this year. The Russian Federation would like to ask the Secretariat to provide further information because when it comes to this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), how much is the 2021 analysis of the effectiveness of the Rome-based Agencies taken into account? The Russian Federation would like to underscore the recommendations of this Joint Meeting and the constructive role of the Committee in addressing the development Strategy of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

You are aware of the fact that we have under Item 13 still the Item on collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), we will come back to that.

Ms Katherine TRUSLOVE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom was glad to participate in the Joint Committee as a Member of the Finance Committee. We fully endorse the Report, reflecting the Joint Committee's recommendations and conclusions, including those related to the adjustments to the programme of work and budget that we discussed yesterday, underscoring the importance of the work of Codex Alimentarius.

We underline the need to continue strengthening prioritization of integrated water resources management. We welcome FAO's work on this and engagement in global I to build partnerships for scaling up action in this critical area at all levels.

We look forward to receiving updates on progress, including on resource mobilization, programme delivery, and results.

We also urge FAO to continue strengthening FAO's processes and measures on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

We look forward to the renewed policy and updates on its implementation, including on resourcing and any challenges and lessons learned.

CHAIRPERSON

With that we have concluded our list of speakers for this Agenda Item and I look to the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting, Ms Yael Rubinstein, to see whether or not she wants to reflect on some of the issues.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees)

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the Members of the Joint Meeting for their constructive approach and very friendly spirit. Allow me also to thank Management and the Secretariat, the technicians, translators and interpreters and the logistic teams for ensuring a very successful Joint Meeting. And last but not least, I would like to thank my Co-Chairperson, Mr Mina Rizk, and the outgoing Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Ms Imelda Smolicic, for the great collaboration and friendship.

CHAIRPERSON

I always look forward to the remarks of Management, but I do not know whether or not Management wants to make some brief remarks? Ms Maria Helena Semedo.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

Regarding the comments from the Ambassador from Argentina, Mr Carlos Chiernak regarding CODEX Alimentarius, I think what I can say is to reassure you of one or two things, that FAO considers the work of CODEX Alimentarius as a high priority. We have just finished the Commission of CODEX Alimentarius, we celebrate the 6th anniversary.

I think it was a very positive moment, a positive evaluation of the work done by CODEX Alimentarius, but now we need to think of the way forward, what could be the contribution of CODEX Alimentarius to food system transformation. How to integrate or to consider the new aspects of food, and how we can find new ways of producing food. But always, keeping the standard setting and science-based approach and the independence of the CODEX Alimentarius.

We at the Secretariat will be supporting the work of CODEX Alimentarius. As it has been shown in the new programme of work of budget you do not have any change in terms of Reporting lines but reinforcing the work of CODEX Alimentarius with the division of food systems as well as other divisions in FAO as appropriate.

The work on integrated water management, I think we presented our vision, our framework – we will be implementing our framework – and just reassure that the Report on presenting on sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse is of utmost priority of FAO as it has been presented by myself and my colleagues during the Joint Meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Beth Bechdol.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

Just very briefly as well I would just like to come in on the final queries/comments provided by the Russian Federation, simply to indicate that we will have I think opportunity to bring this topic up a little later, but that indeed the effort to provide this broader update on our collaboration with other UN system entities, was certainly not intended to replace our Reporting and our communicating on the very important collaborative work that we do with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), but rather to expand on that to still provide significant detail on the work that takes place among FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), but also as we have seen, with systems approach that is required today more than ever, we thought it was very important to share with all of the Members more details on our further UN engagements.

The traditional report, the progress report on RBA collaboration, while not perhaps keeping it the same title, is indeed a collaborative progress summary that is worked on between and among all three of us, and indeed in this particular piece, was included as a footnote, with a full link to that complete

summary. So, I hope that we can continue to discuss this, I think it was very well received by Members to have this expanded opportunity to engage on our fuller and broader UN partnerships.

CHAIRPERSON

With this I would like now to bring forward to you the draft conclusions on this Agenda Item and you all know that we have now a standard practice to deal with those conclusions and to decide on what has been asked to be decided on by those Committees.

I will ask the Secretariat to put on the screen the draft conclusions.

16. The Council reviewed the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and the 198th Session of the Finance Committee*, noting that the adjustments to the *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025*, and the update of FAO's collaboration with other United Nations (UN) system entities would be reviewed as separate Items, and endorsed its conclusions on:

- (a) the *implementation of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) progress and needs*;
- (b) the *follow-up from the United Nations Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2)*; and
- (c) the *Annual Report on Corporate Policy, Processes and Measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*.

I start with the chapeau of paragraph 16. Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to sub subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to sub subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections, and with this we have concluded Item 8. A win by consensus.

Item 9. Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 6-10 November 2023)

Point 9. Rapport de la 137^e session du Comité du Programme (Rome, 6-10 novembre 2023)

Tema 9. Informe del 137.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (Roma, 6-10 de noviembre de 2023)

(CL 174/8)

Item 9.2 Water resources management for the four betters

Point 9.2 La gestion des ressources en eau à l'appui des quatre améliorations

Tema 9.2 Gestión de los recursos hídricos para lograr las cuatro mejoras

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 9, *Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee* which was held from 6-10 November this year, here in Rome. The relevant document before you is *CL174/8*.

Introduction to Item 9: Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 6-10 November 2023)

Ms Yael Rubinstein, Chairperson of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee

I am pleased to present the Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee.

The 137th Session of the Programme Committee was held from 6 to 10 November and its Report is submitted to the Council in document CL 174/8.

The Programme Committee had 21 items on its agenda, including nine for information. I would like to highlight the following matters for the attention of the Council.

The Committee decided unanimously to elect Her Excellency Ambassador Ms Nosipho Nausca Jean Jezile of South Africa as Vice-Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the remainder of its term (November 2023 – June 2025).

In relation to the *Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations (update)*, the Committee recognized the achievements of the Office of Evaluation (OED) in responding to the five focus areas of the OED's strategy and recommended the Council to approve it.

Regarding the *Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14)*, the Committee acknowledged FAO's unique position to contribute to SDG 14; appreciated FAO's key contribution to develop capacity in fisheries data collection and stock assessment, appreciated and stressed that despite FAO's considerable efforts and progress, there is room for improving persistent data gaps and discrepancies that undermine data quality, and recommended the need for a long-term programme on these, which are fundamental to improve country reporting on SDG 14.

The Committee welcomed the *Follow-up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus* and appreciated the actions taken on the implementation of the Evaluation recommendations and the impact and changes made to date.

The Committee welcomed the document *Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition*, recognized the gaps in evidence on the risks and contribution of the wide range of terrestrial animal source foods (TASF) to healthy diets, and encouraged FAO to continue working with relevant partners to capture different approaches and knowledge for evidence generation to fill critical gaps in evidence and knowledge.

The Committee congratulated FAO on developing the comprehensive *Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management*, commended the collaborative and coordinated work on an ecosystems-based approach with other relevant UN entities, and looked forward to receiving information on relevant Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) that will be targeted for concrete impact in integrated management of land, soil and water resources during the biennium.

The Committee also welcomed the update on *FAO responses to global food security challenges*, expressed appreciation for FAO's policy proposals and technical initiatives in response to the global food security challenges, urged the Organization to continue its efforts in this regard, and appreciated the undertaking by Management to provide updated information on the food security emergency in Gaza and other conflicts.

The Committee acknowledged FAO's efforts in accelerating impact through development of the Global Innovation Model and encouraged systematic integration of innovation and technology into FAO programmes for closing the science, technology and innovation gap.

I would like to invite you to review the Report of the 137th Programme Committee. For your convenience, this Report includes an executive summary and suggested action.

I am pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding this Report.

CHAIRPERSON

My idea would be to first go to the Report itself, and then we go to Item 9.1 separately, and we then deal with the conclusions.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Lamento deber interrumpir la Agenda, pero quisiera saber cómo vamos a avanzar con el programa el día de hoy. Usted esta mañana decidió suspender la sesión a las 11.00 para tomar el tema cuatro justo después de la hora del almuerzo.

Quisiera saber si ese tema, si el proyecto de conclusión sobre este tema se va a definir el día de hoy, tal como se había decidido cuando usted tomó la decisión de suspender la sesión a las once. Entiendo

que hay algunos temas que necesitan algunas negociaciones, es decir, el tema cinco y seis, pero en cuanto al tema cuatro no había mucho que negociar, sino que avanzar con el proyecto de decisión.

CHAIRPERSON

At the opening of this afternoon's Session I put forward a proposal how to make progress on the work. So, I propose to start with the *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and the 198th Session of the Finance Committee*, document (CL 174/7) then the *Report of the 119th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)*, document CL 174/10, and then later today, to Item 4, to see how we conclude Item 4. That was approved by the Council. Therefore, we come back later to Item 4 today, hopefully to finalize this Agenda Item also today.

With this, I would like to proceed with Item 9, and again I would like to remind Members that the Adjustments to the *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025* are already dealt with yesterday and the Item on Hand-in-Hand Initiative (HIH) will be dealt with in a separate Agenda Item.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Para una mejor coordinación necesitamos que nos pudiera aclarar cuales son los temas que van a abordarse durante el día. A nosotros nos resulta necesario hacer algunas consultas a nuestras capitales en función al programa de Agenda. Recuerde que tenemos una diferencia horaria de seis horas.

Si tenemos claro cuáles son los temas que se van a tratar diariamente, porque en este momento se está alterando el programa ya que nosotros teníamos que tratar esto mañana. Apreciaríamos mucho saber durante el día cuáles son los temas que van a ser abordados para anticiparnos a la discusión.

CHAIRPERSON

We will now go to Item 9: *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee and the 198th Session of the Finance Committee*, and then we go to Item 10 *Reports of the 196th (Rome, 5-7 June 2023), 197th (Rome, 30-31 October 2023) and 198th (Rome, 6-10 November 2023) Sessions of the Finance Committee* and Item 11, *Report of the 119th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)*.

Then we continue with Item 4, because I think we can manage it within the time we have available today.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Simplemente que usted inició la reunión en el tema 8 y nosotros teníamos en pantalla el tema 10. Es por eso que nos surgió esa duda.

CHAIRPERSON

Sorry for the confusion but we were starting with them because we were not sure whether or not the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting would be available, but she was already available in the room at the beginning of the afternoon Session, so that is why we started already with her Item, so to have the order which was presented in the *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025* of the Council.

With your indulgence, I would now like to go to Item 9 and I will give the floor first to the Regional Groups and then the Members on Item 9.

Bioeconomy will be dealt with in a separate round before we go to the conclusions.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, Japan has the honor to deliver following joint statement.

First of all, the Asia Group would like to commend the excellent work carried out by the Programme Committee. We would also appreciate FAO's efforts to address challenges relating to various programmatic matters.

In this joint statement, the Asia Group would like to highlight some pertinent points from the report, focusing on the issues, which are not covered by the other agenda items of this Council.

FAO's support to Life Below Water (SDG 14): The Asia Group acknowledges FAO's unique position to contribute to SDG 14 through its technical expertise and convening power.

We also appreciate FAO's key contribution to develop capacity in fisheries data collection and stock assessment. At the same time, we support the PC recommendation on the need for a long-term programme to address persistent data gaps and discrepancies that undermine data quality.

We welcome and support FAO's continued active participation in various international fora such as the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC), which will enhance further contribution of FAO's work and expertise on fisheries. FAO's active engagement in INC could also ensure there will be no duplication and replication between INC Process and the plan towards the development of a FAO Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture.

Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets: The Asia Group welcomes the Component Document 1 of the Assessment on Contribution of terrestrial animal source foods to food security, sustainable agrifood systems, nutrition and healthy diets and look forward to further visualization and dissemination of evidence-based information including through forthcoming Component Documents.

Update on FAO response to global food security challenges: We appreciate the undertaking by Management to provide updated information on the food security emergency in Gaza and other conflicts as noted in paragraph 11(c) of the PC report and stress the importance of timely and regular reporting to Members in this regard.

Strengthening science-policy interfaces for agrifood systems/ Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS): The Asia Group welcomes the progress made in strengthening science-policy interfaces for agrifood systems as well as in advancing Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS) initiatives.

In this regard, we encourage FAO to continue to utilize knowledge and technology of the private sector, research institutes and academia for the implementation of such scientific and innovative efforts, enabling a more targeted and effective response to specific country-level needs.

FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action: The Asia Group welcomes the information document on the development of FAO's Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action and looks forward to participation in the upcoming process for further development of the roadmap.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Como siempre es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados Miembros, a los que añadir ocho Estados Miembros que se adhieren a nuestra declaración y que son Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro y San Marino.

En primer lugar, nos gustaría agradecer a la presidenta del Comité del Programa (PC) por su excelente liderazgo.

Nos complace que el Comité del Programa haya reafirmado que se aplicará un enfoque sistemático en todos los ámbitos políticos del mandato de la FAO. Este enfoque sistemático facilitará la identificación de posibles compensaciones entre las distintas opciones políticas y contribuirá a mejorar la colaboración entre departamentos y con otras partes interesadas.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados Miembros toman nota de los ajustes del *Programa de trabajo y presupuesto (PTP) 2024-25*. Acogemos con satisfacción la garantía de la dirección de la FAO de que continuará aprovechando su ventaja comparativa en el trabajo basado en la ciencia y la evidencia y en el establecimiento de normas, como la Comisión del Codex Alimentarius (CAC) y la Convención Internacional de Protección Fitosanitaria (CIPF) y su solución e-phyto, así como el trabajo sobre datos y estadísticas, incluida la racionalización de las funciones estadísticas.

Estamos de acuerdo en que debe reforzarse la integración y la promoción de la juventud, la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres en el medio rural, tanto dentro de la Organización como en todo el mandato de la FAO, pero no creemos que la creación de una "Oficina de la Juventud y la Mujer" sea el camino que seguir. Agradecemos a la FAO la elaboración de propuestas alternativas y esperamos seguir debatiendo esta cuestión.

Coincidimos con la recomendación del Comité del Programa de que se elabore un enfoque global de la financiación de la Organización, que incluya tanto las cuotas como las contribuciones voluntarias y otros acuerdos de financiación, en vista de su contribución al mandato y los objetivos de la Organización y al Marco estratégico para 2022-2031, y esperamos debatir este enfoque en el próximo período de sesiones del Consejo en 2024, a través del Comité de Finanzas (FC).

La UE y sus 27 Estados Miembros reafirman la importancia del enfoque del nexo entre la ayuda humanitaria, el desarrollo y la paz para la FAO y alientan a la FAO a anclar este enfoque en toda la Organización.

Acogemos con satisfacción los progresos realizados en la implantación de la gestión integrada de recursos hídricos y, en términos más generales, la creciente atención que la FAO está prestando al papel del agua en todos sus programas y políticas. El agua es crucial para los sistemas alimentarios sostenibles y estos son esenciales para alcanzar los objetivos de la Agenda de Acción para el Agua de las Naciones Unidas (ONU).

Subrayamos la importancia de mantener abierto el comercio de insumos y productos alimentarios y agrícolas y apreciamos los esfuerzos de la FAO para reforzar el Sistema de Información sobre el Mercado Agrícola (SIMA), y pedimos más apoyo para este sistema como plataforma para mejorar la transparencia del mercado y el diálogo político.

Por último, queremos agradecer los progresos realizados en la aplicación del área prioritaria del Programa "*Bioeconomía para la alimentación y la agricultura sostenibles*". La bioeconomía tiene un gran potencial de innovación en términos de producción y consumo sostenibles, así como un alto potencial de creación de empleo, contribuyendo a través de soluciones de base biológica a avanzar hacia la consecución de los objetivos de la Agenda 2030 de la ONU.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Antes de comenzar, me gustaría destacar la dinámica de trabajo del Comité del Programa donde cada uno de sus Miembros trabajó para facilitar el abordaje y discusión de los documentos. Como este punto de Agenda se subdivide en diversos ítems centrales, me gustaría en esta oportunidad hacer mención específicamente al tema de gestión de recursos hídricos.

En este sentido, sobre el documento referido a la gestión de recursos hídricos, vemos un valor en la propuesta institucional de FAO. Pensamos que el fomento de la adaptación, el acceso a sistemas de riego o prevención de inundaciones y la aplicación de esquemas de alerta temprana, entre otros elementos, son aceleradores clave para la sustentabilidad de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

En esa línea, el apoyo de FAO para el diseño de mapas nacionales, para la irrigocultura pueden funcionar como cambios de juego en realidades nacionales complejas. Al mismo tiempo, también es importante destacar el aporte que pueden realizar el Sistema mundial de información de FAO sobre el agua y la agricultura (AQUASTAT) y la Base de datos de acceso libre sobre la productividad del agua (WaPOR) para favorecer al diseño de estrategias basadas en contextos que contribuyan a evitar inundaciones. Todas estas herramientas poseen un gran valor y demuestran los aportes diferenciados que FAO puede realizar en esta materia.

Igualmente, como se ha manifestado en otras oportunidades nos gustaría recordar la inexistencia de un acuerdo internacional sobre el contenido de alcance de la llamada gobernanza del agua, gobernanza transfronteriza del agua, pero creo que a través del diálogo con la dirección respectiva y con las áreas de conducción de FAO, hemos podido hacer entender nuestro punto de vista y hemos notado un ejercicio de comprensión para tratar de evitar utilizar conceptos que no están internacionalmente acordados o que pueden dar lugar a interpretaciones equívocas. Así que, desde ya, agradecemos anticipadamente a la Sra. María Helena Semedo y al director de la División de Tierras y Aguas de FAO sobre esta cuestión.

Por último, como lo dijimos en el Comité de Programa, pensamos que esta propuesta debería ser más específica sobre cuáles serían los medios de implementación que se ofrecerán a los Miembros para fortalecer sus propias capacidades. Este punto tiene una incidencia especial en los países en desarrollo que justamente son los que más sufren los impactos del cambio climático y, por ende, tienen la necesidad crítica en materia de infraestructura hídrica, sistemas de información y gestión del riego. Por

último, pensamos que de existir el consenso sería beneficioso que esa línea de trabajo sea también presentada en los comités técnicos de FAO ya que eso podría permitir su enriquecimiento.

Con estos comentarios, acompañamos el contenido del documento.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

In fact, we appreciate the work of the Programme Committee. There has been a number of documents as well as recommendations that we agree. We would like to give these observations:

The Near East Group would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Committee. We would like also to stress the quality information carried out by the FAO. Some countries in our region depend on fisheries, so that it is why it is very important to work hard in order to develop these sectors. We have also the small farmers with very little capabilities. Therefore, we need to exert more efforts in order to collect quality data and to analyze them. It is very important that FAO provide more support to our countries for the quality data collection. We also have to work hard so that our capacity can be built in collaboration with the regional and local institutions.

Our region appreciates the work of the FAO for the concept regarding water Management. We would like to refer to the fact that water scarcity in our region represents the most important challenges that are facing our countries. The majority of our countries need to have more support in order to have the excellent use of our water resources. We have also to increase our capabilities and to apply new technologies in order to have sound water Management. We need to have creative and integrated approach for water resource governance.

We have taken note regarding the response of the FAO regarding the food security challenges. Our region would like to express our concern regarding the situation in Palestine, Sudan and Syria, and these are due to the climate change as well as the conflicts and the consequences on food security.

In fact, we would like to thank the Organization for the urgent response despite the complex security situations in these countries.

Therefore, we support the Report as well as the recommendations.

Mr Hanghao LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China runs with Japan's statement on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group. China would like to thank the Programme Committee for its highly effective work. China endorses the rolling workplan of evaluation submitted by the Office of Evaluation (OED).

We duly recognize the substantial workload and numerous requests handled by the OED to further optimize its operations. We encourage enhanced communication between the OED and relevant stakeholders to address evaluation priorities and schedules better aligned to country needs and demands.

China encourages FAO to regularly publish the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) update, food price index, and the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) to help monitor food security and agricultural production and trade, in hotspot regions, and analyze long term and fundamental drivers that affect food security. We also encourage FAO to enhance cooperation with World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to eliminate distortions of the agricultural market.

China recognizes FAO's substantial achievements in mainstreaming water resource. We would like to encourage FAO to further increase its support to water Management related work, including allocating more extra budgetary resources, helping countries in need to draft national water resource roadmaps, and building a long-term mechanism to achieve an inclusive and effective integrated water resource governance.

China also supports the 2024 Asia Pacific Regional Meeting to discuss water resource related issues and make decisions. We eagerly anticipate FAO's regular update on water resource Management, especially pertaining to national roadmaps, Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and global dialogue on water tenure.

With these comments, China supports the Council's endorsement of conclusions with regard to the Programme Committee's Report.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

The United States of America congratulates Programme Committee Members for completing the difficult task of comprehensively reviewing and completing a lengthy Agenda. We appreciate the positive comments of the Programme Committee on the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (VACS). We also commend the Programme Committee for emphasising the important role of Codex and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The United States endorses the Programme Committee Report.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I appreciate the work that went into the week and to recall the essential role of the Programme Committee in advising this Council, in asking questions.

The Members of the Programme Committee spend a lot of time digging deeply through the documents that ultimately come to the Council, spend a lot of time finding consensus in a cross regional manner and ultimately aim to collectively ask questions based on that time and analysis to advance us and help our decision making and move forward for the good of the Organization and for the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

So just want to reemphasize that point of how important it is that all the Committees advising the Council to get the support and recognition that I think they deserve. And with that we would like to endorse all elements of the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

That was not the shortest, but also very brief statement and certainly also I think reminding all of us about the crucial role the Programme Committee (PC), the Finance Committee (FC) and essentially other Committees are playing in our work for the Council.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia would like to join others in congratulating the Chair of the Programme Committee on the smooth running of the Session and we appreciate all Committee Members for their efforts. We have got four brief, broad elements to highlight briefly, and we will address Agenda Item 9.2 on water as well.

First, we welcome the discussion on the Contribution of terrestrial animal source foods (TASF), to the food security sustainable agricultural food systems, nutrition and healthy diets. This document has demonstrated the critical contributions of (TASF) for human health, and we look forward to the forthcoming component documents that will allow livestock contributions to be holistically viewed through a systems lens.

Second, we welcome the recognition of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and its important role in market transparency.

Third on innovation, the adoption and uptake of innovative technology and practises in the agriculture sector is a challenge globally, not least in developing countries. We encourage FAO to focus on simple and effective innovations that have the greatest return on investment, especially in small island developing states in the Pacific.

Fourth, we approve the rolling plan of evaluations and express our appreciation for the pragmatic approach being taken by the Director of Evaluation to clear the backload of evaluations and establish new criteria for better and more targeted evaluations in the future.

Briefly on water, Australia is strongly supportive of the Biennial theme on water resources Management in 2024-2025. Water is a critical resource for food security and Australia's dry climate and frequent droughts makes us particularly aware of our vulnerabilities and the importance of efficient Management. We also reiterate the importance of incorporating indigenous people's perspectives and knowledge for water resources Management.

We encourage FAO to strengthen its contributions to global efforts to improve water use efficiencies and to share information and progress with Members. Australia looks forward to engaging in future processes over this Biennium and sharing our significant experience and expertise.

With the above comments Australia is pleased to endorse the recommendations of the Programme Committee.

Ms Katherine TRUSLOVE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom thanks the Programme Committee and endorses its recommendations and conclusions, including on FAO conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management.

We would like here to focus on the Follow up report on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work on humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. We welcome the implementation of the evaluation recommendations and note FAO's increasing commitment to its humanitarian action as a core part of its mandate, with a budget that has increased to USD 1.2 billion. In this light, we would welcome more information from FAO on the measures being taken to anchor the HDP nexus approach in the Organization.

We recognize FAO's achievements in positioning itself as a key stakeholder in the global anticipatory action discussion by providing evidence, technical expertise and innovative approaches, and would like to highlight the importance of ensuring that conflict sensitivity is embedded across all FAO's programming with a focus on the impact of conflict on food security.

We agree on the importance of strengthening strategic partnerships, can Management offer some concrete examples and is FAO sharing lessons with other agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP).

Finally, recommendation 3 is crucial to achieving concrete results in this space. We encourage FAO to further invest in internal capacity building on the ground when needed, including on conflict sensitivity analysis.

Mr Marcel BEUKEBOOM (Netherlands, Kingdom of the) (Observer)

First of all, the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States as just delivered by Spain. On top of that, I would like to make a few additional remarks since I was also a member of the Programme Committee (PC) in which capacity I had the privilege of having good and in-depth discussions with my fellow Committee Members and with FAO Management. The results of these discussions have been captured as recommendations in the Report that is on our Agenda today.

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight a few points from our deliberations: First, the PC recognizes the agrifood systems approach as an approach that "*shall be applied across all policy fields within FAO's mandate, and be reflected in its programming and budget*" as in article 5a of the Report. This is very important, as it can help identify potential trade-offs and lead to the abolishment of silos.

Looking through a systemic lens to the Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition also led to interesting discussions in our Committee. We noted that looking at this subject without the wider context increases the risk to miss trade-offs with, for example, biodiversity and health objectives. It is important that we keep on talking about these and fill the knowledge gaps that still exist.

Then water. I cannot let an opportunity like this go by without putting the spotlight on water. When looking through a system's lens, one cannot miss the importance of water. We are happy with the acknowledgement of this fact by the FAO biennial theme, and by the many activities that are captured in the conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management. We are worried though by the lack of capacity within FAO and urge Management to correct this imbalance.

Finally, FAO's strategies. When looking ahead at the next PC meeting, and subsequent session of the Council, the importance of having progress reports on FAO's strategies was stressed. We expect

progress reports on the three recently adopted strategies on Climate, Private Sector, and Science and Innovation – and their respective action plans.

On top of that, we should look at the Biodiversity Strategy, and its action plan which, to my best knowledge, expires at the end of this year and should be updated with the results of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (COP15) into an Action Plan for the next three years.

I look forward to a reaction by Management.

Ms Praiya SAVETJINDA (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by Japan. Thailand endorsed the Report of the 137th Sessions of the Programme Committee. We encourage FAO to continue a transparent dialogue on all sources of funds with full spectrum and financial resources.

We underline the importance of the need to appropriately contextualize technical support and tailor it to best serve local demands, capacities and needs. We support increased research on the effects of market distortions and resilience of global agrifood systems and the design of financing mechanisms that minimize risks to agrifood systems.

We look forward to the outcomes of the development of the global innovation model and its three key assets and services. We are in favour to continue discussion on bioeconomy to facilitate mutual understanding of the different meanings of the term.

Item 9. Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee (Rome, 6-10 November 2023)

Point 9. Rapport de la 137^e session du Comité du Programme (Rome, 6-10 novembre 2023)

Tema 9. Informe del 137.º período de sesiones del Comité del Programa (Roma, 6-10 de noviembre de 2023)

(CL 174/8)

Item 9.1 Bioeconomy for sustainable agrifood systems transformation

Point 9.1 La bioéconomie au service de la transformation des systèmes agroalimentaires dans une optique de durabilité

Tema 9.1 Bioeconomía en favor de la transformación sostenible de los sistemas agroalimentarios

CHAIRPERSON

I did not see any other requests for the floor, so, before going to the conclusions, I turn now to Agenda Item 9.1, *Bioeconomy for sustainable agrifood systems transformation* as an Item for discussion, not for decision.

I will first ask Ms Maria Helena Semedo whether she wants to give more background information.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

The discussion on bioeconomy started with the FAO Conference. It was requested by the Conference that FAO discussed bioeconomy during this year in the Technical Committees and also in the Council. Bioeconomy is a priority programme area in FAO's Strategic Framework called Bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. So what is bioeconomy?

Bioeconomy is a development approach that emphasises the sustainable use of renewal biological resources for producing goods, services, information and energy. Bioeconomy integrates economic value, social welfare and environment sustainability and we propose bioeconomy for the transformation of agrifood systems. This could be through a technological approach. We can talk about biotechnology, digital organisational approaches, policies, institutional and social innovation, a societal awareness, data, human capital. And also integrating indigenous peoples, youth, women producers and consumers communities.

We are working on bioeconomy in close linkage with the FAO Strategy on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors, the Climate Change Strategy, the Science and Innovation Strategy, and see

it as integrated across The *four betters* of FAO. As previously said, bioeconomy presents a systemic approach.

We are planning related work in the next biennium. We want to strengthen the role of bioeconomy, incorporating national perspectives, because we are talking at the global level, how we are moving to the national perspective. We are working on the global perspective. Brazil will be chairing the G20, and it has been already mentioned that bioeconomy will be one of the priorities.

We will work with our decentralised offices on how we can bring bioeconomy solutions through capacity building investments and how we can improve related knowledge in order that everyone can understand what bioeconomy is, and how we can leverage the value of bioeconomy for transforming our agrifood system, increasing food security and also farmers' livelihoods.

I think what we want through this is to promote a strong national ownership of bioeconomy, bringing a transformation, a paradigm to transform agrifood system and work very closely with our Members in order to provide guidance how we can move in terms of principles, in terms of opportunities and also in terms of partnership and sharing best practices with different Members and farmers.

Also to say that bioeconomy is very much connected to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 12 on sustainable production and consumption but links to all the SDGs.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Ms Maria Helena Semedo. I now open the floor for Members to address the Council on this issue.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Como lo expresamos en el Comité del Programa (PC), nuestro país entiende que esta temática reviste profunda relevancia y merece la atención y tratamiento de los miembros. Por lo tanto, agradecemos su abordaje por separado.

En tal sentido, no gustaría enfatizar que la Argentina entiende y valora la bioeconomía como un paradigma de desarrollo sustentable para las cadenas agro-bio-industriales. De hecho, este concepto ya forma parte de nuestros planes y programas estratégicos. Para mi país, la bioeconomía involucra bio-productos, bio-insumos, bio-material, bio-tecnología y bio-procesos; es decir, constituye un catalizador para alcanzar la premisa de “producir más con menos” en armonía con la biodiversidad y los recursos naturales.

Adicionalmente, es importante destacar que mi país cuenta con una Comisión Nacional Asesora de Biotecnología Agropecuaria (CONABIA) que desde 2014 funciona como el Centro de Referencia de FAO para la Bioseguridad de los Organismos Genéticamente Modificados; los cuales, evidentemente, también son parte fundamental de la bioeconomía y presentan una robusta influencia en el aumento de los rindes agro-productivos. Alcanzar la meta del Hambre cero requiere pensar nuestras acciones mano-de-la-mano con la bioeconomía.

Es decir, vemos a la bioeconomía como un catalizador indispensable para desarrollar estrategias tecno-bio-productivas que se basen en prácticas innovadoras de producción en plena articulación con el aprovechamiento de procesos y principios biológicos y formas de generación y aplicación de conocimientos para, entre otras cosas, generar alimentos, generar energía y servicios de manera sostenible; reconociendo, incluso, a las “soluciones basadas en la naturaleza”, como principios que también forman parte de los elementos de la bioeconomía.

En este entendimiento, y comprendiendo la dificultad de encarar el desarrollo de una definición universal, acompañamos la idea, sugerida por FAO, de trabajar en la elaboración de principios que permitan consolidar los aportes de la bioeconomía para conseguir los objetivos de la Agenda 2030.

Con estos comentarios, respaldamos el avance programático de esta línea de trabajo.

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

Brazil takes note of the conclusions of the Session of the Programme Committee on bioeconomy. We appreciated receiving an overview of the extensive activities file has been undertaking in bioeconomy since 2015 and particularly after the adoption of the Strategic Framework with the developments on the Programme Priority Area Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture (BE2). We also thank the German Government for having supported the work that has been done by FAO since then.

Brazil has hosted during the World Food Forum and Science and Innovation Forum in October, a side event which was called, Unleashing the Potential of the Amazon Bioeconomy. We had the participation of representatives from different national and sub national governments, research centres and the civil society. We believe it was an occasion that highlighted the regional commitment to the sustainable development of the Amazon through the sustainable use of biodiversity resources and of traditional knowledge, having social inclusion as a central objective.

What stood out from these and many other events taking place along those days was the shared vision according to which bioeconomy encompasses a range of diverse approaches varying from region to region, from country to country. Therefore, it must be addressed in an inclusive manner, aiming for principles and building blocks as opposed to strict concepts.

There was also remarkable agreement on the need to work towards the negotiation of principles and also indicators regarding the sustainability of bioeconomy. We also noticed extensive recognition of the leadership role FAO has to play on the promotion of bioeconomy, given the Organization's capacity to facilitate partnerships, disseminate good practises, foster value chains and harness traditional knowledge.

Those views were expressed by government representatives, civil society, academia, research institutions and private sector alike in occasions such as the event bioeconomy as a catalyst for agrifood systems transformation. And in the meeting of the International Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group.

Brazil fully agrees with the views and ideas expressed and believe this is the moment to provide more clarity on the work we expect from the FAO in observing the mandate given by the last Conference on bioeconomy. In that sense, we propose FAO Members negotiate sustainable bioeconomy principles and indicators within the Technical Committee during the biennium that will lead to next Conference in 2025, building upon the work developed up until this point by the Organization under the International Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

If I may defer to Japan who will be delivering the Asia Regional statement that they can follow.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, Japan has the honour to deliver the following joint statement.

The Asia Group welcomes the information provided on the FAO work on Bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture. We note that there are multiple definitions of bioeconomy, and the Members of the 42nd Session of the FAO Conference adopted the following definition.

Bioeconomy is the production, utilization, conservation and regeneration of bio or biological resources, including related knowledge, science, technology and innovation to provide sustainable solutions, information, products, processes and services, building across all economic sectors and enable transformation to sustainable economy, which has been adapted from the Global Bioeconomy Summit communique of 2020.

It furthermore specified that the term was to be used without the addition of circular. FAO's programmes and activities within such concept and the definition of bioeconomy should be in line with the scope and mandate of the FAO. Bearing in mind no one-size-fits-all approach, the Asia Group looks forward to further elaboration of the bioeconomy concept in the context of the FAO Strategic Frameworks and Programme Priority Areas, which would provide us with more concrete and a clear way forward in response to the interesting topic.

The 43rd Session of the FAO Conference also highlighted the need to discuss this topic within Governing Bodies and Technical Committees of the FAO. The Asia Group expects a proposal of FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment to present to the 29th Session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG 29). A first foundational study on bioeconomy, which reviews the literature and past work, to map the bioeconomy in different countries, in the context to provide an overview of targets, priority action areas and sustainability criteria.

The Asia Regional Group also suggests that this study be presented to COFO 27, and the Committee of Fisheries, COFI 36, as well. Meanwhile, for the 2024-2025 biennium we note that the FAO will build on three elements that have stood out as success factors during this first biennium of implementation. As elaborated in Programme Committee document *PC137/INF/8*.

Furthermore, beyond empowering the FAO's decentralized offices to scale up bioeconomy solutions on the ground, Member States, upon their request, should be capacitated in developing and implementing integrated, evidence-based bioeconomy strategies, policies and programmes for sustainable food and agriculture.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es de nuevo un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 estados miembros y la adhesión de otros siete: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldavia, Montenegro, San Marino y Turquía que se alinean plenamente con esta declaración.

Acogemos con satisfacción la información proporcionada sobre el trabajo de la FAO en bioeconomía para la alimentación y la agricultura sostenibles.

Apreciamos los progresos realizados en la aplicación del área prioritaria del Programa «*Bioeconomía para la alimentación y la agricultura sostenibles*». La bioeconomía tiene un gran potencial de innovación en términos de producción y consumo sostenibles, así como un alto potencial de creación de empleo, contribuyendo a través de las soluciones de base biológica a avanzar hacia la consecución de los objetivos de la Agenda 2030 de las Naciones Unidas (ONU).

Para la UE, el concepto de bioeconomía abarca todos los sectores y servicios asociados y las inversiones que producen, utilizan, procesan, distribuyen o consumen recursos biológicos, sea animales, plantas y microorganismos, incluyendo los residuos orgánicos, y los servicios ecosistémicos.

La UE cuenta con una estrategia y un plan de acción sobre bioeconomía, que incluyen 14 acciones bien definidas, en torno a tres prioridades: la primera, reforzar y ampliar los sectores de base biológica, desbloqueando inversiones y mercados; la segunda, desplegar rápidamente las bioeconomías locales en toda Europa; la tercera comprender los límites ecológicos de la bioeconomía.

Creemos que esta estrategia puede ser útil para seguir desarrollando el concepto de bioeconomía en el ámbito del mandato de la FAO.

Por último, teniendo en cuenta la importancia que la bioeconomía podría desempeñar en las futuras economías nacionales, alentamos a los Estados Miembros a la adopción de estrategias nacionales y planes de acción sobre bioeconomía sostenible y circular.

Ms Ingrid Hordvei DANA (Norway)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country Norway). We fully align ourselves with the European Union (EU) statement.

In the light of the global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable food systems, there is a need to facilitate the development of the bioeconomy in order to accelerate the green transition and to promote self-sufficiency of regions.

The Nordic countries agree that bioeconomy can be a key solution pathway for sustainable agrifood systems transformation. In the Nordic countries, the bioeconomy contributes positively to the national economies and welfare by providing jobs, income and recreational possibilities.

There are three aspects to this topic that we would like to highlight:

First, it is important to develop sustainable bioeconomy throughout the whole value chain as well as within and across different sectors. For example, bioeconomy holds potential for increased synergies between the blue and green sector. Policy actions must cover chain from primary production to product innovations, and account for the use of biological resources from land, sea and waste. This needs to be done without increasing administrative burden for involved actors.

Second, a sustainable bioeconomy means that the resources are smartly used and not wasted. Upscaling the use of recycled materials and side streams allows the expansion of the bioeconomy without increasing the use of scarce virgin materials. Nutrients recycling is a good example of this.

Third, a key factor of success is a balanced and fair inclusion of all relevant actors, particularly farmers and other primary producers. Particular attention must be paid to strategies that benefit local communities, promote gender and intergenerational equality and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Also, it is important to secure the development of the bioeconomy in rural areas and their inclusive economic growth.

In order to enable the sustainable growth of the bioeconomy, a strong investment in research, education, information sharing, and the development of technologies should be encouraged.

The Nordic countries welcome the FAO's key directions for the future of the bioeconomy as highlighted in *PC 137/INF/8* as effective and relevant.

In particular, we commend the FAO for having an integrated approach that considers social, economic, environmental, and governance aspects of the bioeconomy, whilst recognizing that approaches should be context specific.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

The United States strongly supports FAO's work on bioeconomy. This work should encompass the full spectrum of the bioeconomy, including biomanufacturing, biotechnology, genome editing, genome mandating and other innovative approaches that expand how biological resources are used across the economy.

We want to emphasize the importance of international cooperation to ensure a safe, secure and sustainable global bioeconomy. The United States is committed to working with international partners, including governments, private sector and academic institutions that are similarly prioritising biotechnology and biomanufacturing.

There is a strong link between FAO's Science and Innovation Strategy and advancing FAO's work on bioeconomy. How does FAO intend to consolidate and elevate its role as a leading global convening body on Bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture?

We would also like to learn more about the bioeconomy dashboard and the aspirational principles and criteria for sustainable bioeconomy that FAO has developed. How does FAO intend to use these tools to help support developing countries achieve their food security goals? Will Members have an opportunity to review and comment on the dashboard?

At this time, the United States encourages FAO to provide technical support to countries on how best to fulfil their own priorities on bioeconomy. We have heard suggestions that FAO's work on bioeconomy needs to be grounded in a common definition or set of principles. We believe that as this field is still new, it would make the most sense that instead of trying to narrow what counts as bioeconomy, FAO should instead prioritize providing technical support to countries on how to fulfil their own priorities on bioeconomy.

Mr Hanghao LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports Japan's statement on behalf of the Asian Group. China has taken note of the conclusions of FAO's Programme Committee on the topic bioeconomy.

Considering that there is no clear and standardized definition of bioeconomy at this moment and that different countries may have different interpretation with regard to the relevant documents that provided by FAO, the interpretation or the explanations can be quite broad.

Different countries may have different interpretation of it. China encourages FAO to actively implement the three aspects of work listed in paragraph 33 of *PC137/INF/8*, in particular to provide a clear and acceptable definition of bioeconomy in an appropriate manner.

Ms Anna LARSON (Canada)

Just a couple of points from us as we also strongly support FAO's work on bioeconomy. We are pleased to have just heard from Deputy Director-General Ms Maria Helena Semedo that FAO bioeconomy work will look at linkages between bioeconomy and multiple relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as SDGs 2, 8 and 9 in addition to SDG12 on responsible production and consumption, and we look forward to the evolving work on this topic and further updates, particularly given the prominence this topic received through the 43rd Session of the Conference.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

Tengo el honor de realizar esta intervención en nombre de Brasil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela y mi país, Perú, Países Miembros de la Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica.

En agosto pasado, nuestros Jefes de Estado acordaron celebrar la Cumbre Amazónica y la 4ª Reunión de Presidentes de los Estados Parte en el Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica convencidos de la urgencia de abordar la protección de la región amazónica de manera integral, combatir la pobreza y las desigualdades y promover el desarrollo sostenible con un modelo de desarrollo económico justo y ético, de generación de productos, procesos y servicios basados en el uso sostenible de los recursos biológicos, en particular, de la biodiversidad.

En la 14ª Reunión de Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica (OTCA) llevada a cabo el pasado 23 de noviembre, nuestros países han aprobado la resolución OTCA-11 que establece un grupo de trabajo intergubernamental dedicado a la elaboración de estrategias amazónicas para la soberanía y seguridad alimentaria y nutricional que, entre otros temas, deberá considerar y presentar propuestas sobre el fortalecimiento de los sistemas de producción, distribución y comercio de productos de la bioeconomía regional.

En el marco de nuestro trabajo en la FAO, consideramos importante avanzar en este tema, ya que tiene potencial de fomentar cadenas productivas para el uso sostenible de la biodiversidad con los objetivos, entre otros, de promover la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, el manejo y la recuperación forestal, la protección y el reconocimiento del valor de las prácticas y conocimientos ancestrales de los pueblos indígenas y comunidades locales en conformidad con las legislaciones, planes y realidades de cada país y en consonancia con lo encomendado durante la 43.ª Conferencia general de la FAO.

Por ello, proponemos que el tratado desarrollado por la Oficina de Cambio Climático, Biodiversidad y Medio Ambiente (OCB) sea utilizado como punto de partida para la negociación inclusiva de indicadores aplicables a diferentes contextos según las prioridades, necesidades y capacidades nacionales con miras a su adopción por la 45.ª Conferencia de la FAO.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines aligns with the Asia Regional Group Statement delivered by our distinguished delegate from Japan.

In the Philippines, the concept of “*bioeconomy*” appears to be consistent with the priority thrusts under the Philippines Development Plan 2023-2028, with its focus on digitalization, servicification and dynamic innovation ecosystem.

FAO's bioeconomy programs also have the potential to support priority actions and measures embodied under the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production and National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document.

The Philippines is particularly interested in training on systems policy approaches towards bioeconomy development, and capacity building for bioeconomy jobs. Priority strategic measures for the Philippines include developing the blue economy, climate and disaster-resilient technologies, and early warning systems/anticipatory mechanisms.

The Philippines looks forward to the discussions and recommendations of FAO's technical committees on bioeconomy to crystallize targets and priority action areas for the next biennium of 2026-2028, that can be agreed upon by all Members.

Ms Amanda BROWNING (Australia)

Australia thanks FAO for outlining the history of its leadership on bioeconomy and the examples offered. We acknowledge the definition provided at paragraph 7 and we appreciate FAO's practical approach to bioeconomy through including it as an element of sustainable agriculture.

We note that differing interpretations of the term bioeconomy exist, and we encourage FAO to continue building upon the framework established through the Sustainable Bioeconomy Guidelines and work to develop a common understanding of bioeconomy that works for people, food security and climate change.

We note that the aspirational principles and criteria cover the three dimensions of sustainability, being social, economic and environmental, as well as good governance. This aligns with Australia's set of sustainability principles that promote an outcomes focused, no one-size-fits-all approach to agricultural sustainability.

We support a further examination of how the concept of bioeconomy can support sustainable food and agricultural production acknowledging the diversity of circumstances between countries. We encourage FAO to continue partnering with countries on bioeconomy projects that are relevant and suitable to furthering agricultural sustainability, suitable to each country's individual circumstances.

Our Australian sustainability principles are underpinned by transparent, science and risk-based policies and regulations and promote the role of the multilateral trading system, including transparent, predictable, open and fair markets.

We note FAO's work in elevating bioeconomy as a strategic priority and look forward to continue learning about the work FAO is doing in collaboration with partners, especially in the context of transforming agrifood systems and advancing sustainable development.

We encourage FAO to keep Members informed as to the key lessons learned from bioeconomy projects to improve the efficacy of future efforts.

Ms Swantje NILSSON (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We appreciate the information given on the Progress Report on Bioeconomy for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Transformation. For Germany transforming food systems towards more sustainability and resilience is crucial for implementing the United Nations Agenda 2030.

Therefore, Germany significantly increased its support of projects focusing on sustainable food system transformation adapted to local needs in 2023, so this year. In this context, we would like to emphasize the relevance and quality of FAO's work on bioeconomy and highlight the work of the International Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group.

Germany has been intensively involved and also supported the project team financially over two funding periods. We feel it has been quite a success. We therefore welcome and support the Brazilian proposal to use the principles developed by the International Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group as a basis for indicators of a sustainable bioeconomy.

The development of sustainability criteria for the bioeconomy is still a challenge that has not yet been tackled uniformly. An international and multilateral initiative could contribute to the comparability of national systems and help us all, including countries that are still at the beginning of developing criteria. We hear that FAO's work already has been used by Member States for the development of national strategies or policies.

With this success, we would like to encourage FAO to intensify its efforts by scaling up bioeconomy related activities and support at country, regional and global level.

Additionally, we are trying to do our homework too. Just yesterday at the German-Brazilian Government Consultations in Berlin, a joint declaration of intent on bioeconomy was signed. The aim of this cooperation will be the further development of not only industrial bioeconomy, but also of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Allow me to comment that we believe this also to be a good sign of constructive cooperation between the regions, obviously also in this field, intensified cooperation among the UN organisations can help create synergies in order to accelerate food systems transformation.

Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)

Ethiopia, Angola and Cabo Verde delivers this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group congratulated the Council and the Secretariat for the inclusion of this important Item on bioeconomy in the agenda, and we also thank Brazil for taking the initiative.

The United Nations Food System Summit and the Stock Taking Moment (UNFSS +2) held in July in Rome continue to catalyse advancement so that initiatives like the one presented can contribute to the holistic vision of the impacts of the pandemic and the crisis bring to food systems.

We consider it important for the region to continue collective action to accelerate the results of national dialogue, so that systems transformation services can address the cross-cutting issues we still face. Cross-cutting by economic policies which provide food and nutritional sovereignty, especially at the local level, can promote and improve productivity and the solution of the plurality of agricultural, fishing and livestock production systems with bioeconomic benefits.

Bioeconomy as a tool for local dialogue and participation is an approach that reaffirms sustainability and represents a vision that strengthens the production chain, food and nutritional security, generates jobs and incorporates sustainability dimensions.

The result in the African Region still poses a challenge that will shape the resilience of the system and the transformation. The Africa Regional Group believes that the approach is relevant and could be included in the priority agenda provided. It aims at the resilience of food system for cooperation and collaboration for development. This should enable the region to ensure productive growth interconnections of the renewable biological sources, biodiversity protection, application of biotechnologies and value chain efficiency in sustainable manner.

The recently adopted post Malabo Declaration and the assessment of the Agenda 2063 portfolio combined innovation and rural policies focusing on the resilience of systems and many form the basis for this vision.

We find the multidisciplinary feature perspective useful as it may positively impact local development. However, in the regional context, we emphasize the priorities of combating poverty, inclusivity and building a society that contributes to progressive evolution using practical actions that strengthens the production of a sustainable bioeconomy.

The Africa Regional Group considers bioeconomy important as long as national dialogue envision the development of practises from the initiative and actions that enables the progressive implementation of the model.

We believe that education and training with new practises improved biotechnologies can have beneficial result, especially in progressive change of attitudes and new approaches in family farming and the acceleration of rural family levels.

The Africa Regional Groups would like to emphasize that climate change and emission reduction programmes can play an important role in empowering and educating local communities and sectoral linkages.

We recommend the development of bioeconomy strategies for better technical complementarity and access to various components of the bioeconomy, focusing on comparative action of already adopted processes that strengthens interregional cooperation and collaboration. Finally, the Africa Regional Group proposes the organization of a conference on bioeconomy and food system resilience to

develop new academic approaches and strengthen actions leading to the assessment and direction of this new paradigm of sustainability, resilience and food system transformation.

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

India appreciates and supports the work of FAO on bioeconomy, however, we stress upon the need for inclusive bioeconomy frameworks that duly considers economic realities and capacities of developing nations, while ensuring that bioeconomy initiatives are environmentally sustainable, economically viable and culturally appropriate.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not see any requests for the floor from our other Council Members, I now go to the Observers.

Ms Elsa Barbosa DE OLIVEIRA MARCELINO SIMÕES (Cabo Verde) (Observer)

Cabo Verde supports the statement delivered by Ethiopia on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. We thank FAO for preparing this information papers. The 42nd Session of FAO Conference elevated bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture to the status of a priority programme area, raising the awareness and promoting discussions amongst Members and allowing to better guide FAO on its work. We thank Brazil for the initiative.

As a small island developing state, we see bioeconomy as a means to strengthen resilience in our agrifood systems, contribute to rural development and the livelihood of rural families. To achieve this, we believe FAO role in supporting the preparation of guidelines that are inclusive and sensitive to each local reality, can be an important investment to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 1 (SDG1) and 2.

Additionally, we believe that empowering and reinforcing staffing at FAO decentralised offices, sustainable and broad range impact investments and supporting research and capacity building, partnership and South South and Triangular Cooperation can leverage our work in bioeconomy.

With these comments, we look forward to a continued dialogue and discussion in the Technical Committees.

Mr Lieven DE LA MARCHE (Belgium) (Observer)

Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States and underscores the importance of the Bioeconomy Strategy. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan that serves as a reference for our understanding of the concept of bioeconomy.

The ongoing food and energy and security puts additional pressure on resources that ecosystems can provide. This shows that it is more urgent than ever to deploy a bio-based economy. For this reason, Belgium welcomes the fact that bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture has been given the status of programme priority area within the FAO Strategic Framework.

Bioeconomy because it offers opportunities to utilize residual streams can contribute to the development of the rural economy, stimulate innovation and create local jobs. Optimal use of bio-based products and biological resources will make agricultural systems more resilient. With cascading use of biological resources is the best way to extract high value added. In this respect, the use of food co-products in the local economy is a Strategy to be encouraged.

Moreover, the cascade principle is extremely effective in enabling primary producers to increase their income, localised input provision and when it comes to local businesses, for job creation.

In recent years, the Belgian Agricultural Policy has given particular attention to the potential of biological resources and food residual streams. Some examples are the public private partnerships Flanders Circular rule, which includes two Agendas, an Agenda for food chain, which focuses on the food chain as a whole and on the valorization of side streams and the Agenda bioeconomy, which focuses on the applications and the non food bioeconomy like the use of hemp as material for insulation in bio-based buildings.

Second example, the Business-to-Business (B2B) platform that was put in place through the Flemish Policy Framework on Bioeconomy that connects agriculture, horticulture, marine and food industry with industrial partners around green innovation in the carbon neutral economy. And the third example, the Circle Deployment Strategy called, Circle of Wallonia, developed by the Walloon Region, bringing together public authorities, businesses and citizens.

To conclude, Belgium is committed to continue its work and efforts on the development of bioeconomy for food security and advocates for policy coherence, multi level and multi sectoral engagement, balancing economic value, social welfare with environment sustainability.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France) (Observateur)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom de l'Union européenne et de ses 27 États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. La bioéconomie peut constituer une formidable opportunité de décarboner les économies via une utilisation durable et raisonnée de la biomasse en substitution des ressources fossiles. Bien entendu, son développement doit se faire en tenant compte de l'impératif de sécurité alimentaire. La bioéconomie peut en cela faire partie de la réponse au défi d'adaptation et d'atténuation au changement climatique.

Elle peut également contribuer aux enjeux d'autonomie, autonomie stratégique, alimentaire, énergétique et industriel, des enjeux d'autant plus importants dans le contexte des crises actuelles. La bioéconomie est également un formidable atout concret de développement des territoires permettant aux agriculteurs et aux forestiers d'être des acteurs clés pour contribuer pleinement aux réponses face au défi climatique et de souveraineté.

La France a adopté en 2017 sa stratégie nationale en matière de bioéconomie. Elle s'articule pleinement avec les orientations de la stratégie européenne, notamment en ce qui concerne la nécessité de décarboner nos modes de vies en développant des produits biosourcés, alternatifs aux ressources fossiles, construction, matériaux, chimie et énergie, ainsi que la nécessité de déployer plus massivement la bioéconomie à une échelle locale au niveau des territoires, tout en veillant à la mobilisation durable de la biomasse et en limitant les concurrences entre les usages de celles-ci.

La France souligne enfin la nécessité d'appréhender la bioéconomie de manière systémique et large, en s'appuyant sur les trois piliers du développement durable, environnemental, social et économique, ainsi que sur des pratiques agroécologiques.

Mr Luis COELHO-SILVA (Portugal) (Observer)

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

We are very grateful to the Deputy Director-General Ms Maria Helena Semedo for the initial presentation on the topic under discussion.

We would like to join our voice to Brazil, and other distinguished representatives that spoke before us, highlighting the potential of bioeconomy.

Indeed, it is widely recognised bioeconomy as an opportunity to promote economic and social development, through production model based on the use of biological resources, which can offer solutions for the sustainability of agriculture and food systems.

From our side we adopted in 2021 a national Action Plan for the Sustainable Bioeconomy, in line with the European Union's Bioeconomy Strategy, and we are looking forward for having the opportunity to find a common basis for the concept of bioeconomy in the context of food and agriculture and streamline the concept where appropriate in the FAO's work on agriculture and food systems.

We also commend FAO for the work developed on bioeconomy under the respective Programme Priority Area and the briefings that recently have been made, notably for the intersectional work for the Committee on Agriculture.

We are looking forward for the outcome of the G20 work next year, also on bioeconomy, during the Brazilian Presidency of G20, to which we take the opportunity to express our best wishes.

Sra. Veronica Alexandra GOMEZ RICAURTE (Ecuador) (Observador)

Mi delegación suscribe la declaración efectuada en nombre de los países amazónicos. El Ecuador ha hecho de la preservación de la biodiversidad una prioridad en el marco de una política de transición ecológica en marcha y en la que la bioeconomía representa una oportunidad para el desarrollo económico y social y tiene el potencial de generar conocimiento, uso y aprovechamiento sostenible de los recursos de la biodiversidad.

En 2020 se promovió la firma del Pacto Nacional por la Bioeconomía Sostenible a la cual adhirieron 34 instituciones públicas y privadas. A partir de allí, el Fondo de Asistencia Técnica (FAT) establecido para este efecto ha trabajado en la construcción del Libro Blanco y la Estrategia nacional de bioeconomía sostenible del Ecuador junto con la implementación de una estrategia de comunicación que apoye a la consolidación de la bioeconomía en el país.

De acuerdo con los consensos alcanzados en dicho proceso, para el Ecuador la bioeconomía en términos amplios es el aprovechamiento sostenible de materias primas de origen biológico que incluye la valorización de la biodiversidad, biomasa residual, biomasa cultivada para la generación de bienes y servicios donde la agregación de valor y la protección de la propiedad intelectual resultan fundamentales.

En este sentido, y en concordancia con lo encomendado por el 43° período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO consideramos esencial avanzar en el ámbito de la bioeconomía y fortalecer la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional, la gestión forestal, la protección, el reconocimiento de las prácticas y conocimientos de los pueblos indígenas y las comunidades locales y tradicionales. Es por ello que creemos prioritario iniciar la negociación inclusiva de indicadores de bioeconomía sostenible aplicables a diferentes contextos según prioridades, necesidades y capacidades nacionales, así como fortalecer la labor de la FAO en todos los ámbitos relacionados con la bioeconomía.

Mr Zahid RASTAM (Malaysia) (Observer)

My delegation aligns itself with the joint statement delivered by Japan on behalf of the Asia Pacific Regional Group, we take note of the information provided by the FAO to the Programme Committee on the bioeconomy.

Malaysia has had a national bio-economic policy since 2005, which was focusing on renewable biological resources which can be converted into energy, food, livestock feed and other uses via innovative technology.

Our National Bio-technology Policy 2.0, which is for the period of 2022 to 2030, we see that this can leverage bio-technology to drive economic growth and promote sustainability. In this respect, we believe that with a lack of an agreed definition of the multilateral level with regard to what constitutes bioeconomy, it is appropriate for the FAO to continue with its work in terms of looking at it from a programme perspective, and in this respect we look forward to hearing more on some of these programmes and to continue the discussions with other Members and organizations with regard to the development of a bioeconomy that can reach consensus and meet the needs of all Members.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

We would like to align ourselves with the statement made by Japan on this Agenda Item. Thank you very much for this Agenda Item on bioeconomy. We nationally are now developing our national Strategy on bioeconomy, and we are now working closely with the FAO on exploring how the sustainable vegetable oils could contribute in the development of the bioeconomy.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Observer Bolivia.

Sra. Sonia Silvia BRITO SANDOVAL (Bolivia, Estado Plurinacional de) (Observador)

Bolivia como país Miembro de la Organización del Tratado de Cooperación Amazónica se asocia a la declaración realizada por la honorable representación del Perú que representa la línea discutida en la Cumbre Presidencial de la Amazonía sobre el tema en el marco del desarrollo sostenible en concordancia con los derechos de la madre.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the last speaker, Observer Nigeria.

Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan OLANIRAN (Nigeria) (Observer)

Nigeria associates itself with the statement made by Ethiopia on behalf of Africa and look forward to working together with colleagues. Thank you, Brazil, for bringing this up.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am taking the floor now just for the record because we want to make sure that what is going to be said is taken on board by the Secretariat.

Let us at the outset, thank the Secretariat for the revised calendar of work which we received today and would encourage them to continue to provide us, on a daily basis, a kind of journal of the day so that we can prepare to discuss the Agenda Items as they come.

If you have noted, Africa has not had the floor on Agenda Item 9, because we were expecting this to come tomorrow morning and the person who was in charge was committed to another meeting today, because there are more delegations, as you know; it is not easy. We have just sent a copy of that, that is why I say I am taking the floor for the record, to the Secretariat, for that statement to be considered as our contribution to the discussion on Agenda Item 9.

Statement of the Africa Regional Group

The United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa, and Zambia make this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group would like to express appreciation to the Chairperson, Ms Yael Rubinstein, for her leadership and to the team for all their hard work, it commends the work of the Programme Committee in assisting the Council in carrying out its duties with relation to the development and implementation of FAO's program activities.

The breadth of important matters presented for attention at this Council is therefore noted.

The Africa Regional Group welcomes the specific recommendations for decision by the Council on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25, and the Rolling Work Plan of Evaluations, and would like to stress on:

the importance of scientific, evidence-based normative work and statistics, and welcomed the assurance that FAO would continue to leverage its comparative advantage in science and evidence-based normative and standard-setting work such as CODEX Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) along with its ePhyto Solution, as well as data and statistics global public goods, including streamlining of the statistical functions;

In light of the current global food security situation, the Africa Regional Group requests FAO to strengthen its efforts towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in the context of global challenges and risks to global food security and stress on the importance of the instrumental role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The ARG took note of the Committee's request and urged FAO to enhance and reinforce such collaboration and increase its visibility and the work on partnerships in maintaining food and agriculture on the global agenda.

The Africa Regional Group recognizes the Evaluation of FAO's support to life below water (SDG 14) and Management Response; Stresses the Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition; the importance of the FAO innovation and technology accelerators and thus support the endorsement by Council.

The Africa Regional Group recognizes the importance of water as a critical resource for sustainable development supports the FAO's Conceptual framework for integrated land and water resources management and encourages the FAO to intensify its efforts and strategic approaches to financing and investing in water infrastructure and management,

With these remarks the African Regional Group endorses the Reports of the 137th Programme Committees.

CHAIRPERSON

You can be assured that both the Secretariat and I will do our utmost to follow the order as we presented at the beginning of the week, but sometimes, as you know, we have to be a little bit fluid, but we will stick now to what we will put in the order of today, whatever happens, and of course your input will be reflected in the Report.

With that, I would like to turn now to the draft conclusions of Report 137th Session of the Programme Committee.

– first, I give the floor to Ms Maria Helena Semedo, if she wants to make some very brief remarks because we are pressed for time.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General)

I think it was an enthusiastic debate that we had, and guidance provided to me. We have a common vision, the need to have some approaches, but also to work on the ground with practical actions to support the Member countries.

We appreciate the Members considering FAO the leading global force in advancing bioeconomy for agrifood system transformation. We will keep the Members informed on the aspirational principles, the criteria, and we will also ensure an inclusive development of the bioeconomy foundation study to be a basis for discussion in the Technical Committees.

As it has been requested by some Members, we will share the dashboard and also the foundation study will be shared as a basis for the discussion Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and Committee on Fisheries (COFI).

Thank you for the support, we will continue the discussion as we move forward.

Ms Yael RUBINSTEIN (Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees)

I would like to thank for the comments, all Members of the Council, we will try our best to take all of them into a serious discussion and consideration at the next Programme Committee meeting. I would like to thank the Members of the Programme Committee for their hard and great work.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Ms Jiani Tian, our very devoted and professional Secretary. And finally, I would like to thank my Vice-Chairperson, the Ambassador of South Africa, and the outgoing Vice Chair, the Ambassador of Argentina.

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to the draft conclusions of the Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee.

I will read them out first, as you know, and then we go one by one.

17. The Council received the Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee, noting the adjustments were to the *Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-2025* and the update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative would be reviewed as a separate Item and:

- (a) noted considerations on the Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils, the Strengthening Science Policy Interface for Agrifood Systems, the FAO Forestry Roadmap: from Vision to Action; the update on the One Country One Priority Product Initiative, the outcomes of the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Livestock Transformation and the FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Agriculture Mechanization;
- (b) agreed with its conclusions on the evaluation of FAO support to life below water and Management response, and the follow-up Report on the evaluation of FAO's role on and work on humanitarian-development-peace nexus and endorse recommendations on the rolling workplan of evaluations; and

- (c) further agreed with these conclusions on the contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition, the FAO's conceptual framework for integrated land and water resource Management, the update on FAO's response to global food security challenges and the FAO innovation and technology accelerators, a fit for purpose business model to ensure an inclusive, efficient, resilient, and sustainable agrifood system transformation;
 - (d) commended the work on developing the comprehensive conceptual framework for water resource Management; and
 - (e) welcomed Management's commitment to Reporting this work during the biennium 2024-25, including on concrete impact in the relevant PPAs, programmatic initiatives, resources and partnerships.
18. The Council took note of the observations of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee on bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture and:
- (a) welcomed the information provided on FAO's work on bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture;
 - (b) appreciated the progress made in the implementation for the priority programme area bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture;
 - (c) acknowledged the important role that bioeconomy can play in agrifood systems, transformation; and
 - (d) looked forward to further discussion in the Technical Committees; and
19. With the above observations the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Report.

Can we agree to the chapeau of paragraph 17? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to paragraph 18 – the chapeau.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c).

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Yo no veo ninguna referencia al Sistema de Información sobre el Mercado Agrícola (SIMA) en el texto y sí nos gustaría que quedara incluida. Es decir, incluir el reconocimiento a los esfuerzos para reforzar el SIMA y seguir apoyándolo como una plataforma que permite reforzar la transparencia de los mercados. Creo que debería incluirse una referencia al respecto.

CHAIRPERSON

Give us a moment to find the language. Unless you already have prepared language, which would be helpful. We have put a text on the screen but we put it then at the end of paragraph 17 or do you want to have it in bioeconomy?

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

No, el final del párrafo 17 está bien. Podemos, incluso, sugerir una propuesta si se le facilita. Pues la dicto en inglés.

CHAIRPERSON

We have found agreed language. If yours is also agreed language, for me it is fine.

I will read out the subparagraph – “*stressed the significance of market transparency and emphasized the importance of timely and credible market information provided by the agricultural market information system, amongst others*”.

Can we agree to this subparagraph?

I see happy smiles on faces.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I would like to better understand why this proposal here; I do not know if there is a real reason for us to have it here if it has not been treated somewhere else, because we are looking at the Report of the Programme Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Spain to answer, but it is reflected in the Report of the Programme Committee.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Respondiendo a la pregunta de nuestro compañero camerunés, creo que la respuesta fundamental ya la ha dado el Presidente del Consejo. Está en el Programa, por tanto, desde la Unión Europea creemos que es razonable y conveniente una inclusión específica en este momento teniendo en cuenta la importancia que tiene este sistema para el correcto funcionamiento de la Organización, más allá de que, insistimos, y como bien ha dicho usted, está en el Programa.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

We fully support the inclusion of subparagraph (f) – we made a reference in our intervention about the importance of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), so we would support its inclusion and recognise the text as being agreed language.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I understand the logic perfectly and though I have no problem with this, I have a problem with the last statement on this Report - “*We endorsed the Report of the Programme Committee*”. Therefore, if we have already endorsed, shall we go to every single discussion Item? So that is my problem here because we will single out everything, then let us go – we can build a Christmas tree on everything that is important to us in that Report. That is why I asked that question, if it really needs to be here, if we have already endorsed the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

I will leave that up to the Members to decide on it, whether or not. I do encourage you not to build on the Christmas tree now, but to live with these remarks.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

It is on this paragraph 17, and it is a simple question, just really about the relationship between subparagraph (d) and subparagraph (e) – whether they are referring to the same work. Subparagraph (e) in its current sense is a little bit ambiguous in terms of “*welcomed Management’s commitment to Reporting this work*”. What work is it talking about? So, perhaps subparagraphs (d) and (e) could be combined?

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with subparagraph (f). Is there flexibility to agree to this subparagraph?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We can be flexible but this should not become a principle, that we pick up what we think is necessary for us. And everybody will pick up what is necessary, and then we come back to reproducing the Report of the Committee in the Council. If I look at subparagraphs (c), (d) and (b) – I believe that everything is already in there, in the discussion of the Programme Committee. We can go along with this, we have no very strong views but that should not become a habit for us that if something is absolutely interesting for us, we put it there, whilst we have endorsed the Report or in combination with the Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I echo your words when it comes to how we now have a way of working when it deals with Reports of the Programme Committee (PC), Finance Committee (FC), and the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). So, indeed, it should not set a precedent for other work and other conclusions. But given this, could we agree for this time to this subparagraph?

I do not see any objections.

Then, to the request of Australia, perhaps we could say, “*commended the work on developing the comprehensive conceptual framework for water and resource Management and in this regard, welcomed...*” because then we combine both subparagraphs and make it one.

We have made it one subparagraph. The technique is not as fast as we are ourselves. But is that agreeable?

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

That does address the ambiguity, I think, where subparagraph (e) sat by itself.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this paragraph? I do not see any objections. When it goes to the Drafting Committee, it will look perfect.

We go now to paragraph 18, where we were with subparagraph (b).

Can we agree to subparagraph (b)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d).

Ms Carla BARROSO CARNEIRO (Brazil)

I think that maybe those subparagraphs would not reflect what was the reaction of the Plenary. So, I allow myself to suggest the inclusion of another subparagraph which would be (d) and it would come after subparagraph (c) and before the now subparagraph (d).

I will read a suggestion of wording that I think takes on the spirit of the Plenary and it says, “*emphasized that the work developed by FAO, including its aspirational principles for bioeconomy, could serve as a baseline to be negotiated by Members in the Technical Committees and presented to the 44th Session of the FAO Conference*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I assume, if the Council could agree to this, that we follow also our set of preparations of Programme Committee (PC) and Council. You say Technical Committees, but I think normally the work by the Technical Committees goes via PC and Council. But let us first see the reactions of the room towards your proposal.

Mr Sean COX (United States of America)

I think that we understood that this Agenda Item was going to be, not for decision but, either way, I think that subparagraph (e) covers what was discussed.

We did hear Members such as Brazil mention that they would like to move towards negotiations, but I do think that we also heard other delegations, such as our own, that do not think that we are at that

point yet. I think we have also had this discussion a little bit, the beginnings of some of these discussions, in the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), for example, and I know we are going to continue those discussions.

Therefore, we would not be comfortable putting a mandate to negotiate these principles, especially as we have just heard that FAO, with the Sustainable Bioeconomy Working Group (ISBWG), is developing these principles. So, we would not want to pre-judge those.

So, we would move to strike that but with the understanding that I think we did hear from a number of Members that they do want to continue working on this, including us, and I think that subparagraph (e) covers that broadly.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Actually, along the lines of what was just said by the United States, Canada is committed to working on bioeconomy and we are keen on this issue. Nevertheless, the timelines, we do have some concerns around that.

With only one round of the Technical Committees coming up next fall ahead of the 44th Session of the FAO Conference, it feels like it could be tight, particularly if this has not yet been considered by the bureaus of those Technical Committees.

Therefore, just questioning the timelines and whether it is right to move forward in this robust form and perhaps, with what the United States just suggested, that subparagraph (e) already covers that effectively.

Mr Su GUO (China)

China echoes what the United States and Canada said. I think that based on the interventions of Members on this Item, each Member has its own national plan on bioeconomy, maybe will have different pictures on this and different faces on this. Therefore, from the definition to a different approach would take some time to coordinate with national policies towards bioeconomy. So, if you set an exact time to precedent something, it would not be enough on this complicated Item. We think actually that the current subparagraph (e) covers what we want. We suggest keeping (e).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We perfectly understand this proposal from Brazil but I believe that if we look at the timetable, this is not the FAO Council that prepares for the FAO Conference. Can we allow first the Technical Committees to work, and then in December 2024, the Council may decide whether it would like to have a discussion about principles or aspirational principles in the Conference. Because we are still very far from the Conference. We will have other Items that may be proposed. Therefore, it seems to be a bit early that this Council takes such a decision. Let us allow the Technical Committees to work first.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Nos parece muy razonable lo expuesto por Estados Unidos y sucesivamente apoyado por, entre otros, Canadá o China.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

I can understand the sense of Brazil's comments but also agree with the United States, Canada, China and other colleagues. I would suggest the following wording in line with the Report of the 44th Session of the FAO Conference, just add the words, after the Technical Committees in subparagraph (e), "*and Governing Bodies*".

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with subparagraph (d). I do not think there was consensus on including this subparagraph. Is there flexibility to delete it? We delete subparagraph (d) and then we take the exact language of the Conference.

I will read the full text of the Conference conclusion, “*stressed the importance of bioeconomy for sustainable agrifood systems and highlighted the need to discuss this topic within governing bodies and Technical Committees of the FAO, bearing in mind ongoing collaboration between COAG and COFO on the linkages between agriculture and forestry and the COFO/COAG joint roadmap*”.

So if we say “*Technical Committees within...*”. We can repeat, of course, the whole subparagraph but if we want to make it short, we should say, “*looked forward to further discussion within Governing Bodies and Technical Committees of FAO*”.

Or we could say, to be legally correct also, “*within Technical Committees and other Governing Bodies of FAO*”, and we delete then “*and Governing Bodies*”.

Would that be agreeable? I see nodding.

Then we go to the last subparagraph.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am sorry to drive you back to paragraph 17 subparagraph (e). I think I would suggest that this sentence be brought up in Agenda Item 4. That is where we discuss this. And even the Programme Committee (PC) discussed it under that Agenda Item. That is why I was asking at the beginning, what it was doing here. So, I am not very comfortable having it here, but I will be comfortable if Spain can keep it when we are concluding Agenda Item 4.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I just had a comment on paragraph 19, so if you want to deal with this first, please go ahead.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first deal with this, otherwise we cannot conclude on paragraph 19. I move to Spain’s flexibility to bring this paragraph to Item number 4 which, of course, is still open.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Considero que, por razones de procedimiento, si no me he enterado mal ya usted ha leído antes el tema 17 y ya toda la audiencia mediante la aquiescencia lo aceptó, punto número uno. Punto número dos, el asunto cuatro del Consejo me parece que lo tenemos que resolver con cuestiones que están en la mesa y que pueden ser complicadas. No creemos que sea razonable añadir otro elemento de debate a ese punto cuatro. Punto número tres, agradeciendo enormemente el comentario anterior de Camerún sobre su flexibilidad al respecto, insisto en nuestro agradecimiento a su flexibilidad.

CHAIRPERSON

I will remind everybody, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. So, the Item open until we have agreed to all the elements of this Item. That is one of the constitutional procedures.

I always love to give the floor to Observers, but I cannot give the floor because we are now in the text negotiations, which is only for Members.

Mr Su GUO (China)

I heard the discussion between my colleague from Cameroon and from Spain. Personally, I want to support the reasoning of my colleague from Cameroon because what we talk about here in Council is really to focus on the recommendations of the Council. We know the significance of the image here, but if it exists in the Programme Committee Report, it is there, and we endorsed the Report and also there is nothing really about recommendations here.

So, I think what Cameroon is saying is reasonable. If we signify one point of the Report, there is nothing about recommendations, the many Members will say we have other concerns about the Items. So that would be opening a Pandora Box.

CHAIRPERSON

We are bogged down now on one subparagraph., and if you look to Item 4, although we are still discussing it, there is a paragraph related to market systems and the functioning of market systems, but

I will leave it to Spain whether there is flexibility. At this moment we cannot arrive at a consensus, because the consensus is gone. If there is any flexibility to move it to Item 4? And I think you will get an agreement on the paragraph itself.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Cómo el espíritu de la flexibilidad lo compartimos todos, no tendríamos problema, en principio, si es que eso es algo que satisface a nuestro colega camerunés incluirlo en el punto cuatro, pero permítame la chanza para que se apruebe, claro. Que no nos ponga problemas ahí.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for your flexibility, so on that whole condition we can delete it here and bring it to Item 4, and Cameroon said that he would be flexible on Item 4.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am an African and everybody knows that we always keep our word.

CHAIRPERSON

Then we go now to paragraph 19. Can we agree to paragraph 19?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We can agree with paragraph 19 – the only concern we have is sort of a structural issue within the Report that there is a header in between and so it looks like the only observations we may be considering are those in paragraph 18. So, perhaps with the observations contained in paragraphs 17 and 18, I do not know if that is a way to make it clear, so that we know that this is not just under the header of bioeconomy.

CHAIRPERSON

That is very concise and precise, so can we agree to this, to avoid confusion. I do not see any objections with that.

We have concluded our work on the *Report of the Programme Committee*. We will break now until 17:30 hours.

Is it a point of order?

Mr Marcel BEUKEBOOM (Netherlands, Kingdom of the) (Observer)

Just looking back on how we dealt with this topic, it seems to me that we spoke about Item 9 and then moved on to Item 9.1 after which Management had the opportunity to respond but to my recollection, they only responded to what was said under Item 9.1 and did not respond to any questions that were asked under Item 9. So, could you give Management the opportunity to respond to the questions that were asked under Item 9 in our initial discussion?

CHAIRPERSON

It is up to Management to see whether to respond to what was said by the Members. I see Nicaragua asking for the floor. I think Management had the choice as to whether or not to respond to it. They did not do it, so I cannot re-open now this Item.

Perhaps later on there will be an opportunity to do it bilaterally, because also Ms Maria Helena Semedo is not in the room, if there are urgent questions.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

También una moción de orden, como usted dice, necesitamos de una pausa de media hora después de tratar toda la tarde los temas 8 y 9. Solicitamos como país Miembro de este Consejo que a las 17:30 al retomar nuestro trabajo se someta a votación el subpárrafo que Nicaragua presentó bajo el Tema 4 de conformidad con los textos fundamentales, y si el procedimiento el Señor Rakesh Muthoo o la Asesora Legal nos pueden explicar cómo podemos proceder para cerrar ya esa parte.

CHAIRPERSON

I am going to break now first, before we come back and we will answer then the question when it comes to the point of order.

We have a break now until 17:30 hours. Then we can consult. We will also come back to Belarus but first I want to consult with the Legal Counsel and the Secretary to see how we proceed.

I suspend the meeting until 17:30 hours and we will come back.

The meeting was suspended from 16.58 to 17.48 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 58 à 17 h 48

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.58 a las 17.48

Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers (*continued*)

Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes (*suite*)

**Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes
(*continuación*)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as a result of a point of order we turn now to Item 4, and Nicaragua asked for a vote on their proposal. Based on the rules and procedures in the Basic Texts, we have to vote on their proposal. So, we will bring the proposal on the screen.

We go to the vote but any Member may ask for the floor in respect to this voting. If we start with the vote, no Member can ask for the floor anymore, because then we have to proceed voting, etc.

So, is there any Member who wishes to take the floor? If that is not the case, we go to the vote and I give the floor to the Elections Officer.

ELECTIONS OFFICER

We are proceeding to a roll call vote as is practised in hybrid meetings in the Organization.

In order to proceed to the roll call vote, I should first confirm that we have at least 42 Council Members here in the room, which is well beyond the 25 Council Members that we need to have a quorum. We therefore have a quorum and we can proceed to a vote.

We will conduct the roll call vote in accordance with Paragraph 7 of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization. The vote of each Member participating in the roll call vote will be reflected in the record of the meeting.

For the proposal to be adopted, a majority of the votes cast is required, and votes cast includes affirmative and negative votes, but does not include abstentions. All this is set out in Paragraphs 3(a) and 4(a) of Rule XII of the General Rules.

Once voting begins, Members of the Council will be called one by one in English alphabetical order. The name of the first Member to be called to vote will be designated by a lot drawn by the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

Delegates who cast their vote virtually should unmute themselves and turn on their camera when called to vote. They should also ensure that they have switched to the language channel in which they wish to speak.

Delegates voting here in the Plenary Hall, please turn on your microphone when called to vote. The voting Delegates should reply yes if they wish to vote in favour of the proposal, no if they wish to vote against, and they should call abstention if they wish to abstain in the vote.

If technical issues arise which prevent the person casting the vote from being clearly heard and no response is provided, the vote will progress to the next Member.

At the conclusion of the first round of calls, the names of Members whose Delegates or Representatives failed to answer, will be called again a second time to provide an opportunity for those Members to cast a vote.

Members are requested not to raise their hand for any reason during the voting, except if to raise a point of order in connection with the conduct of the voting.

I will now ask the Chairperson please to draw a lot to determine the first Member to vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Germany.

ELECTIONS OFFICER

We will now proceed to vote on the proposal as indicated on the screen, calling out the names of Council Members and ask for their votes, either yes, no or abstention.

CHAIRPERSON

There is a point of order by Cameroon.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is a very complicated issue now because we are put before the situation without us really being prepared. So, we would have preferred a different voting modality, which does not allow people to know what a country has voted for. So, we would prefer to have a local vote, if that is the case now. We want to check with the Legal Counsel, is that correct, if that is doable?

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel and then to Indonesia also for a point of order, and Lesotho.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that the distinguished delegate of Cameroon is asking whether in the current context in this particular meeting, it is possible to have a roll call vote, but without the recording of names, is that correct? Or, indeed, is asking whether or not we could have voting by another modality, a secret ballot.

In this context, I would acknowledge that in accordance with Rule XII, Paragraph 7 (a), a roll call vote is normally only held at the request of a Member. Nevertheless, we are currently in a situation where the Members had agreed to hold this meeting in a hybrid modality, and within that context, as has been the practice of the Organization at meetings of this nature, the only means by which such a vote can be held in a hybrid modality is by having a roll call.

In this regard, I would refer to document *CL 174/INF/5, Methods of Work for the 174th Session of the Council*, which was endorsed at the beginning of the Session, which did stipulate, here I quote at Paragraph 3, “*all meetings of the 174th Session of the Council will be conducted in hybrid modality, with both physical presence in FAO headquarters and attendance through the Zoom videoconferencing platform, ensuring participation of all Members on equal footing.*”

Here, the reference to equal footing, I believe has been understood to mean that then voting would also be on an equal footing, i.e. either it could be done virtually or it could be done in presence in the absence of further guidance.

Thus, at this moment in time, I do not see a formal legal barrier, but of course it is in the hands of the Members if they wish to proceed, but this would appear to be the way that the Members have decided to go forward, is to have a roll call vote, because this meeting is being conducted in a hybrid modality with Members participating on an equal footing.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor back to Cameroon, before I give the floor to Indonesia for a point of order.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Our preference will be for a secret ballot.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu if we want to have a secret ballot, which is feasible, but then we have to vote on, as far as I know, on a secret ballot.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

With the assistance of the Elections Officer, here I would refer to Rule XII, Paragraph 10 (b), which specifies that “*any other matter shall be decided by secret ballot if the Conference or Council so determines*”, thus this in itself requires a decision of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first have all the points of orders, because I have now a list of four points of orders.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Just a quick clarification needed from the Secretary. Did we officially count if we have a quorum here, both here in presence or virtually?

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

A nosotros nos parece que no es factible la realización de un voto secreto en el momento que es una sesión híbrida. ¿Cómo vamos a garantizar el voto de las delegaciones que no están presentes en la sala sino que están conectadas virtualmente? Creemos que esto es un voto por llamamiento.

CHAIRPERSON

Let that be answered by Ms Donata Rugarabamu, but let us have first all the points of order.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

My point of order is simply a question for the Legal Counsel as well, but I believe the call for a vote to be held by secret ballot is not a point of order, but a proposal, which should have been made before the voting began.

Once the voting begins, only points of orders can be raised, as is held by the Basic Texts and by the Rules of Procedure, so I do not think that is a point of order, and I would question to Legal Counsel whether or not that was a point of order or a proposal, and if it was a proposal, if it is allowed to be made once a vote has begun, which the Chairperson made very clear it had.

Mr Thesele John 'MASERIBANE (Lesotho)

Lesotho supports Cameroon's proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu to answer those questions.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

With respect to the question on quorum, I would leave that to the Elections Officer, to respond to.

The observation by Spain as to the feasibility or otherwise of a secret ballot, I believe that was an observation rather than a query addressed to me.

With respect to the United States' observation that this is a proposal rather than a point of order, in this context, here I would refer to the guide to the conduct of plenary meetings, this was a Conference document which has been reproduced on many occasions. The last is in document C2019/INF/3, in respect of which points of order are listed as follows: I will not read all but maybe here I will read, “*in principle, a point of order can only deal with the following matters: Item B refers to the procedure being applied or to be adopted; Item D, the manner in which the debate is conducted; E, the maintenance of order; G, material arrangement, seating interpretation,*” etc.

In this regard, it is then arguable that this is a point of order, in so far as my understanding is the question of Cameroon was the procedure being applied or to be adopted, noting that Cameroon had initially queried whether a roll call vote could be held at all.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En aras de la claridad y si mi pregunta no ha sido suficientemente bien formulada, me permito repetirla para los servicios legales. No es una opinión, es una pregunta que le rogamos nos conteste. ¿Es factible o no lo es hacer un voto secreto teniendo en cuenta que hay delegaciones presentes solo virtualmente? E imagino que en algunas de ellas, hay Miembros que han de votar. En ese caso, suponemos, pero le preguntamos a usted para que nos dé su respuesta si es posible o no.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The answer to your question, Spain, is yes. Because this is established practice, this has been done both in virtual and hybrid modality meetings of the Conference and other Governing Bodies, where secret ballot votes have been held, even though the meetings were in virtual or hybrid modality. Naturally, the secret ballot vote itself is in-person in these instances.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I hear what the Legal Counsel is saying about the question about the procedure that is being applied, but I also heard a request to go to a secret ballot, so a request to change the procedure that had already been applied. I think that would be a proposal, I would argue, and not a point of order.

The second question I had, though, is in respect to what the Secretary-General just said. Yes, we have held secret ballots while a meeting is hybrid, but that would automatically exclude people, I believe, and Members who are participating hybridly. So, I would wonder about the question, and maybe the Secretary-General can clarify this, if there were a secret ballot and that happened, would that by nature exclude Members of the Council who are participating hybridly and remotely, who understood that participation would be actual participation in the Council?

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

In established practice, in the instances where secret ballot votes have taken place in meetings which were in hybrid physical-virtual modality, every Member had the opportunity to participate in the secret ballot if they had a delegate physically present to cast the vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Donata, to answer the remark by the United States.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

My recollection is the United States heard this as a request to go to a secret ballot, i.e. that there had been a process agreed that this would be held by roll call, and that Cameroon had requested to replace the roll call with a secret ballot. Here I would again point to *C2019/INF/3*, which says “*the process being applied or to be adopted*”, but here once again, if we were to address this as a proposal, that in itself would then need a vote as a new proposal.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I know that Nicaragua is willing to have the vote today and we support that, but can we not, as we have seen in other instances, that a note be circulated to all Members to have a physical presence in the hall, and we determine the time and date of vote for secret ballot, because we can do that, we still have three days ahead of us, so we can decide not to vote today, but send a message that the vote will be

held on secret ballot and every delegation is called to have somebody here, or get a vote by proxy, because we have seen that in the past, there had been a vote by proxy in the past.

I know it because I know that people voted when we were voting the chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), there were many votes by proxies. So, the Elections Officer can tell us, but this is our proposal for the procedure to follow.

CHAIRPERSON

First, listening to the Legal Counsel, if we want to have a vote by secret ballot, the Counsel has to agree to a vote by secret ballot. So that is the first proposal, so that means that either we do it by, then we have to have a roll call on the secret ballot.

I do remind everybody that after 19:30 hours we do not have interpretation any more.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

No es mi intención añadir confusión ni mucho menos sino tratar de aclararlo. Es verdad que en su versión inglesa y no es mi lengua materna, los Textos Básicos de FAO en la Regla XII, párrafo número 7(a) dice, “*A vote by roll call shall be taken either upon request of a delegate or representative, or if a majority of two thirds is required, by the Constitutions of these rules.*”

Yo no sé si resulta la aplicación aquí. Pedimos luz al respecto, por favor. Me parece que nos estamos empantanando demasiado. Bastante complicado está como para hacerlo más complicado.

En todo caso, ya se había empezado a llamar a Alemania. La votación había empezado. Por tanto, si la votación había empezado, sigamos.

CHAIRPERSON

No, but the point of order was asked for before I took the ballot. I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

It may be helpful to recall where this matter began. There was a request by Nicaragua to put its proposal to a vote. In light of the Working Methods of this Session, it was understood and in accordance with the practice of the Organization in similar hybrid meetings, that this vote should be held by roll call.

The Elections Officer confirmed that there was quorum, and indeed here I recall Spain had a query concerning quorum. Thereafter and before the actual roll call had started, Cameroon made a point of order requesting clarification as to whether or not a roll call was appropriate, seeking guidance or seeking clarification as to why a roll call was being held.

Upon receiving the explanation as to why the roll call was being held, i.e. because we were in a hybrid format, at that point Cameroon said, can we then have a secret ballot?

At this stage, the matter was addressed then as a point of order. As you are well aware, at Paragraph 14, it does state, “*once voting has commenced, no Delegate or Representative may interrupt the voting except to rise to a point of order in connection with the voting*”. As Conference document C2019/INF/3 states, a point of order can deal with, and here it says: “*the procedure being applied or to be adopted.*” So this was addressed as a point of order.

Thus in this context, we are going around in circles, because there is now a formal request to have a roll call, again, if we were to do this, we would then end up having to have a roll call on whether to have a secret ballot, and then maybe, depending upon the outcome of such a vote, whether to put in place the arrangements to have the secret ballot.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

If I may just complement what the Legal Counsel has just said, with reference to the last question from Spain about the use of a roll call modality, perhaps I could just recall the established practice now, and

I would call it established as a practice in the Governing Bodies of FAO, including Council, that the default modality for voting is the roll call vote.

This has occurred now at the 169th and the 171st Sessions of the Council, the 43rd Session of the Conference, the 33rd Session of the European Regional Conference, and the 50th and the 51st Session of the CFS. So there is a well-established practice for the default modality in hybrid meetings for a roll call vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Following now what was said by the Legal Counsel, because of the request made by Cameroon, we first now have to have a roll call vote on the proposal to have a secret ballot. So, we will start now with the roll call vote.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I would like to both ask a question but also make a statement before the vote, since we are now moving toward a vote. To me, I will just say that having a secret ballot vote where Members would be excluded is completely unfair, and I would encourage Members to vote against such a proposal on those grounds.

My other question though is for the Legal Counsel, just out of curiosity, what is the threshold for a vote of this matter, is it a simple majority or is it different than that?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

No, I reiterate my proposal. You should have put this also to whether we want to go for a roll call vote, to vote for a roll call vote. So all these, we are in cycles, so let us now decide that every voting here, starting from now, will be by secret ballot. That is what we want to say now. There should not be the principle of roll call vote, whatever, even if you have to call for, we go for secret barrel for every single vote, because that is what we want to have.

Also, we are not making a campaign here. I heard some countries that are already requesting countries not to vote for something. You cannot. I do not really appreciate that. You cannot say, I urge countries not to vote for this. No, that is not fair. If the country that has said that can retract, I would appreciate it very kindly, because this is not very positive, or it does not give us the mood we want to have to move into the voting.

So to summarize, we want every, if we have to vote in this Council, every vote should be done by secret ballot. That is our final proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu, because there are clear legal constraints to this proposal.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that Cameroon is now making a proposal that all voting should be by secret ballot. Here I would distinguish this from a point of order. This is a general proposal, whereas the points of order are only permitted when the vote has begun, in relation to the vote in question. Thus, I am not sure that this could be within the framework of the Basic Texts, that this could be entertained at this moment in time.

M. Abdellah LARHMAID (Morocco)

I would like my Delegation to underline that we are supporting what was proposed by Cameroon, so on the issue to proceed by secret ballot on the subparagraph.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

This is just a general note. We do not want to engage in the discussion whether we should have secret ballot voting versus roll call voting. We just wanted to highlight, and this could be a reminder for everyone in this room, the discussion we are having now is exactly what we should avoid having tomorrow.

I think we have had very negative experience regarding the many rounds of voting during the last Council Session in April, and we hope that for the remaining Agenda Items on the Council, to work hard to reach consensus and refrain from reaching this very lengthy process of voting, either as secret ballot voting or roll call voting.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I recall that at the commencement of this Session, the Council adopted *CL 174/INF/5*. Paragraph 3 talks about a very important principle, which is ensuring participation of all Members on equal footing. That is something that we cannot depart from, so unfortunately I think we have to go through the process that you have started, which is a roll call on whether to have a secret ballot. I do not see any other way out from what the Legal Counsel said.

Mr Kaba Urgessa DINSSA (Ethiopia)

I think I have been listening to many speakers. We support Cameroon's proposal. In a way that we should all exercise our rights by asking which modality we prefer to vote. I prefer to vote in a secret ballot, but I am also having a question along with this. When we are discussing in a way to vote, what does the rule say that if somebody from the audience are asking others not to vote this one and vote for another one?

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Si se define un determinado método en este tipo de votación, ¿cuál será la metodología que utilizaremos durante toda la semana si existe otra oportunidad u otra situación de votación o tendremos que discutir esto todas las veces que haya una instancia de votación? Solamente para definir si habrá una política común o si vamos a tener este tipo de discusión permanentemente durante toda la semana.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

A ver si se me aclaran las ideas con todas estas cosas que estamos oyendo porque aquí se han hecho alusiones absolutamente compartidas por España y por los 27 Estados Miembros de la Unión Europea, pero también por muchos otros de no bloquear, de abogar por el consenso, como bien ha dicho antes una referencia nuestro colega egipcio, de tratar de no dilatar de manera artificiosa nada.

Aquí, si somos un poco honestos con nosotros mismos, vemos que estamos discutiendo la modalidad de voto abogando algunas partes, a mi juicio, minoritarias, pero algunas en cualquier cosa sobre un voto secreto sobre algo en lo que todo el mundo se ha pronunciado previamente en el debate. Es decir, se está pidiendo un voto secreto para algo cuya posición se conoce. A mí esto me parece cuando menos incoherente, sino una dilación artificiosa del proceso.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Perhaps it will go to the Legal Counsel anyway. Perhaps just a question of whether we are at a moment where we can ask to vote, whether we should vote, because we seem to be bogged down on modalities, and I believe in the past there have been moments when the voting, whether we should vote, has come to the table.

And at this point, maybe that is the way to move it forward. Presumably, that may not be requiring a secret ballot, and we can just have a regular vote to whether we should vote at this point, and move the Agenda forward.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

This is again on a point of order. Since we are asking questions, I would also like to ask a question.

At the 2021 Conference, we had a secret vote on the budget, online.

No, it was not online?

CHAIRPERSON

Just for your information I can say it freely. When we had the election for the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), not this time but the previous time, it was a secret ballot, it was

announced to all Members of the Conference way ahead, so that they had the possibility to vote in-person, because it was also decided that it could not be done in a hybrid form, so the Conference decided it should be done in-person.

It was announced to the Members of the Conference, and then we had a secret ballot in-person here, as well as in New York, to make sure that every Member of the Conference had the possibility to vote in-person. That is how it was done for the ICC election in 2021.

I cannot give the floor to Observers in this stage, because it is a Council procedure now. I give the floor back to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I just wanted to make an observation. As I noted previously, the discussion had moved on from a point of order, indeed well beyond the scope of what is contemplated in Paragraph 20 of Rule XII of the General Rules of the Organization, which expects very quick action on points of order. The discussion appears to have gone well beyond this. You are now looking at the general longer term working methods of this Session. It is thus not clear to me that this could be addressed as a point of order any more.

CHAIRPERSON

To be absolutely sure also in legal terms, Canada asked for a vote on the vote. Whether or not we should vote, before we start voting on which procedure we should follow? So I am looking to the Legal Counsel whether that is correct, that that can be done. The question of Canada was can we have a vote whether or not we should vote, before we decide whether it would be a roll call vote or a secret ballot vote.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Could you repeat the question?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I believe you have done an admirable job in trying to summarize, so we certainly appreciate that. The question is whether at this stage we can vote whether we should vote. Because we seem to be stuck on that procedure going forward. So can we vote whether we should vote?

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

A Member can request a vote. Once again though, I would have to say, right now we have gone well beyond the point of order territory, I suppose this is where my concern comes. But if the Members would choose and feel that this is the most expeditious way of moving forward, it is in the hands of the Members. However, we had begun the vote, the vote was interrupted on a point of order, that ceased to be a point of order. So in many respects, I think we have to try and understand where we are now in this process.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I understand perfectly that the motion to go for a vote was put on the table by a country, which is a fait accompli from our perspective, so we may not need to go to vote for a vote. A country has said I want a vote, so this is taken, but you have not addressed the other issue, my proposal is still, I am still waiting to know, if we can postpone this voting and circulate information to all Members to be present here for the physical vote.

I am still waiting on your answer on this, we still have three days ahead of us, so we can plan, program the votes, and invite Members to be present in the hall. The Secretary-General can do that, invite Members to be present, like we did when we were voting for the Independent Chairperson of the Council. A note was circulated to all Members that it will be a physical vote. People should be physically present here in Rome or in New York or in Geneva. That was the information that was given ahead of time.

CHAIRPERSON

That was in case of a secret vote, so we first have to decide what the vote would be, would it be a secret vote, or a roll call vote, because only in a secret vote case, we have to make sure that everybody is aware that the secret vote will take place, so that they have the possibility to be present here in the room at the moment of the vote, but that is in the case of a secret ballot.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Perdóneme que esté confundido, discúlpeme, pero la verdad que es difícil seguir esto. Estuve tratando de entender lo que plantea mi querido colega de Camerún, pero al mismo tiempo me acuerdo que la Embajadora de Nicaragua que sí quería que se vote ahora. Es decir, que la decisión se vote ya y eso tiene una contradicción con la idea de esperar dos días o buscar un lugar dentro de esta semana y no sé si lo que planteó Nicaragua fue una moción de orden respecto de que había que votar ahora. Y si es así, no entiendo cómo definimos cuál es la moción de orden prioritaria. Estoy confundido, no entiendo, pero tengo la mayor flexibilidad, pero me cuesta entender el proceso.

CHAIRPERSON

The vote has to take place based on the request of a Member, so that is what we are now starting. But there was a question raised, and I understand from the Legal Counsel, in conformity with the Rules of Procedures, whether or not we should have a secret vote. So before going to start the vote, we have to know what kind of vote we are going to start. That is what I understand is the case.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

As I understand today, a Colleague from Nicaragua requested the Council for a voting at 17:30 hours. Is the Council bound to accept that or is it the Council's view, whether that reflects the entire Council's view, the timing at 17:30 hours, are we legally bound to take that, what is the rule position?

CHAIRPERSON

As in the Rules of Procedures, the moment a Member of the Council asks for a vote, a vote has to take place, unless the Council decides otherwise. But for the vote in the Rules of Procedures it is stated that the moment a Member asks for the vote, and she asked to start the vote at 17:30, so directly after the break, start with the voting, that is what has to be obeyed. That was also explained to me by the Legal Counsel.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

We need to be aware of something. What are the mechanisms for a secret ballot, and if it is a secret ballot, then there is a need for it to be organized, we need to organize cabins and so on.

Can the Secretariat actually organize a secret ballot vote at this stage? Perhaps a roll call vote is different, we might take a half hour over that, so what we need to do is decide what kind of vote we are going to organize, whether it be a secret ballot or a roll call. For me it is impossible to organize a secret ballot vote at the moment.

CHAIRPERSON

I think it is an important question made by Qatar, because for each vote you have different practical modalities how to organize it. I will give later on the floor to the Secretary-General.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just a couple of questions. I think this might be for the Secretary-General, but do we have a situation where this has happened before. I think I would ask that in two different ways. Do we have a situation where there was a sudden call for a secret ballot during a hybrid modality where Members would be excluded because of that? The other one is, has there been secret ballot votes before on something other than an election at FAO?

Those would be two questions I think would be good for people to know since this could potentially be setting a pretty big precedent as a discussion, without a lot of debate beforehand, since it came up as a point of order, which in theory would not allow debate.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

We seem to be going round and round, in fact we came about an hour ago and we are still on the same spot. Cameroon made a suggestion, we still have three days, we could give notice to people who are following hybrid and ask them to be present because there will be a secret ballot. Why do we not postpone this voting to another day so we can follow the procedures and go along with that? I support what Cameroon said.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

If I may try and address a few of the queries from the floor.

First of all, the questions from the United States of America. Since we have had hybrid meetings, has there been a secret ballot vote upon request of a Member where a roll call vote was the default methodology? No.

Have there been secret ballots held other than for elective positions in FAO's history? Yes.

If I may just go back on the practical question, should the Council decide to hold a secret ballot vote, we would need a little bit of time. So, if for example tonight the Council decides it wants to hold a secret ballot vote, we would need at least until tomorrow to organize that, that is absolutely correct, as Qatar pointed out.

To summarize what you had quite rightly said, Independent Chairperson of the Council, we have a request from a Member, Nicaragua, for a vote to take place, and that request must be recognized and honoured by the Council. Indeed, it had begun.

Now we have a second request from Cameroon, to determine the modality of that vote, and to have that vote as a secret ballot, rather than the default roll call. At which stage, as the Legal Counsel has clarified, we need to now turn to a roll call vote to determine the modality of the vote that Nicaragua had requested.

CHAIRPERSON

After a long discussion, can we now start a vote on whether we should have a secret vote.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am not so sure that we are serving the purpose here, by rushing. There is a proposal to postpone the vote, you are not considering it. Probably you can give the floor to Nicaragua, if Nicaragua can accommodate to have the vote delayed a little bit, if she did insist on having the vote right now, or not.

And if that is not the case, then there is another problem, if we can vote, whether we should vote now or delay it. There are all possibilities of conducting a vote. Our problem is, and then this should be recognized by everybody. We are voting not, we do not want our vote to be recorded. That is a principle from the guidance I received from my country. It is a guidance from my country, it is not a guidance from another country, so I will fight for it until I fail.

CHAIRPERSON

We do not have the whole evening because of the lack of interpretation at a certain moment. Give me one minute to consult with the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel (LEG).

After consultation, I think at this moment, we have all the information presented by the Legal Counsel to decide on what to do. It is clear in the conformity of the Rules of Procedures, that Nicaragua asked for a vote on their proposal after the break. So, unless the Member who proposed the vote will say differently, I start the vote now on the procedures.

Sra. MÓNICA ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

En realidad, Nicaragua desde las 11.00 de la mañana estuvo solicitando que se diera paso a este tema y no a las 5.30 de la tarde y usted tenía razón cuando dijo que la votación iba a llevar dos horas. Yo creía media hora, pero parece que es más de dos horas. Ya vamos para las 7.00 de la tarde. Creo que, a esta

altura, Nicaragua tiene la responsabilidad de decidir y nosotros creemos que podemos apoyar en aras de la flexibilidad la propuesta de Camerún de posponer mañana por la mañana la votación de forma secreta.

CHAIRPERSON

We can postpone the vote until tomorrow morning based on the proposal of Nicaragua. Nicaragua also proposed that it would be done as a secret ballot, but the last part of the vote can only be done if there was consensus in the Council to have a secret ballot, because otherwise we have to vote on whether it would be a roll call vote or a secret ballot.

We can postpone any voting until tomorrow, but if it has to be a secret ballot, if that is a condition, then we have to decide this evening how the vote tomorrow will go. So I turn the floor back to Nicaragua to see what her proposal, if there is an agreement, it is easy, but there has to be consensus in the room on a secret ballot.

I ask Nicaragua to be absolutely clear. Is it a condition for postponing the vote until tomorrow, that it will be secret, because then we still have to continue this evening to make sure there is a consensus on the secret ballot vote.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

No es una condición. Camerún propuso que la votación se podía llevar de forma secreta y Nicaragua simplemente está apoyando y no tiene ningún problema en que se realice de forma secreta. No es una condición que nosotros pusimos. Para nosotros, podíamos haber realizado a las 11.00 de la mañana la votación. Simplemente.

CHAIRPERSON

That is partly answering my question, but put it in this way, are you agreeing to postpone the voting until tomorrow, and then tomorrow morning we decide what kind of voting we will do?

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Tenemos que decidirlo hoy, si no mañana vamos a empezar otra vez horas y horas decidiendo la forma. Lo que podemos hacer hoy es, decidimos la forma y mañana realizamos la votación.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Before I make my point, I have a question that needs to be answered, but my understanding is that a vote has not begun yet, is that what you are saying right? Okay, then we would like to request closure of debate on this Item at this time.

CHAIRPERSON

Spain made a point of order. So if it is other than a point of order, then I cannot give you the floor. If it is a point of order, I can give you the floor. Let us be procedurally correct.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Mire usted, yo no soy jurista y simplemente quiero hacer una conversación en este foro de personas que estamos aquí con un ideal y un objetivo común, que no creo que sea este, pero esta es mi opinión personal. Me parece que, insisto, en mi condición de no jurista, pero sí lo son algunos de ustedes y desde luego nuestros servicios jurídicos.

Aquí hay una petición explícita de algún Estado Miembro para una modalidad de voto, pero es que resulta que también hay peticiones explícitas de otros Estados Miembros para la otra modalidad de voto. Por tanto, habría que atender ambas, entiendo yo. Aparte de que la petición, si no me equivoco, de una votación nominal es un derecho por parte de los Estados Miembros que así lo soliciten.

Por tanto, si nos vemos en una situación en la que hay algunos Estados Miembros que piden el voto secreto y otros que piden el voto nominal, como es imposible atender ambas peticiones, por favor, votemos ahora mismo sobre la modalidad del voto, que salga lo que tenga que salir, y acto seguido procedemos. Y así vamos avanzando en la resolución de este 174.º período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO. Hay un Estado Miembro que ha pedido el uso de su derecho a hacer una votación, lo estamos

atendiendo, hágase. Lo demás es crear confusión y añadir problemas a algo en lo que no deberíamos estar entreteniéndonos.

CHAIRPERSON

We are going around in circles. I think we have all the elements of what we need to have to decide. Give me one moment to decide what I do with the request of the United States because that is a request for adjournment of the meeting.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I made a request for closure of debate on this specific Agenda Item, not for adjournment of the meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I believe here the United States of America is exercising its right under Paragraph 23 of Rule XII, which specifies that “*a delegate or representative may, at any time, move for closure of the debate on the Item under discussion whether or not any other delegate or representative has signified his wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate, unless the ICC according to the right to speak, would be accorded only to speakers opposing closure, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote.*” Therefore, this would be the Rule that you would be implementing at this moment in time.

CHAIRPERSON

I only want to have a remark on the motion to close the debate that is put forward by the United States, so not of any other Item anymore but the motion to close the debate.

Ms Katherine TRUSLOVE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

At this point, my request is simply to follow the Basic Texts which clearly set out that upon such a request, as has been made, to close the debate, it goes immediately to a vote and that is it. We should have no further discussion, we should proceed with the vote on that and be in line with the Basic Texts on this.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am not so sure what the United States said and what the United Kingdom has just said; it is confusing me really. When it said close the debate, including the voting?

CHAIRPERSON

No.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

What is the closing of the debate? When we are not debating something, there is a motion on the table, we are not debating. I am really confused here so please guide me, I want to understand. I am not a lawyer, I am an economist but I want to understand, what is it? We have a motion on the table, that is what is there. We are not conducting any debate at all. So there could not be a motion to close the debate here.

CHAIRPERSON

As I understand the motion to close the debate means that we stop discussing, we go to the vote and that means that we have to vote firstly, whether or not the vote would be a secret ballot.

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

In the context of the exercise of Paragraph 23 of Rule XII, i.e. a motion to close the debate, in accordance with Paragraph 24, it is one of those motions that take precedence over other actions which

are before the Council, except for points of order. Thus, the decision on the motion to close the debate would take priority over the decision on whether or not to conduct the vote by secret ballot.

CHAIRPERSON

Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Legal Counsel is perfectly correct, and the corollary of that is that the Council must address, by vote now, the motion by the United States to close the debate, which would involve a vote, and if acquiesced or agreed upon by that vote, would then fast forward this Item to its conclusion phase, its decision phase, that is no more debate on this Item.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Exactly what the Secretary-General was saying, this is not a debate about an Item. We are not debating this Item. This could be called three hours ago in the morning when we presented the Item. When Nicaragua presented the Item it was a debate, now we are not debating this Item.

Now we are going into a vote and the vote must go on. It cannot now close the vote since this is what the procedure is saying. The closure of the debate should have been done in the morning and then we move on and then that is it. There is no debate about this Item now. We are not even talking about the Item. We are talking about the voting procedure.

So please, let us move on and vote and then if it is a secret ballot then we will do it tomorrow early in the morning.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I am just asking for clarification because what the Secretary-General described was not what I understood in terms of the point I was making. Perhaps if the Legal Counsel could explain paragraph 24 (a), (b), (c), and (d) and what effect those would have if that motion were made upon this Agenda Item.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Just to recap, my understanding is that the United States of America has asked for clarification as to what the subparagraphs of paragraph 24 mean in the context of the discussion that is ongoing. I recall that paragraph 24 notes that "*the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting, except a point of order*", and thereunder it lists the elements including paragraph (d) "*closure of the debate on the Item under discussion*".

Thus, I would conclude at this moment in time, that the vote on the closure of the debate would take precedence over a vote on whether to have a vote by secret ballot. However, I would observe here that we are in uncharted waters because we had begun with embarking upon a vote, we had then had a point of order, we had then had some substantive discussion. Therefore, in many respects we are resorting to the Rules, and while we wish to stay within the Rules, it is very difficult sometimes to see exactly where we are.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I tried to refrain from engaging in this very lengthy discussion about voting and voting and voting, but I would like for us to support the intervention made by our colleague from Kuwait because I think we have had a very recent incident for a motion to close the debate and that was in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on 27 October 2023 and if I recall correctly it was Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States who asked for a motion to close the debate on this Item and then we reconvened again 25 November 2023.

I think this is exactly what Kuwait was trying to mention is we at this time, that was adjournment but I am making a reference that the idea was we were in the middle of a debate. My understanding now is

the motion of dear colleague from the United States is taking us one step backwards because we will vote to close the debate and then we vote again to take us forward, as the Secretary-General has mentioned, to vote again on the subparagraph as presented by Nicaragua.

I do not think we should increase the number of voting rounds that we will have to vote on the closing of the debate and then we vote on the paragraph itself and then on the modality.

CHAIRPERSON

We cannot discuss the motion itself so it is clear there is a motion to close the debate, which has to, as was said by the Legal-Counsel, supersedes any other request for vote. So that is what we have to do. For me the only question is, if we vote in favour of closing the debate, what will be then the next step? So that is clear what will be done if it is being agreed to.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

That was exactly my question on the meanings of paragraph 24 subparagraph (a), (b), (c) and (d). My understanding is that closure of the debate on the Item under discussion, ends discussion on Agenda Item 4. Not as described by the Secretary-General of moving to the discussion phase, or the decision phase on this.

That it ends the debate, meaning it ends Agenda Item 4 and we move on to Agenda Item 5 and 6. If that is not the case and instead adjourning the debate on the Item under discussion does that, then that is what I would prefer to say, and that is why I am asking the Legal Counsel, or someone, if they can explain what is the effect of paragraph 24 subparagraph (a), (b), (c) and (d) if they were made as proposals right now on Agenda Item 4.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for that question because we have to be absolutely clear what the consequences are on a motion to close the debate, so I turn the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

As Members will be aware, paragraph 23, which is then followed by 24 which gives the order of precedence; paragraph 23 states that “*a delegate or representative may, at any time, move for closure of the debate on the Item under discussion*”. This would typically be the debate on the Agenda Item.

But nevertheless, there is no specific stipulation on “item” in this Rule. What the Members are currently discussing is a modality of voting; that is an item under discussion. However, the United States of America is correct, typically it would be the closure of the discussion on an Agenda Item.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

So the proposal that I thought I was making was exactly the proposal as described by the Legal Counsel, which is ending Agenda Item 4 and moving forward. That does not seem to be the understanding of the Secretary-General. I am not sure of the Chairperson. If that is not the understanding then I would withdraw that proposal. If that is the understanding, which I think it is, then I would keep that proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

The only way forward is following the Rules of Procedures in the Basic Texts and for that, we have the Legal Counsel. The Legal Counsel have clearly stated, the understanding is that if we vote in favour of this motion, it means that Item will be closed. There we go indeed to Item 5, that is my understanding. No, no but that is what you said. So to be absolutely clear because everybody has to know if they are going to vote on this, what they are voting on.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

They are voting on the closure of the debate on “the item”.

CHAIRPERSON

And “the item” is Item 4? So that means that we close the Item.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

They are closing the debate on the Item 4.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I now join my colleague from Kuwait in being utterly confused about what is happening this evening. For the time being I will withdraw my request and hope that we will just end this as quickly as possible.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us now turn back to what we now have to do. We have now to take a vote on whether or not we vote on the question of whether or not we have a secret vote. Because if we have a secret vote, the vote will be done tomorrow because we cannot organize a secret vote now. If it was not a secret vote, we can do the vote this evening with a roll call.

The proposal will be now to vote on the proposal to have a secret ballot. That I will bring to the vote. So, we put it on the screen so that everybody knows what we are voting on. Can we start now the vote whether or not we have a secret vote? We start now the vote.

In the meantime, we have counted the Members present so that we do not have any question about the quorum. We have in Plenary in person 39 Members, we have in the virtual room 3 Members, so that means that we have 42 Members present, which means that we have a quorum.

Now I draw the country with which we would start the vote. Afghanistan. We start the vote with Afghanistan. But we have to make sure whether or not Afghanistan is online. Afghanistan is online? We will check.

I will start with Afghanistan and then I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General to now call for the roll call vote on the secret ballot vote.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is Afghanistan. I will proceed to call out the names one by one and ask for the vote; either yes, no, or abstention.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the results of the vote on the secret vote.

Number of votes cast, 31. Majority required is a simple majority and that means 16 votes. Voted for, 16. Voted against, 15. Abstentions, 10.

That means that the results are that the Council has approved to have a secret ballot vote on the proposal by Nicaragua for inclusion of their proposal in Report of the 174th Session of the Council. So tomorrow morning we will start at 09:30 hours with a secret ballot.

**174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023**

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to vote by secret ballot on a proposal made by Nicaragua (item 4)

5 December 2023, 19:00

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	31
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	16
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favour	16
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	15
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	10

Votes for: Belarus, Cameroon, China, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Kuwait,
Votes pour: Lesotho, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway,
Votes contre: Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, Congo, India, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Thailand
Abstenciones:

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Bahamas, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Uganda
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

One point of clarification before we leave. You said earlier that a vote had not yet begun on the proposal. Is that correct still? Does that still stand?

Earlier when I asked, you said a vote had not yet begun on the proposal from Nicaragua. I want to make sure that that still stands so if amendments are to be offered before the vote begins, the vote has not yet begun, as you said earlier. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

We will be here tomorrow morning at 9:30 hours to start the secret ballot vote on the proposal of Nicaragua. As I said before, the vote did not begin.

I would not take up now the Report of the Finance Committee because I do not think the atmosphere in the room is good to start with the Finance Committee.

We stop today because it is almost 19:30. We would like to thank the interpreters, the messengers, technicians, people around the table, for the hard work of today.

We still have a lot of work to cover the next three days and let us avoid more problematic discussions on whatever comes on Items to be covered.

The meeting is adjourned until tomorrow 9:30 hours.

The meeting rose at 19:20 hours

La séance est levée à 19 h 20

Se levanta la sesión a las 19.20

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatorzième session
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023**

**FIFTH PLENARY SESSION
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

6 December 2023

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:41 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 41
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 09.41
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers (*continued*)**Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes (*suite*)****Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes
(*continuación*)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Yesterday we voted on having a secret vote on the proposal made by Nicaragua. That is what we are going to do this morning. But I was made aware that before we start voting, we cannot have a debate anymore. The debate is finished. But before we start the actual vote, amendments can be made to a proposal. That is not only for this but for any other item that we are going to discuss and probably vote on.

So that we do not again have a one and a half hour debate on the rules and procedures, I will look to paragraph 26, which states the following:

“When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Conference or Council shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairperson to be the furthest removed in substance from the original proposal. And then on the amendment next moved therefrom and so on, until amendments have been put to a vote. Where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another, the latter shall not be put to the vote.

If one or more amendments are adopted, the amendment proposal shall then be voted upon. A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that a proposal but not if it negatives the proposal. An amendment by way of substitution shall not be voted on until the vote has been taken on the original proposal and any amendment thereon.”

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

In the spirit of finding a consensus way forward, we would like to offer an amendment to this text. We know that this amendment has been agreed upon by consensus before and we hope that it would help us to find a way forward today as well.

In the text, I do not know if you want to put it on the screen so that we can then show the edit that we would put, and then I will read it.

This is in subparagraph (j). That is what we are voting on, is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

So, we would replace “*the*” in “*took note of the views*” with “*diverse*”, so “*took note of diverse views expressed by*” and then I would replace “*certain delegations*” with the word “*Members regarding the*” and then I would delete the word “*negative*.”

The paragraph as amended by the amendment we are proposing would read as follows: “*took note of diverse views expressed by Members regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security*” and then the rest of the paragraph as well.

I put this forward as an amendment in the spirit of transparency and inclusion of the work of this Council and in line with the practice across the rest of the UN bodies, I would also propose and request that this vote on this amendment be done via roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

You have seen the proposal of the United States of America on an amendment to the text of the proposal from Nicaragua. It has been translated by the interpreters in all languages but I have to make

sure that we can go ahead with the vote on this amendment without first circulating every element in the six languages.

We go now to the vote, unless Nicaragua asks for the floor. Because it is not about a statement, it is only if there is another amendment made. Because we go to the vote or, if there was a proposal not to go to a vote.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Simplemente era sobre la propuesta de Estados Unidos que queremos agradecer. Sin embargo, Nicaragua quiere mantener la propuesta. Puede aceptar que se cambie la primera parte en el sentido de opiniones diversas expresadas, pero si vamos a mantener la delegación y no Miembros porque en esta sala se expresaron solamente los Miembros del Consejo, pero también observadores que son parte de la FAO.

Sobre el término “*negative*” lo vamos a mantener porque, por supuesto, que son medidas negativas, no son positivas. Así que, reiteramos que mantenemos este texto propuesto. Podemos aceptar simplemente cambiar la primera parte propuesta por Estados Unidos.

CHAIRPERSON

I have to interrupt because we have had the debate. There is an amendment and now the amendment will be put to a vote. Because otherwise we have a long debate again. There is an amendment and it is now up to the Members whether or not by vote express their support or reject the amendment. Unless there is a point of order, I would like to go to the vote now. I look to the Philippines because I do not want to have statements on position because that is for the voting.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Having heard what the delegation from Nicaragua has said, we would be willing to adjust. As long as the word “*negative*” were to come out, “*delegations*” would be fine. Otherwise, we request a vote on our amendment as proposed.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not want to go into a discussion because it is to the proposer, to the original text as well as to the proposal of the amendment to see whether what we have to vote on exactly.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I just want a clarification. What exactly will we be voting on, the United States of America (USA) amendment or the original text?

CHAIRPERSON

I read out paragraph 26 of Rule XII of the Basic Texts of the Rules of Procedures, is that we first vote on the amendment and then we will see what will be done, based on the outcome of the vote, with the original proposal. So, we go now to the vote on the amendment of the United States.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

El voto va a ser secreto, porque ayer decidimos...

CHAIRPERSON

I will come to that. First we have to be clear what the text is, before we start the vote. The United States asked for a roll call vote. So, unless the Members of the Council could agree to a roll call vote, we go to a secret vote. On the amendment, we decided yesterday that on the original proposal, it would be a secret vote. The US asked for a roll call vote on this item. Can we agree to a roll call vote?

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

No, Nicaragua propone que también esta votación sea hecha de forma secreta.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Just one question. Because we are going to vote on the same paragraph, should it not be the same modalities as the one that we are originally voting for? Because it is the same paragraph, only with amendments. So, I would think that it would be the same modality for the same paragraph, by secret ballot.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

My understanding is the question is whether or not the amendments proposed by the United States of America should be determined by the Council on the basis of a secret ballot or a roll call vote, depending upon the decision taken yesterday evening by the Members.

In this context, I would note that the question that was put to the Council yesterday related to the proposal by Nicaragua. Here we are addressing amendments to that proposal. Here, again, there is no hierarchy. It would seem to follow that we are still addressing the proposal of Nicaragua, i.e. the item on which there was a decision yesterday.

Maybe the Secretary-General or the Elections Officer could remind me of the question that was specifically put to the Members yesterday. I would note that there is no particular hierarchy between the paragraph which enables Members to call for a roll call vote, nor the paragraph which enables the Council to determine whether or not there should be a secret ballot.

As yesterday, in the same manner today we continue to be in uncharted waters, but that would seem to be the logic, if the question that was presented related to the proposal of Nicaragua.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

This is an interpretation of the Rules, clearly. Thank you to the Legal Counsel for that and for putting forward a certain logic as you see it, but I did call for a roll call vote. If there is opposition to that, I would call for that to be voted on.

CHAIRPERSON

That means that we first go to a vote on whether or not we could vote on the amendment by roll call vote. But before doing so, I will ask the Council Members whether or not there is another amendment. Because we have to have clarity that all amendments are available before we start voting.

Because I read out paragraph 26 of Rule XII to decide the order of voting. So, that is why I ask any Council Member who wants to make an amendment, please come forward now.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Listening to Nicaragua's position, maybe we can amend it to "*Members of FAO.*"

CHAIRPERSON

There will be another amendment.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

This is a question regarding the voting modality. Is it possible to have the main paragraph and the two amendments in the same ballot so that we can vote altogether and save time?

CHAIRPERSON

No, because paragraph 26 of Rule XII says that you have to take it amendment by amendment for a vote. Because the outcome will change the subparagraph, which we finally vote on. So, it goes, clearly, amendment by amendment.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

Yes, I am not rejecting anything. I am trying to be out of the box so that we can save time and move forward with the Agenda, because it seems this is taking a lot of time. In principle, even if we are voting amendment by amendment, we can put the latest amendment and then the amendment before it,

and I think, logically speaking, when we have the results of the voting on each amendment, if the first one passes, then it passes. But at least we have only one ballot to do the voting with the three amendments.

CHAIRPERSON

No, the Rules of Procedure are very clear. You have to take it amendment by amendment.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus)

I am sorry for that, but I would like to make a proposal. First of all, I would like to explain it. To my mind, as I understood Nicaragua's position, the main for them would be to have the word "negative" in the text.

Another proposal of having "*the Members of FAO*" is here in the proposal from Japan. "*Diverse views*", yes, there were diverse views. And to my mind United States of America (USA) told us that they have nothing against the word "negative". So, my proposal is to add to the proposal of Japan the word "negative impact". And to my mind in this case we will not even need any vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Now we have three amendments. The rule is clear, I read the text again of paragraph 26. "*The Council shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairperson to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal,*" and that is the proposal of the United States.

But before we go to the vote, we first have to have a vote what kind of vote we should take. So, now I put on the screen for the vote on the modality of the vote before we start the vote.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus)

Should we vote once for the way of voting for all the three amendments? Because to my mind... And I would agree with the logic with our distinguished Legal Counsel, that as the basic proposal was decided to be voted with a secret ballot, our amendments should be treated the same way. So, I would propose to take my amendment and to vote my amendment by a secret ballot, like the amendment.

CHAIRPERSON

We will take your amendment, but first now we vote on the modality of the vote on the amendment of the United States and we put on the screen what the proposal is.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Just to clarify now, we have three amendments now to vote on? Am I clear?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Then if the first one gets the vote... Let us leave the modality of voting. If the first one gets the vote of the majority, then we have to go to the second and then we still have to go to the third?

CHAIRPERSON

And then we have to vote on the final text which includes all the amendments.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

That would be the last one?

CHAIRPERSON

We have three amendments. Based on the outcome of the amendments, we have a final text which will go for a vote as well.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Okay, wonderful. All right.

Mr Gabriel MBAIROBE (Cameroon)

I think we discussed about this Item yesterday evening and we come in for a secret ballot for this amendment. So, I cannot understand why you have to discuss about that again.

CHAIRPERSON

If a Member asks for a vote, I have to bring it to the vote. I cannot rule any other way. So, we made a rule on voting by secret vote on the proposal of Nicaragua but now we have an amendment made by the United States which asked for a roll call vote, so now we have to take the vote on which modality of the voting we will take for this amendment.

So, now we can put it on the screen. This is the proposal on the modality of the vote. So, now it is clear that we have a quorum in the room, 46.

It means that we now go for the vote and, as I said, the vote cannot be interrupted. I draw the Member of the Council which we will start with and then we will see. Belarus.

I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council Member designated to cast the first vote is Belarus. I will proceed to call out the names of Council Members and ask for their vote as a yes, no or abstention.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRPERSON

Now we wait for the results.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, we have now the results of the vote on the modality of the vote and the proposal was a vote by roll call. Number of votes cast – 37. Majority required is a simple majority – 19. Votes for – 19. Votes against – 18. Abstentions – 9.

The Council has approved the proposal of the United States of America to vote by roll call vote on its proposal for an amendment to the proposal made by Nicaragua.

**174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023**

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to vote by roll call on an amendment proposed by the United States of America to a proposal of Nicaragua (item 4)

6 December 2023, 10:00

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	37
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	19
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	19
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	18
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	9

Votes for: Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Guinea, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Morocco, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D' Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Argentina, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Thailand
Abstenciones:

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Uganda
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

Now we go to a roll call vote on the amendment of the United States and we put the amendment on the screen and I will read it out again so that everybody has its interpretation in the six UN languages.

Now we have a roll call vote on the amendment proposed by the United States of America on the proposal by Nicaragua for inclusion of the text in Item 4.

And the text of the amendment is: *“took note of diverse views expressed by Members regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the global food crisis, in line with paragraph 30 of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.”*

Now I will draw the country which we will start the roll call with. Panama.

I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General.

Vote
Vote
Votación

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, here are the results for the votes on the amendment proposed by the United States of America on the proposal by Nicaragua for inclusion of text in Item 4. Number of votes cast – 26. Majority required – 14. Votes for – 15. Votes against – 11. Abstentions – 21.

This means that the Council has approved the amendment proposed by the United States on the proposal by Nicaragua for inclusion of text in Item 4.

174th Session of the FAO Council 4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to adopt an amendment to a proposal of Nicaragua (Item 4)

6 December 2023, 10:30

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ *Votación Nominal*

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	26
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	14
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	15
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	11
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	21

Votes for: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Belarus, Chile, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Kuwait, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D' Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Thailand
Abstenciones:

No reply: Afghanistan, Uganda
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

With this we go to the amendment by Japan.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Quiero pedir disculpas porque interpreto que tenemos un pequeño espacio para hacer una pregunta de interpretación. Hay algo que no entiendo, que es lo siguiente: Estamos votando diferentes enmiendas respecto de la propuesta original de Nicaragua. ¿Qué pasa cuando todo termine con las diferentes enmiendas en la cual quizá lo que se vote sea contradictorio o las diferentes enmiendas con respecto a la propuesta original? ¿Después se vuelve a votar la propuesta original? Y, ¿qué es lo que queda finalmente en el texto? Esto es lo que no logro entender, permídenme. Es la primera vez que me pasa una situación como esta.

CHAIRPERSON

We go through the amendments and then we will see what the amended text will be after the amendments, and then the amended text will go for a vote. But we first have now to go through the other votes and then the amended text will finally go for a final vote.

We will put again on the screen the proposal made by Japan. I will read out the text for interpretation: *“took note of diverse views expressed by Members of FAO regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the global food crisis in line with para 30 of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.”*

This is the proposal made by Japan. Now we have to see the voting modality.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Before starting to vote, what I tried to do is to attract as much votes as possible to get something closer to consensus. We already have approved this amendment and so if we can all vote for the amendment, then maybe we can go along. I am not sure what should I do here.

CHAIRPERSON

So, it is up to you to decide whether or not you want to bring your amendment to a vote now.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

I think probably my amendment at this stage will not make any difference, so I withdraw my amendment.

CHAIRPERSON

One amendment has been withdrawn. Give me one moment to consult.

I was consulting what to do with the amendment of Belarus, but with the adoption of the amendment of United States, we already ruled on the amendment of Belarus because Belarus is proposing to include the word *“negative”*. That is already decided on by Council, so we do not have to vote on that amendment. So, now we bring to a vote the final proposal, and we will show it on the screen.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I would like for Legal Counsel to explain to us why Belarus’s position has been rejected. I believe we should put it to a vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

As the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) has explained and read out, paragraph 26 of Rule XII governs how amendments are addressed in sequence. Here the Members have proceeded to concur with the amendment to Nicaragua’s proposal presented by the United States of America. We then have a situation which is addressed in the middle of paragraph 26, which says, *“where, however, the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another, the latter should not be*

put to a vote." So, the understanding is that the adoption of the amendments proposed by the United States necessarily imply the rejection of the proposal put forward by Belarus and consequently this proposal is not being put to a vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I now put on the screen the final proposal on Item 4.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

There is something I am not quite clear on. When we discussed the amendment of Japan, which also amended the text proposed by the United States of America (USA), we were ready to vote on that, although that was also an amendment to the proposal of the USA and the question was not raised about automatically removing it. So, why is this being done with regard to my proposal? I would like to ask the Council once again to put my proposal to the vote, please.

CHAIRPERSON

First, although it is rejected, why did I bring the proposal of Japan to a vote was it was an addition to the text of the United States because it was "*Members of FAO*", so the "*of FAO*" was the new part. The amendment of the United States of America was not ruled against this amendment. The amendment made by you was already voted on with the amendment of the United States because of the word "*negative*", which was removed in the proposal of the United States. So, that is why, in accordance with what was explained by the Legal Counsel, paragraph 26, I cannot bring your proposal to a vote. Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I do not really have more to add. The proposal put forward by Japan did not change the substance, the content, of the amendments that had already been adopted by the Council. The proposal by Belarus to introduce the word "*negative*" had changed the substance of the provision substantively. And that is why I understand there was a conclusion that the adoption of the United States' amendments, necessarily implied the rejection of the proposal to include the word "*negative*."

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I have a question and a comment. Question is, what is the order for the amendments? Our understanding is the latest amendment should be voted first, just for understanding. Now, my understanding is the latest one was from Belarus, one after it was from Japan, and then the one before was from the United States of America (USA). So, in general, I would like to know what is the chronological order for amendments on the paragraphs for future references?

The comment I have is, it is not my call, but I disagree with the explanation made that "*negative*" is actually contradicting with the paragraph of the USA, because the USA paragraph does not have the word "*positive*." Negative is the opposite for the word positive. But some countries or some delegation who have voted for the paragraph of the USA can also support adding the word "*negative*." So, to be honest, if we want to go in a correct manner, I do not think that the word presented by the delegate from Belarus is contradicting the paragraph made by the USA.

CHAIRPERSON

I am not going to enter a debate on the substance of the amendments, because if you read the amendment when it was first presented, the word "*negative*" was removed by the proposal of the United States. The paragraph 26 Rule XII is clear and I repeat it again, "*When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. When two or more amendments to a proposal are moved, the Conference, or the Council, shall first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairperson to be the furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and then on the amendment next removed therefrom, and so on until all amendments have been put to a vote.*"

The proposal of the United States, so it is not by order of when they are proposed, but it is clearly stated "*first vote on the amendment deemed by the Chairperson to be furthest removed in substance from the original proposal,*" and that was the proposal of the United States, because that had the most

changes, if you see, and was removed the most from the proposal of Nicaragua. That is clearly done in accordance with Rule XII, and we consulted with the Legal Counsel.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I have a question for our Legal Counsel. If we propose not putting in the word "*negative*," but, for example, "*damaging*," then would that proposal remain?

CHAIRPERSON

Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

This is not a matter for my judgement. It is a matter of interpretation of the substance. This is not a matter for the Legal Counsel, I believe.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I cannot agree more that the Rules of Procedure are very clear, but also very relative. I do not see precisely who can decide if the language of the proposal from Belarus is contradicting to the proposal from the United States of America (USA). Nothing says that. The Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) decides on this. I think the Council should decide on this. That is why I think the proposal made by Belarus should be put on voting.

CHAIRPERSON

I see a point of order, but let me first explain, it is clear and stated that the Independent Chairperson of the Council decides which amendment will be voted on first. And the rule is, as it is stated, it is the furthest removed in substance from the original proposal, and that is the proposal of the United States.

The proposal of the United States included the deletion of "*negative*." The Council has decided on that. So, you cannot bring then again back a decision if you do not like the decision of the Council. No, I am not going to have a long debate on this. The Rules of Procedures are clear. We have clearly voted in accordance with paragraph 26. I give the United States the floor for a point of order.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I just wanted to clarify, because I think at this point you have started to move toward the voting on the item, on the proposal. Therefore, anything should be a point of order that is raised at this point and not hypotheticals or questions on procedure that are not relevant to this vote, I believe.

CHAIRPERSON

I see other requests for the floor, but we cannot have a debate on the outcome of the voting because Council has voted on this. It is clear, the vote has been taken. Point of order by Egypt.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I do not want to take this any longer, but as you read the Rules of Procedure, it says it decides on the order of the voting, not if this paragraph or this proposal is contradicting with another proposal or not. Once again, we request that this be very clear that the Council is the one to decide if one proposal is against the other one or not.

CHAIRPERSON

The Rules of Procedure are clear. The Council voted on an amendment of the United States. One of the amendments in the proposal of the United States, one of the elements, was the deletion of "*negative*." Anyhow, it has been voted on, so I do not want to prolong this discussion. The Council has voted, and the Council has voted that the element of "*negative*" should be removed from the proposal.

So, you cannot bring back then this proposal again. So, that is the ruling, and the Rules of Procedure are clear. So, I do not want to have this debate because we have voted, and I want to go to the vote, and it will be done by secret vote on the final proposal which is now in front of us. Point of order by Nicaragua.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Usted presentó las tres enmiendas y las puso en pantalla y dijo que íbamos a votar por las tres enmiendas. ¿Qué ha cambiado desde que Estados Unidos presentó la suya? Japón retiró voluntariamente la suya y la tercera no la votamos. ¿Qué ha cambiado? Usted la puso en pantalla y dijo que íbamos a proceder con tres votaciones distintas y ahora no, que es suficiente la votación de la enmienda propuesta por Estados Unidos. ¿Cambió acaso el reglamento en estos diez minutos, me pregunto yo?

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, the rules are very clear. There are three amendments, and they have to be brought to a vote. But I could not prejudge when we start the voting on the outcome of the furthest away amendment. Because with the vote on the amendment of the United States, the Council voted on the deletion of the word "*negative*." That means that you cannot bring that back with another amendment because it is voted on.

So, the Rules are very clear on this, unless you want to change the Rules of Procedure. So, the moment the Council adopted the proposal of the United States, by that it rejected the inclusion of "*negative*." That is what we voted on.

I want to proceed now to the final proposal.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I will not demand anything right now, but what I think is that it would have been necessary to explain to the Council the consequences of voting on the first amendment. Argentina asked you whether or not we are going to vote on all three amendments, and I think that the Council should have been told that if the amendment of the United States of America (USA) was supported, then voting on the other amendments would not take place.

The Council should have understood this before voting on the amendment by the USA. What we have now is that the Council was sure that we were going to vote on all three amendments, and I think that, as a minimum, does not follow.

CHAIRPERSON

The text were clear. It was explained by the United States, that the proposal of the United States included the deletion of the word "*negative*." I do not think that anybody could not understand that, as it was part of the proposal, when they were voting, that it would mean deletion of the word "*negative*." That was part of the proposal. So, that was adopted by the Council. Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

When this process began, the outcome of the votes on each amendment, or indeed whether they would proceed, was not known. As has been reflected many a time this morning, there is a sequence and depending upon the outcome of each vote would guide whether or not there would be a subsequent vote. That is how the Rule is specified. Beyond that, I am afraid I really do not have anything more to add.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

Please allow me to begin my statement with an example. An hour has gone by without us having taken a single step forward. There are contradictory explanations that we have heard, explanations from a legal standpoint that point in one direction, and others that point in another direction.

We are debating a paragraph that represents no political danger that anyone might fear. This is quite a generic paragraph that could be in everyone's interest, and I do not see how a single sentence could warrant all this time. I have been taking part in the Council since 1996, and we have never had a Council of this type.

CHAIRPERSON

Sorry, Qatar, I have to interrupt you because you start now the debate on the proposals. It has to be a point of order towards the next point of the procedure, not about the substance. It is clearly stated by the Legal Counsel what we have decided on and what the Rules of Procedure are. We have voted on

an amendment of the United States which has implications and give guidance to the other amendments. So, that is in front of us.

Whether or not we like the outcome of the vote is not for the debate now. So, unless it is about the next step in our procedure, we cannot debate the outcome of the vote, whether or not we like it. The Legal Counsel has clearly stated that what we have done is in accordance with the Rules of Procedures, especially paragraph 26 of Rule XII.

With this, I want to go now to the next step of our procedure, and that is the secret vote on the final proposal based on the amendments adopted. So, I put those now on the screen.

We turn to a secret ballot vote on the proposal by Nicaragua to include in the Report of the 174th Session and Item 4, as amended by the Council, "*The Council took note of the various views expressed by Members regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the global food crisis, in line with para 30 of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.*"

Before we turn to the secret ballot, we have to have two tellers appointed. The volunteers are Canada and Indonesia. We will now print the ballot papers and we can start, because the ballot papers have to be translated in all six UN languages.

We start the secret ballot vote at 11:45 hours.

What we can do now, we could take up the Report of the Finance Committee.

Item 10. Reports of the 196th (Rome, 5-7 June 2023), 197th (Rome, 30-31 October 2023) and 198th (Rome, 6-10 November 2023) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Point 10. Rapports des 196^e (Rome, 5-7 juin 2023), 197^e (Rome, 30-31 octobre 2023) et 198^e (Rome, 6-10 novembre 2023) sessions du Comité financier

Tema 10. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 196.^o (Roma, 5-7 de junio de 2023), 197.^o (Roma, 30 y 31 de octubre de 2023) y 198.^o (Roma, 6-10 de noviembre de 2023) del Comité de Finanzas

(CL 174/16; CL 174/17; CL 174/9)

Item 10.1 Audited Accounts – FAO 2022

Point 10.1 Comptes vérifiés – FAO 2022

Tema 10.1 Cuentas comprobadas de la FAO correspondientes a 2022

(C 2025/5A; C 2025/5B)

Item 10.2 Status of current assessments and arrears

Point 10.2 État des contributions courantes et des arriérés

Tema 10.2 Estado de las cuotas corrientes y los atrasos

(CL 174/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

Let us take Item 10, Reports of the 196th, 197th and 198th Sessions of the Finance Committee, which you can find in *CL 174/16*, *CL 174/17*, *CL 174/9*, *C 2025/5 A*, *C 2025/5 B*, and *CL 174/LIM/2* are in front of us. We have the Chair of the Finance Committee here, Egypt. I remind you that when it comes to the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget, they already have been dealt with under Item 3.

We have the Audited accounts, as well as the Status of current assessments and arrears are part of this discussion.

The introduction of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee has been circulated.

Introduction to Item 10: Reports of the 196th (Rome, 5-7 June 2023), 197th (Rome, 30-31 October 2023) and 198th (Rome, 6-10 November 2023) Sessions of the Finance Committee

Mr Mina Rizk, Chairperson of the Finance Committee

I am pleased to present the Reports of the 196th, 197th and 198th Sessions of the Finance Committee, submitted to the Council in documents CL 174/16, CL 174/17 and CL 174/9 respectively.

While the 198th Session dealt with FAO matters, the 196th and 197th Sessions were convened to deal with World Food Programme (WFP) matters. Our reports on WFP matters have been submitted to the WFP Executive Board for its consideration.

I would like to highlight the following matters presented in the Report of the 198th Session of the Finance Committee, except for those matters referring to Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25, which are covered separately under item 3 of the agenda of this Session of the Council.

On the review of the *Audited Accounts – FAO 2022*, the Council is invited to endorse the draft resolution for adoption by the Conference as presented in paragraph 12 of document CL 174/9.

On the review of *FAO Oversight Advisory Committee Membership*, the Council is requested to endorse the appointment of Mr Jorge da Silva as a member of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee for an initial period of three years.

Furthermore, the Council is requested to endorse the conclusions of the Finance Committee on its consideration of the *Financial Position of the Organization; and Recommendation 7 of the JIU Report Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function (JIU/REP/2020/1)*.

Finally, the Council is requested to note the Finance Committee's considerations related to the updates it received on: *Programme and Budgetary Transfers in the 2022-23 Biennium; Implementation of recommendations of the External Auditor and the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee; and the ongoing FAO Management and Administration Review by the JIU*.

I would be pleased to provide any further explanations you may have regarding our reports.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for the Members.

M. Abdellah LARHMAID (Maroc)

Cette Déclaration est faite par la République du Congo, la République du Mali et le Royaume du Maroc au nom du Group Régional Africain (GRA) au titre du Point 10 de l'ordre du jour de la session actuelle du Conseil de la FAO.

Le Groupe Régional Africain tient à exprimer sa gratitude au Secrétariat pour la qualité des documents.

Le Comité Financier (FC) a examiné lors de ses 196ème et 197ème sessions, des questions intéressant le Programme Alimentaire Mondial (PAM); sa 198 session, de la situation financière et des questions budgétaires de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture (FAO), notamment, les ajustements apportés au *Programme de travail et budget (PTB) 2024-2025*.

Le Groupe Régional Africain apprécie l'appui apporté par la FAO au travail du PAM à travers son Comité financier. Il accueille favorablement l'utilisation de mécanismes de financement stratégiques comme un moyen important d'accroître l'efficacité et l'efficience des opérations du PAM et soutient l'utilisation de ce mécanisme de financement et la gestion des risques associés.

Le Groupe Régional Africain apprécie l'appui apporté par la FAO au travail du PAM se félicite de l'augmentation budgétaire de la FAO de 5,5 pour cent considérée comme une étape cruciale pour doter notre institution des ressources financières nécessaires pour l'accomplissement de son mandat. Cette augmentation reflète l'importance du rôle joué par la FAO dans la lutte contre la faim et la malnutrition dans le monde, renforçant ainsi son soutien aux pays africains pour faire face aux défis alimentaires et climatiques actuels.

Le Groupe tient à souligner que cette augmentation ne représente qu'une étape parmi d'autres pour

assurer une visibilité à notre Organisation. La FAO reste confrontée à des défis énormes, notamment ceux relatifs à ses capacités.

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

India takes the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group (ARG).

At the outset, the Asia Regional Group compliments the Finance Committee (FC) for its excellent work and appreciates its Reports for being comprehensive and forward-looking. While we concur with the recommendations of the Finance Committee, we would like to emphasize some of the key issues.

While we support the Finance Committee recommendations that underlines the importance of assessing and managing the balance between voluntary and assessed contributions on a longer-term basis, we also encourage FAO to focus its efforts towards leveraging its comparative advantage in normative and standards setting work meticulously built over the years and also its capacity of providing technical assistance to members. We request the Finance Committee to continue to review this important issue.

We have noted that the Finance Committee while reviewing the financial position of the Organization urged the Member Nations to make payments of assessed contributions on time and in full, and also requested management to address the underfunding of After Service Medical Coverage liabilities (ASMC). The unfunded ASMC issues has been highlighted year after year without any practical solutions. We expect the Management to identify some out of the box innovative solutions and set into motion a time bound concrete plan of action to address these issues in a feasible way.

Given the critical importance of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) we would like to request FAO to maintain TCP Expenditure at a level that ensures full implementation of the TCP appropriation as approved by the Conference.

We compliment the Management for preparing the Audited Accounts 2022 in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), the External Auditor for the quality of his Report, and appreciate that the External Auditor had issued an unmodified audit opinion on the FAO Accounts for 2022. We urge management to implement the recommendations of the External Auditor expeditiously especially those emanating from the performance audit of the Information Technology (IT) systems of the United Nations Global Resource Management System (UNRMS). We expect FAO management to closely review the Emergency preparedness of Country Offices and take steps to mainstream Anticipatory Action in the Emergency and Resilience efforts of the organization considering its value of investment.

We concur with the recommendations of the Finance Committee with regard to implementation of the Recommendation 7 of the Report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system (JIU), and express our confidence that the Management would present draft provisions of the investigation and disciplinary procedures to the Finance Committee during its autumn 2024 Session. We support the recommendation that the procedures to be developed should, as far as possible, avoid the establishment of new bodies, and allegations should be referred to an external investigating entity while ensuring that the cardinal principles of integrity, transparency, impartiality, expertise and efficiency in the investigation process, adherence to, and consistency with, the Basic Texts, due process, duty of care and presumption of innocence are adhered to in developing the processes to implement recommendation of the JIU Report.

We underscore the importance of further strengthening the FAO decentralized and country offices with adequate resources and delegation so as to enhance their capacities to support the member states and effectively implement food and agriculture policies. Further we encourage FAO to lay greater emphasis on initiatives that have potential multiplier effect, with adequate resources allocation.

Lastly, while we appreciate FAO for its continuous efforts in forging collaborations across the United Nations (UN) System, we also emphasize upon the critical importance of deepening synergies among the three UN Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) at regional and national level, to ensure that this 'triple nexus' leverages collective resources optimally, and delivers mandated outcomes with minimal overlap.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States endorses the Report of the 198th Session of the Finance Committee, and I want to take a moment to draw attention to the fantastic job done by the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, our colleague from Egypt, Mr Mina Rizk. Mina did a really great job of keeping us on track, of making sure that the Finance Committee was able to accomplish its work in less than the time allotted, so thank you for that as well, but also with the professionalism that our Committee deserves.

Just from a personal side, I want to thank the other Members of the Committee as well. The Finance Committee, for those of you who have never been part of it, is a pretty amazing Committee to be part of. We debate things, we disagree about things, we do it in a way that is collaborative and respectful, and it really works well in terms of fulfilling the mandate and looking toward the financial outlook of this Organization. So, thank you to everyone who is on the Committee.

Just a few points I would like to make. I would like to reiterate the US request that Management begin developing a dedicated, standalone annual Report on efficiencies and its associated savings. As we move forward with the approved budget increase from this Council, we urge FAO to focus on making progress on Organization-wide efficiencies, including reporting on these efforts while ensuring all the funds are used as effectively as possible. FAO Members need to have a thorough and up to date picture of this work, and such a Report would do just that.

While we hope that these are never needed, the United States looks forward to continued discussions on draft provisions of the investigation and disciplinary procedures for handling complaints of misconduct against any FAO Directors General. In line with the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU's) recommendation, we look forward to an upcoming briefing during the spring Session of the Finance Committee, and in the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM).

We urge FAO to continue efforts to advance this goal, working with Members to present draft provisions to Conference for consideration and approval in 2025.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí como siempre un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE), de sus 27 Estados Miembros y de otros nueve Estados Miembros que se adhieren completamente a nuestra declaración y que son los siguientes: Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro, San Marino, Ucrania y Turquía.

Centraremos nuestro comentario en el informe del 198º periodo de sesiones del Comité de Finanzas (FC). En primer lugar, nos gustaría agradecer al presidente del 137º periodo de sesiones del Comité del Programa (PC) por su comprometido y eficiente liderazgo. En términos generales, acogemos con satisfacción el informe. Aborda varias cuestiones importantes para seguir mejorando la gobernanza, la eficacia, la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas de la FAO.

Compartimos plenamente el agradecimiento del Comité por el informe del auditor externo para 2022, tanto en lo que respecta al dictamen de auditoría sin modificaciones como al valioso informe detallado. Basándonos en ello, estamos de acuerdo en que el Consejo transmita a la Conferencia el proyecto de resolución por el que la Conferencia aprobará las cuentas auditadas.

Alentamos a la dirección de la FAO a abordar y aplicar las recomendaciones pendientes del auditor externo y del Comité Consultivo de Supervisión, especialmente las pendientes desde hace tiempo o relativas a riesgos elevados, a fin de reforzar el marco de control interno para abordar las deficiencias sistemáticas.

Tomamos nota de la información también sobre las iniciativas previstas en materia de eficiencia y eficacia para alcanzar el objetivo de adecuar la organización a los fines perseguidos y mejorar la aplicación del Marco Estratégico, y esperamos que estas iniciativas sean transparentes en los futuros informes anuales a los órganos rectores, con una sólida hoja de ruta sobre el trabajo que queda por hacer y los resultados previstos.

Al igual que el Comité, subrayamos la importancia de evaluar y gestionar el equilibrio entre las contribuciones voluntarias y las cuotas a largo plazo, y acogemos con satisfacción los futuros debates entre los miembros sobre las formas de abordar la situación de la financiación.

Asimismo, acogemos con satisfacción la información actualizada sobre la forma en que el examen administrativo en curso de la Dependencia Común de Inspección (DCI) puede contribuir a nuevas mejoras en la FAO en el período de sesiones de primavera del Comité de Finanzas y alentamos a la Dirección a que siga dando prioridad a la elaboración de procedimientos para tramitar las denuncias de conducta indebida contra los Jefes Ejecutivos.

Con estas observaciones aprobamos los informes del Comité de Finanzas.

Sr. Miguel Jorge GARCÍA WINDER (México)

Antes de hacer mis comentarios sobre el Comité de Finanzas del cual México es parte, quisiera comentarle que llevo realmente dos meses casi sin dormir y meditando sobre qué podría hacer yo como persona para ayudar a construir los puentes que hemos quemado. Hemos quemado los puentes entre naciones, hemos quemado los puentes del multilateralismo y, la verdad, no encuentro una solución que pueda aportar. Al no tener una solución, quisiera compartir con ustedes, si me lo permiten, una reflexión.

El año pasado tuve la oportunidad de visitar Sierra Leona y este año acabo de regresar de un viaje con muchos de ustedes de Uganda, donde tuvimos la oportunidad de ver algunas contribuciones que las agencias con sede en Roma hacen. Y de estos dos países regresé con la idea, que le llamo yo, el poder de los 150 USD. Son 150 USD que se hace de préstamo a un poblador rural, particularmente a una mujer.

Y son 150 USD suficientes para sacarla de la pobreza para alentarles una nueva vida, para otorgarles una nueva esperanza y aquí, nosotros, en las discusiones el día de ayer, yo creo que gastamos más de 150 USD, sin contar nuestras comidas, nuestras computadoras caras y que, quizá, hubiera sido mejor que invirtiéramos esos 150 USD en préstamo para sacar a la gente de la pobreza y que nos está esperando.

La verdad no sé cómo vamos a ser juzgados por la historia. ¿Qué van a decir de nosotros las nuevas generaciones? ¿Vamos a ser la generación fallida de diplomáticos que a nombre del multilateralismo y del consenso dejamos de hacer lo que teníamos que hacer por los pobres de este mundo? No tengo una respuesta, pero lo que sí creo es que tenemos que construir nuevos caminos. Dejar nuestras trincheras, encontrar un tema común que nos ayude a resolver la pobreza sinceramente. Que salgamos de nuestros capullos y hagamos que esta institución, que a veces parece un paquidermo adormecido, pueda llegar a quien lo necesita.

Ojalá que el resto de nuestras conversaciones nos permitan encontrar una cosa para alentar la esperanza de un mundo mejor. Con esto, y reconociendo el gran trabajo del Presidente del Comité de Finanzas que nos ha dado una renovada y juvenil enfoque de cómo trabajar, quisiera resaltar tres temas que, me parece, este Consejo tiene que tomar en sus manos de manera seria y de exigir.

Primero, tenemos que dar una solución al asunto de gastos médicos después de servicios que requieren atención. Seguimos pateando la bola hacia adelante; esto no puede continuar. Al final del día le va a explotar a esta institución. Segundo, desde hace mucho tiempo se ha venido pidiendo que se haga un trabajo para entender cómo se manejan las contribuciones voluntarias. Yo creo que es momento de dejar de pedir y exigir que se dé respuesta a cómo se manejan las contribuciones voluntarias. Tercero, tenemos que enfrentar el gravísimo reto de cuotas atrasadas. Esta institución no puede seguir avanzando con cuotas atrasadas.

Con esto, termino mi intervención y ruego que ojalá podamos encontrar un punto común para dejar nuestras trincheras y responder a aquellos que han puesto su fe en nosotros.

Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China agrees with the comments by India on behalf of the Asian Regional Group. China is also one of the new Members of the Finance Committee (FC). China thanks the new Chairperson, Mr Mina Rizk, for his excellent leadership, and all the FC Members for their professional and dedicated spirits of work.

We recognize the efficient work of the Secretariat and the Chinese translation team. China agrees with the relevant recommendations by the FC, with particular concern that the underfunding of the After

Service Medical Coverage (ASMC) may pose a significant financial risk to the long-term development of the Organization. We therefore encourage FAO to explore solutions.

We note that the current liquidity of FAO is able to meet the needs of the current work and recognize the timely and the full payment of contributions is an important prerequisite for the functioning of FAO. We thank the External Auditor for his recommendations and commend FAO's excellent work in improving risk controls and the monitoring mechanism.

We stress that the principles of the procedure for implementing recommendation seven of the Report should include the adherence to the Basic Texts, including the principles of due processes, the adversarial principle and rights of defence, duty of care, and the presumption of innocence.

Based on the comments above, China supports the Council to endorse the relevant conclusions by FC.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia would like to join others in recording our appreciation to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, our fellow Members, and the Secretariat of the Finance Committee. There are several elements we would like to highlight from the 198th Session of the Finance Committee in particular.

First, we appreciated the progress Reports on Implementation of Recommendations of the External Auditor and the Progress Report on Recommendations of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee. While we welcomed the progress made in implementing recommendations of the External Auditor, in particular, recommendations aimed at strengthening internal control in headquarters and decentralised offices, we note that a number of recommendations remain outstanding, and we urge the timely implementation of those recommendations.

On the item recommendation 7 of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Report, we appreciated the discussion with the Chief Legal Counsel on this item. We support the recommendation that the principles of integrity, transparency, impartiality, expertise and efficiency in the investigation process should be emphasised in developing the processes to implement recommendation seven. Like others, we look forward to the results of Management's further consultations and presentation of draft provisions of the investigations and disciplinary procedures that will be necessary for handling complaints of misconduct to implement the JIU's recommendation.

We also appreciated Management's verbal update on the ongoing FAO Management and Administration Review (MAR) by the JIU. We emphasize the important opportunities the JIU MAR Review presents to FAO to ensure that its Management and administration arrangements are fit for purpose. We look forward to further updates on the outcomes of this review and Management's response at the May 2024 Session of Finance Committee.

Finally, in respect of the status of current assessment and arrears, recognising that the Organization's ongoing cash flow health is dependent on the timely payment of assessed contributions, Australia urges Members to make payments of assessed contributions on time and in full.

With these comments, we endorse the Report of the Finance Committee.

Mr Anatoliy SHATKOVSKYY (Canada)

Canada thanks the Chairperson of the Finance Committee and its Secretariat and Members for their effective work in deliberating and preparing this Report. We only have two observations to make. We note an increase in unspent balances in financially closed emergency projects, and we would like to know more about FAO Management's plan to manage this.

Secondly, we also note that the Auditor in his Report underscored the need for FAO to improve its procurement, noting that I quote, "*FAO had procured 21 percent of goods through exceptional award, and 15 percent through direct procurement.*" We recall that FAO is encouraged to use competitive bidding as much as possible. Combined with the fact that the Report notes many documents ensuring the process is fair and transparent were not made available, we believe this merits further attention going forward.

With these observations, we endorse the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Observers.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation fully supports the recommendations of the Finance Committee, and we are grateful for the contribution of the Members of this body in formulating the administrative and budgetary policy of FAO.

We would also like to align ourselves with the words of gratitude to the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Mina Rizk, and the Secretariat of the Finance Committee. When it comes to comments about the adjustments to the budget and problems to do with it, with regards to the gap between Voluntary and Assessed Contributions, we shared our views on this under the Agenda item on the Amendments of the budget, we would like to talk about the following issues.

We note the positive work of the External Auditor of FAO, the Auditor of India. The work to optimise the activities of the Organization we think is important in the context of general optimising and streamlining of the work of the Organization. We call on the Secretariat to step up its activities to implement the recommendations of the External Auditor.

As comments to the recommendations from the last Session on investigation, I would like to highlight the following, that setting up such a mechanism should not be an aim in itself and there is no rush in implementing this mechanism. Investigations should reflect the intergovernmental nature of this Organization and should be in line with best practice of the UN system. We see that it may be important to involve such bodies in FAO's mechanism.

We note the importance of the independence of the Investigation function, and we are looking here at internal control. There are certain risks to do with impartiality here. We believe it would be good to take into account the proposals on holding open consultations on the issue of developing an investigative mechanism with the participation of all Members. This was something which we heard during the last meeting of the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn to the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Chairperson of the Finance Committee)

I am pleased to be here with you today during the Council consideration of the Reports of the 196th, 197th and 198th Sessions of the Finance Committee. I have taken careful note of the Council's detailed review and observations on our Reports.

Overall, I believe the Sessions of the Committee were very productive and it was possible to address a number of important issues facing the Organization. The 197th and the 198th Sessions of the Committee were the first Sessions of the Finance Committee where I had the honour to act as a Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and I would like to express and recognize my sincere thanks to all the Members of the Committee for the collaborative spirit in which we carried out our work, and which we enabled the Committee to come to a consensus on the recommendations and observations reflected in our Reports.

I would also like to thank the Secretary of the Finance Committee, Mr David McSherry, for his excellent work in supporting my chairpersonship. On behalf of the Members of the Committee, I would also like to extend our appreciation to the Management for its support and inputs during our deliberations, and our gratitude to the Members of the FAO for providing us this opportunity to further the important work of the Organization.

I would be pleased to provide my further explanation you may have regarding our Reports. And once again, I would like to thank all the Members of the Finance Committee for the appreciation for the work of the chairmanship.

CHAIRPERSON

I will see whether or not Management would like to take the floor.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

I just offer some additional congratulations from all of us affiliated with Management to the Chairperson for his very effective and very collaborative approach. This was also my first time representing Management in the Finance Committee, and so I too learned a lot and benefited from the spirit with which this particular Committee operates.

Just very briefly, let me say from our perspective how pleased we are to once again have an unmodified audit for 2022. This is something to very much be recognized and pleased with. We also recognize on maybe three different levels, the comments that have been provided, not only in the Finance Committee, but by others of you here, taking into consideration your important observations regarding issues around costs and liabilities.

I would say we remain committed to all of you to continue to work on a better accounting of our cost savings and efficiencies across the Organization in the period to come, and I am very encouraged by the strong messages that have come regarding the very serious liabilities that affect this Organization due to the After Service Medical cost challenges. It is time for an out of the box approach. Old ways of thinking about how to solve this longer-term problem need to be changed.

Second, I would just say on resources we have continued to, I think, emphasise in our responses in other Governing Body meetings the commitment that Management brings to discussing with Members this challenge or set of opportunities, you could say, that also exist in the areas of our funding, the balance between Assessed and Voluntary Contributions. We stand committed as Management to continue to be transparent and to work through different scenarios, different risks, different opportunities in this landscape with Members.

Finally, let me just reassure Members of our commitment in all of these areas to continue dialogue and full transparency. That issue has come up through a number of the issues discussed in the Finance Committee, whether it is the Joint Inspection Unit investigative function or the Management and Administrative review, the continued seriousness that we take to the Reports and recommendations of the External Auditor, as well as the Oversight Advisory Committee.

We are working diligently to take all of these very serious Reports and their recommendations onboard, and to try our best to expedite many of the agreed upon actions and the recommendations as well. So, thank you to everyone for the support and the comments and for the great work of the Finance Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, we turn to the draft conclusions of the Report of the Finance Committee, and we put them on the screen. I will read them out first and then we go one by one.

20. The Council reviewed the Reports of the 196th (Rome, 5-7 June 2023), 197th (Rome, 30-31 October 2023 and 198th (Rome, 6-10 November 2023) Session of the Finance Committee, except for the *Adjustments of the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25*, which was taken up under a separate agenda item, and:

- (a) endorsed the recommendations of the Finance Committee to:
 - (i) submit the Draft Resolution for adoption by the Conference of the FAO Audited Accounts for 2022, as presented in paragraph 12 of document *CL 174/9*; and
 - (ii) endorse the appointment of Mr Honoré Ndoko as a member of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee for an initial period of three years.

21. In addition, the Council endorsed the conclusions of the Finance Committee on:

- (a) the financial position of the Organization, and
- (b) Recommendation 7 of the JIU Report, "*Review of the state of investigation function progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function*".

22. The Council also noted the Finance Committee's consideration on:

- (a) Programme and Budgetary Transfers in 2022-2023 biennium;
- (b) Implementation of Recommendations of the External Auditor and the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee; and
- (c) the ongoing FAO Management and Administration Review by the JIU.

23. With the above observations, the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Reports of 196th, 197th and 198th Sessions of the Finance Committee.

We go through them one by one.

Can we agree to the chapeau of paragraph 20? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to paragraph 21, the chapeau.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am just looking at *CL 174/9* regarding the Membership to the Oversight Advisory Committee. I am just scrolling to the right paragraph, apologies. I understood in paragraph 20 that we proposed that Mr Jorge da Silva was a Member of the FAO Oversight Advisory Committee. I am just confirming whether we have got the right name in there, and perhaps I am on the wrong document or I have got confused, but I just thought that it is an important matter to be confirming.

CHAIRPERSON

Give us one moment to see whether or not we have the right person. Australia is correct, so we will fill in the right name. If you could repeat the name because I do not have it in front of me.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am referring here to paragraph 20 subparagraph (a) of the Finance Committee Report and it is Mr Jorge da Silva. I am just confirming I am correct in that understanding.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you so much, Australia, also for being so alert. We certainly need that.

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

I was also about to say the same thing as Australia. Anyway, thanks to Australia for the correction.

I have a point to make on paragraph 22.

CHAIRPERSON

I will do first paragraph 21. Can we agree to paragraph 21? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to paragraph 22.

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

I want to know why the word “*considerations*” has been put there rather than “*recommendations*”. Can we put both recommendations/consideration in the first line?

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Hasta el momento no tenemos observaciones que hacer al borrador del texto, pero lo que no vemos en el mismo y nos gustaría sugerirlo a la Membresía, es una alusión al alentamiento a FAO para continuar su esfuerzo en seguir mejorando las cuestiones de la gobernanza, la eficiencia, la transparencia y la rendición de cuentas. Si les parece y para someterlo al parecer de los Miembros, les puedo sugerir un párrafo añadido. Hasta ahora por lo que hay, yo no tengo observaciones a hacer a nada de lo que se ha dicho hasta ahora. Solo es una sugerencia añadida.

CHAIRPERSON

If you can propose a concrete subparagraph on 22? After subparagraph (b).

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Lo leo en inglés a velocidad de dictado. “*Encourage continued efforts to further improve the governance, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of FAO*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we put that as a separate subparagraph, otherwise, paragraph 22 does not read really well.

We first deal with the proposal made by India. Can we agree to the proposal of India?

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I just had a comment on the proposal made by Spain. Was this issue discussed in the Finance Committee? Perhaps somebody could clarify that.

Mr Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (Spain)

My understanding is for sure we have discussed issues related to governance, effectiveness and transparency in general, but there was no specific discussion for these items as they stand now on the screen.

Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

Regarding the addition, paragraph 23, our understanding is that is what we considered in the recommendations of the Finance Committee (FC) Reports. Therefore, this new addition has nothing to do with the recommendations of the FC. Therefore, in our view, it is not necessary to add this paragraph.

Mr Abdellah LARHMAID (Morocco)

In the Finance Committee, we discussed some issues linked to the governance and the effectiveness of FAO, but this is the new subparagraph which is not discussed in this Committee. So it is not here. It is not discussed, so we propose that this language cannot be discussed at the time.

With regard to the proposal of India, we can go along with the proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

We can agree to paragraph 22 with the inclusion of the proposal of India.

Then on paragraph 23, I think there is difficulty for accepting this text in the conclusion.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Visto que hay dificultades, era una propuesta, pero somos flexibles. Si no tiene la aprobación de los Miembros no pasa nada.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much Spain, for your flexibility on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States. Now, I go to paragraph 23.

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

India would like to propose a paragraph between 22 and 23. “*The Council encourage the FAO Management to identify out of the box/innovative solutions and set into motion a time bound concrete plan of action to address the issue of underfunding of After Service Medical Coverage liabilities*”. We are flexible on the language.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I believe in the Finance Committee and perhaps in the Council also, we were informed that this matter is being dealt with as a UN system issue in the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM).

Perhaps, we need a progress Report, what has happened there because I do not think we should have sort of parallel ideas going. If we are participating in the UN system exercise in the HLCM, then we should create a progress Report from there.

CHAIRPERSON

So to understand, your proposal means that you want to have a deletion of this paragraph. Any other remarks from the Council Members? Given the explanation by Pakistan, India, are you flexible to delete this paragraph?

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

I think most of the Members in this room are really keen. This is a very serious issue. We all want some solutions for that, but if there is a global approach, rather overarching approach through UN system, we are flexible to that but I am flexible. We can delete it as well but the purpose is that mainly to understand the importance of this urgency of this issue.

We also agree for any alternative language if there is or even for deletion as well.

CHAIRPERSON

We discussed clearly that a global solution has to be found. So my proposal would be not to take up this paragraph. Thank you for your flexibility because with that we can conclude the conclusions of the Finance Committee because I do not see any remarks for paragraph 23.

With that, we have concluded our Item 10.

Item 11. Report of the 119th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (Rome, 9-11 October 2023)

Point 11. Rapport de la 119^e session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (Rome, 9-11 octobre 2023)

Tema 11. Informe del 119.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (Roma, 9-11 de octubre de 2023)

(CL 174/10)

CHAIRPERSON

We can continue our work with the *Report of the 119th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM)* and the document before you is *CL 174/10*.

The introduction by Chairperson of the Committee, Ms Celine Jurgensen, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 11: Report of the 119th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (Rome, 9-11 October 2023)

Ms Céline Jurgensen, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters

The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) held its 119th Session from 9 to 11 October 2023 in-person at FAO's headquarters.

The CCLM elected Ms Haifa Aissami Madah, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as Vice-President.

After having considered the relevant documents prepared by the CCLM Secretariat, the Committee brings to the attention of the Council for its endorsement, its considerations and conclusions regarding:

- Recommendation 7 of the JIU Report “*Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function*” (JIU/REP/2020/1); and
- the dissemination of Memoranda of Understanding signed by FAO.

Furthermore, the CCLM considered the update on:

- the implementation of the FAO Data Protection Policy.
- the implementation of the FAO Policy on Intellectual Property Rights.
- the review of the jurisdictional set-up of the United Nations common system; and

- the activities of the Development Law Service.

The CCLM informs the Council of its considerations with respect to these items and any other matters.

CHAIRPERSON

The floor is open for the Members.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Permítame saludar a la nueva Presidente del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales (CCLM), la Embajadora Céline Jurgensen y también a nuestra querida compañera, la Vicepresidente del CLLM, la Embajadora de Venezuela, Haifa Aissami. Quisiera agradecer a la Presidente del CCLM y a sus Miembros por la elaboración de este documento.

En primer lugar, me gustaría señalar la importancia de promover la transparencia a partir, por ejemplo, de la publicación de los memorándums de entendimiento que FAO consolida con distintas partes. Si bien notamos que hay un trabajo institucional en este campo, pensamos que es apropiada la sugerencia del CLLM sobre la necesidad de seguir continuando con las buenas prácticas del Sistema de Naciones Unidas.

Por otro lado, en materia de derechos de propiedad intelectual y protección de datos, nos gustaría indicar que acompañamos la idea de llevar adelante revisiones periódicas sobre la política de FAO en materia de derechos de propiedad intelectual, toda vez que el avance de las nuevas tecnologías tiene un impacto constante en cómo se producen, almacenan y distribuyen los datos, así convalidaciones o actualizaciones en secuencia de períodos dados, permitirán mantener vigente el abordaje de la FAO en esta materia. En el marco de la reforma que se implementará sobre el funcionamiento de la oficina del Jefe Estadístico entendemos que sería necesario, también, recibir actualizaciones sobre las políticas de protección de datos incluidos aquellos que aportan los Miembros en el marco de la FAO.

La validación de información nacional y su tratamiento e interpretación correcta hacen a la base de buenas prácticas estadísticas y, en ese sentido, vemos que aquí podría existir espacio para incrementar marcos de transparencia y accesibilidad. Con estos comentarios, acompañamos el Informe y creo que he batido el récord dentro de mis presentaciones en dos minutos.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí un honor intervenir en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados miembros en este punto al que se añade la adhesión completa de otros ocho miembros de la FAO: Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro, San Marino y Ucrania.

En primer lugar, me gustaría agradecer al Presidente del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (CCLM), así como al Vicepresidente, a todos los miembros del Comité, a la Secretaría y a la Oficina Jurídica (LEG) su minucioso trabajo y su constructivo compromiso.

Apreciamos los progresos registrados en la implementación de la Recomendación 7 del Informe de la Dependencia Común de Inspección (DCI), *“Examen del estado de la función de investigación”*, y apoyamos las recomendaciones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos sobre la ampliación de la definición de *“conducta indebida”* para incluir la explotación y el abuso sexuales, así como sobre los mecanismos a través de los cuales la Organización podría abordar eficazmente el proceso de investigación. Éstas deben evitar, en la medida de lo posible, la creación de nuevos organismos. Tomamos nota de que el Marco estratégico de la FAO no preveía, hasta la fecha, un período entre sesiones para una Mesa de la Conferencia.

Acogemos con satisfacción el debate sobre la difusión de los Memorandos de entendimiento (MOU) y otros acuerdos generales de cooperación y asociación firmados por la FAO con terceros. Subrayamos la importancia del principio de transparencia y de aplicar el artículo 102 de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) en consonancia con las mejores prácticas del sistema de las Naciones Unidas. Recordamos que el Consejo de la FAO no limitó el alcance a los MOU firmados por la FAO con otras organizaciones intergubernamentales y esperamos recibir información adicional al respecto. Respalamos la recomendación del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos de difundir los MOU firmados por la FAO después de julio de 2021, que ya contienen una cláusula de difusión, y

apoyamos que la Organización solicite la aprobación de los asociados para la difusión de aquellos MOU que no contengan dicha cláusula, lo que consideramos que se lograría mejor mediante un procedimiento de no objeción. También apoyamos la recomendación de que la Secretaría facilite al Comité, en su próxima sesión, una lista exhaustiva de los MOU celebrados entre la Organización y otras organizaciones intergubernamentales.

Tomamos nota de la actualización sobre varios asuntos importantes, relacionados con la política de protección de datos, los derechos de propiedad intelectual, la configuración jurisdiccional del sistema común de las Naciones Unidas y las actividades del Servicio de Derecho para el Desarrollo (LEGN).

Apoyamos la recomendación del Comité de que el Servicio de Derecho para el Desarrollo aumente su alcance a los Miembros, incluso con fines de intercambio de conocimientos, desarrollo de capacidades y movilización de recursos para la prestación de asistencia jurídica, función básica de la FAO.

Por último, apoyamos un debate por parte del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos, en su próxima sesión de marzo de 2024, y dentro de su mandato, sobre, en primer lugar, (1) opciones institucionales para reforzar el Acuerdo para promover el cumplimiento de las medidas internacionales de conservación y gestión por parte de los buques pesqueros en alta mar, y en segundo lugar sobre la organización de un Acto sobre los Tratados en paralelo a la Conferencia o al Consejo de la FAO. Esperamos con interés las futuras consideraciones y conclusiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos.

Con estas observaciones, pedimos al Consejo que apruebe el informe del CCLM.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Indonesia delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We appreciate the report, the information and the recommendation contained in the document on the agenda item.

We take note the important work of the Committee on issues related Constitutional and Legal matters (CCLM) of the Organization.

In this regard, Asia Regional Group would like to share its views with regard to the CCLM draft report before us:

First, on Recommendation 7 of the Joint Investigation Unit (JIU) Report. We fully concur with the recommendation of CCLM that preliminary procedures for the investigation and disciplinary processes, as set out in the JIU recommendation, should be addressed through mechanisms by which the Conference, as the appointing authority under the Basic Texts, could address such matters. In this regard, the allegations should be referred to an External Investigating Entity (EIE).

We also agree that the procedures to be developed should, as far as possible, avoid the establishment of new bodies. Asia Regional Group also agree that such procedures should ensure impartiality, transparency, due process, duty of care, and the presumption of innocence, while noting the possibility of politically motivated allegations against the Director-General.

Thus, we commend the work of CCLM in this regard and looked forward to an update taking into account the relevant practice and developments in other UN specialized agencies as well as related discussions in other FAO Governing Bodies.

Second, on Dissemination of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) signed by FAO. We are happy that CCLM could provide a crystal-clear recommendation on this issue. It is the right moment to stock-take the MoUs concluded between FAO and other intergovernmental organizations.

With regard to the dissemination of those MoUs, we support the practical solution of CCLM to recommend the dissemination of those MoUs concluded after July 2021 containing the dissemination clause and seek approval from partners for the dissemination of those MoUs which do not contain such clause.

Lastly, on FAO policies and legal offices activities. We support the practical approach and focus on the uptake on such policies and activities.

This is why, not only do we support more disseminations, follow-up and review of FAO Products such as Intellectual Property Rights and Data Protection, but also the sharing of experiences and best practices on the use and application of it through legal office activities, networking and active involvements in UN Processes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, we support and endorse the report 119th Session of CCLM.

Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China agrees with Indonesia's statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. With regard to the dissemination of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed by FAO, China is particularly concerned with paragraphs 16 and 18 of the Report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We would like to stress that the dissemination of any MoU signed prior to July 2021 must be preceded by the consent of the other parties and that no consent should be presumed, nor should the absence of explicit objection be regarded as a tacit consent.

China has taken note of the conclusions and recommendations of the CCLM on other topics. We recognize the progress made by the FAO in implementing the Data Protection Policy and Policy on Intellectual Property Rights. We would like to encourage the Development Law Branch to strengthen its interface with Members and to expand its cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions, including knowledge sharing, capacity development and resource mobilization activities, with a view to providing legal assistance on a systematic and planned basis. On the above basis, China supports the Council's endorsement of the relevant conclusions in the CCLM's Report.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

As the incoming representative for the Southwest Pacific Region for the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), Australia would like to thank the CCLM Chairperson and Members for a collaborative meeting. We highlight some of the considerations made by the CCLM regarding Recommendation 7 of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations (JIU) Report 2020/1 *Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function*.

We fully support the explicit mention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the definition of "misconduct", while fully aligning ourselves with the guiding principles for the development of these processes. In addition to providing safeguards for complainants and whistleblowers, Australia considers it essential to specifically mention victim protection. As we note, the current document, as presented, focuses heavily on preserving the dignity of the Director-General. We look forward to having further opportunities to input into the development of these procedures going forward.

Further, Australia welcomes the conclusion of the CCLM with regard to the dissemination of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The publication and dissemination of these agreements between FAO and other intergovernmental organizations is a valuable contribution to increasing transparency. We underline however that the request from the 171st Session of the Council did not limit the discussion on dissemination of MoUs to only those signed with intergovernmental organizations.

Recognizing there may be a need for FAO to establish appropriate mechanisms moving forward, Australia looks forward to the dissemination of a broader range of MoUs in the future. With that, we are pleased to endorse the findings and recommendations of the 119th Session of the CCLM.

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation is not against adoption of this document, but we would like to talk about oversight in the United Nations (UN) system. We know that the amendments to the Charter of the International Civil Service Commission, which was adopted by the Conference in June, gives only the ability for post adjustment to the organizations of the UN system.

This needs to be taken into account in formulating FAO's position, particularly within the framework of the participation of representatives of FAO and the activities of the network of UN jurists with regard to the 2019 Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization ruling, which

practically questions post adjustments for workers in Geneva. We believe that the position of the Secretariat of this Organization should be more clear on this point.

M. Madiagne TALL (Sénégal)

Le Sénégal, l'Algérie et le Gabon font cette déclaration conjointe au nom du Groupe régional pour l'Afrique et au titre du point XI. Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique, tient à féliciter l'ensemble des membres du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (CQCJ) pour le travail effectué lors de 119^e session dudit CQCJ tenu du 9 au 11 octobre 2023, ainsi que les membres du Secrétariat qui n'ont pas été en reste dans l'élaboration du document qui nous est présenté aujourd'hui au Conseil.

Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique apprécie les points qui ont été abordés par le CQCJ et salue les remarques pertinentes faites sur la recommandation no 7 du rapport du Corps commun d'inspection (CCI) et portant sur le harcèlement sexuel ainsi que l'exploitation sexuelle. Dans ce sens, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique soutient la recommandation du CQCJ concernant ces types spécifiques de comportements répréhensibles et apprécie également la position du CQCJ sur la nécessité de protéger les plaignants et les personnes qui dénoncent des irrégularités.

Aussi, sur la diffusion des protocoles d'accord signés par la FAO, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique soutient les considérations et conclusions formulées par le CQCJ et invite le Conseil à suivre ces recommandations comme souhaité pour la diffusion de ces protocoles d'accords. Par ailleurs, le Groupe se félicite des réflexions apportées par le CQCJ sur la Politique de la FAO relative aux droits de propriété intellectuelle et salue les efforts déployés par la FAO pour l'élaboration et la promulgation de ce document, ainsi que pour sa mise en œuvre au moyen d'activités de formation et de sensibilisation. Tout comme l'a souhaitée le CQCJ, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique invite également le Conseil à prendre note des progrès réalisés par la FAO en ce qui concerne cette politique et sa mise en œuvre. Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique salue également la Politique de la FAO relative à la protection des données et les avancées notées dans sa mise en œuvre.

Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique prend note également de la décision du CQCJ d'attendre des informations actualisées concernant les activités du Comité de contrôle de la protection des données, du réseau des Champions de la Protection des Données et de l'unité de protection des données. Pour ce qui est de l'examen des questions de compétence au regard du régime commun des Nations Unies, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique prend note des observations du CQCJ concernant la divergence de points de vue et se félicite de l'engagement du Bureau Juridique à informer sur l'évolution de la situation à ce sujet pour un règlement de cette divergence.

Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique félicite la Sous-Division droit et développement (LEGN) du Bureau juridique pour le soutien inestimable qu'il apporte dans le cadre de négociations multilatérales comme la Conférence intergouvernementale sur la biodiversité marine des zones ne relevant pas de la juridiction nationale, la réunion des parties à l'Accord relatif aux mesures du ressort de l'État du port, sur le gaspillage et la perte de nourriture, sur l'application des lois et sur l'initiative en matière de communication.

Sur ce dernier point, le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique appuie la recommandation du CQCJ qui invite LEGN à intensifier ses efforts de communication auprès des membres et sa collaboration avec les organisations et institutions régionales et sous-régionales, notamment dans les domaines du partage des connaissances, du renforcement des capacités et de la mobilisation des ressources dans le but de fournir une aide juridique systématique et programmatique.

Le Groupe régional pour l'Afrique réitère ses vives félicitations au CQCJ et remercie le Conseil pour toute l'attention particulière qu'il portera sur les conclusions et recommandations formulées par ledit Comité.

Mr Anatoliy SHATKOVSKYY (Canada)

Canada would like to thank the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for its concise and precise Report, which provides guidance to our deliberations in this setting. We particularly welcome the initial discussion that took place regarding Recommendation 7 of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations (JIU) Report 2020/1, titled *Review of the state of the*

investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function.

Progress made in the United Nations (UN) system organizations in strengthening the investigation function should lead to the FAO Conference adopting a set of procedures for the investigation and disciplinary processes in case of misconduct by the head of the Organization. While we certainly hope that these procedures will never have to be used, we believe they are a bit like life vests on a plane. Should they be needed, they are there and available to guide Members and the Secretariat.

Canada would like to reiterate a few basic principles as the work continues in defining those procedures. First is the importance of an independent investigation process referred to an external investigating entity. In addition, regarding oversight of the investigation and implementation of recommendations from the investigation, we would caution against creating new entities within the governance structure of FAO, as the current governance structure could allow for the inclusion of additional functions to existing Governing Bodies under the authority of the Conference.

With these comments, Canada supports endorsement of the conclusions and recommendations of the Report.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal matters, Ms Celine Jurgensen.

Mme Celine Jurgensen (Présidente du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques)

Nous avons eu en effet le plaisir et l'honneur avec les membres du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (CQCJ) de tenir notre 119^e session du 9 au 11 Octobre 2023. Je voudrais remercier très sincèrement la Vice-Présidente, l'Ambassadrice Haifa Aissami Madah, et bien sûr tous les membres du CQCJ pour leurs travaux très constructifs et l'ambiance consensuelle de notre session.

Je remercie les membres pour leurs observations et commentaires, ainsi que les observateurs. J'en ai pris bonne note et je pense qu'ils illustrent à nouveau l'attachement que nous portons tous aux activités normatives de cette Organisation, une fonction essentielle de la FAO, et reconnue comme telle. Je voudrais enfin remercier le Secrétariat du CQCJ, toutes les équipes du Bureau juridique, bien sûr, la Conseillère juridique, les interprètes, les équipes de soutien de la FAO que je n'oublie pas et permettez-moi d'avoir une pensée particulière pour la Secrétaire du CQCJ, Mme Annick Vanhoutte, qui quitte le Secrétariat et que je vous remercie d'applaudir.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, we have concluded our deliberations, and we turn now to the draft conclusions. I will put them on the screen.

24. The Council considered the Report of the 119th Session of Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM).

25. The Council:

- (a) endorsed the considerations and conclusions of the Committee on:
 - i. the status of recommendations presented in the JIU Report *Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function* (JIU/REP/2020/1); and
 - ii. dissemination of Memoranda of Understanding signed by FAO.
- (b) noted the Committee's consideration on:
 - i. the implementation of the FAO Data Protection Policy;
 - ii. the implementation of the FAO Policy on Intellectual Property Rights;
 - iii. the review of the jurisdictional set-up of United Nations common system; and
 - iv. the activities of the Development Law Service.

Can we agree to paragraph 24? I do not see any objections.

Then, we continue with paragraph 25. Can we agree to paragraph 25? Let us do first subparagraph (a). Can we agree to (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then I go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b)? I do not see any objections.

With that, we have concluded our deliberations with the adoption of the draft conclusions on the Report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters. Thank you so much with consensus.

Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers (*continued*)

Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes (*suite*)

**Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes
(*continuación*)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Now, we turn to the secret ballot vote. The ballot papers are available. I give the floor to Mr Ilja Betlem to introduce the vote. Let me also make a remark that is absolutely what we are voting on. The text is on the ballot paper. If you vote “yes”, it means that the text on the ballot paper will go into the Report of this Council. If you vote “no”, no text will be taken up in the Report on this Item.

ELECTIONS OFFICER

We are about to have a secret ballot vote. Before we do that, I wish to announce that we have a number of Members in the room well beyond the required 25 to have a quorum and proceed to this vote. We have 45 Members in this room.

For the proposal to be adopted, a majority of the votes cast is required. Votes cast including votes in favour and votes against, but not including abstentions. I should first remind all voting delegates of the fundamental importance of complete secrecy of the ballot in accordance with Rule XII of the General Rules and the responsibility of all delegates is not to disclose any information which may tend or be presumed to tend towards destroying the secrecy of the ballot, and this is in line with relevant decision and practices of FAO.

We will also apply the procedure and the practice by now that all electronic appliances will need to be handed over before entering the voting area, and they will be kept under the supervision of a security guard and will be returned to the delegates at the exit of the voting area.

Voting delegates will be called one by one in alphabetical order, starting with the letter A, to go to the voting area in the corner to your left. A ballot paper will be issued there by one of the tellers at the entrance of the voting area. The ballot paper indicates the proposal with options to vote either yes, no, or abstention in respect of that proposal.

Delegates are invited to cast their vote by placing an X in the box corresponding to their preferred choice. An abstention can be recorded either by marking the box for an abstention or by leaving the ballot paper entirely blank. In line with his prerogative under Rule XII, the Independent Chairperson of the Council has appointed these tellers, Mr Maarten de Groot of Canada and Mr Purna Cita Nugraha of Indonesia.

Finally, may I draw your attention to paragraph 14 of Rule XII which specifies that once voting has commenced, no delegate or representative may interrupt the voting except to raise a point of order in connection with the voting. The Secretariat will shortly when we are ready to begin, the delegates in alphabetical order starting with letter A.

CHAIRPERSON

I thank the Elections Officer for explaining our vote. I now give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General to call the Members of the Council for the vote.

Vote

Vote

Votación

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, we now start the counting of the votes. So, we adjourn the meeting until 13:15 hours.

Mr Yousef Juhail (Kuwait)

Only for the results. No items to be continued.

CHAIRPERSON

You will get the results of the vote, and I cannot prejudge the outcome of the vote, and then we will see how we will continue.

The meeting was suspended from 12.43 to 13.24 hours

La séance est suspendue de 12 h 43 à 13 h 24

Se suspende la sesión de las 12.43 a las 13.24

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished delegates, dear friends, Report on the Secret Ballot on the Proposal proposed by Nicaragua to include in the Report of the 174th Session of the FAO Council, under Item 5, as amended by the Council this morning.

The proposal was: *“The Council took note of the views expressed by Members regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the global food crisis, in line with para 30 of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.”*

Ballot papers deposited – 46;- abstentions – 3; defective ballots – 0; votes cast – 43; so, the majority is 22 votes. votes in favour – 25; votes against – 18.

So the result of this vote is that the proposal is adopted and will be included under Item 4.

CL 174 – Result Sheet

REPORT OF BALLOT	No. 1	<p>Proposal by Nicaragua to include in the Report of the 174th Session under item 4, as amended by the Council:</p> <p>The Council took note of diverse views expressed by Members regarding the impact of economic, financial and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the global food crisis, in line with paragraph 30 of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.</p>
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1. Ballot papers deposited	46
2. Abstentions	3
3. Defective ballots	0

4. Votes cast	43
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Required majority = more than one half of the votes cast.

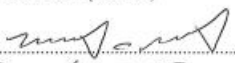
5. Majority	22
-------------	----

6. Votes in favour	25
7. Votes against	18

Result: the proposal is adopted

Tellers

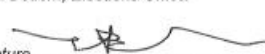
Mr Maarten de Groot (Canada)

Signature.....
Date..... Dec 6 2023

Mr Purna Cita Nugraha (Indonesia)

Signature.....
Date..... 6 - 12 - 2023

Mr Ilja Betlem, Elections Officer

Signature.....
Date..... 6/12/2023

CHAIRPERSON

Now we break and my proposal would be to start at 14:15 hours again to finalize Item 4 because we have still one subparagraph.

Then we decide how to proceed because I await a signal from the negotiators on the draft decision of Item 5, whether or not a consensus is in reach. If that is not the case, we take up Item 5. But that we will hear at 14:15 hours because that depends on whether or not they are so close that the time could help them to find a consensus, which is always preferable, because it means we are going for a vote or votes again.

We break now for 50 minutes, and to see you back in this room at 14:15 hours.

The meeting rose at 13:27 hours

La séance est levée à 13 h 27

Se levanta la sesión a las 13.27

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session Cent soixante-quatorzième session 174.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2023 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
SIXTH PLENARY SESSION SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEXTA SESIÓN PLENARIA
6 December 2023

The Sixth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:26 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La sixième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 26
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la sexta sesión plenaria a las 14.26
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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to: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

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Las partes marcadas como [XX] fueron inaudibles debido a razones técnicas. Por favor, envíe todas
las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Item 4. Global food security challenges and drivers (*continued*)**Point 4. Défis liés à la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et principales causes (*suite*)****Tema 4. Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y sus causas: conflictos y guerras en
Desafíos para la seguridad alimentaria mundial y factores coadyuvantes
(*continuación*)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

We now continue our business with Item 4. We have had the secret vote, and we included the subparagraph which was voted on.

We have one subparagraph left still open, “*recognized FAO’s efforts to address hunger and food insecurity in the world and continue its responsiveness, emphasizing the value of its normative work and as a global science and evidence-based knowledge Organization for food security and agriculture*”.

Could we agree to this last subparagraph? I do not see any objections.

With this we have concluded our work on Item 4.

Item 5. The situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**Point 5. Situation à Gaza en matière de sécurité alimentaire et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l’Organisation des Nations Unies pour l’alimentation et l’agriculture (FAO)****Tema 5. La situación en Gaza con respecto a la seguridad alimentaria y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)**

(CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

I will open now Item 5, *The situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*.

Over the last two weeks and over the last couple of days, intense informal negotiations have been taking place to find a consensus. But as I saw at the end of the lunch break, there were one or two Items where it was impossible to bridge the gap, and it means that no consensus could be found on the draft decision, which is very unfortunate.

I know that all the negotiators and I compliment and applaud them for their hard work, they are trying to do their best. I tried to help them with text proposals in informal meetings, but unfortunately we could not arrive at a consensus.

Introduction to Item 5: The situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

Since the onset of the conflict between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) on 7 October 2023, the situation, particularly in Gaza, has led to a humanitarian and food security crisis. Over half of Gaza's population, totaling 2.1 million people, has been internally displaced, with the majority in urgent need of food assistance. Even before the current crisis, over 1.8 million Palestinians required food security and livelihood assistance, covering 53 percent of the population in Gaza and 11 percent in the West Bank.

The primary cause of food insecurity before 7 October was the lack of economic access to food due to high levels of poverty driven by unemployment. Significant transaction costs resulting from

limitations under the occupation on movement, access, and trade pose immediate impediments to Palestinian economic growth, followed by energy and water insecurity.

Prolonged restrictions on access to the sea, land and markets for inputs and exports have adversely affected agricultural activities, deepening the vulnerability of agricultural livelihoods. In the West Bank, agriculture-dependent communities, particularly Bedouins and herders in Area C, have faced challenges accessing water, grazing land, and animal health services. In the Gaza Strip, up to 35 percent of agricultural land was inaccessible due to Israeli military restrictions, and access restrictions to fishing areas have undermined the fisheries sector.

While the OPT heavily depends on imports to meet domestic demand for agricultural products, particularly cereals and animal feed, it is largely self-sufficient in vegetables, grapes, figs, olive oil, meat, eggs and honey – fundamental elements of a healthy and diverse diet. Fishery production is also vital in Gaza and serves as a major source of nutritional diversity. Livestock accounts for 45 percent of the total agricultural value, with small-scale farmers, herders and fisherfolk being the primary agricultural producers.

Beyond the immediate impact on lives, displacement, production and the availability of food and fuel, the conflict will have long-lasting implications for food security, nutrition and agriculture. The long-term implications of the current conflict on agriculture, agricultural-based livelihoods and access to healthy diets will be far greater than in previous conflicts. While the extent of the damage is still unknown in Gaza, it is likely that most of the agricultural infrastructure, soil and land will be negatively affected, and the current stock of livestock will be decimated due to the inability to feed and water animals as well as emergency consumption. Reconstruction of the agricultural sector will require significant resources, and FAO stands ready to contribute with its technical expertise.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the Palestinian economy, contributing significantly to income, food security and job opportunities. Agricultural land in Gaza is concentrated in the eastern and southern peri-urban areas bordering Israel. In case of a land attack, crops are expected to be destroyed.

Protracted conflict and the current escalation in Gaza are expected to further erode the economic viability and long-term sustainability of various sectors, including agriculture, and exacerbate the already critical food insecurity levels. The limited availability of and constrained access to natural resources hamper domestic food production, leading to increased dependency on food imports, which are currently constrained. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, persistent violence, land loss, property destruction and restricted access to territory, natural resources, markets and essential services continue to undermine livelihoods.

For FAO's interventions, two operational scenarios need to be considered. The first involves assessing the support that can be obtained from Egypt in terms of logistics and procuring agriculture inputs. The second scenario pertains to logistics and fodder procurement through Israel when the borders are reopened.

Under the updated Humanitarian Flash Appeal, FAO requires USD 20 million to provide emergency assistance to 13 100 farmers and herders (70 660 people). FAO's priority interventions for Gaza include USD 4.7 million for the provision of animal fodder, water tanks and veterinary kits; USD 5.3 million for livestock restocking; and USD 5 million for the provision of time-critical agricultural inputs. Moreover, FAO's appeal includes USD 5 million to meet the immediate needs of the most vulnerable farmers in the West Bank, affected by increasing hostilities and movement restrictions.

FAO Palestine will participate through the Food Security Cluster and in coordination with the entire Humanitarian System, implementing various assessments, including a Rapid Damage Assessment. FAO Palestine is gearing up to conduct a rapid assessment using geographic information system spatial data with the support of HQ, once a ceasefire is announced. The team is preparing an assessment via satellite imagery.

CHAIRPERSON

I first open the floor for Members to make their statements, before we go to the draft decision.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Allow us to give the floor to the Chairperson of the Near East Regional Group.

CHAIRPERSON

Iraq, as Chairperson of the Near East Regional Group, you have the floor.

Mr Saywan Sabir Mustafa BARZANI (Iraq) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

On behalf of all Members within the Near Eastern North Africa Regional Group at FAO, I am honoured to address this august Council in its 174th Session.

The catastrophic humanitarian situation that is threatening the lives of the Gazan inhabitants in particular, and the Palestinian people in general, as a result of the military operations that are destroying everything that is related to Palestinian food security – plant, animal and fishery resources, as was pointed to by the Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr Martin Griffiths, as well as by the Chief Economist on food security crisis in Gaza. This was also demonstrated in the report in terms of the dire situation of food security in the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza Strip's population is 2.3 million. 70 percent of them are displaced from other Palestinian regions, including more than one million children suffering on a daily basis from the destruction of all aspects of their lives in a flagrant violation of their innocent childhood and their human dignity. The death toll since nearly two months is more than 16 000 persons; the number of injured so far is 38 000, the majority of whom are women, children and unarmed civilians. 230 000 housing units were affected, in addition to the forced displacement of more than 1.7 million people that are pushed southwards, with a total loss of the bare necessities of a dignified life.

There is a great threat of a multiplication of diseases and pandemics. We call upon the international community to uphold the content of the last General Assembly Resolution calling for a ceasefire, which would lift the suffering of the Gazan Strip under occupation for the last 17 years. We would like to make an appeal to the international community to avoid double standards when it comes to the Palestinian people, particularly in order to save children and women, whilst everything that has to do with their daily lives is destroyed, including hospitals, markets, schools, mosques and churches in the Gaza Strip in particular.

Today we do need a unity of action when we see that the conflicts and crises are increasing. We do need to seek a solution to this crisis. The situation in Gaza is dire, children are traumatized, they were forced out of their homes. This humanitarian crisis requires a common and joint work in order to secure food security for the entire peoples of the world.

We call upon the international community and all people with conscience to show solidarity with the Palestinian people to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a sufficient and adequate way so that they can live properly and in dignity. We save them thereby from death and forced displacement. We call upon this august Council to adopt the draft resolution submitted under this agenda item.

M. Mohehd EL BECHIR EL HADJ (Mauritanie) (Langue originale arabe)

Le Groupe Régional Africain voudrait intervenir au nom de notre groupe. Cette intervention a été préparée par la Mauritanie, la Tunisie au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique et nous allons aborder le point V de l'ordre du jour. Le Groupe Régional Afrique salue l'inclusion de ce point V lié à la situation à Gaza et à la situation alimentaire dans la bande de Gaza, nous demandons au Conseil d'aborder cette question. Nous aimerions ici remercier les pays qui essaient d'alléger les souffrances de la population palestinienne.

Nous demandons à la communauté internationale de tout faire pour mettre un terme à la situation catastrophique qui règne à Gaza. Le Groupe voudrait ici mentionner la résolution de la Ligue Arabe et de la décision de l'Union Africaine qui en appel à un cessé le feu total pour faciliter l'acheminement

d'aide humanitaire d'urgence pour les 2,3 millions de Palestiniens. Nous exprimons notre grande préoccupation au vu des hostilités, des opérations militaires entreprises par Israël, il s'agit d'une violation flagrante du droit international, du droit humanitaire international.

Nous demandons des mesures communes, conjointes pour mettre un terme aux opérations militaires qui menacent les vies humaines, les enfants, notamment avec des conséquences catastrophiques. Notre Groupe voudrait ici réaffirmer que la punition collective que subissent les populations civiles, c'est une violation du droit. Nous voudrions ici réitérer l'importance du respect des principes humanitaires. Ce sont eux qui devraient nous orienter.

Nous en appelons à la fin des hostilités contre les Palestiniens, nous en appelons également à la facilitation de l'accès à l'alimentation. Nous aimerions encore une fois exprimer notre grande préoccupation quant aux pénuries d'eau, d'alimentation, d'électricité dans la bande de Gaza. Nous demandons aux organisations ici à Rome de déployer tous les efforts possibles pour sauver les Palestiniens, d'assurer leurs survies. Nous espérons qu'une solution pacifique sera trouvée, et ce, dans la droite ligne des résolutions des Nations-unies pertinentes.

Nous estimons qu'une action urgente et collective doit être trouvée pour trouver un terme à ces opérations et à cette tragédie.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States condemns Hamas' devastating and brutal terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens and recognizes that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate interests to live in dignity and to self-determination. We support Israel taking necessary actions to defend its country and its people from Hamas terrorists, consistent with the rule of law and war.

As we stand with the people and Government of Israel, we also stand with Palestinian civilians. We remain deeply concerned with the ongoing conflict in Gaza, and the deteriorating situation in the West Bank, which continues to take the lives of civilians and increase the need for humanitarian aid and emergency agricultural assistance.

We acknowledge the already challenging situation regarding food security in Gaza and the West Bank prior to the conflict, and the critical importance of the agricultural sector for livelihoods and economic growth.

For this reason, we note with concern FAO's assessment that the "*long term implications for agriculture, agriculture-based livelihoods, and access to healthy diets will be far greater than in previous conflicts*" and that the conflict could further erode the economic viability and long term sustainability of various sectors, including agriculture, and exacerbate the already critical food insecurity levels.

Fighting Hamas does not mean fighting the Palestinian people. The humanitarian situation is urgent and we continue to focus on addressing the humanitarian needs of the civilian population in Gaza, the vast majority of whom have nothing to do with Hamas or other terrorist groups, and we continue to emphasize the importance of pauses in the fighting to permit civilians to depart areas of active hostilities, to increase access to food, water, medicine and shelter, and to enable hostage releases.

The United States is the leading single country humanitarian donor to the Palestinian people, we have contributed more than USD 1.1 billion since 2021. We acknowledge the dire need for both consistent humanitarian aid and emergency agricultural assistance, to increase humanitarian access and additional support for agricultural interventions, including inputs such as fodder, fertilizer, and veterinary medicine.

As Secretary of State Blinken has said, much more needs to be done to protect civilians and make sure humanitarian assistance reaches them. Far too many Palestinians have been killed and we want to do everything possible to prevent harm to civilians and maximize the assistance that gets to them.

As we continue to support efforts to increase the flow of humanitarian assistance into Gaza and the West Bank, we appreciate FAO's update and efforts to inform the Council of its assessment of the medium and long term impacts of the conflict on food security. We appreciate how FAO is taking the

initiative to support the humanitarian response, including through its participation in the food security cluster, and the USD 20 million plan for agricultural aid under the updated humanitarian flash appeal.

The United States is FAO's biggest supporter because we see the impact of its work, day in and day out. We are proud of FAO's ongoing efforts to be there when conditions permit, to lend technical assistance to help address this conflict's devastating consequences for agricultural infrastructure, soil, land and livestock.

We look forward to FAO sharing its completed Rapid Damage Assessment when it is ready. We stand ready to continue working with FAO, our fellow Members and all partners now, and in the weeks, months and years to come.

Let me close, with the words of our Ambassador to the UN, Ms Linda Thomas-Greenfield. Last week she said, *"As has been the case since day one of this crisis, the United States will continue to use all its influence to encourage the re-unification of hostages with their loved ones, and the further expansion of aid to Palestinian civilians in Gaza who have suffered tremendous losses. We will continue pressing for the protection of civilians as Israel pursues its legitimate military objectives, and we will not give up on a future where Hamas does not control Gaza, which is untenable for Israel's and for the region's security and for the wellbeing of the Palestinian people."*

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

Sudan would like to join the distinguished delegate from Iraq on behalf of the Near East Group. We would like to appreciate the efforts made by FAO and the friendly nations who are trying their best to give assistance to the Palestinian people. We believe that the major reason behind the suffering of many countries is the climate change and its repercussions.

What is happening in Gaza since October is disastrous. More than 16 000 people were killed in addition to the death toll among children. Refugee camps, schools and hospitals are being targeted, and the catastrophic situation is being exacerbated on a daily basis. Our families in Gaza lack water, food and the bare necessities. It is amazing what is happening. We would like to show solidarity with our Palestinian brethren, their legitimate right to have an independent and sovereign state.

We would like to call for the hostilities to stop promptly and immediately. Humanitarian assistance should reach them unhindered. The international community should uphold its responsibilities. We should pave the way for ceasefire. We would call this august Council to adopt the draft resolution submitted under this agenda item.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

En cuanto a la situación de la seguridad alimentaria en Gaza, como indica el documento, nos encontramos frente a una catástrofe humanitaria sin precedentes. La pérdida de vidas humanas, el desplazamiento forzado, el colapso de la economía, la falta de acceso a los alimentos, urgen de una asistencia humanitaria duradera y sostenida y el suministro de servicios básicos de forma continua, segura, suficiente y el paso de la ayuda sin obstáculos ni demoras indebidas.

Expresamos nuestro más enérgico repudio al criminal bloqueo y militarización de los alimentos, agua y medicamentos en violación de los principios más fundamentales de los derechos humanos, el derecho a la alimentación. Es intolerable que el acceso a los alimentos y medicinas sean utilizados como armas de guerra contra los civiles. Rechazamos ese bloqueo impuesto como medidas coercitivas unilaterales. Exigimos una respuesta efectiva y solidaria ante esta crisis que más allá de una cuestión política se ha convertido en una cuestión evidentemente humanitaria para los dos millones de ciudadanos de la Franja de Gaza, la mitad de los cuales son niños.

Es imperativo ayudar a estabilizar la situación en Palestina y que Israel cumpla con los mandatos de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) como de los acuerdos que suscribe. Ante esas crisis de inseguridad alimentaria, evidentemente agudizada por el conflicto y ocupación en curso, la FAO puede desempeñar un papel importante a la hora de abordar la emergencia a través de intervenciones específicas, trabajando en estrecha colaboración con otras agencias de la ONU como Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) y Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA) y con actores relevantes para garantizar una respuesta integral y eficaz a las necesidades alimentarias y agrícolas en

la región de forma inminente y a largo plazo. Finalmente, Nicaragua apoya la resolución suscrita por Miembros y observadores de este Consejo.

Concluyo citando el refrán que reza, “*No hay mal que dure 100 años, ni pueblo que lo resista.*” El pueblo Palestino ya superó este trágico récord. Esperamos no se prolongue aún más.

Mr Bo LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China welcomes the last information provided by FAO on the food security situation in the Gaza Strip, and recognizes the timely and effective work carried out by FAO within its mandate, taking full advantage of the Organization’s strengths and technical expertise.

Since the beginning of the conflict, China has been actively promoting peace and negotiation, and pushing for a ceasefire and an end of the fighting. As the rotating President of the UN Security Council in November, China presided over the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 2712, which provided important support for the restoration of peace in the region.

China has also provided concrete help to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and through the Palestinian National Authority and the United Nations agencies, China provided USD 2 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, and also 15 million yuan renminbi worth of food, medicine and other humanitarian emergency supplies to the Gaza Strip through Egypt.

In particular, on the 21 November, China’s President Mr Xi Jinping attended the special video Summit of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries on the Israeli/Palestinian issue, where he comprehensively elaborated China’s position on promoting a ceasefire to end the fighting and realize lasting peace and security, thus pointing out a direction for easing the current situation and resolving the problem at its root.

We know that with the joint efforts of all parties, we saw a ceasefire has been put in place and now we believe that the most pressing task at hand is to ensure the normal life of the people in the region and also push forward the Resolution 2712. We encourage FAO to give full play to its leading role in the global food and agriculture sector, to maintain full cooperation and communication with the Rome based agencies and all parties concerned, and to effectively ensure food security and basic livelihoods for the people in the region through such means as emergency humanitarian assistance and technical support.

China is ready to work with all parties to provide all possible support for the early resumption of production in the region.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados miembros, así como de otros siete Miembros de la FAO que se adhieren completamente a nuestra declaración y que son los siguientes: Albania, Georgia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro, San Marino y Ucrania, que hacen suyas también estas palabras. La UE y sus Estados Miembros están profundamente preocupados por el agravamiento de la crisis en Gaza, ya que las necesidades humanitarias aumentan rápidamente y el suministro de alimentos y agua sigue siendo escaso.

Reafirmamos la posición expresada por el Consejo Europeo en sus conclusiones del pasado 27 de octubre y en la declaración del Alto Representante y Vice presidente del 12 de noviembre realizada en nombre de la UE.

La UE y sus Estados Miembros vuelven a condenar con la máxima firmeza a Hamás por los ataques terroristas brutales e indiscriminados que han cometido en distintos lugares de Israel. El uso de civiles como escudos humanos por parte de Hamás es una atrocidad particularmente lamentable.

La UE y sus Estados miembros hacen especial hincapié en el derecho de Israel a defenderse de acuerdo con el Derecho internacional y el derecho humanitario internacional. Reitera su llamamiento a Hamás para que libere de inmediato y sin condiciones previas a todos los rehenes.

Expresamos nuestra más profunda preocupación por el deterioro de la situación humanitaria en Gaza y pedimos un acceso humanitario rápido, seguro y sin trabas y que la ayuda llegue a quienes la necesitan, a través de todas las medidas necesarias, incluidos corredores humanitarios y pausas para

necesidades humanitarias. Seguiremos colaborando estrechamente con los socios internacionales, las Naciones Unidas (ONU) y otros organismos, así como con los países de la región, para proteger a la población civil, prestar asistencia y facilitar el acceso a alimentos, agua, atención médica, combustible y refugio, asegurándose de que las organizaciones terroristas no hagan un uso indebido de esta asistencia. En este sentido, acogemos con satisfacción los resultados de la Conferencia Humanitaria Internacional para la Población Civil de Gaza celebrada en París el 9 de noviembre.

Lamentamos la aparición de los Territorios Palestinos en el último informe sobre focos de hambre publicado por la FAO y el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA) como zona de máxima preocupación. Según el informe, alrededor de 1,5 millones de personas padecían inseguridad alimentaria aguda en los Territorios Palestinos en 2022, 1,2 millones de ellas en la Franja de Gaza. Las hostilidades actuales provocan un deterioro mayor y muy significativo, sobre todo en la citada Franja de Gaza.

Al tiempo que reconocemos el derecho de Israel a defenderse de acuerdo con el derecho internacional y el derecho internacional humanitario, nos sumamos a los llamamientos para que se prolonguen las pausas en las hostilidades y se establezcan corredores humanitarios que faciliten el acceso a alimentos, agua y suministros médicos. Esto incluye el aumento de las capacidades en los pasos fronterizos y el establecimiento de una ruta marítima específica, para que la ayuda humanitaria pueda llegar con seguridad a la población de Gaza. También pedimos un acceso humanitario continuo, rápido, seguro y sin trabas, para que la ayuda pueda llegar a quienes la necesiten.

En respuesta a la emergencia actual, la UE y sus Estados miembros han anunciado más de 360 millones de euros en contribuciones para hacer frente a la crisis. Estas contribuciones apoyarán principalmente las iniciativas dirigidas por la Agencia de Naciones Unidas para la población refugiada de Palestina en Oriente Próximo (UNWRA), el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA), el Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (CICR), el Fondo de Respuesta de la Oficina de Naciones Unidas para la Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios (OCHA), el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (UNICEF), la Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja (FICR), así como diversas Organizaciones No Gubernamentales (ONG). Este importante compromiso financiero se suma a la ayuda de 240 millones de euros comprometida anteriormente para los Territorios Palestinos.

Además, hemos activado la Capacidad Europea de Respuesta Humanitaria (CERH), proporcionando ayuda a la población de Gaza mediante la asistencia a operaciones humanitarias. Esto incluye una operación de Puente Aéreo Humanitario de la UE, que lleva a Egipto cientos de toneladas de suministros humanitarios que luego se hacen llegar a la población civil necesitada.

La UE también ha comprado y donado equipos que aumentarán en 3.200 metros cuadrados el espacio de almacenamiento cubierto de la Media Luna Roja Egipcia en Al Arish. Esto incluye cámaras frigoríficas y de temperatura controlada para alimentos sensibles al calor.

Pedimos a la FAO que proporcione la ayuda que pueda ser necesaria para supervisar la situación, evaluar y abordar su impacto en la seguridad alimentaria en la región y fuera de ella, y que esté preparada para proporcionar ayuda al desarrollo a más largo plazo cuando las condiciones lo permitan.

Por último, lamentamos profundamente la pérdida de vidas de todos los civiles, incluido el personal de la ONU.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Numbers and data have shown us over and over again that we are moving away from the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), moving away from Zero Hunger, and moving away from achieving the core mandate of our Organization.

Let me refer again to the preamble of our Constitution, in case some people forget. *“The nations accepting this constitution being determined to promote the common welfare of furthering separate and collective action on their part for the purposes of raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the people, securing improvements in the efficiency of the production and distribution of all food and agriculture, bettering the condition of rural population and thus ensuring humanities freedom from hunger.”*

None of the points I have mentioned above are happening in the State of Palestine, in the occupied Palestinian territory or in Gaza. Does the Constitution only apply partially to certain nations? Is it supposed to benefit only the haves and deny the have nots? I do not think so.

Since the establishment of the Organization the spirit has and always will be, to leave no one behind. This includes all Palestinians. Our meeting today should end with strong messages; We should call for permanent ceasefire as peace is the prerequisite for humanitarian assistance to flow, post-conflict peace building and allow FAO to discharge its mandates.

As a rule based and human rights based Organization, we need to prevent food, water and energy to be used as weapons of war. Collective punishment in all forms is forbidden by international law.

We need to push for political solution to take place, in this case political process under the two states solution can no longer wait.

Most importantly, FAO must help in assessing and addressing the impact of the conflict on food security, nutrition, agriculture and fisheries in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

Of course this is a lot to ask, but this is why everyone must contribute positively towards this end.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

En este sensible tema de la Agenda del Consejo, Chile desea enfatizar el mandato de la FAO en relación con el derecho humano a la alimentación y la tarea a la que están llamadas las Agencias de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) en el ámbito de la seguridad alimentaria: FAO, Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA) y Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA), en su conjunto, y dentro de sus atribuciones para responder a las crisis alimentarias y promover la gestión y la respuesta coadyuvando al resguardo al acceso al agua y al suministro de insumos agrícolas.

En esta línea, Chile hace suyas las recientes palabras del Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos, Volker Türk, en el sentido que la magnitud del desafío en Gaza requiere acciones multilaterales urgentes, pues estamos ante una situación de crisis humanitaria y de derechos humanos en la que se han quebrado los valores humanos más básicos. Junto con lamentar la pérdida de miles de vidas humanas, incluidas las de más de un centenar de funcionarios de la ONU, es de esperar que con el apoyo de la comunidad internacional se logre reimpulsar un proceso de paz justo, pleno y definitivo entre Palestina e Israel de conformidad a las resoluciones de la ONU y el respeto del derecho internacional.

Reiteramos, finalmente, nuestro firme apoyo a los esfuerzos de la ONU por un cese al fuego y por aliviar la dramática situación que hoy se vive en Gaza.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt) (Original language Arabic)

We reiterate our support to the statement of Iraq delivered on behalf of the Near East Group and I would like to start by saying that today we are two months down the road from what was the beginning of a colossal human tragedy in Gaza Strip. More than 2 million people are suffering, they are under blockade, they are starving, they are subject to collective punishment covering the entire Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is deprived of water, food, electricity and have been neglected by the civilized world for years.

The occupying country is continuing to impose coercive measures and I welcome the report of Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist of FAO, and in particular, the fourth section of the report that addresses the situation in Gaza, and that highlights the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

This crisis will have long term consequences on food security, on agriculture, as well as a heavy impact on the lives of people, the availability of food and the continuation of forced expulsion of civilian population. More than 1.5 million people have been forcibly displaced and you will read these figures in the report that I have mentioned.

Egypt is doing all that it can. Not only from the beginning of this crisis, but for the last 75 years we have been providing humanitarian assistance, in particular through the Rafah Crossing, and I would

like to thank all of the donor countries that have shipped humanitarian assistance to Egypt for it to be delivered to our brothers and sisters in Gaza, and we are assisting systematic violations that are forcing the people of Gaza to abandon their land.

According to the Charter this Organization that we are Members of, all persons are entitled to their rights and should have access to adequate food and in this light, I would like to express our deep sorrow to see that the international community is simply watching on, doing nothing.

This humanitarian crisis will have colossal implications on the food insecurity of the region as a whole. We are witnessing systematic violations of international law, which is met by the silence of countries who call themselves the protectors of human rights and international law. The silence of countries that continuously try to impart lessons to other countries on human rights, on democracy – these self-same countries are now remaining with their arms crossed doing nothing.

The use of food and water as a weapon against human beings is prohibited, and I would like to focus on the need that humanitarian assistance reach Gaza without impediments. Solutions need to be found to the entire Palestinian question, and here I would like to refer to the words of our President El-Sisi who said the following: *“We will never abandon the Palestinian question. A peaceful, just solution must be found.”*

In conclusion, I support the draft resolution that has been submitted by the Near East, which is inspired in its wording, by text that has already been adopted on a consensus basis by the United Nations. The contents of this draft resolution has already been adopted, it is consensual and has been adopted already by the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait) (Original language Arabic)

What is the use of delivering humanitarian assistance when bombing is continuing? In the north, in the south, wherever the populations have sought shelter, what is the point of humanitarian assistance in this situation? Perhaps tombs are more needed now in the Gaza Strip.

I do not see the point of these statements, especially in the face of the media propaganda of the occupation forces. We cannot fully grasp, we cannot understand the tragic plight of the Palestinian people. If this catastrophe were understood, then perhaps words of truth could be spoken in the face of the massacre of Palestinians. The people of Gaza are now thinking, should they remain where they are together as a family and die together, or should they be scattered among a number of different buildings so that if part of the family is destroyed, another part may survive.

All of this is being presented as legitimate defence. Others are saying that they are trying to assist the Palestinians but no, in the face of what is happening, we understand that there is no more humanity, and how can we look at these families of Gaza in the eyes? Every day children are killed, 8 000 children so far have lost their lives in Gaza. Do you understand what 8 000 children mean? Only 1 000 people can fit into this room. Imagine that times eight, and 8 000 children in Gaza.

The truth is that this is a revenge. It is a form of collective punishment by cowardly forces, and in the face of the silence of the international community. Dignity is what matters most to each and every human being; unfortunately the Palestinian territories, the Gaza Strip, no longer have that human dignity. Every minute an elderly person, a man/a woman, loses his/her life. These people are being deprived of their lives by cowardly military forces, and they are being bombed, they are being imprisoned, without trial, without justice.

You say that the Palestinian people are not Hamas, but what is happening now is affecting all of the people of Palestine. Do the Palestinians have the right to self defense? No. No-one is saying that - that would be seen as impossible. According to the international community, that is prohibited.

In conclusion, you can write whatever you wish in the draft resolution. We have spent weeks and months in negotiation to arrive at a consensus-based text. All of the groups have worked on it. We have given proof of great flexibility. There is one country here, I am not speaking of the United States of America, I am speaking of the representative of the occupying entity, that rejects the adoption of this resolution.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

The European Union (EU) countries Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the EU statement.

The Nordic countries are deeply alarmed by the immense civilian suffering and what it means for the future for both Palestinians and Israelis. The humanitarian situation in Gaza and its extreme consequences for the population is of grave concern.

Allow me also to express the condolences for the staggering loss of civilian lives and of our governments for the death of more than 100 United Nations (ONU) humanitarian staff in Gaza.

We pay tribute to the heroic efforts of humanitarian and health workers, who are saving lives and alleviating suffering under extreme circumstances.

The conflict in Gaza has led to a humanitarian and food security crisis over major order. Up to 80 percent of Gaza's population of 2.1 million people has been internally displaced, and the majority urgently requires food assistance.

While the extent of the damage is still unknown, in Gaza, it is likely that most of the agricultural infrastructure, soil, and land will be negatively affected, and the current stock of livestock will be decimated due to the inability to feed and water animals as well as emergency consumption.

While agricultural land in Gaza is limited, agriculture remains an important part of the Gazan economy and constitutes a significant source of export revenues. Lack of fuel and electricity has a devastating effect on food security. It disrupted refrigeration, irrigation, and incubation devices. Currently, wheat flour is reportedly no longer available in markets and bakeries are not functioning.

We appreciate that FAO will participate through the Food Security Cluster (FSC) and in coordination with the entire Humanitarian System, implementing various assessments, including a Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA).

The Nordic countries fully agree with the Security Council's call for extended humanitarian pauses in Gaza to save and protect civilian lives, in addition to the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and for full, safe, rapid, and unhindered humanitarian access. For humanitarian assistance at scale, it is necessary to open additional crossing points for aid.

We have been clear about Israel's right to defend itself, within the limitations of International Law. We reiterate that all military operations must be in line with international humanitarian law, including protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel.

There is no military solution to this conflict. The Nordic countries continue to call on Palestinian and Israeli leaders to seek peace through political dialogue. Only a negotiated two-state solution can achieve lasting and durable peace between Israel and Palestine, and in the Region.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Japan is deeply concerned about the situation in Gaza. While it is evident that we need to redouble our diplomatic efforts to diffuse this crisis, the most imminent challenge for us now in this room, is to minimize the deterioration of the humanitarian condition.

Japan has decided to provide humanitarian aid of USD 65 million in addition to the already decided USD 10 million for the people in Palestine, and we are providing humanitarian goods through our aid agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Japan is determined to contribute to make our utmost efforts and cooperate with FAO and other UN agencies in order to deliver humanitarian assistance as soon as possible, and as much as possible and, secondly, to build resilience there.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

The ongoing conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories has claimed a harrowing number of civilian lives, including children and UN personnel. Australia welcomed the recent

agreement on hostage release and pause in hostilities. We have consistently called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, for greater humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and for the protection of civilian lives.

Australia reaffirms the call for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to enable lifesaving assistance to reach affected civilians. Australia unequivocally condemns Hamas's attack on Israel as abhorrent acts of terror against innocent civilians. We affirm Israel's right to defend itself, however the way it does so matters, and Israel must respect international humanitarian law and protect civilian lives.

We continue to support the ongoing efforts of international partners to prevent the conflict from spreading.

The Australian Government welcomed *UN Security Council Resolution 2712* of the 15 November, which demanded that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law – notably with regard to the protection of civilians, and especially children.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories suffered from chronic food insecurity prior to the current crisis, with up to a third of the population estimated to be food insecure in 2023. The effects of mass displacement and damage to infrastructure, including agricultural production, will have serious ramifications for human health and nutrition. A protracted conflict and continuing constraints on food imports will exacerbate the existing, acute food insecurity situation.

In response to the crisis, Australia's USD 25 million humanitarian assistance package is helping to meet essential needs for civilians affected by the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and across the region. It includes the provision of food, water, medicine, and other essential services including sanitation and hygiene.

We support efforts by FAO to provide rapid relief to affected farmers in the form of emergency assistance and time-critical agricultural inputs.

Recognizing the challenge of directly supplying these much needed agricultural inputs, tools and animal fodder given the restrictions on imports, we encourage FAO to work closely with the other Rome based agencies and regional actors to ensure items can be quickly distributed in the occupied Palestinian territories, when possible.

We request FAO to continue monitoring the situation and to collaborate with other Rome based agencies to coordinate effective relief responses.

We recognize the efforts of FAO to prepare a Rapid Assessment using FAO's Geospatial data tools, and we look forward for the results to be shared with Members as soon as possible.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

A tragedy is continuing to unfold in the Middle East. Israel has suffered the worst terror attack in its history, Palestinian civilians in Gaza are experiencing a devastating humanitarian crisis and violence continues to increase in the West Bank.

The United Kingdom (UK) is working urgently to respond to this deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. We are a longstanding and significant provider of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people. Indeed, since Hamas' terror attack against Israel on 7 October, the UK has more than doubled our existing aid commitment this year.

All possible measures on the ground must be taken to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian aid. For this to happen successfully, there needs to be a safer environment, which necessitates humanitarian pauses. Too many civilians have lost their lives. The UK is working intensively to get more aid into Gaza, to respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, support the safe return of hostages and back Israel's right to self defence whilst complying with international humanitarian law.

Alleviating the suffering is our foremost priority. The United Kingdom is supportive of humanitarian pauses as part of measures to protect civilians and facilitate the flow of lifesaving humanitarian aid, including food, water, medical supplies and fuel as a priority.

We are therefore calling for better aid access to facilitate delivery of critical humanitarian aid. We thank FAO for its work as part of the humanitarian flash appeal and participation through the food security cluster, in collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP) and the wider humanitarian system, in providing assessments and emergency assistance, supporting the needs in Gaza, as well as those of the most vulnerable farmers in the West Bank.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

In two years of work at FAO, I have learned a lot more about democracy and human rights, but I still do not understand the deep politicization of the work in FAO and the many statements where many people are accusing other Member States. We are persuaded that in all conflicts what is indispensable is that we protect the civilian infrastructure and in particular, the people. It is not up to the FAO to decide who is right or wrong in Gaza. Today we are witnessing a humanitarian catastrophe which is immense. Our role, our task is to attenuate the situation to the extent possible and I would urge FAO to focus on this aspect.

Leaving political ambitions in New York.

We support the draft resolution on this topic.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to affirm our support to the statement of the Ambassador from Iraq, Chairperson of the Near East and Northern Africa group on the catastrophic situation in Gaza.

What has been happening in Gaza for the last two months does not require any speeches or any illustration here to know what is happening there. It is enough to look honestly as human beings, to look at the atrocious crime that is being committed in the name of self defence.

Some have spoken of hundreds of billions of dollars that will be committed in the form of humanitarian assistance, but what is needed is that the humanitarian catastrophe that is taking place in Gaza be ended before delivering this humanitarian assistance. We could rejoice in the idea of humanitarian assistance, but massacres are taking place now in Gaza.

I would like to thank our colleagues, my brothers from Egypt and Kuwait, for their very clear statements. What is happening in Gaza is the systematic, deliberate destruction, forced displacement, bombings have been incessant for the last two months. Ending this must be our first objective as civilized nations.

I would like to join my voice to that of Sudan, Nicaragua, Norway and the Near East North Africa Group, regarding the conclusions to be drawn on the catastrophic situation in Gaza.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

We support the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Iraq on behalf of the Near East Group. We express grave concern over the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip. We consider the forced displacement of the civilian population, including children, a violation of international law.

The indiscriminate bombing of Gaza has claimed thousands of lives, including those of children. We call upon the international organizations and the international community to take measures to bring an immediate end to the bombardment and siege of Gaza, so that food, medical supplies and essential goods can be supplied to the territory.

We support the role of FAO in cooperation with other UN organizations to address the impact of the conflict on food security, nutrition and agriculture, and we urge FAO to continue to develop plans for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, together with the other Rome-based Agencies.

Mr Abdellah LARHMAID (Maroc)

Ma Délégation s'associe à la déclaration faite par la Mauritanie au nom du Groupe Africain et par l'Irak au nom du Groupe Proche-Orient et Afrique du Nord, et tiens à remercier la FAO pour avoir inclus le point relatif à la question de Gaza à l'ordre du jour du Conseil. Ma Délégation se félicite de la

qualité du document préparé par l'Économiste en Chef et salue les efforts consentis des équipes des Nations Unies travaillant sur le terrain pour venir en aide à la population palestinienne.

Etant conscient des difficultés traversées par la population palestinienne de Gaza, le Royaume du Maroc est engagée pleinement à leur apporter soutien et assistance dans le cadre de la politique de solidarité. À cette fin, Sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI a réitéré récemment la position consentie du Maroc en faveur de la cause palestinienne, juste et a réaffirmé son soutien au droit légitime du peuple palestinien frère.

Le Souverain a rappelé à cet égard les quatre priorités urgentes définies par Sa Majesté le Roi pour faire cesser le massacre des vies humaines portant sur la désescalade urgente et concrète et la fin des agressions militaires pour aboutir à un cessez-le-feu durable et vérifiable, la protection des civiles, l'acheminement fluide en quantité suffisante des aides humanitaire au profit des populations de Gaza, une perspective politique pour la question palestinienne de nature à relancer la solution des deux états.

Le soutien du Maroc en faveur de nos frères palestiniens s'inscrit dans la continuité des actions que Sa Majesté le Roi mène en tant que Président du Comité d'Al-Qods au sein de l'Organisation de la Coopération Islamique tout en mettant en œuvre ses initiatives sur le terrain via l'agence Bayt Mal. Monsieur le Président, mesdames et messieurs, dans le cadre de l'engagement de Sa Majesté le Roi, Président du Comité d'Al-Qods, en faveur de la cause palestinienne, le Maroc a envoyé des aides humanitaires d'urgences à la population palestinienne. Ces aides ont été remises au Croissant Rouge égyptien pour les acheminer vers la bande de Gaza.

Ma Délégation exprime sa pleine confiance dans la capacité de la FAO à adopter le projet de décision et intensifier ces efforts en faveur de la population palestinienne et en vue de relever les défis dans un esprit de coopération de la communauté internationale. Nous espérons à un cessez-le-feu, et à garantir les droits fondamentaux du peuple palestinien, tout en respectant le droit international et le droit international humanitaire.

Conformément au mandat des organisations des Nations Unies basées à Rome, nous réaffirmons notre plaidoyer en faveur d'un accès accru et durable à l'aide humanitaire accompagné des efforts visant à protéger les agriculteurs et la production agroalimentaire locale en ces temps difficiles.

Mr Mohammed Ahmed M. ALGHAMDI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the statement of the Near East Group that was delivered by His Excellency, the Ambassador of Iraq. This Council is convened while a catastrophe is unfolding. It is unfolding every day as we speak right now. This humanitarian catastrophe is the result of the aggression perpetrated against the brotherly Palestinian people, especially our people in Gaza.

Some officials still deem it too much to ask to talk about a ceasefire. We call for humanitarian corridors in order to open the way for the necessary humanitarian aid. The King Salman Center for Humanitarian Relief has already offered USD 100 million, and this is a drop in the ocean to meet the effective needs in reality.

However, in spite of all that, we are facing difficulties when it comes to opening these crossings. We thank the sisterly Government of Egypt for opening the Rafah crossing for the delivery of these aids, however, there are a number of other hardships.

We stress the right to food, water, and energy within the mandate of the FAO, however, this cannot be realized without the cessation of hostilities and the forced displacement against the Palestinian people. If the aggression on Gaza threatens to block the water, energy, and food, and it has been going on for over 50 days, the simplest thing to do for this Council is to adopt the draft decision that has been submitted to you.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

As a region that prospers during periods of world peace, we refuse to be silent on this issue. Although this is a very brief statement, it is our sincere hope that it has a significant impact, not just on the FAO, but on that of the leaders of the developed world, who has the influence to cause an end to this unfortunate conflict.

I wish to note that the Bahamas and the Caribbean region supports a peaceful resolution and respects human life. We call for a lasting peace agreement based on a two State solution and call for all States to adhere to international law. We endorse the call of a ceasefire and continued humanitarian assistance and the protection of all civilian life.

M. Anatoliy SHATKOVSKYY (Canada)

Le Canada apprécie l'analyse que la FAO a préparée pour ce Conseil. Elle nous met en garde sur les répercussions, les vies et les moyens de subsistance. Le conflit aura des conséquences à long terme sur la sécurité alimentaire, la nutrition et l'agriculture. Si nous reconnaissons clairement d'autres crises en cours, comme témoigne le dernier rapport sur l'état de la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde, c'est que les conflits demeurent les premières causes de la faim.

Nous devons donc déployer les plus grands efforts diplomatiques pour mettre fin aux guerres, prévenir le terrorisme, promouvoir et protéger les droits de la personne et les primautés du droit. Les conséquences d'un manquement à ce devoir sont décrites dans le rapport mondial sur les crises alimentaires 2023, qui fait état de quelque 117 millions dans cette situation de vulnérabilité divers en raison de troubles politiques ou de conflits dans 19 pays ou territoires. Une augmentation de 58 pourcent par rapport à 2018.

Continues in English

On the catastrophic conflict between Israel and the terrorist organization Hamas, whose reprehensible actions on 7 October we unequivocally condemn, Canada continues to use all its diplomatic networks to forcefully urge both parties to protect civilians, ensure the security of humanitarian workers, and allow and facilitate humanitarian access to civilians in need.

Canada deeply regrets the end of the humanitarian pause between Israel and Hamas. All hostages must be released. Sufficient humanitarian aid must reach its civilians in Gaza to prevent the humanitarian crisis from deepening.

Canada was among the first countries to provide additional robust humanitarian aid for Gazans through trusted partners like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), World Food Programme (WFP) and others. This was in addition to our USD 100 million multiyear contribution to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) earlier this year.

We also established a matching fund that leverages the generosity of Canadians. Canada stands ready to do more, while working with partners so no money goes into the hands of the terrorist group Hamas, who have weaponized food and humanitarian aid in the past.

With respect to the role of FAO, we expect the Organization will continue to scientifically assess and address, within its mandate, the consequences that all conflicts may have on food security, nutrition and agriculture, including the one in Gaza.

In this context, we encourage the FAO to use all the relevant tools at its disposal, including rapid assessments drawn on geographic information system spatial data.

Continue en français

Le Canada est également l'un des 10 principaux donateurs de la FAO et du Programme Alimentaire Mondial et nous saluons votre travail dans ce contexte difficile. Je tiens à rappeler une fois de plus que les conflits restent le principal moteur de la faim. L'insécurité alimentaire peut également provoquer de l'instabilité, créant un cercle vicieux.

Nous devons nous attaquer aux causes profondes au cœur de l'insécurité alimentaire et des conflits. Le Canada soutient fermement le peuple israélien et palestinien dans leurs droits à vivre en paix, en sécurité, dans la dignité et sans crainte.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to the Observers.

Mme Céline JURGENSEN (France) (Observateur)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom de l'Union Européenne et de ses États membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national. La position de la France concernant le conflit israélo-palestinien est connue et constante. Ancrée dans le droit international. C'est cette même constance et cette même fidélité aux principes du droit international qui guide sa position depuis le 7 octobre.

C'est pourquoi la France rappelle sa condamnation des attaques terroristes perpétrées par le Hamas et d'autres groupes terroristes contre Israël le 7 octobre et exhorte à la libération immédiate et inconditionnelle de tous les otages, souligne qu'Israël a le droit de se défendre et le devoir de le faire dans le strict respect du droit international humanitaire. Ce qui implique que les populations et les infrastructures civiles doivent être protégées et appel à la mise en œuvre pleine de la résolution 27/12 adoptée par le Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies le 15 Novembre 2023 et à garantir un accès humanitaire complet, sûr, durable et sans entrave à la bande de Gaza. Monsieur le Président, la situation humanitaire à Gaza est catastrophique, elle requiert une mobilisation de la communauté internationale dans son ensemble à laquelle la France prend toute sa part.

La France a notamment pris l'initiative d'une Conférence Internationale Humanitaire pour la population civile de Gaza qui s'est tenue à Paris le 9 Novembre, sous l'égide du Président de la République et de la ministre de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères et qui a permis de mobiliser plus d'un milliard de dollars de financement. Une réunion de suivie des engagements pris lors de cette conférence a lieu en ce moment même autour de la Ministre.

À titre national, la France a porté son soutien financier à 100 millions d'euros, dont 13 millions pour le Programme Alimentaire Mondial (PAM) et a par ailleurs déployé plus de 120 tonnes de fret. Elle a également déployé le navire-hôpital Dixmude qui, mouillant au large d'El-Arich, accueille et soigne des blessés palestiniens, dans le cadre d'un appui médical coordonné par l'Égypte. L'effort de la communauté internationale pour alléger les souffrances de la population civile seront cependant vains si les conditions permettant la délivrance de l'aide humanitaire ne sont pas réunis.

C'est pourquoi l'urgence doit être une trêve durable, qui permettent la libération des otages et un accès humanitaires accrus, et qui ouvre la possibilité d'un cessez-le-feu. Un réengagement politique devant aboutir à une solution à deux états, selon les paramètres internationalement agréés et dans le respect des résolutions pertinentes des Nations Unies, est indispensable.

Mr Ayman RAAD (Syrian Arab Republic) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset, we would like to support the statement by the Near East and North Africa Group. We are all watching the images that come across from Palestine, and these disclose the magnitude of the destruction and the criminality of Israel. Criminality is actually the main quality of this occupation, ever since its inception in 1948.

These are decades of murder, displacement, incineration of territories and other crimes. However, this time, it has exceeded its own records and it is demolishing the homes on the heads of their tenants, killing civilians, women and children, and not even the sick and the elderly have been spared.

His hospitals as well as the schools have been decimated and the infrastructure is being targeted. Even the trees have not been spared, and the crops are being set on fire in a way that is turning Palestine into an uninhabitable land.

This is deliberate displacement, these are war crimes, genocide crimes that are documented, and they are ongoing. We are hearing here today from some countries, talk about the respect of the international humanitarian law, are you not watching the images that come from Palestine, the justification of murders, of killing, under illegal, illegitimate pretext such as self-defence, is not a lesser evil than participating in these crimes. How can you take as a pretext self-defence in killing a people that is unarmed, that is under siege in its own territories, without water or medicine?

The Palestinian people is the people that is entitled to self-defence, and this is guaranteed by all international charters and instruments. It has the right to fight for its land and to recover its rights by all possible means. The priority now is to stop the bloodshed of the Palestinians caused by the Israeli blood machine, and this must be guaranteed by all international resolutions, in order to hold Israel accountable to violating the international law.

We would like to thank FAO and all the organizations operating in Palestine. Their staff are risking their lives in order to deliver assistance for the Palestinian people. We call upon the Member States in the Council to support the draft decision, because this is really the most basic thing to do to shoulder our responsibility towards the people of Palestine.

Sra. Claudia GONZÁLEZ TOLEDO (Cuba) (Observador)

Agradecemos nuevamente la actualización sobre la situación de la seguridad alimentaria en Gaza contenida en el documento *CL174/4*. Queremos recordar que, si bien el conflicto entre Israel y Palestina escaló a partir del 7 de octubre, el pueblo palestino sufre desde hace décadas prácticas israelíes de ocupación ilegal y colonización en flagrante violación de sus derechos inalienables en su propio territorio.

Condenamos en los términos más enérgicos los asesinatos de civiles, especialmente de mujeres, niños y de trabajadores humanitarios del Sistema de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU), los bombardeos indiscriminados contra la población en Gaza y la destrucción de viviendas, hospitales e infraestructura civil, así como la privación de los servicios de agua, alimentos, electricidad y combustible a dicha población que empeoran considerablemente la precaria situación humanitaria resultante del bloqueo de la Franja de Gaza. Nada, absolutamente nada puede justificar tales acciones que constituyen graves violaciones del derecho internacional.

Volviendo al documento presentado por la FAO, el panorama actual descrito en el punto cuatro del documento es aterrador. El impedimento al acceso a servicios básicos ha tenido un efecto crítico en todos los sectores productivos conduciendo, prácticamente, a la paralización de estos con un impacto directo en la población civil palestina.

Las consecuencias del conflicto para la seguridad alimentaria, la nutrición y la agricultura de Palestina serán profundas y duraderas por lo que se requerirá la intervención de la FAO en coordinación con otras organizaciones de Naciones Unidas según sus respectivos mandatos y, en particular, con los organismos con sede en Roma. Al propio tiempo, requerirá el reforzamiento de la aplicación del triple nexo entre la acción humanitaria, el desarrollo y la paz para soluciones duraderas.

Exigimos el cumplimiento de las resoluciones adoptadas en las Naciones Unidas, el derecho internacional y a no utilizar el hambre de los civiles como método de guerra al tiempo que abogamos por la búsqueda de una pronta solución por la vía de la negociación que detenga esta escalada de violencia y sus gravísimas consecuencias humanitarias. Instamos al Consejo a adoptar la propuesta de decisión presentada por la región del Cercano Oriente sobre el tema.

Ms Orli GIL (Israel) (Observer)

On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched a vicious attack on a civilian population of a peaceful kibbutzim close to Gaza Strip.

On that dire day of 7 October, Hamas terrorists stormed the Israel border in a deliberate, savage terror attack. Israeli families were destroyed. Twelve hundred, 1 200, murdered. Parents slaughtered in front of their children. Youngsters beheaded in front of their parents. Girls and women savagely raped, then shot in front of their loved ones. Many of the people murdered were farmers who succeeded to overcome the challenges of the desert that was their home. These farmers transformed the desert to agricultural heaven. 249 were taken hostage. As we speak, 150 are still in Hamas' hands, with no access to sufficient food and water.

It is essential to recognize that international humanitarian aid to Gaza is among the largest globally, especially when in 2021 alone, the World Food Programme (WFP) facilitated the transfer of over USD 120 million in humanitarian assistance. We just heard the US representative saying that the US has spent billions in aid to Gaza. This money should have been used for an improvement in living conditions of the Palestinians. Yet, despite this substantial aid, life in Gaza was challenging, even before the war, with 60 percent of the population experiencing food insecurity.

Until 7 October, Israel has allowed 20 000 Gazans to cross the border daily for employment opportunities in Israel. So, a question arises, if international humanitarian aid to Gaza is among the largest globally, why was life so difficult there before the war? The answers should be demanded from

the terrorist organization Hamas, who has been ruling Gaza since 2005. Hamas has diverted this aid to execute its own violent, brutal, murderous purposes.

Distinguished delegates, the State of Israel does not ignore the dire situation in Gaza, the displacement of citizens and the shortage of food, water and other humanitarian needs. Despite dealing with its own humanitarian crisis, Israel actively promotes large-scale humanitarian aid. The people of Gaza received up to now from different sources the following aid, close to 3 000 tons of food, 10 000 cubic meters of water, 45 tankers of oil and 30 tankers of gas. Unfortunately, we could not prevent, even these very days, some of this being stolen by Hamas.

Let me conclude by saying there is no place for use of this Council for spreading false criticism about Israel. We still hope that future discussions here will not be diverted by political interests as this one was. Israel's right to retaliate to the barbaric terrorist attack is not in opposition to the principle of achieving food security and nutrition. Israel agreed to humanitarian aid entering to Gaza. At the same time, Israel is not required to supply Hamas with the capabilities to advance its genocidal Agenda.

Mr Khaled Ahmad ZEKRIYA (Afghanistan)

The Embassy and Mission of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Rome would like to express its almost alarm in regard to the escalation of the Israeli Government's military attacks on the Palestinians in Gaza, especially in the last 72 hours, and the successive clashes of Israel and its illegal settlers with Palestinians in the West Bank, which has caused a large number of Palestinian casualties.

The deliberate targeting of civilians, especially children and women, along with the destruction of civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, clinics, refugee camps and schools, which currently accommodate the wounded and the displaced Palestinians, is considered against international and humanitarian laws. Additionally, this runs contrary to the UN resolutions and State and non-State actors' demands for an immediate ceasefire.

Afghanistan would like to redraw the attention of the United Nations agencies and other concerned parties, especially the Islamic countries in the region, to jointly take action for an immediate end to the current war and aggression by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories. Furthermore, we strongly believe that in the event of the end of the war, the announced intent for the reoccupation of Gaza by Israel is deemed not only illegal, but it will cause more conflicts in Gaza and West Bank, as well as in the region and beyond.

The only way out of this conflict is a political solution by revisiting and implementing the creation of two States side by side, an independent Palestinian state next to the Israeli state. Afghanistan supports the statement of the Near East Group.

Ms Abeer M. B. ODEH (Palestine) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to thank all the countries that have supported the draft decision. I would like to point out to the catastrophic landscape in Palestine caused by the occupation, not only during the past 60 days, but also prior to that. In addition to the tragic situation in Jerusalem and the West Bank, this is ongoing and it is beyond anything you can imagine.

I would like to remind you of some figures. There are about 17 000 people that have been killed in Gaza, 70 percent of whom are children and women. There are 1.9 million people that have been forcibly displaced in an area of less than 100 square kilometres. Just imagine that. We were speaking about food insecurity, now we are speaking not about 70 or 80 percent, but 100 percent of the Gaza Strip that is food insecure. We used to speak about water scarcity, now we are speaking about a total lack of drinking water in Gaza.

As for the West Bank, only 250 people have been killed in 50 days, whereas all the cities and towns are fully blocked and the settlers continue to attack all the towns and cities, in addition to East Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, the statistics that are now emerging from a preliminary Report by the UN and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), warned that as a result of this war, 16 years of human development have been reversed, and war is growing by 34 percent every month, in addition to the total loss in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

I would like to point out a couple of points that emerged from the statements. Firstly, some countries have underlined that Israel has the right to self-defence. Of course, this has been repeated, however I have heard another expression today, the upholding of international humanitarian law. This is a positive progress. However, when you speak about law, this should not be divided. Israel is a state of occupation according to the international law. The state of occupation has no right to self-defence. The occupied territories have the right to self-defence.

What is unfolding is not a natural catastrophe, it is a man-made disaster, a disaster made by the Israeli occupation, and we should not cover that up. This is what I wanted to mention. We need to put an end to that. In addition, we need to adopt resolutions that respond to this catastrophic situation.

We have taken into consideration the sensitivities in drafting this decision, and we did not name the party that is responsible from this situation, as if it came out of the blue without any reason. Some also objected to the expression of the use of hunger as a weapon of war. Most of the Palestinians in Gaza have no access to water or food. The hospitals, the schools, the infrastructure have been decimated. What is left, I do not know, in addition to the forced displacement.

Do you believe that 1.9 million people have left their homes to take a stroll? We should put things into perspective, and I believe that this draft decision should be taken seriously and we need to shoulder our responsibility as the international community. The situation not only in Gaza but in the whole of Palestine is tragic.

If you are to speak about the two State solution and about peace, we need to take into consideration the international law in its detail without fragmenting it, and without rejecting what we do not like in it.

Mr Ender SARITEKIN (Türkiye) (Observer)

Türkiye is deeply concerned with the current dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. We welcome the humanitarian pause, which was agreed upon and put in place recently, but it did not last long. The indiscriminate targeting of Palestinian people in Gaza should stop, and the international community should give correct messages in that direction.

A ceasefire and cessation of hostilities is a pressing need. Also, a peace process must be initiated right away, and a lasting peace cannot be possible without a just peace deal.

In the face of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe, safe, rapid, unhindered, and scaled up flow of humanitarian assistance into Gaza is a must, and since the beginning of the crisis, Türkiye has taken immediate action and has delivered more than 200 tons of humanitarian aid to Gaza in response to the local needs and in close cooperation with Egyptian authorities.

We have a health team on the ground working on the feasibility of establishing a field hospital in Al-Arish port and Rafah border gate, and our efforts to establish a field hospital in Gaza is also underway.

As the Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital in Gaza had to cease its operations due to attack, now we are working on taking those patients into Türkiye for medical treatment. Apart from our bilateral efforts, we have provided USD 1 million to United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in response to the flash appeal made by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Finally, I want to reiterate Türkiye's strong support to and full solidarity with the Palestinian people in this period, and with that spirit, we express our support to the draft resolution proposed by the Near East Regional Group (NERG) on this particular Agenda Item.

Ms Asmahan Abdulhameed ALTOQI (Yemen) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

We support the statement made by the Middle East and the North of Africa and reiterate that the use of food and water as a weapon of war is illegal and immoral.

It is important that we speak clearly about what is happening and that we avoid using ambiguous terminology about the catastrophic situation in occupied Palestine, and in particular in the Gaza Strip. This catastrophe is due to the collective punishment and the war launched by the occupying Israeli forces.

Civilians in Gaza, according to UN Reports, cannot save their own lives because of bombings, and they are under threat because of sieges and a lack of food, water, medication and necessary medical equipment. Indeed, even medical personnel are not on the ground and hospitals themselves have been destroyed, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and humanitarian principles.

It seems that we have forgotten these humanitarian values. The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) has asked the occupying forces to take all the necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and humanitarian posts, following the entry of the forces into the Gaza Strip. Indeed the occupying forces are pushing civilians from the North systematically, in order to guarantee the forced displacement of Gazan civilians.

We have been using the following terminology about a holistic solution of the crisis, or we have talked about radical solutions to the crisis, or furthermore, other different solutions that have been mentioned, however, this terminology has not been multilaterally adopted, because how can we really face this crisis? That is what we need to know, and how can a proper approach be taken? Why is such thinking absent? Partial approaches or temporary approaches are not an effective solution.

Indeed, today we are trapped in a vicious circle where we are deploying time, money, and effort, but what is happening is that we are still seeing an increasing number of human victims. Nonetheless, we hail the efforts that have been made by the United Nations, and unfortunately a large number of UN personnel have lost their lives, and many people have been censored when they have spoken freely.

With these comments, we support the draft resolution.

Mr Abdul Rahman ABDUL WAHAB (Malaysia) (Observer)

My delegation thanks FAO for the update on the food security situation in Gaza, as contained in document *CL 174/4*. Malaysia has been deeply concerned and enormously distressed by the 7 October attack against civilians and foreigners, barbaric and brutal slaughter of innocent lives in Gaza. The attacks and forced displacement of civilians as well as attacks on homes, schools, hospitals, places of worship, humanitarian workers, journalists and many more, have shaken and should have shaken humanity.

The Report makes clear the impacts of the attacks on the civilian population of Gaza and their food security. In addition, the current threats to their right to life, the population is further faced with threats to their right to food and right to water. We are highly alarmed at the negative long-term implications of the current conflict, and the long-term siege and occupation on a civilian population on agriculture, agricultural-based livelihoods and access to healthy diets.

It is stated in the Report all the current long-term actions being inflicted upon the population of Gaza erodes the economic viability and long-term sustainability on various sectors, including agriculture, and exacerbates already critical food insecurity levels. This mass and weaponized starvation is a direct violation of *United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2417*.

There can be no excuse for the targeting of objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population such as agricultural assets, foodstuffs, crops, livestock and drinking water installation and supplies, as well as the targeting of objects necessary for food production and distribution such as markets, food processing sites and warehouses.

Assistance is required and unhindered humanitarian assistance is needed. Malaysia calls for, one, the immediate halt of the targeting of civilian infrastructure critical to the survival of civilian population, including food production and distribution facilities. Two, providing water supplies for Gaza's population in line with the minimum humanitarian response standards of 15 litres per person per day for drinking, cooking and sanitation purposes. Three, allowing sufficient fuel into Gaza to enable the proper functioning of hospitals, water extraction, purification and distribution infrastructure, and communication networks for the coordination of humanitarian response.

We welcome the FAO's proposed response and planning for this crisis. Such planning needs to be further refined and response as the situation develops and as the humanitarian catastrophe worsens.

Malaysia stresses the need for joint coordinated actions and policy responses to assist the Palestinian people in the medium and longer term plans to address food security challenges and resilience-buildings in the food system.

We call on the Council to do its duty to humanity, and urge Members to support the draft decision of this Agenda Item contained in document *CL 174/INF/11*.

Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVIK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Our delegation echoes all of the statements that have been made supporting Palestine. The catastrophe in Gaza must stop and should stop as soon as possible. Food and water should reach Gaza without any obstacles. We recall that the deliberate impediment to the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population, is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

At the end of November, the Russian Federation made a delivery to Egypt of its latest batch of medicines for Palestinians in need. Since the beginning of the crisis, we have sent more than 300 tons of humanitarian goods to Gaza.

We call on the Council to properly respond to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and to instruct the FAO Secretariat to provide regular information on the situation from a point of view of food security in Gaza and in the occupied Palestinian territories, and also to carry out an immediate review of the needs in a financial and technical sense for assistance, and to provide proposals on how to provide specific assistance.

Gaza needs a political solution. Gaza needs humanitarian assistance. Gaza needs help for its recovery. And our common collective obligation is to provide this assistance as quickly as possible. In this connection, the Russian Delegation fully supports the draft resolution, which has been put forward for the adoption by the Council.

In conclusion, we once again would like to draw the delegation's attention to the statement by the Representative of Palestine, on the right to self-defence and the qualification which was made by the International Court. The text of this judgment is freely accessible, and this judgment was given in 2004 at the request of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). All delegations can easily and openly familiarize themselves with it. From that conclusion, everything is very clear.

Mr Rasoul ZARE (Iran, Islamic Republic of) (Observer)

My delegation is deeply concerned with this catastrophic situation in Gaza and supports the statement delivered by Iraq on behalf of the Near East Group, and echoes the statements delivered by Egypt and Kuwait.

All possible measures must be taken urgently in order to stop the killing and indiscriminate bombing of the innocent civilians of Gaza, and a permanent ceasefire must be urged. Humanitarian aid must reach the people in need in order to alleviate their suffering.

Mr Kais O. B. ABU DAYYEH (Jordan) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

In the name of God, the Compassionate and the Merciful, the land of Palestine is a land of peace, but that has never known peace. We are talking about peace for Palestine, which is dear to us.

On behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, we support the statement from the Middle East and the North of Africa, the statement that was made by the Ambassador from the Republic of Iraq.

Since the outset, we have supported the draft resolution before us, but I would like to ask the occupying force for some clarifications after what the delegate said. She said that 60 percent of people in Gaza are suffering from food insecurity, and that was the case before the war against Gaza.

The occupying force has decided therefore, to sentence the people of Gaza to death. I am wondering, and I am even surprised, that 13 000 tons have been sent by them in food to Gaza. So I am asking, how many tons of bombs have fallen on the people of Gaza?

We are meeting today in this forum for Gaza and for its inhabitants, while they are facing atrocious war and destruction, we must put an end to this war as soon as possible.

Some countries have mentioned self-defence, but this injustice did not begin on 7 October, but a long time before 7 October. This decade alone has seen destruction, violation of holy places, because of a mentality, a mentality that wants to turn Gaza into a territory where no soul can live or survive.

We as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are doing what we can for Palestine, and that is on the basis of a deep belief which in itself is based on values and principles. These recognize the rights of the Palestinian people.

We restate the importance of stopping aggression against Gaza, stopping forced displacement and guaranteeing access of humanitarian assistance. Before the entire world and on behalf of those who believe in peace and human dignity, regardless of their religion or their language or their ethnic group, we say that the only way of achieving a lasting peace for the region and for the world, begins with the fact that each life should be considered on an equal footing.

Sra. Madah Haifa AISSAMI (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

Venezuela se suma como copatrocinador de la propuesta de conclusiones para este punto del temario presentada por varios Miembros y observadores de este Consejo. Lo hacemos con la esperanza de que el pueblo palestino pueda encontrar en la legalidad internacional multilateral un espacio para hacer valer sus derechos, esos más básicos, conforme al mandato de esta Organización y que no es otro que el garantizar el acceso regular a alimentos suficientes y de buena calidad para llevar una vida activa y sana relacionados, en fin, con la seguridad alimentaria.

Reiteramos el llamado a la comunidad internacional y a la conciencia de toda la humanidad para sumar esfuerzos y continuar con las acciones que conlleven a detener la matanza indiscriminada de mujeres y niños, ancianos perpetrada por la potencia ocupante de Israel al hermano pueblo palestino. El gobierno venezolano se une a las manifestaciones de numerosos países que han pedido un cese al fuego inmediato y han condenado la política de exterminio aplicada por Israel contra el pueblo palestino. Los asesinatos sistemáticos contra la población civil e indefensa, especialmente la de mujeres y niños, organizados por las fuerzas de ocupación en los territorios árabes palestinos y, particularmente, en Gaza tienen que detenerse de inmediato. La ayuda humanitaria debe ingresar y circular sin ninguna restricción a las áreas afectadas y los desplazamientos forzados de la población civil deben cesar.

A la larga lista de crímenes cometidos en los últimos días contra la población civil en Gaza no se puede oponer el argumento del derecho a la defensa, pues se trata de una agresión y exterminio que se ha venido perpetrando contra el pueblo palestino lamentablemente desde hace muchísimas décadas. Venezuela recuerda que los actos cometidos en Gaza constituyen crímenes de guerra y de lesa humanidad, los cuales, tarde o temprano, serán juzgados bajo las leyes internacionales. Mientras esto sucede, Israel debe cesar sus ataques indiscriminados a la población civil y detener la masacre sistemática que comete contra el pueblo palestino, especialmente contra la población civil.

Venezuela reitera su solidaridad con el hermano pueblo palestino y su legítimo derecho a la autodeterminación y a la consolidación de un Estado soberano e independiente. Asimismo, hacemos un llamado a la comunidad internacional para que se pronuncie enérgicamente contra el genocidio del cual es objeto la población en Gaza y exija el cese inmediato.

CHAIRPERSON

As I asked you in the beginning of the Council, we have to speak with dignity and respect towards the other, and we should not use terms which are certainly not respectful in this Council. I would like everybody to refrain from using those words and show respect and dignity to all, thank you.

If you can conclude your statement.

Sra. Madah Haifa AISSAMI (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

No quiero herir la susceptibilidad de nadie, pero hay más de quince mil muertos civiles que también tienen sensibilidad. Sus familias y el pueblo palestino que clama por justicia. Yo solo apelo a que este Consejo, conforme a su mandato –no quiero que violen el mandato que está conforme a los textos constitucionales de esta Organización– cumpla con su obligación.

Finalmente, concluyo expresando una vez más nuestra solidaridad con el personal humanitario que también ha perdido la vida en cumplimiento de sus funciones alrededor del mundo y, particularmente, en los territorios árabes ocupados de Palestina.

Sra. Sonia Silvia BRITO SANDOVAL (Bolivia, Estado Plurinacional de) (Observador)

Durante mucho tiempo en la FAO no se ha querido hablar de algunos conflictos armados aduciendo que se trataba de un tema político. Pero la muerte de miles de personas, las masacres, las violaciones permanentes y constantes, los delitos de lesa humanidad son derechos humanos, derechos por los que fue una de las razones para que se creara la Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) y, por tanto, la FAO como parte constitutiva de la ONU.

Creo que coincidimos todos que es horrorosa la realidad que está viviendo el pueblo palestino. Nos golpea a todos cada momento, escuchando, viendo lo que ocurre en ese país. En todos los espacios como este, en la FAO, no solo deben importarnos algunos conflictos sino todos y, en este momento, se está violando flagrantemente los derechos humanos a la alimentación, pero además el principal de los derechos que es el derecho humano a la vida de todo un pueblo. Quince mil personas civiles asesinadas. Niños, mujeres, personal médico, periodistas, personas de otras nacionalidades que estaban allá. Estamos hablando de los funcionarios, de los servidores de la misma ONU. No podemos mantener un silencio cómplice. Este es un tema que debemos condenarlo categóricamente.

Creemos que una instancia que aborda fundamentalmente el derecho a la alimentación, esta instancia debe trabajar a la cabeza suya en el Consejo, por utilizar todos los mecanismos con los que cuente la FAO para colaborar ahora con un pueblo que se encuentra asediado, que se encuentra perseguido, donde la mayoría de sus miembros no sólo no tienen derecho a la alimentación, sino que están temiendo por su vida. Creemos que la FAO no debe, insisto, mantener un silencio que al final termina siendo cómplice.

Nosotros como Bolivia nos solidarizamos plenamente con el pueblo palestino, apoyamos el derecho legítimo a la autodeterminación de este pueblo. Apoyamos la paz, apoyamos la posibilidad de que se desarrollen, se creen, se vean, se busquen soluciones a través de la diplomacia, a través de los espacios de concertación. Bolivia rechaza la invasión, la ocupación que se ha hecho con el pueblo de Palestina. Por tanto, quisiéramos pedir también la necesidad de que se trabaje en un plan de suministro de recursos básicos para, primero, hospitales, población civil, población palestina en general. Necesitamos que los planes de apoyo sean urgentes e inmediatos, todo esto a través del Consejo de la FAO.

Por tanto, Bolivia apoya la declaración *CL 174/INF/11* que se ha propuesto y se solidariza plenamente con Palestina.

Mme Tassadit AIT YAHIA (Algérie) (Observateur)

Mon pays condamne avec force l'agression sauvage et barbare que subit d'une manière intensive la population palestinienne dans la bande de Gaza et qui a engendré plus 16 000 victimes innocentes, dont 8 000 enfants, ainsi que des destructions massives d'infrastructures vitales. De même, nous condamnons également avec force les déplacements forcés de population, la privation délibérée d'accès à l'alimentation, à l'eau et aux soins, qui constituent une violation flagrante du droit humanitaire international.

La FAO, à l'instar d'autres organes des Nations Unies, ne peut remplir la mission que lui confère son mandat dans les conditions catastrophiques actuelles, qui prévalent dans la bande de Gaza. C'est pourquoi mon pays appelle à un cessez-le-feu immédiat. Mon pays souscrit également à la déclaration, faite par le représentant de l'Irak au nom des pays du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord, de même qu'elle soutient et appelle à un appui massif des membres du Conseil au projet de résolution qui lui ait présenté.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I give the floor to Observer, as a right to reply.

Ms Orli GIL (Israel) (Observer)

I would like just to make sure that since so many people here use the word occupier and so on, to remind the people here that Gaza today is not occupied. There is no one soldier, Israeli or others, before 7 October since 2005. With the huge aid, billions we heard, that they received since 2005, they could build beautiful hotels on the Mediterranean shores, they could build excellent schools, excellent hospitals. Instead, they used the money for excellent bases for missiles to be fired towards Israel, and an excellent underground net of tunnels for weapons and terrorists.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to observer Palestine for the right to reply, and then I close the list. If I have closed the list, then we turn to Management for briefly answering some of the questions.

Ms Abeer M. B. ODEH (Palestine) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset, we do not need any aid from the occupier. Those who pretend that they send tons of food, we do not need this. Please stop the aggression against our children and people.

As regards the advice, particularly that Gaza is without Israelis, it is true. However, Gaza is besieged. Gaza is the largest open air prison in the world. Gaza is occupied, and this is the definition according to the international law. You could consult the laws and the International Court of Justice, defining that Gaza is under occupation, when water, food, and energy are denied access into Gaza without the permission of the Israeli occupier.

People cannot leave Gaza without permission from Israel. As mentioned by the representative of the enemy, Gazans could have left this siege. However, this is an area that has received funds, USD 2 billion just to bolster this prison. Gaza used to have beautiful hotels. However, let me remind you of the wars and aggressions against Gaza by the Israeli occupier.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to Mr Máximo Torero Cullen.

Mr Máximo TORERO CULLEN (Chief Economist)

As reported, this is a major order of humanitarian and food security crisis, because of the lack of water, food, energy, no agriculture and no bakeries. FAO will continue to use all our scientific tools, your special information within our mandate, to keep measuring impacts.

The short-term and long-term implications of the current conflict on agriculture and agricultural-based livelihoods and access to healthy diets will be greater than in the previous conflicts. While the extent of the damage is still unknown, in Gaza it is likely that most of the agricultural infrastructure, soil and land, will negatively be affected, and the current stock of livestock will be decimated due to the inability to feed and water animals, as well as emergency consumption. So, in the long term, clearly and in the medium term, reconstruction of the agricultural sector will be required and will require significant resources, and FAO stands ready to contribute with its own technical expertise within our mandate.

In the short term, we will continue to co-lead the food security sector with World Food Programme (WFP) coordinating assessments. We will continue to plan to support 70 660 people with animal fodder, restocking of livestock, animal water tanks, veterinary kits and other supplies as part of our USD 20 million response when funding and circumstances allow.

We continue our existing projects, we will also redesign as appropriate given the current situation.

CHAIRPERSON

I look to the Director of Office of Emergencies and Resilience (OER), Mr Rein Paulsen, whether or not you want to give any additional information.

Mr Rein PAULSEN, (Director, Office of Emergencies and Resilience)

The Chief Economist has updated our response activities.

CHAIRPERSON

Now we break until 17:05 hours and then we take up the draft resolution.

Meeting adjourned until 17:05 hours.

The meeting was suspended from 16.34 to 17.27 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 34 à 17 h 27

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.34 a las 17.27

CHAIRPERSON

We turn to the conclusions of this meeting and that is for the Council Members. In front of you, as conclusion, is the decision.

A draft decision was circulated as the conclusion of this meeting and it is an official document of the Council *CL 174/INF/11*. As we follow the previous Council we go to a vote, but I have to make sure that that is what the Near East, which circulated this draft decision, is proposing.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

To be honest with you, we have been in a totally different position today after all the hard work we have done over the past ten days to reach consensus-based text, and we have also supported all your strong efforts to reach consensus-based language on the draft decision as submitted by the Near East Group.

However, it seems that some delegations want to work against multilateralism and the spirit of cooperation and reaching consensus. The same delegations who we have spent hours of negotiations responding to their concerns about the text and even listening in your presence to some irritating comments and presence of several Ambassadors and Heads of Missions of our group, in spite of all of this, we have tried to contain and work hard to the last minute to reach consensus, but it seems some delegations do not want to see a successful outcome for this Agenda Item specifically.

I wanted to highlight this point because I wanted to say that I see that unfortunately we have not reached consensus on this consensus-based language and that is why, as you have explained in the beginning, going back to the original language.

CHAIRPERSON

That means that we go for a vote, if I understand you well.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

First allow me to thank you for your efforts and the efforts of many, many in this room to try to reach a consensus. We know that we will not reach consensus today. With that, just to speed things up, we know we are very supportive of the original text and so Indonesia would like to request to vote for the draft decision *en bloc*.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

We have heard some very strong opinions today on this issue and a very good discussion in the room. Thank you for moderating that discussion and thank you to all the colleagues for having that discussion.

I want to be really clear about where we are. The United States as well as the Near East Group and many others in this room have worked very hard to try to reach consensus, as was said by the representative of Egypt; many meetings over the course of several weeks trying to reach consensus.

I want to thank specifically the Members of the Near East Group who have been willing to have very professional, very good, very thoughtful conversations about this text, even on Items that we completely and existentially disagree, in a way that was respectful and dignified. I think it really shows the best of who we are as the United Nations (UN), and who we are as this Council, so just thank you for that before we move forward.

But the fact that we were unable to reach consensus I think speaks not to the ability or willingness to do that, but simply to the fact that there are clear and difficult disagreements over how we view this

situation. In that vein, the United States proposes five separate amendments to the text – how would you like us to present them, Chairperson?

If you would like to put the text on the screen, I am happy to go through them, however you would like to have us propose them?

CHAIRPERSON

I see still two speakers. I follow then the procedure, we go to a vote. I will ask everybody whether or not they have amendments. Then we collect all the amendments. And then, as we have done this morning as well, based on Rule XII paragraph 26, we see what is the most far-reaching amendments.

But, before I call for the amendments, let us first give two speakers who have asked for the floor on the process before we go to the vote.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

We also would like to thank you first for all the work you have done through the past two or three weeks trying to help in reaching consensus on this important issue for us. Everybody understands how important this issue is, not only for the Near East Group – it is important for so many countries in this Organization.

Unfortunately, some Members do not see it that way – they see it there are people who are more important than the Palestinians, they see that there are some civilians who deserve a decision draft that calls for a ceasefire or a cessation of hostilities, while the civilians in Gaza do not - they do not deserve it, they are second class citizens. Their hair colour is different, their eye colour is totally different. This is the message you are sending to everybody in this room and to the world.

Everybody is watching and everybody will judge what you are saying. Yes, we thank you, you have been working with us so good for the past two weeks, you have been in the morning and at night, whenever we call you, whenever we meet you – but so did we. We tried to reach a consensus. We had fights within our groups to get the language acceptable by everybody. By everyone in this room. Unfortunately, for two or three it is not acceptable that...

This is not acceptable. When we speak about multilateral work and working in organizations, we have to consider other countries opinions, we have to consider their feelings, we have to consider the situation on the ground. We see it. We see it out there – how can you not stress? How can you not even wish for a ceasefire? I do not understand. How can you not express your internal feelings that you want, at the end, cessation of hostilities?

And then you come to me and tell me, oh yes, we want to help the Palestinians, we want to aid them. How? How do you want to help the Palestinians if you do not stop the fighting? It does not get to anybody's brain. Even at 10 years old, my kids, they ask me, what do you do in the Organization? What do you say? What do you tell them? What do they respond to you when you tell them you want to stop the fighting?

I tell them, I do not know what they respond. Nothing. They do not have an excuse. No excuse – only about Hamas. Hamas is underground - 100 metres. Go behind them if you have the courage. Go down the tunnels and fight them. But unfortunately, nobody does. I would like to call for a vote *en bloc*.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

I would also like to echo the voice shared by our dear colleague from Kuwait earlier, that this is not a matter now anymore of double standards because we have seen double standards before – that is not a new thing for us, but now we are talking about the question of humanity. Really this is addressing a lot of concerns, not only to us, but to several delegations in our group.

On another front, I would like to provide a leading question here. Our understanding is that we go for amendments if we have amendments on paragraphs, but now we have a request to vote on the decision *en bloc*, so if there is an amendment, there should be an amendment decision, a new decision, not an amendment to this text.

That is why I think we have not seen any circulated texts as a draft decision under this Agenda Item. When we voted before on two draft decisions, both have been circulated earlier – this one has not been circulated, only one draft decision. It has been requested to be voted *en bloc*, I do not think, legally speaking, we have any chance to make any amendments to this draft decision. We can only have another draft decision if circulated earlier under this Agenda Item, but this has not happened.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En nombre de la Unión Europea y sus 27 Estados Miembros, en este punto que nos encontramos de tener que ir a una votación, no quisiéramos dejar de destacar el hecho de que todos nosotros, no solo la Unión Europea, sino todos nosotros esperábamos llegar a un consenso y queremos agradecer el diálogo mantenido con todas las partes hasta el momento y a usted Presidente por su labor tratando de conseguirlo. Compartimos con los colegas del Consejo, como no puede ser de otra manera, nuestra preocupación por la crisis humanitaria que se está viviendo en Gaza.

Reiteramos, como Unión Europea, la importancia de garantizar en este contexto la protección de todos los civiles en todo momento, en línea con el derecho internacional humanitario y del mismo modo, reiteramos también nuestra llamada a la inmediata e incondicional liberación de todos los rehenes. De conformidad con las conclusiones de nuestro Consejo Europeo del pasado 26 de octubre 2023, la declaración del Alto representante de la Unión Europea el 12 de noviembre 2023 en nombre de la Unión Europea, volvemos a hacer hincapié en el derecho de Israel a defenderse de conformidad con el derecho internacional humanitario.

La Unión Europea y los 27 Estados Miembros que la componemos seguimos todos nosotros igualmente comprometidos con la necesidad de nuevas pausas en las hostilidades y el establecimiento de corredores humanitarios, incluso también mediante una mayor capacidad en los cruces fronterizos y en una ruta marítima específica para que la ayuda humanitaria pueda llegar de forma segura a la población de Gaza que lo necesita. Necesitamos proporcionar tanta ayuda urgente como sea posible a los civiles que soportan este devastador conflicto.

CHAIRPERSON

I am sorry, Spain, I have to interrupt because we are going to start a debate again and I said we had the debate before the break, so I would like to ask you to finalise your statement.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Finalizo ya, no es mi intención hacer ningún debate y mucho menos reabrirlo, pero sí queremos manifestar en primer lugar nuestro agradecimiento por el esfuerzo denodado de todas las partes en alcanzar este acuerdo. No ha sido posible, pero creo que al menos lo hemos intentado. Ojalá seamos capaces en una próxima ocasión, aunque ojalá no sea necesario tener que vernos en esta situación.

CHAIRPERSON

Let me be clear to everybody, we have closed the debate and we start now to the procedural issue on the proposed decision which was circulated some time ago; it is an official Council document, and now the request has been made by two Members to vote on it *en bloc*.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom (UK) would also like to first thank Egypt and other Members of the Near East Group for their availability to meet with us all and to discuss over the last days.

We feel that significant progress was made in those discussions. We regret that it is not possible to continue those discussions; we felt there was an opportunity to reach a text that could reach almost a consensus, there were maybe a couple of outstanding areas but there were ways there of taking that forward.

We are certainly ready to continue those discussions in order to try to avoid having that vote *en bloc*. We would welcome the opportunity to try to work together to come up with a text that can have the broadest possible support because I think fundamentally here, we are all in agreement with the key messages overarching in this text. There are of course, some differing positions on certain aspects but there is scope for working together and we would certainly welcome that.

CHAIRPERSON

It is clear that this was done yesterday; two Members asked for a vote so that means that we have to obey the Rules of Procedures and we have to start now with the vote.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I wanted to support the proposal for a vote on the text as a whole and recall that we had the same situation only the other way around on Ukraine, and at that time we voted on the proposal as a whole, despite the fact that there were objections on the text, so we should keep to one way of doing things, regardless of the question we are discussing.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

También Nicaragua se suma a la solicitud avanzada por Kuwait, Egipto, Indonesia y Bielorrusia de aprobar la resolución el proyecto de decisión *en bloc*.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

We also support the statements made by Egypt and Kuwait and we call on Council to vote on the draft decision presented by the Near East without going into operational and linguistic issues concerning what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Gaza, given the massive destruction and deprivation of water, food, and medicines to the civilians.

We have discussed this for hours and had lengthy meetings and we could have achieved a consensus on the humanitarian situation, but unfortunately that did not happen. All we can do is call on the Council to vote on the draft decision presented by our regions - supported by Kuwait, Egypt, Indonesia, and Nicaragua, as well as other speakers.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I would be asking my colleague, the Secretary-General to assist me in my reply to this question.

As has already been indicated, there is a proposal which was circulated in advance of this meeting in accordance with the Rules of the Organization. We understand now that there may be a proposal for certain amendments to that proposal.

In this context, I would, in fact, invite the Members to re-visit their procedures that were followed at the 169th Session of the Council, and here I would just read from the Verbatim Records, in which reference was made to the text of the proposal put forward by 22 Council Members, in which you noted the normal proceedings, of course, as if we have draft conclusions is that we go paragraph by paragraph, but it was stated clearly by several Council Members that they want to adopt these conclusions *en bloc*.

Indeed, you observed, and here again I quote, “*all the Members asked me today during the lunch break whether or not it would be feasible to propose slight amendments to the text*”, and you then assessed “*whether or not this is a take it or leave it proposal of the group of 24 Members. If it is a take it or leave it proposal, I will put it forward for adoption en bloc, and then we will see whether or not we have consensus, or whether or not we have to vote*”.

This was how you addressed the proposal at the 169th Session.

CHAIRPERSON

Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just to follow on from the intervention of the Legal Counsel, and jogging all our memories from the 169th Session of the Council which took place on 8 April last year, there was indeed a proposal for a draft decision by the Council circulated by a number of Members contained in document *CL 169/4* - circulated on 25 March. There was also, separately, another proposal circulated by a different Member

on 5 April, which is contained in document *CL169/6*. Those two proposals were voted upon separately. Indeed, the first proposal was voted upon *en bloc*, and after that there was a separate vote on the second proposal.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

I think we have received, as you have mentioned in the morning, a very clear response from the Legal Counsel and from the Secretary-General and this is a take it or leave it draft decision and so we reiterate our request to vote on this draft decision *en bloc*.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I disagree, first of all, that we have had a clear answer on this. We are talking about the 169th Session of the FAO Council but I will note that in other Councils where a request was made to vote on a decision *en bloc*, there were amendments made. Those amendments were voted on before the vote of the decision *en bloc*.

Under the rules, and under the rules in the Basic Texts, amendments can be offered to any proposal that is put forward. That does not change that we voted *en bloc*, and frankly, the United States can support after amendments have been voted, that this decision be voted *en bloc*; that makes a lot of sense, and we would not want to prolong proceedings by taking this paragraph by paragraph, by any means.

However, Council Members have right to offer amendments to proposals that are put forward in this Council, regardless of the intention of Members to have things voted *en bloc* – we have tried this; we tried this ourselves; in our interventions, we said we that wanted to vote *en bloc* and amendments were offered because, as I understand it, the Rules of Procedure allow that, it is the whole point of having Rules of Procedure.

I do have amendments that I will propose, please let me know when you would like me to do that and how you would like me to do that.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

I think it is quite clear what the Legal Counsel had just mentioned right now, she even read it Verbatim, so I think an *en bloc* is the quickest and most efficient way.

Also, before when Belarus and the Russian Federation had proposed amendments, we had seen them before – now we have not seen anything; we do not know what it is! And so, the Members do not know what we are facing and it is clear that we should. Transparency is very important and we should still vote *en bloc* as presented by the Near East.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

The whole idea now is very clear. There are some Members with due respect, trying to mis-interpret what the Legal Counsel has said, what the Secretary-General is saying, and trying to put forth some amendment – this is not acceptable. This is not acceptable at all. This game has to stop. I am sorry to say that, but we will move on, and we call for a motion to vote *en bloc*.

Now, if they do not like it, they can vote no, it is very simple. What is the issue about this? Vote no, and then you can go before your country and tell them I voted no. As we did before – we voted yes, and we voted no. We go and explain to our capitals that we are sorry, but the Members chose that path.

Why is it so hard to be accepted that way? This is a democracy, is it not? Why is it so hard? And then you go inside and you open every book, left and right, people are opening, trying to find a way out of this. Vote. We take the vote, or you take it, congratulations, we made our point.

Mr Abdellah LARHMAID (Morocco)

My delegation supports also what was stated by Egypt and Kuwait, to go for a vote *en bloc* for this draft decision.

Mr Mohammed Ahmed M. ALGHAMDI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

We have spent hours trying to achieve consensus. Today, we have a draft *en bloc* – Members can either accept it or refuse it, that is democracy. We support what has been said by Egypt, Indonesia, Kuwait and Morocco and we call for a vote on the draft decision *en bloc*.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

I think it has been very clear, and we should refrain here from using different methods of running this Session.

The Legal Counsel has been very clear, the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) have been very clear in his Verbatim in the 169th Session of the FAO Council, the Secretary-General is very clear, and we have to move forward. We have strong support, as you can see, your Excellency, from the floor that we should move now to voting, and we ask you to kindly call for voting on this draft decision *en bloc* and as my colleague from Kuwait said, if you do not like the document, you can vote no.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

Sudan supports those speakers who have called for a vote *en bloc* on the draft decision.

M. Mohehd EL BECHIR EL HADJ (Mauritanie) (Langue originale arabe)

Nous soutenons la proposition de vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Give me a moment to consult with the Legal Counsel and the Secretary-General.

The meeting was paused from 17:56 to 18:16 hours

Pause dans la réunion de 17 h 56 à 18 h 16

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.56 a las 18.16

CHAIRPERSON

In the 169th Session of the FAO Council we followed a certain procedure; at 171st Session of the FAO Council we followed a certain procedure – because the text is a little bit ambiguous when you look to rules and procedures, but I will read out what we have done so that you know the dilemma which we are discussing.

In the 169th Session of the FAO Council it was already stated in the letter that the Members asked for the adoption *en bloc* of their proposal. And then I stated, and it is in Verbatim, “*all the Members asked me today during the lunch break whether or not it would be feasible to propose slight amendments to the text*”. I said, “*that is not up to me, but that is up to the group of 22 Members whether or not, because it has to be clearly stated in the Plenary whether or not this is a take it or leave it proposal of the group of 22 Members. If it is a take it or leave it proposal, I will put it forward for adoption en bloc and then we will see whether or not we have consensus or whether or not we have to vote*”. So that was agreed upon during the 169th Session of the FAO Council.

In the 171st Session of the FAO Council, again the proposal was put forward *en bloc* but there, a slight amendment was proposed by one Member, which we took up first before vote *en bloc* on the draft decision.

So, we have two practices, now in the 169th and 171st Sessions of the FAO Council If you look to the practice we have followed, they are not in line with each other, but we agreed to both practices as Council. You were all there, or at least most of you were there.

If it is clear – and that was, of course, clear, and that is why we followed the procedure at 169th Session of the FAO Council, but because the group of 22 said it is an *en bloc* decision, all amendments would be voted against. But, we did not open the floor for the amendments.

In the 171st Session of the FAO Council, it was also *en bloc*, it was clear that also the request of one Member to have a slight change in the Text was clear we dealt with it as an amendment and it was voted on before we took the Text for vote *en bloc*. So, this is a prisoner’s dilemma. We have to find a way out, because we could have a long debate.

Yes, I will come back to you, but first give me the chance to see how we find a way out of this business dilemma.

We can go either way as we have done, and we can discuss whether or not it is in line with the Rules of Procedure; we could have a long discussion. But what we first could do – it is just a suggestion as I said in 169th Session of the FAO Council, it is up to the Members and the Members were very clear in 169th Session of the FAO Council – is at least hear the amendments of the United States of America because that was done in 171st Session of the FAO Council. The floor was asked by one Member, who wanted to have a slight change in the draft decision, and we dealt with it as an amendment, and it was voted on as an amendment.

So my proposal would be – and then I will give the floor to, because I see hands going up with a sign of point of order – but my proposal would be to speak about hope and transparency at least listen to what he has to propose as amendments, then we will take the next steps to whether or not we vote on it.

The other option is, and I give you options because it is not up to the Independent Chairperson of the Council, the other option is that we, based on that, vote on which procedure we will follow.

That is the best way forward because we adopted, two Councils – different procedures. I see no further complication but let us go to the Verbatim; it is clear that we followed two different procedures. Whether you like it or not, and I see that some of you do not like it and others like it, that is what we have done, so it is a state of fact. You can call no, but I would ask each of you to read the verbatim and then you see what we have done.

So we have two options and I give the floor to the United States of America for a point of order.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The Basic Texts is not ambiguous. Paragraph 26 says “*when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first*”. I find it quite interesting that you are not referring to the Basic Texts but referring to non-analogous situations. In the 169th Session of the FAO Council, no amendment was put forward, what you actually said at the end was “*let us see if we have consensus or if we need to move to a vote*”. No amendment was put forward at that point so this is not an analogous situation to that of the 169th Session of the FAO Council.

Had an amendment been put forward under the Rules of Procedure and specifically paragraph 26, you would have had to allow an amendment to go forward and as many amendments as someone wanted to put forward.

In the 171st Session of the FAO Council, The Russian Federation did put an amendment forward. That amendment was voted on. Russian Federation did not have to make a “slight change to the text” to make an amendment. Russian Federation could have put forward any amendment, any number of amendments that they wished to put forward and under the Rules of Procedure we would have had to consider those amendments.

I find it incomprehensible why it is that you want to try to point to a practice that is not analogous to the current situation rather than pointing to the rules and following the rules. We would have been finished with votes by now had we followed the rules at the very beginning.

The United States has amendments that we wish to offer to this proposal. Under paragraph 26, when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. This is very simple. I do not understand why we are playing games with the procedure and why we are trying to create a situation where we are saying that “*in the 169th Session of the FAO Council we did this*” when you are creating a history here that is not the history.

I would ask, respectfully, that the Chairperson follow the Rules of Procedure. Allow an amendment, let us just get this over with, let us do it. We will vote on the amendments, we will vote on the text, this will be finished. I cannot understand why it is that the Chairperson is trying to move us away from what the Basic Texts are saying and the Rules of Procedure.

CHAIRPERSON

I will read out what happened at Council and you only refer to one part of what was said during that Council because, as I stated, and it is also in the Verbatim, that “*Members asked me today during the lunch whether or not it would be feasible to proposal slight amendments to the text*”. I said, “*that is not up to me, that is up to the Members*”. So, I did not open the floor for the amendments but it was discussed.

Mr Bassam Essam Rady Abdelhamid RADY (Egypt)

I think we should apply here what we did in the 169th Session of the FAO Council for the simple reason that you mentioned; that in 171st Session of the FAO Council there was a slight change, slight amendment. And we need to understand that amendments are part of the process.

We are reaching this stage now, as we have been for more than ten days, in consultation regarding these amendments and our group did not approve these amendments and that is why we reiterate that it is take it or leave it as our colleagues said before. If this draft decision is not appropriate, you cannot admire it, then you can vote no for it but we cannot compare what happened in the 169th Session of the FAO Council to what happened in the 171st Session of the FAO Council for the simple reason that, as you kindly mentioned, it was a slight change and it was accepted by the group that presented the draft decision.

In this case, we have only one draft decision and I also would like to recall why a certain Member did not make any changes to the draft decision of the 169th Session of the FAO Council because there was another draft decision that we voted on and we, the Council, voted against. We had two draft decisions to discuss. Now we have only one draft decision.

The need is the group that presented this decision is saying, this is a take it or leave it, you can vote yes or no. We can only apply here what we did in the 169th Session of the FAO Council, not what we did in the 171st Session because simply we already, as a group presenting this draft decision, rejected the amendments. There is no Rule for us to accept any change to the language we are presenting to this draft decision; not conclusions.

These are not draft conclusions; this is a draft decision. We have it here and we reiterate our request to have a vote *en bloc* of this draft decision and if it is not admired by several delegations here, they have the freedom to vote against it.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us try to find a way forward because otherwise we are going to state every position which was already where we started this discussion. I also favour transparency because in the 171st Session of the FAO Council we allowed an amendment to be made before we voted *en bloc*, and that amendment was voted against.

We did not allow it. At least there was no amendment because of how the discussion went on the 169th Session of the FAO Council, so that was why I say we can have a long fight back and forth what is preferred of how to interpret it. That is why I said let us at least hear the amendments of the United States so that we know what is on the table. Anyhow, I think transparency is what we want.

I see a point of order of Saudi Arabia and then a point of order of the United States.

Mr Mohammed Ahmed M. ALGHAMDI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

We have discussed this with the group to try to reach a consensus. We have made many attempts; we have tried to consult various Items and we have removed some portions of this draft resolution. Despite this, they did not agree on this. We want to vote; it is the time to vote on this draft decision. Take it or leave it. We have spent hours and days discussing this and they wanted to vote on this draft decision. It is time to vote. I kindly demand you to vote on this draft decision *en bloc*. During the 169th Session of the FAO Council we did something similar, let us replicate this practice in here.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

While I appreciate that you are pretending that what you said creates a precedent, just because you quoted what you said to people at lunch, that is inaccurate according to the rules and does not make it

true. I would like to hear from the Legal Counsel why it is that nowhere in this discussion have we discussed the Rules of Procedure.

All we have discussed is a quote from you from the 169th where you interpreted the rules incorrectly and discussion of the 171st Session of the FAO Council where the rules were actually followed, and amendments were allowed.

I am just wondering where the ambiguity is, and I know that you had a discussion beforehand and after you had the discussion with Legal, you told us that there is ambiguity here. I would like to hear from Legal, where is the ambiguity in the Rules that would not allow or would allow the Chairperson to deny people to offer amendments that would be offered under paragraph 26?

CHAIRPERSON

Let me be very clear on effects. I was not interpreting, I just stated what was said during the Council, not at lunchtime, and the decision was made by the Council, not by me. Because as I read out the verbatim, I said, “*it is not up to me to decide what to do*”. The Council decided not to give the possibility for amendments. That was clear, although nobody asked formally for an amendment after what I have said. That is different with 171st Session of the Council where there was a request and an amendment was made.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

First, we would like to support what Egypt said and we were the first one to call for a proposal to vote *en bloc* on this, so I think as procedure this morning, that is the one that should go first and so that should go first. You said yourself during the explanation that if the group that proposed is take it or leave it, then we should go with the vote. Now, Egypt already said that it is a take it or leave it text, so now we should just go ahead and do the *en bloc* as a whole.

Also, the difference between 171st and 169th Session of the Council is that in the 171st, my understanding is that it was already circulated, the text that was amended. That was my understanding. But this we do not have, and you can see from Rule XI- paragraph 2, “*proposals and amendments shall be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall arrange their circulation as Conference documents*”. We have not received anything.

So now the ones that proposed the text has already said that this is a take it or leave it and there was a request for an *en bloc*, we should go ahead and do that.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to point of order of Kuwait and then I give the floor back to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

This dilemma that we have is not because of us. I want to state this, because this is what they chose when they turned this Organization political. This is now they do not want to do the same thing, okay? This is exactly how it started, exactly how they wanted it, exactly the decision that they put forward, exactly they wanted to vote *en bloc*, the wording, everything. Now, when we put it? It is a no. They voted on *en bloc*, we requested to vote *en bloc*. The amendments cannot be *en bloc*. If it was paragraph by paragraph a discussion, we can take the amendment, but our request is *en bloc*.

So we called for a motion to vote, , we should have done that as my colleague from the United States said. We could have been done by now, but no, we are trying to find something that does not exist. The 169th Session of the Council was clear, we should go into a vote now *en bloc* and everybody near you is agreeing, I can see that. Including the Legal Counsel explained it very well, that 169th Session of the Council was very clear, go on into a vote *en bloc*.

Now if they do not like it, we can come after and propose to us another amendment to this decision as we will put it again and then we can discuss it again, but at this moment I request you, respectfully, let us go to vote *en bloc*.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Paragraph 26 of Rule XII establishes that “*when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first*”.

At the 169th Session of the Council, the approach that was taken by the Council was that no amendments were in fact moved because the Council was guided that they could not be moved, because the proposal was put forward that this would be *en bloc*.

At the 171st Session of the Council, a proposal was moved and it was put to a vote.

There is little more I can say, I cannot give you a solution on this.

CHAIRPERSON

I see now seven points of order. Probably that will take us through the time available this evening.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

There are two issues that come to mind and I want some clarification actually from Legal Counsel on this. It appears to me that there is one which is a practice and the second one, the reference to paragraph 26, and my question is, is the Council able to, as a Body, change the Rules? In other words, can the Council over thorny issues such as these, vote on whether the Rules, if it existed, can be changed or are we bound by the Rules? Because it seems a little nonsensical to continue this debate when we seem to have rules that govern what the Council should or should not do.

CHAIRPERSON

I will first collect all the points of order and then I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

In this Council some people expressed their ignorance and said they did not understand why the situation was going this way and I myself do not understand either why we cannot take a vote on this text. This is one of the instruments between our hands. Voting is one of the instruments within this Council. It is an instrument that has been used in the past. There are states in the past that came in with proposals, those proposals were adopted or not adopted and this is exactly what we are asking for.

There are 48 countries in this Council, most of them want for this vote to go through except for one or two countries and therefore, if no vote is taken then I wonder what the rights are for Members. What are the rights of Members in this Council when the majority of countries, except for one or two, want for a text to go through a vote and yet one or two participants do not want for this text to go through a vote? Then we listen exclusively to these one or two other countries, then the question is, it really begs the question; what is our right to vote? Let us please go through the voting motion.

CHAIRPERSON

I can assure you that we will have a vote, that is one thing for sure. The only question is what do we vote on first?

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Colleagues, this is a question of government at this point. It is clear from the Basic Texts of this Organization that govern this Governing Body that it is the right of any Member to call for an amendment. That amendment, as set out in paragraph 26, shall be voted on first. I do not think there is any question in this room that the request to vote on the text will not be respected. Of course it will be, we will vote on it. There is no doubt about that.

What we need to do is move forward and get on with voting. We could have already made good progress on that. What we need to do is to be in line with the rules to ensure the credibility of this Governing Body. Respecting the rules, allowing to have those amendments presented, we respect that also in terms of transparency and good governance.

We realize and we recognize, as we have said before, that there have been informal consultations prior to this formal plenary Session, but not everybody has necessarily been party to that.

If, in the context of a plenary Session of Council, an amendment is proposed, it is our duty to listen to that amendment and to vote on it. We will go through those amendments, vote on it and then vote on the text, as is set out by the Basic Texts. We agree with that. We agree with previous speakers who have said that voting is an instrument to be used by the Council, and we will use it, but we will use it in line with the Basic Texts please. And let us move forward and let us vote.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I could not agree more with what everybody seems to be saying, which is that it is time to vote, we should move to a vote. What that means is that you move to a vote, amendments are offered, or in our case one amendment can be offered altogether, we can put our amendments *en bloc* if that makes things easier, but we need to follow the Rules.

You said it yourself at the end of your last intervention that in 169th Session of the Council you offered your opinion, no one asked for an amendment so it was voted *en bloc*. No one asked for an amendment, it was voted *en bloc*. The rules cannot be more clear as was laid out by the Legal Counsel just a few moments ago. In 169th Session of the Council no amendment was offered so it was not voted upon, when in the 171st Session of the Council an amendment was offered, so it was voted upon.

I keep hearing people say, “*take it or leave it*”, I do not know that that is anywhere in our Basic Texts or in the Rules of Procedure. I did hear the suggestion from Indonesia that proposals be circulated in advance. I am happy to do that. If you want to give us time to circulate our proposal in advance, I am happy to do that. If you want to give us time to do so, or we can just move forward and finish it right now.

I think what I would leave with, though, is very much along the line of what was said by the United Kingdom and several others as well but, we have Rules of Procedure for a reason. They protect us all. They protect the right of every Member, as one Member one vote, to be able to make our points, to make our voices heard, and to put our ideas out there to see if those ideas are accepted by the Council.

Maybe we will put forward our amendments, maybe they will lose spectacularly, that is okay, that is part of democracy as well. We do it, we put our amendments out there, they pass or they fail. The text is voted then *en bloc*, with amendments or without, and it passes or it fails. This is so simple and I do not understand why we have been discussing it for an hour when the rules are clear, we could do this and it will be finished.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I think it is very clear from the Legal Counsel, Secretary-General, and everyone on your stage, what the right procedure is, and I think the decision is in your hand. Only in your, , because as Indonesia has mentioned, and this is by the way not a proposal, this is the Basic Texts, saying that the amendments, especially the draft decision of the Near East Group has been published on the website ten days ago, on 28 November 2023.

We have not seen any amendments since then, no communication, zero emails. Ambassador, enlighten us; if you have received any amendments that were not shared electronically, that is a question to you. Have you received any amendments? Have you received any counter draft decision? None.

Now, this timetable for this Agenda Item has been circulated on Monday, yesterday, and this morning. We understand very well the Agenda Items to be discussed today at 14:00 hours. 24 hours ago we have not received any amendments and that is why I do not think we should accept any amendments to this draft decision.

Once again, these are not draft conclusions and back to 169th Session of the Council, no amendments were presented because the esteemed delegates who presented this draft decision said that they cannot accept any amendments to the draft decision and that is why we voted *en bloc*. This is our basic right.

We did a lot of work to reach a consensus, we change language because the delegation asked us to do so and after we approved they came back and disapproved, so we should not be taken for granted. We should be taken seriously. Once again, it is in your hands.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to be that simple, but it is not. Yesterday and today, in conformity with the Rules of Procedure, until you start the vote, and the vote has not been started yet, any Member, that is clear in the Rules of Procedure, and we followed that also with a previous Item, any Member can make an amendment. That was done by the proposal of Nicaragua, which was put on the table.

An amendment was made because we asked Legal Counsel (LEG) how it should be done. Until you go to a vote, an amendment can be made. Whether or not we like it. We follow that procedure on Item 4 and there were amendments made at the last moment. No, but it is not about a decision, it is about an amendment.

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu because I see again three requests for the floor. I assume they are point of orders.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

We read the first line of paragraph 26, we advised how it had been applied on previous occasions, so I do not really have more to offer.

I do note that the Bahamas had raised the question of rules versus practice. Clearly rules prevail. What has been referred to, though, has been how those Rules maybe were applied in the past. But, clearly, of course, the Basic Texts prevail.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I just wanted to make sure that we are clear. You did answer part of my question; if the Rules apply, is it then that there was a misapplication of the Rules in 169th Session of the Council? Because when I raise the question of rules versus practice I also said if the Council have the power to change the Rules by voting to change the rules, and I take it from your response that the Council does not have the power in a sitting to change the Rules, that we are bound to follow the Rules, is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Clearly the process and the decisions taken by the Members are taken within the authority of the Members, so I would not wish to characterize what occurred at earlier Sessions as misapplication of the Rules.

Indeed, as I noted earlier, with the 169th Session of the Council, because of an indication by the Members who had put forward a proposal that they would not accept any amendments, no amendments were moved, none were put forward. That was the distinction between this and the situation in the 171st Session.

Both processes, but of course, again, it is in the hands of the Members, appear to me to have been consistent with paragraph 26.

CHAIRPERSON

It is always up to the Members to decide whether or not, because the Members can set aside some of the Rules. We have done at the beginning of this Council, as we have done in previous Council, for a hybrid meeting - you have to set aside some of the rules which are in the same Rules of Procedure.

For example, that it has to be held here in Rome for all, that is a Rule that we set aside, and we decided on to set it aside by consensus at the beginning of this Council. But I want to try to find common sense.

I go to those who have asked for the floor, do not worry. We are going for a vote, that is clear.

We are going now completely around in circles and we have to find a way out because it is also my task as Chairperson. It is not easy because of the strong positions and the strong emotions and there is already one thing which changed from the beginning of the discussion which is that United States

offered to put their amendments in one proposal to be adopted or not. So, that is already a way we could find forward.

As was explained by Ms Donata Rugarabamu, both the 169th Session of the Council as well as 171st Session of the Council were in conformity with the Rules of Procedure because in the 169th Session no amendments were put on the table, because it was flagged by Members that they do not want to see amendments, but no amendments were tabled. That was done in the 171st Session.

We have to find a way forward and that is why I am appealing to your common sense, and also to be show a little bit of flexibility, because then I will go through the list.

But my idea would be at least could we not at least listen to the amendments of the United States, then we can take the next step onwards with voting because that is the right for everybody so that we have transparency in the room because one said it is slight, the other says it is big.

As long as we do not know what is on the table, we do not know what we are speaking about. We could have a lot of no further complication that is growing in this room, but we do it in the order given by the Chairperson.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Me mantuve callado durante todo este debate, quizás pueda parecer sorprendente que no haya intervenido antes porque, en realidad, no quiero intervenir en la cuestión de fondo. Tengo claras instrucciones y, por lo tanto, sólo quiero referirme a algo que me preocupa muchísimo, como es la ruptura del espíritu de solidaridad dentro de este Consejo. Lo que estamos viviendo no es una discusión técnica solamente. Lo que estamos, es siendo testigos de un proceso de autodestrucción y esa autodestrucción es la autodestrucción del organismo de gobernanza más importante que tiene la FAO. Estamos en un escenario donde se están rompiendo todos los lazos de solidaridad dentro de los propios colegas con el espíritu que implica tener ser parte de un órgano de gobierno.

Yo creo que, al menos, en mi experiencia en los últimos cuatro años lo que hemos visto es que hemos llegado a situaciones límites de diferentes posiciones pero que, al final, por esa idea de preservar el espíritu y la solidaridad con la Organización y con el propio órgano de gobernanza, finalmente lográbamos soluciones de insatisfacción, pero que en definitiva preservábamos al organismo, a la Organización y al órgano de gobernanza por encima de nuestras posiciones particulares. Yo lo único que pido es que seamos conscientes de las consecuencias de llevar esta situación al extremo y tratar de que los colegas que tienen, en este caso – el colega o los colegas, no quiero hacer una apelación específica–, entiendan que en este momento estamos afectando seriamente para mi criterio la gobernanza y a este órgano de gobernanza que es el Consejo.

Solicito realmente que terminemos con esta discusión técnica. No hay manera de que legalmente salgamos de esto, porque esto requiere de interpretaciones y necesitamos que esto salga por el sentido común y por un criterio de preservar este órgano por encima de las tensiones que naturalmente existen, por lo cual hemos llegado hasta acá y que no empezaron hoy. Estas tensiones tienen una historia. Simplemente no hablé hasta ahora, así que le agradezco que me haya dado estos dos minutos para poder expresar mi preocupación.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En nombre propio y de los 27 Estados Miembros. Creo que se han dicho bastantes cosas interesantes en los últimos momentos. Como que, hay que saber romper el círculo y salir adelante, y no sé si es una broma o no, pero que cuantos más juristas, más difícil es la situación.

Yo no soy jurista, ya lo saben, pero sí sé leer un texto legal y creo que es muy claro y además lo ha dicho la Jefa de los servicios jurídicos de esta Organización, y si no me equivoco dijo, *“Of course, basics texts must prevail.”* *“Los textos básicos tienen que prevalecer”*. Creo que es muy sencillo, no da lugar a mayores interpretaciones. Lo dijo muy bien la delegada del Reino Unido también.

Y quiero hacer eco también de lo que acaba de decir Argentina con quien no puedo estar más de acuerdo. Estamos poniendo en peligro la solidaridad que es un principio básico del multilateralismo. Y la solidaridad también significa hacer respetar la democracia y dejar que otros propongan enmiendas a

las que votar. Se votan esas enmiendas, se aceptan o no se aceptan y se vota *en bloc*. Eso es la democracia, eso es el sentido común y eso es la solidaridad dentro del multilateralismo.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

I just wanted to comment on when it was mentioned that why the Nicaraguan was amended and then this is not, but those are two different procedures; one is a draft conclusion which you proposed and nobody asked for an unblock and we just amended it a little and that was by procedure, but this is a draft decision which a group proposed and they said no amendments, and so we should respect that.

That is the procedure and it was done in the 169th Session of the Council and so we should continue with that, finish with all this talk about going round and round and round. There was already, we were the first ones to put in a request for an *en bloc* and I think that we should do that now.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

Respect as my colleague from Spain was saying. Respect Members first. Respect the wish of Members, exactly. We asked for a vote *en bloc*, give us this respect. We came to you about 50 times, you did not give us a single ounce of respect. You wanted to change everything in our text and we went along, we changed, we went along, we changed.

We still have a proposal that is 95 percent agreeable to them, for two words. For two words, they do not want to approve it. What kind of respect is this? You are asking for respect, really? Democracy? This is okay? I put my motion to vote. Vote on it.

You want to bring something else, next Council bring 50 draft decisions, it is up to you, but now we came with a decision. We tried and tried, 50 times, 08:00 hours in the morning until 22:00 hours at night, at the end where is the respect of this? He should tell us, okay I have the respect for you, for this I will stand with you and go along and leave this mess, but no, there is one control that twirls around this group, it is unbelievable, I have never seen anything like this in my life. Never. We call again on a vote.

The discussions, the amendments on discussion, there is no discussion on the draft decision. We put it as a block. We did not even start any discussion on it. How can you put in an amendment? It is done like this in 169th Session of the Council and everybody in 171st Session of the Council if you look at the Verbatim, all of them they ask the same thing, to vote *en bloc*, all the Members from European Union.

One by one I can call you now, they asked for a vote *en bloc*. And now when we do the same thing they tell us no, respect. I respectfully call for a motion on vote *en bloc*, please Chairperson. This is the only way out for you and for us.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I decided to take the floor to respond to your request to express ourselves so Italy will express our own thought. I think we all tried, really very hard here. Everyone who has been involved in lengthy conversation and all, and I mean seriously, all the parts, gave a part of concession. As it was said, sometimes you do not reach consensus, not because you do not want that but because things are more complicated that sometimes are.

So what guides us are Rules of Procedure. This is where we think we are, and we do think that Rules of Procedure that deserve respect by everyone. The rule of the game, we agreed altogether long time ago. We can change them only in Conference as far as I know, and I feel very much reassured but what the Legal Counsel told us, that so far, we have always been in respect of Rule XII, paragraph 26.

I ask myself why should I divert from this practise for the first time today? I would also ask, and I asked myself, I do not think anyone is afraid of taking a vote. Vote is the highest possible expression of will and intention for us all, and a vote will tell us where this Council will go to the next steps. So why being afraid of following the rules and see the amendments? Why impede that if it is clearly stated in the rules?

Every time we say something and we make a statement, and with this I really finish, there is also another side. It can also be seen in two different ways, so my way is then why should we be afraid of seeing the amendments?

Thanks to the Legal Counsel for that

CHAIRPERSON

I will wait now for consultations and I will come back to you.

The meeting was paused from 19.06 to 20.46 hours

Pause dans la réunion de 19 h 06 à 20 h 46

Se suspende la sesión de las 19.06 a las 20.46

CHAIRPERSON

Dear friends, I have consulted to find a way out but just for information, we are not the only UN body who is discussing this Item but for the first time in history of the United Nations, the Secretary-General used his right to call for the Security Council Meeting for a humanitarian ceasefire. That is not for us, just that everybody has the same information, and this meeting will take place today.

It is already quite late, and I was hoping that we could come back tomorrow and have a little bit more rest but it is clear that several Members want to have the next step. So, I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

As the Members will recall, we have, a proposal for decision from a group of countries that circulated a fairly extensive period before the Session. During today there have been firstly requests for that draft proposal to be voted *en bloc*. Also, during today, one Member proposed amendments to that proposal. The question then arose as to which precedent may be of assistance to the Members in this context.

There was the precedent from the 169th Session of the Council and the precedent from the 171st Session. At the 169th Session there had been Members who had made a proposal for a decision, which they had indicated they wished to have adopted *en bloc*. Other Members of the Council were so informed, and they did not formally present proposals of amendment.

At the 171st Session, similarly, the proposers put forward a decision saying they wished to have these adopted *en bloc*. Notwithstanding that, during the Session one Member put forward a proposal for amendment. In accordance with paragraph 26 of Rule XII, that amendment was then put to a vote before the original proposal.

Thus, there have been these two recent experiences of the application of paragraph 26 of Rule XII of the Basic Texts. In this instance, as I recalled at the beginning, we have had a proposal put forward circulated by Members.

We have also now received a request by a Member that it wishes to put forward amendments. In that context, the first sentence of paragraph 26 would apply in my view, specifying that "*when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first*". I do not see any basis in the General Rules of the Organization by which a Member could be denied the right to put forward amendments. I would also observe that Rule XI does provide for circulation of proposal for amendments.

In this context, I would refer specifically to Rule XI paragraph 2, "*Proposals and amendments shall be introduced in writing and handed to the Secretary General of the Conference, who shall arrange for their circulation as Conference documents*". That, of course, is applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the Council. Paragraph 3 of Rule XI further provides that its second sentence that "*the Chairperson of the Conference or of the commission or committee, - in this case, the Council - may permit voting on amendments even though those amendments have not been circulated or have been circulated less than 24 hours before the vote*".

Thus, having read the Rules, it is my understanding of the current situation that the proposals for amendment would have to be circulated and considered by the Council. That is my understanding of the Rules.

CHAIRPERSON

To be absolutely clear, you say the Rules state that we now should give a Member the possibility to propose amendments? So based on the advice of the Legal Counsel explaining the Rules and the situation, I have to follow the Rules, the advice of the Legal Counsel. That would be the proposal to the Council to allow one Member, or at least one Member to put forward amendments.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

I think first response to that is we have not seen any proposal being presented to the wider plenary. Meaning that technically the, to my view, that a proposal is not, or has not been moved in this regard because at the beginning we said that the group that proposed these decisions to be voted *en bloc*, they clearly oppose to hear or to receive any amendment to those decisions being made, so that would be the case.

Second is to see that paragraph 26 of Rule XII, we have to be sure that this is a valid amendment being proposed. It has to. And it says here in paragraph 26, and I quote, "*A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from, or revise parts of that proposal, but not if it negates the proposal*". We have to be clear that this is a valid amendment. If not, we did not have even to consider it. That is the second argument that we would like to propose.

Third, I think we also have to see the paragraph 26 in this regard. Subject to paragraph 26, any motion calling for the decision by the Conference or Council on its competence to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question. We have to be fair and see that if it is a valid proposal before we take any decisions on that proposal being questioned. That would be my understanding in this regard. We have to see that in relations on the paragraph 26 as well. That will be my argument on this.

CHAIRPERSON

I listened very carefully to what you are saying, but to understand it and to see what is applicable, we have to see something.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I start from where you ended. We need to see something to decide. This decision has been circulated for more than almost ten days now, and we have seen nothing. We should not wait until the last minute to see these amendments. We could have seen it even before. And we cannot compare this to what happened yesterday and this morning regarding the paragraph that was proposed by Nicaragua because these draft conclusions were not circulated before.

It was shown on the screen on the same day, and then it was discussed and we had amendments on the same day. But this draft decision has been there, circulated publicly on the website of FAO accessible to everyone, and we have seen no comments on it.

As you have seen, according to paragraph 27, as the dear colleague from Indonesia has said, we should not come now with seams, not really slight amendment like what happened in the 171th Session of the Council, especially that we have had a practice of the 169th Session of the Council and come now and say, "*oh, we have amendments, let us look unto them and see if they are applicable or not*". That is not the right time.

To be clear, I think paragraph 26 is not applicable in the situation here. That is a draft decision submitted by a regional group requested to be voted on *en bloc*, and we cannot jeopardize the language of this decision by waiting to see if amendments are applicable or not applicable to the decision itself.

The easy way to go forward is to respond to the will of the Members who have submitted this draft decision and the owner, this product that we have this draft decision is owned by the countries that have submitted this draft decision.

Well, we should go that they want to vote on this *en bloc*. This is not amendment to a proposal, as in paragraph 26. This is a different situation. Maybe as the colleague from Indonesia has explained it is not applicable according to the Rules of Procedure, but maybe there is a gap in the Rules of Procedures. And we want to make sure that this gap should be on our shoulders. We should not go and have an account for this one.

But what we can see here with all the due respect to the legal advice from the Legal Counsel, we do not think that paragraph 26 is applicable here.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I have been very, very hesitant to take the floor and I still do not really want to enter into the debate on this issue but this is something which is difficult for me to. This is my 65th Session of the FAO Council and I have never seen such a situation before.

After more than 66 Sessions of the Council that I have attended, it is so difficult to understand what is happening here today, and this has been going on for the past two years and it is very difficult to manage. The Council is becoming difficult to manage. The fault is ours. It is not the faults of the Chair or whoever, it is the Council itself.

We are here in a situation where there is a case law, which has been set up in the 169th Session and I would have loved to see that that case law guides us on the decision-making today. We are in a position where we do not know what is going to happen to any amendment which is coming up. I am sure that if one amendment comes, it could be the beginning of a new Christmas tree. Christmas is near, in two weeks time, I know. Everybody is making his Christmas tree in his home now, but we do not have to have it in the text of the Council.

Chair, I will plead with you, really, to apply the case law of 169th Session and take the decision on the basis of that because this is a precedent. We cannot just push it aside. I am really pleading that this experience of the Council being divided and continue to be divided is hard for me, and I really do not like to see it happening. Why should we always work to divide the Council?

We need to have ourselves good relationships, from one country to the other, from one region to the other, and being respectful to one region to the other. And as we have been elected by our region, different regions, to the Council, we should be mindful of the fact that this election gives us some responsibilities we have to fulfill.

If we do not fulfill, then the Council has no right to exist. I really plead with you to move a motion to take reference to the case law of the 169th Session and move forward. That may help us. This decision is a political decision we have to take because we have been hearing here that the Council decided not to have a motion.

But I believe that if I recall very well what happened, I think, Chair, you requested countries not to bring amendments. You are the one who requested and no country as such brought the amendment to the text.

So, you can, again, today do the same thing, request countries not to bring amendments because we have that precedent.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I would like to draw your attention to something. We are at a fateful moment. I am really quite awkward with the argument that during the 169th Session of the Council there were no amendments made. I think we need to look at the recordings of the 169th Session very carefully because I was there and I recall that simply nobody made any amendments.

We were not talking about not making them or making or proposing them, but it was said to us that a group of countries made *en bloc* proposal. Perhaps, of course I have forgotten what happened, but in my view, that was what happened. I would not agree with the affirmation that at the 169th Session there were no amendments made. That is the first thing.

And I think we also need to look at the records of this meeting so that we know exactly what happened. The second point is that we have left us a certain nuance. We, it was just said to us by the

Legal Counsel that if a proposal to make amendment is not made within 24 hours, then the decision about whether or not to consider it or not is to be taken by the Chair. Is that correct?

I did not really understand whether or not the Chairperson had taken such a decision or not.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

The right word that my distinguished colleague from Cameroon said is respect. It is now a matter of principle really, because Members seem to think that they can bend the rules. They can do whatever they want in Council, they can direct the decision as they wish. This is not good for the Council.

This is taking us in a way that will reflect on our work, on how we are doing the work in this Council. They have done that in 169th Session of the Council knowing all the rules. They are very good at the rules. They have all the books and they read everything.

They know what is going on and they have done it, 169th Session *en bloc*. For now, I do not even see our draft decision on the screen. Nobody even knows what our draft decision. They can see how simple it is. At least they can see how the language in that draft is so acceptable by everyone, even somebody passing down the street. But no, it is only a matter of I do not like it. I do not want it, and therefore I will not let it pass.

This is what we are getting now. This is the problem with this setting of Council. That it is no, I do not want to pass it. Yes, we passed it in the 169th Session and we did it in the 169th Session. But now, no, I will not approve it. It cannot be working that way. We cannot go working that way. It is impossible. The only way for you is to take the decision as the Legal Counsel said, as the Secretary General said, that it has been done in the past. It is a precedent.

Everybody saying there is no precedent before that has been done on that matter. Voting in a block. Well, it is being done now. That is all we need. It is being done. And whatever proposals they will bring, we have seen it. This is a problem. Everybody should know this. We have seen their proposals and we gave them another one and another one, another one. They do not want to accept it. They do not want to accept our proposal. It is like going in circles. It is useless. They do not like our proposal. Vote on it.

We are so happy, even if we lose, but vote on it. Vote.

CHAIRPERSON

Before giving the floor to the Legal Counsel to answer the questions when it was stated by Cameroon of the case law of the 169th Session of the Council to be correct with the facts, it was not I who asked not to propose amendments because I read the verbatim.

As Members asked me today during the lunch break, whether or not it would be feasible to propose slight amendments to the text, that is not up to me. That is up to the group of the 22 Members, whether or not, because it is clearly stated in the Plenary whether or not it is a take it or leave it proposal.

I did not ask. I told what the situation was and the group of 22 stated at that moment that it was a take it or leave it proposal, but the Council decided to go follow the procedure. That is the case law of the 169th Session of the Council. I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I will start firstly with the query from Belarus concerning the 24-hour requirement. Rule XI, paragraph 3 sets out firstly that "*proposals shall not be put to a vote unless copies thereof have been circulated at least 24 hours before the vote*". But it then goes on in its second sentence to say the "*Chairperson concerned may permit voting on amendments even though these amendments have not been circulated or have been circulated less than 24 hours before the vote*". The Chairperson may make that determination.

With respect to Indonesia's observations, as noted by Indonesia, the last sentence of paragraph 26 does actually address what constitutes an amendment and what does not and indeed how then those would be addressed. In fact, the last two sentences of paragraph 26, where it specifies "*a motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from, or revises part of that*

proposal, but not if it negatives the proposal. An amendment by way of substitution shall not be voted on until the vote has been taken on the original proposal and on any amendments thereto”.

Therefore, as indicated, something that qualifies as an amendment then has to be voted on first before the proposal. Something that does not qualify as an amendment is voted on after the vote on the original proposal, if voted at all; the original proposal goes first, but that is where it does not qualify as an amendment.

As regards paragraph 27 of Rule XII, this provides “*Subject to paragraph 26, any motion calling for decision by the Conference or Council on its competence to adopt a proposal submitted to it shall be put to the vote before a vote is taken on the proposal in question*”. My understanding, my reading of paragraph 27 is that this is talking about the authority of the Council. In fact, it says, “*to address a matter is within the mandate or competence of the Council*”. All I can do is let you know what is written in the Rules.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

Thank you for bringing us back to the Verbatims of 169th Session of the FAO Council, because I also would like to get the guidance of the Legal Counsel because I think it is very clear if we read the full Verbatims, because I think you have not read the full paragraph. And it is if you allow me, “*all the Members asked me today during the lunch break whether or not it will be feasible to propose slight amendments to the text. That is not up to me. But this is up to the group of the 22 Members*”.

That is setting precedence, that is up to the group of countries that propose the draft decision. That is number one. And then we go whether or not, because it has to be clearly stated in the Plenary, whether or not this is a ticket or leave the proposal for the group of 22 Members. If, and here we go, “*if it is a take it or leave it proposal, I will put it forward for adoption en bloc and see whether or not we have consensus or whether we or not we have to vote*”.

The question was consensus or voting. It was not for adding any amendments to the proposal since it was requested from the group, from the 22 Member States of the group that presented this draft decision to take the decision. And what we are asking for, Mr Chairperson, as Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), is fairness. This is very clear and this Verbatim what we had as a question and what we had as a precedent.

What we are asking for is to have the same precedent. And I will ask again the guidance from the Legal Counsel regarding the exact wording of the ICC. The same ICC, we gave him confidence in the last Conference, so he did not change and that is why we have the same advantage, Chairperson of the Council, and we will ask him to take the exact same decision he took in April 2022.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Donata Rugarabamu, because the question was given to you.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

Here I would observe that I do not believe it is in my competence to advise on this matter. What I would recall is that under Rule IX, paragraph 4, “*the Chairperson, in the exercise of his functions, remains under the authority of the Conference.*” i.e., the Chairperson in this context, in the exercise of his functions, remains under the authority of the Council. Therefore, if the Council does not concur with the approach of the Chairperson, the Council can take a decision.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I am a little confused about what is going on because you were gone for a long time and then came back and made a decision. Now we are back in the same discussion we were in before. I just want to point out, the words said by the Independent Chair of the Council (ICC) does not make rules. The Rules of Procedure are what govern our work here. But I also want to make really clear a couple of things. One is the definition of *en bloc*.

En bloc simply means that the text stays together when it is voted and is not split up into other sections. But I think more important here is that no one, ourselves included, is arguing or trying to say that we do not think that this proposal should be voted on. We do. We want it to be voted on. But, like the rules provide for here and in every other United Nations (UN) body, when someone puts a proposal or a resolution in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) or a resolution anywhere else, or whatever the wording is for that document, other Member states are allowed to offer amendments. They pass or they do not. That is how we come to conclusions when there is no agreement on things.

This happened recently in UNGA. There were amendments proposed that did not pass. It has happened here. Amendments are proposed that pass, amendments are proposed that do not pass, but it is the right of every Member State, not the United States, not anyone else, is the right of every Member State to offer amendments, have those amendments decided on by the Council and then move forward. We want to vote. We would like to move forward on a vote.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

For the last time I have a suggestion. English is my language so I think I understood the Legal Counsel quite clear earlier when I asked the question. The answer I got says that the Council has the authority to suspend any Rule. If that is true, can we simply have a vote to determine whether or not the body wishes to suspend whatever the rules are to allow or to disallow an amendment?

Is that a possibility? Because I certainly think that we have most of the Members here, so we have quorum. If we have the authority as Council to determine what should happen, then there can be a decision made to allow or disallow an amendment to be made. And so, you can have a vote up or down on that particular issue, and then we move forward instead of having an endless debate.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

In this regard, I am not sure I confirmed whether or not the Council had the authority to suspend the Rules or not. I indicated that, under the guidance of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC), when the first time, in the 169th Session of the Council, the formal amendments were not presented on the basis that the Members which had proposed that decision had said they would not accept formal amendments, that they would want to go forward *en bloc*. There was not, formally speaking from a very technical legal perspective, amendments proposed.

On that basis, the ICC put forward the decision for adoption without having addressed any amendments because no amendments have been formally presented. Nevertheless, I think really, we are now at a situation where I have read the Rules here and we are in your hands. It really is a matter of working out how the Members can proceed because I can keep repeating paragraphs 26 and paragraphs 20 onwards. I am in your hands right now.

Mr Mohammed Ahmed M. ALGHAMDI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

What we are asking for is not about a precedent or a case law. The 22 countries asked in the past to vote *en bloc* on their proposal and today the Council should go towards the same direction. The double standards are not acceptable here. Something that was acceptable there is not acceptable today, now we insist to vote on this proposal *en bloc*.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

Two points. First of all, in reference to the commitment by the distinguished colleague from the Bahamas, I do not think anyone in this room has asked us to suspend the Rules of Procedures, and I just want to make this very clear. I think we, speaking on behalf of my delegation, we do not want to suspend any Rules of Procedure.

We highly respect and appreciate the Basic Texts of FAO as well as we appreciate and respect the Reports that were adopted and endorsed here in the FAO Councils, especially the 169th Session. I think it is very clear when we were briefed about the Verbatims, we were not briefed in full.

This applies that in the 169th Session we were not briefed by any legal advisor that we have had the chance to ask to not vote *en bloc* because it does not apply to paragraph 26 of Rule XII of the Basic Texts because we are not legal experts and as the Independent Chairperson of the Person (ICC) has mentioned before, we are not lawyers here.

Based on the same goodwill and good intentions, we accepted this request made by the ICC since he stated it very clearly and no one, we should not be the ones correcting the ICC if he is not going the right legal path. It should be someone else, maybe the Legal Counsel, I do not know. But we trusted his judgment and his assessment that he said that this is the decision of the countries who submitted the draft decision. That is what we are asking for today.

We are coming on the same way, asking from the same ICC to take the same decision and accept, our well as coming from the Near East Regional Group to vote on this draft decision *en bloc*. With no suspension of any Rule, with no going any further. I think it is very clear, the vibe in the room is very clear that we should go for voting on this draft decision *en bloc*.

CHAIRPERSON

We can go back and forth on many things, but let me be clear, it was 169th Session of the Council (CL169). It was a decision of the Council. It was not my decision because it is not up to me to take my decision. I put it as I stated, I gave what is stated in verbatim, went to the Council, and the Council accepted that because I do not have... You can shake your head Egypt, but let us state this, and the Council decided to go along with this. That is how it is in the verbatim.

The Legal Counsel stated that the next step should be, which of course does not mean the consensus is to ask the United States to at least present their amendments and then we can see whether or not it is conformed to paragraph 26, 27, et cetera. Cameroon made a motion to apply the case law of CL169. So those are two proposals on the table. I do not see we get any consensus on that at this moment. That means that we have to go for a vote on that. I give the floor to Cameroon, whether or not he made that motion formally or it was a suggestion.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I said you are the one to take the decision, Chairperson, on this. I recalled that it was a case law in the 169th Session of the Council and we take recognition of that. And on that basis, you put before us, as we did for the 169th Session of the Council, if we want to accept *en bloc* as it was the case. That question has not been posed to the Council, to the best of my knowledge.

If I suggest, Chairperson, probably that is the first question you should put to the Council if we want to use that case law to move forward. I did not put it as a motion, but I just recalled it.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I am not sure what is meant by case law in the context of the Council, but as was described very clearly in the 169th Session, no one offered an amendment so paragraph 26 was not invoked. In 171st Session of the FAO Council amendments were offered, paragraph 26 was invoked. I am not sure what the decision is to be made here. Start the vote. We will offer amendments. We will vote on the amendments. They will pass or they will not. We will have a vote *en bloc* of the text as it stands and we will move forward. This is so simple.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Having heard what this discussion is going anywhere, I think we will listen carefully, and we do not want to, I think, prolong the discussions that we had. We do not want to suspend any Rules. What we do is simply what we have requested since the beginning is to have to vote the decisions *en bloc*. We would like to plead and to make a formal request that we could vote whether or not we can vote *en bloc* on the decision put forward by the Near East Group. This is our formal request.

CHAIRPERSON

That is similar, which I was going to propose, but it is now a formal request to vote on the proposal and I read it, "*to move directly to the vote on the proposal contained in CL 174/INF/11*". That is how I understand the proposal of Indonesia.

The Council has now to take the decision to move directly to vote on the proposal contained in *CL 174/INF/11*. That is what we have to vote on now.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I have two questions about this. Moving to the vote is what we are all asking to do. Moving to the vote would allow us to offer our amendments, vote on those amendments, and then vote on the proposal. I am not sure why this would require a vote to move to the vote. We all agree we should move to the vote.

And then under paragraph 26 of Rule XII, all offered amendments, we will vote on those, we will vote on the proposal. This is exactly what we are all proposing, so I do not understand why we would have to go to a vote on this.

If what is being proposed is to move to a vote and suspend the Rule on allowing amendments, that is a different story. But if it is just a movement to go to a vote, I kind of feel like everyone in this room agrees on that right now, and let us do it.

CHAIRPERSON

It is not up to me to explain the proposal of Indonesia, but Indonesia proposed to go directly to the vote on the proposal contained in *CL 174/INF/11*, which is the proposal of the Near East Group and the States go move directly. That is what was proposed by Indonesia. But if Indonesia sees differently, it is up to Indonesia to explain.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Yes, the proposal is to vote directly to that. Only the difference is that we would like to request that it will be voted *en bloc*. That will be the difference than what you said earlier.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to make sure that our understanding of this is all correct because I think I agree with that as well. Moving to vote *en bloc* is again, what I think there is consensus in this room to do. If we move to vote *en bloc*, the vote begins and when the vote begins, amendments can be offered under paragraph 26.

I will offer those amendments. Those amendments will be to a vote. They will pass or they will fail and then we will vote on the proposal. I am not sure if what is being asked is to move directly to a vote and not allow amendments, then we are asking to suspend the rules, which everybody says they do not want to do. I am confused, but it sounds like there is consensus to move to the vote. Let us do it. We will offer our amendments, we will vote on them. This will be finished.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Maybe the Legal Counsel could clarify if a motion to vote is being challenged, it means that there is no consensus. We do not mind to vote on that, whether or not we will have to move to vote *en bloc* the tough decisions put forward by the Near East Group. We will have to put a vote before the vote of that original proposal proposed. This is a procedural vote before the vote, just to be clear on that.

CHAIRPERSON

To be clear, let the United States of America ask us a question. Because as I read the understanding of the United States, but let the United States explain itself, what he sees in your proposal because I feel there is a difference.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I, again, agree with this proposal 100 percent. We should have moved to the vote four hours ago. We should move to the vote, and we should move to the vote *en bloc*. *En bloc* means that the proposal stays together as one proposal. It does not mean that amendments are not offered, amendments being offered is the right of any Member State. And when the vote begins, that is when amendments can be offered.

So yes, we do not have to vote on this and I unless there is an opposition to starting the vote, but I have not heard any. If that is what is being proposed is to move directly to the vote, let us do it. Let us move directly to the vote. We will offer our amendments. We will vote on them. This is easy. This is what we have been asking for all along and I think we need to move as a Council. We can get this finished. We can get it finished quickly.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Indonesia to see whether or not that is also the understanding of Indonesia with this proposal, that when we start the vote, that we also ask for amendments to be tabled.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

But my understanding is that the Group that presented this proposal draft decisions does not want to hear any. They oppose to hear any amendments presented by the United States of America. This is the difference. Meaning that we do not have Council decisions to hear or even to explore any possibility to have hear the proposal by the United States of America. Our proposal is that we should put a vote on whether or not we can vote the decisions presented by the Near East Group *en bloc*. I hope I made it clear enough.

CHAIRPERSON

I have a long list of speakers. Let me put on the screen the proposal of Indonesia because then get a little bit clear on what we have to vote on. The proposal is as it is written on the screen. “*Vote to move directly on the proposal contained in CL 174/INF/11 en bloc*”. Point of procedure by Belarus and then the United States of America and then Egypt.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I wanted to once again return to the minutes from the 169th Session as were just quoted by the representative of Egypt. We all understand what happened then we deviated from the amendments because the country that initiated the proposal did not want to hear those amendments. Why is it that today everything is completely different?

Today, once again, a group of countries is saying we do not want any amendments. But today, unlike in the 169th Session of the Council, why is it that this proposal is not being supported? What has happened in the intervening 18 months? The Rules were the same in the 169th Session, as was mentioned from the minutes. That was because the initiators of the proposal did not want to hear those amendments. What has changed today? Why is it that today we are playing by different Rules? How can that happen?

CHAIRPERSON

I have a long list of speakers, whether or not we read point of orders or not. But my idea would be that we start voting on this because we are not in agreement. That is clear.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I would say the Rules were the same in the 169th Session of the Council. Members chose not to offer amendments. That might have been done under pressure from the Chairperson, it might have been done under pressure from other Member States, but they had the right to do so.

I will also point out, no one ever wants there to be amendments to their proposals, that is why we put forward proposals. That is also why the rules allow amendments so that we can have this sort of a discussion. However, we need clarification on this because reading from the Rules of Procedure, a vote to move directly to vote means that we move directly to the vote, which means amendments can be offered.

And the Legal Counsel needs to weigh in on this because if we are not, and what we are voting is to not allow amendments and move to a vote, we are voting to suspend the Rules of Procedure which requires a different majority, I believe, but also requires us to decide whether or not we have the competence to change the Rules of Procedure and whether or not we want to set the precedent whereby we suspend the Rules of Procedure when it is convenient for us.

We really need to think about this, but also we need clarification from both you, Chairperson, and from the Legal Counsel. Not another back and forth between us and Indonesia where we have different understandings of this, because a move to the vote means we move to the vote, and that would mean at that point amendments can be offered. If that is not the case, this is a proposal to suspend the Rules, which we need to be very clear on as well. Thank you.

Sorry, just one more thing, *en bloc* from my understanding, and again we need clarification from the Legal Counsel, *en bloc* does not mean you get to move something forward without getting amendments on your proposal. It means it stays together, it is not split up into parts to be voted on in parts, so we need clarification on what it is we are deciding and we need clarification from the Secretariat or from you, Chairperson, or from the Legal Counsel, because we are going back and forth on this.

But I do not think Members can vote on something when we do not understand what the outcome will mean and whether or not this needs to be a different threshold.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that there are two queries with respect to the proposal that had been presented to you. The proposal of Indonesia to move directly to the vote on the proposal contained in document CL 174/INF/11 *en bloc*. Firstly, the question was whether this would in effect mean that amendments would not be considered or addressed and whether that, in effect, was then a suspension of the General Rules of the Organization. And secondly, whether '*en bloc*' in fact meant that amendments could not be presented.

As regards the question of whether this would represent a suspension of the General Rules of the Organization, and here once again I would note paragraph 26 does specify that, "*when amendments are moved, the amendments shall be voted on first*". If amendments have been moved, they must be voted on first, and here of course though the Members may, nevertheless, decide as they have done in the past, to amend their processes. But nevertheless...

In fact, let me take that back, they have not amended their processes. What occurred was at an earlier stage there was a decision taken that, under guidance or otherwise, there seemed to be an acceptance by the Council when presented by the ICC that the Members who had put forward a proposal would not accept amendments, there seemed to be an acceptance of this by the Council so amendments were not formally moved.

As regards whether *en bloc* means that no amendments can be presented, when one refers to the past precedents both in the 169th and 171st Sessions, it has been used in a particular sense. It has been used to mean that the text has gone forward without any changes, literally as presented in the proposal, that was how these were addressed in the past and so it has been used in that manner.

Whether formally this conforms to *en bloc* as may be used in other fora would be another matter, but my understanding is that in this forum, when these instances have arisen, it has been used to mean that the text is presented, addressed and considered as such, without any change.

I hope that I have answered your queries, but please revert if I can help from the legal perspective.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just on the question about *en bloc* in the context of governance at FAO, this is a term that has been used time and time again. It is used in adoption of draft reports, draft decisions as at the 169th Session of the Council, we talked about it. Normally, and this is my understanding, at once the intent of the

party that presents the term *en bloc* is that the proposal in question is considered as the sum of its parts, but also that is considered unaltered.

That is normally the accepted consideration when this term is used in governance at FAO. It is not a hard and fast rule, there is no hard definition, but this is the general acceptance.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Indonesia to explain exactly what they mean with “*vote to move directly*”, because that is their proposal, what it means. Because we have to be absolutely clear what we are going to vote on.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Two things. I think, first, just to say that formally, legally speaking, no amendment is being moved because we have not seen one.

Second, on my intent on this voting, it is already clearly said that we would like to move directly to vote on the proposal contained in document *CL 174/INF/11*, which means the document as it stands now, without alterations.

But if we can make it clear then we can add after “*en bloc*”, the words “*without amendment*”, that would be to make it clear enough.

CHAIRPERSON

I see the list of speakers growing. We have to start voting on something. So, is it clear what we are asked by Indonesia to vote on. Then I bring it to a vote. Two points of order by the United States and Spain.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

This very clearly is a suspension of the Rules so could we get clarification from the Legal Counsel on how the procedure for suspension of Rules by the Council would be conducted, and if there is a different threshold for voting on the suspension of the Rules.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Dos cuestiones sobre la formulación que vemos actualmente en la pantalla de la última propuesta de Indonesia haciendo referencia explícita a que no haya modificaciones, nos sumamos plenamente a la pregunta que acaba de formular Estados Unidos de América con el ruego explícito a los servicios jurídicos, al Secretariado del Consejo y al Presidente de él, es decir a todo el pódium que estamos viendo, que se nos dé una respuesta clara, firme. Para eso están los servicios jurídicos.

Si volvemos a la formulación anterior, en la que no venía “*without amendments*” o “*sin modificaciones*” queríamos consultar igualmente si en ese caso, leo en inglés, “*vote to move directly to vote on the proposal containing CL en bloc*” significa, de hecho, el no permitir a un Estado Miembro presentar modificaciones y, por tanto, de facto suspender el reglamento actual. En cualquier caso, eso nos parece un precedente tremendamente peligroso para esta Organización que es de todos nosotros.

CHAIRPERSON

I will take down all the speakers to avoid that we continue back and forth because at a certain moment we have to decide what to do and how to do it.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

It seems we are not only deprived from our right to vote on our draft decision *en bloc*, but we are even now deprived from our right to ask the Council to decide if we can vote on our draft decision *en bloc*. This is, I think, going beyond what we can accept.

What we have, and I do not know why the colleagues are taking this discussion into a legal discussion or like suspension of the rules discussion, this has nothing to do with suspension of the rules. We have different legal interpretations if paragraph 26 of Rule XII is applicable in this case or not. For many reasons that we have been discussing for the past four hours and that is why we are asking the Council

to decide to give its decision on the right legal interpretation for this question. No suspension of Rules, nothing.

We came here saying we want to vote now our draft decision *en bloc* as we did in the 169th Session of the Council. Especially that we have not seen any amendments and as the Legal Counsel (LEG) said that we should have seen the amendments 24 hours in advance at least and we have not seen any amendments, so we do not think that paragraph 26 applies here. Some other delegations say no, we think that paragraph 26 applies here, so this is an issue with different legal interpretation if paragraph 26 is applicable here or not.

What we are doing now to make it very clear is we are asking the Council to decide on the right legal interpretation for this issue. I do not know why we are depriving the Council from its right to decide. It is really becoming very strange that we are not only not able to vote on our document that we presented ten days ago, but actually we are deprived from our right to ask the Council to decide, and I would like to refer to a comment made by our colleague before about being afraid to vote on some amendments, and I am not sure who is afraid now.

I do not want to drag our discussion to this path, but just to make it very clear, it is the right of the Council to decide on the right legal interpretation if this Article is applicable here and hence if we can vote *en bloc* with no amendments on the draft decision since we have no amendments.

We are not asking to remove any amendments, we do not have any amendments so far and we want to vote directly on the text as it stands. I would rather put draft decision instead of proposal but that is another point, not really that we would like to see on the screen. This is a draft decision, proposed draft decision from the Near East Group, yes? I think, I hope it is clear for everyone now what we want to vote on at this moment and since there is a motion to vote, Mr Ambassador, and I think from a legal perspective, we should move directly to voting now. Why should we open a debate?

We really count on your guidance now, Chairperson. We have many reasons why we want to vote. We are not only voting *en bloc* but we are voting to ask the Council to decide if we can vote *en bloc*. Really, I do not understand how further can we go tonight regarding this.

CHAIRPERSON

I have five speakers and then I give the floor to the Legal Counsel and then we go to the request to the vote.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I want to repeat what I said before and this time I want to formally make a request to propose that we move for the suspension of the rules. It seems clear to me that the only way out of this quagmire is to propose to vote on a suspension of the Rules.

If not, we will be here all night and I do not think that is advisable. We have gone through this repeatedly and we could continue to go around in circles.

It is clear to any reasonable thinking person in this room that we are going to have this debate go on and on eternally. The only way out, as far as I understand, is to vote for a suspension of the Rules and a decision can be made with that decision.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

I do not think this is a circus because we are talking about human lives here. We are talking about the people who are suffering in Gaza. This is what we are talking about. This is not a joking matter. This is not something that we are playing with. We are trying to put forth something that reflects the situation, partially reflects the situation in Gaza - partially, not even fully. And we are working closely with everybody and trying to reach consensus.

Now, this is what the Legal Counsel says for 50 million times, I do not know how times she said it, it was accepted by the Council to vote *en bloc* in the 169th Session of the FAO Council. It was very clear and now we come here and then now Indonesia is asking to vote on the vote. There is no amendments to the word "to". There is nothing. It is a vote so we can vote on our decision.

Chairperson, come on, please, take the decision and let us move on because it is 22:00 hours now at night. We cannot stay anymore hanging like this, everybody. You told us to have some courage, the courage is in your hands.

CHAIRPERSON

After the comments of the Legal Counsel, we go to the vote. I see the list growing but I give only Italy and the United Kingdom the floor and then we give the floor to the Legal Counsel because all the arguments and all the elements now been put on the table.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I think it is clear that we all want to vote as soon as we can. Now from what we see on the screen right now, Italy takes that this means suspensions of the Rules of Procedures which is, of course, possible but we would like to be clear, not only on the majority that it requires to take the decision but also if this has to notified prior, as I read on the Rules of Procedures, 24 hours before that.

On the vote, I would like to argue that we should not vote on applying or not applying the Rules of Procedures, we should vote according to the Rules of Procedures.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Let me just underline here that nobody in this room is saying that we do not want to vote. We do, we have been saying that for hours. Nobody in this room is suggesting that there is any attempt by the Council to deprive anybody of voting for the draft decision as put forward *en bloc*. We are not doing that, there is no suggestion that the Council is trying to do that.

It is the right of Members to suggest that, and the Council will proceed with that. Equally, it is the right of any Member to put forward an amendment. We also need to protect that right and talking about previous examples does not take precedence over the Basic Texts of this organization. The examples that have been clearly set out show that there was no vote on amendments because no amendment was put forward. In this case, there is a request for an amendment to be put forward and that is being blocked. On the contrary, we could simply move forward, go for the vote, vote on the amendments, and then vote *en bloc* for the text. It is actually quite a straightforward process.

I think it would be very dangerous for this Council to start looking at suspending its rules. I do not know where that could take this Council. It is a risk and quite apart from that, Rule XLIX suggests, and the Legal Counsel can confirm this, but there does seem to be a suggestion that it is not for the Council to suspend its rules, that would have to be something that goes to Conference. There would then need to be a two-thirds majority vote by Conference.

So, I would really recall that we try to respect the Basic Texts and Rules of this Organization and the Rules for this Governing Body. Respect the governance, move forward without any further delay in line with the rules, taking the proposed amendments, voting on them, as has been clearly said they will either be supported or not supported, that is fine, and then we move on and we vote *en bloc* for the Text, and we are done, that is it. But we will have performed our responsibilities in line with the Rules of this Governing Body, which is of the utmost importance.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Ms Donata Rugarabamu.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I am at the stage where there seems to be rather a lot of different elements on the table and this is where it becomes somewhat difficult in fact to assist you from a legal position, insofar as there seems to be a difference in views as to whether or not an amendment has been moved or not; there seems to be differences as to whether paragraph 26 is applicable or not.

What I can confirm is, if there is agreement that an amendment to a proposal has been moved, then the amendment shall be voted on. I can keep reading that paragraph to you, but there seem to be deeper questions here and I very much regret that I feel because there are different opinions, indeed some of

the Members have already expressed differing views to mine, I am not really very sure how much I can actually add to the discussion at this moment in time.

CHAIRPERSON

I think all the elements have been now discussed, put on the table, it is clear that there is a huge difference of view in the room on the interpretation of several Rules or not, so the only thing I can do is to bring to you a vote on what is now on the screen.

But we have to do it. We cannot continue with point of orders, but I give the floor to the United States of America for a point of order.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The Council does not have the authority to suspend our Rules but, that said, we really need to have some time to figure this out. It is very complicated. I move to suspend this meeting.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

Amendments cannot be accepted and this is addressed to the delegate Council. No amendments can be accepted unless they have been submitted 24 hours prior. Accepting the amendments in this case is a suspension of procedures and not the other way around.

CHAIRPERSON

I gave the floor to the United States because of the point of order but he made now a new proposal and that is to have a motion to suspend the meeting and see how we proceed on that. Give me one moment.

The meeting was paused from 22:12 to 22.21 hours

Pause dans la réunion de 22 h 12 à 22 h 21

Se suspende la sesión de las 22.12 a las 22.21

CHAIRPERSON

Distinguished delegates, dear friends, a motion to suspend the meeting was put forward and in Rule XXI it is stated that we should directly vote on it.

However, I have to ask the United States what he meant because you have the motion to suspend or the motion to adjourn, because in the 169th Session of the Council there was a motion to suspend the meeting which meant we stopped the Council.

The motion for adjournment means we stop at this moment and come back tomorrow, so I want to make clear that if we start to vote on it that we have clarity whether we want to stop now and come back tomorrow or that we suspend the Council.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I can tell you the essence of what I am trying to accomplish here. This is very confusing; it requires us to get some information to be able to make a decision on whether or not to do something that seems like it is not within the competence of this Council to do. We need some time to go to capital on this, we need some time to talk to our legal advisors within our missions on this. So therefore, we cannot move forward tonight with a vote on this, because we are not sure that this is legal or within the competence of this Council to decide.

So, what I am trying to do is continue to get some time, adjourn for the evening perhaps even, to move forward, so that tomorrow we can have a clear idea of what it is that we are doing and we can also have a clear idea of what the ramifications for this would be and what our position is on this.

My understanding before, when we had a discussion about adjournment versus suspension, was that it was the opposite from the plain language understanding of this and that suspension meant we suspend until tomorrow or Friday or later on and that adjournment meant we adjourn permanently.

That is why I asked for a suspension because what I am looking for is simply to end this meeting for tonight and pick it up tomorrow or Friday. It is something which is, frankly, within the authority of the Chairperson to do, if he wishes to do that. If he were to take that decision, I could reconsider my

proposal. However, my proposal is that we would suspend the meeting until later this week to give us time to think about this.

But if the Chairperson were willing to end the meeting for the evening and pick it back up tomorrow when we have some time, we are fresh, and we get the information we need, we could do that as well. Otherwise, my proposal stands.

CHAIRPERSON

I had informal discussions, because everybody is getting tired, I only asked whether or not there would be the possibility to come back on this issue tomorrow, but clear indication was given that that was not the wish of several Members. But now it is 22:30 hours, we can vote on it or we can just adjourn the meeting, because if we have to vote, you know what happens.

First, before going to a vote, can we agree that we take our rest and that we come back tomorrow on this issue and we do not go around to voting? Because I think it helps us. We are tired. We are getting more and more bogged down and emotional. We are hungry because the snack did not help anymore. Could we just agree as a Council that we come back tomorrow on this Item, so that we avoid a vote?

Because then I have to bring directly, without a debate, the motion to suspend and the understanding that it means come back tomorrow on this issue or somewhere this week. The week is not that long anymore. Or, if that is not the case, then we have to take a vote. But I do not want to have a whole list of speakers now. Can somebody indicate whether or not there is a consensus that we stop for today.

Can I take it that we stop the meeting now and come back tomorrow. If somebody cannot go along with it, I have to put it to a vote. So can we stop the meeting for today?

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

Yes, I think everyone in the room already wants to go home at this time, so we will not object to your proposal. I just wanted to make sure that the last thing we had before the discussion was the motion to vote from Indonesia on the draft decision that we had, and just to make a reminder that this will be the first thing we do tomorrow in the morning.

CHAIRPERSON

Unless somebody is not agreeing, I now adjourn the meeting until tomorrow morning at 09:30 hours.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Just two things. One clarification is that our request on the vote is not baseless, it is based on paragraph 27, where we want the decision to be made by the Council on the proposal made, so it is within the boundary of the Basic Texts.

The second one, I agree with what has been said by Egypt. First thing in the morning we will revisit the proposal made by Indonesia and go strictly through that.

Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I concur with you that we should suspend this meeting now because we are going in circles, but I do not want us to leave this room with the impression that what we intend to do here is to suspend the Rules. I am not so sure that that is the intent here, that we want to suspend the Rules.

We are applying another principle, which is known and it is not the suspension of the Rules, so nobody should go and negotiate and say that, okay, we are suspending the Rules. If we wanted to suspend the Rules, we would have done that at the beginning of the Session, as we did to allow this meeting to go hybrid. That is one thing.

The other thing is that we have been discussing an issue and we heard the sponsoring countries of this decision saying that they want this to be voted *en bloc*. This is a very risky decision that they are taking because it can go the other way around. Nobody knows the outcome. If they have decided that this is what they want, why are we fighting it? Because they are taking a very big risk. This is what I wanted to put before the Council for people to consider.

We will respect your ruling to move further. Let us move because first we started in a very bad mood this morning by changing what we decided last night, so let us not come tomorrow and we change again what we are deciding today. So we are moving here with in mind that the motion put forward by Indonesia, that is what we are tackling first thing tomorrow morning.

CHAIRPERSON

I adjourn the meeting until tomorrow 09:30 hours sharp. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 22:31 hours

La séance est levée à 22 h 31

Se levanta la sesión a las 22.31

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session Cent soixante-quatorzième session 174.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2023 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
SEVENTH PLENARY SESSION SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE SEPTIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA
7 December 2023

The Seventh Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:44 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La septième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 44
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la séptima sesión plenaria a las 09.44
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Les parties signalées par [XX], pour des raisons techniques, étaient inaudibles. Veuillez communiquer
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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

- Item 5. The situation in Gaza related to food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (*continuación*)**
- Point 5. Situation à Gaza en matière de sécurité alimentaire et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) (*suite*)**
- Tema 5. La situación en Gaza con respecto a la seguridad alimentaria y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO) (*continuación*)**
- (CL 174/4)**

CHAIRPERSON

It is now Thursday, 09:45 hours and we have only two days for a lot of work to be done in the Council to finalize our Council.

We have had an emotional and heated day yesterday. Understandable, because we are all struck by the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip, whatever side you are. But we have to do our work within the Council to move forward on the Basic Texts and the Rules of Procedures.

Yesterday, for many procedural question and Items we received advice from the Legal Counsel. That was and is the advice of the Legal Counsel, whether we like it or not, whether or not we agree with it, because it was clear that we have different interpretations about the Rules of Procedures and the Basic Texts.

You have heard the legal advice from the Legal Counsel. It is up to you to do with it. You will see letters sent yesterday evening in which we follow the Rules of Procedures based on the Basic Texts and the Rules of Procedures as was requested by Indonesia, a Member of the Council.

I have to put forward for a vote the proposal of Indonesia. I will be very strict now because we cannot continue with the debate. On any point of order, I will give a ruling. It is up to the Council whether or not they want to follow that ruling or contest and vote on it, but we have to move forward and we have to vote so that we can finalize our Council tomorrow at some time.

I give the floor to the United States for a point of order.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I will make two points of order, but will do so separately to allow for your decision. Before doing so, we draw to the attention of the Council paragraph 20 of Rule XII, which states that "*following a point of order, the matter shall immediately be decided by the Chairperson, without debate.*"

In order to expedite my first point of order, I just want to confirm your decision from yesterday on a point of order that we had raised. We raised a point of order that this proposal is contrary to the General Rules of the Organization and the Council's Rules of Procedure by changing or suspending the Rules of the Organization.

We raised a point of order at that point and I believe that your decision at that point was to say, it is not, we can go forward with this and your decision was to move forward with this vote. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON

I did not give a ruling on the substance because it is not for me to rule on the substance because if a Member proposes a proposal for a vote, it has to be voted on. It is not up to the Chairperson to decide or rule on the content of the motion. So, my ruling on your question will be, yes, if a Member makes a proposal and asks for a vote, I have to bring directly that proposal to a vote.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

With respect to your decision to move forward on a vote on a proposal that is clearly contrary to the General Rules of the Organization and the Council's Rules of Procedure, we raise that as a point of order and as such that decision is inconsistent with Rule XI.

Given your decision pursuant to paragraph 20, we appeal against the decision of the Chairperson and note under the Rules, the appeal shall be immediately put to a vote without debate. I will make my second point of order after the decision on this one has been made.

CHAIRPERSON

We are not going into a debate. I put this proposal forward to a vote. I will put it on the screen. The default of voting is voting by roll call unless a Member asks for a secret ballot. If a proposal is made, the Council has to vote on the proposal for a secret ballot, as we have seen yesterday.

Indonesia, I can only give a point of order if it is related to my ruling on now putting the motion requested by the United States to a vote. So, it cannot be on anything else than that ruling.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Just to clarify that last night we said clearly that this is not against the General Rules.

CHAIRPERSON

No, but Indonesia, we cannot go into the substance.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

I just want to say that legally speaking this is following paragraph 27 of Rule XII of the Basic Texts. The one that we are going to do now is in line with the Basic Texts.

CHAIRPERSON

I go now to the vote on my ruling, as requested by the United States. I will not give anybody else the floor anymore.

It is the Chairperson now who rules. I have to follow the Rules and Procedure.

We have a Basic Texts, which clearly states if there is a point of order with a motion which is put forward for a vote, it has to be put forward for a vote. As I said, and I will repeat, when we started the meeting I put forward a vote on the proposal of Indonesia to the Council. That is what I did.

That was challenged by the United States. In accordance with the Rules of Procedures, a ruling of the Independent Chairperson of the Council on an Item should be put forward directly for a vote. I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I confirm that with regard to the matter of points of order, if a Member raises a point of order, the Independent Chairperson of the Council must address it immediately. Once the Independent Chairperson has ruled, the Member that raised the point of order may appeal against the ruling. In that case, the ruling of the Independent Chairperson must be put to a vote immediately, without any further interventions.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Kuwait for a point of order.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

You are raising the point that some Members took a point of order to vote. That is what Indonesia did yesterday and you did not vote. Then you should have done the same exact procedure yesterday with Indonesia immediately.

CHAIRPERSON

We adjourned or suspended the meeting yesterday. I did exactly what Indonesia asked me to do.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

To go on a vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I did, because I said we go on a vote this morning.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, I followed exactly what has to be done, and that means that if a Member asks for a vote, I bring it to a vote. So, this morning I brought the proposal of Indonesia to a vote. That was my ruling. That ruling was contested and the Secretary-General explained what needs to be done if a ruling of the Independent Chairperson of the Council is contested. That is what we have to do. There is no other way to it.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

As you said, the Rules were clear. If you apply it to someone, it has to be applied to everyone. We are all equal here with one vote and all of us must be respected. It does not matter if it is a group or a person, a person is as equal as 30 Members in this Council, they have a right to say whatever they wish to say according to your guidance and to the Basic Texts.

As we want to go further, there are two words in this draft decision that everybody must understand. Coming to this time, "cessation of hostilities", that they do not want to put, that is making all this mess. They want the war to continue. That is fine. Everybody can understand what is going on here. They want the war to continue and more civilians to be dead.

So, what we want to do is to contest the request from our dear colleague from the United States of America and put it for a vote. It will continue for a whole day now. It will go on like this for the whole day. This is what they wanted, to turn this Body into politics, bringing us now amendments, I do not know from where but this is where we are going.

CHAIRPERSON

Give me one moment to consult before I take the floor to the point of order of the United States on the point of order of Kuwait.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General after consultations with the Legal Counsel about how to deal with this situation.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Far be it for me to advise the Council on how to deal with this situation, but what I can put to the Members is what the processes of the Council are, and what the practice is.

And, at the risk of repeating myself from my earlier intervention, I would just like to recall that yesterday there was a proposal by a Member for a vote to take place. The Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) ruled in favour of that proposal, and then the meeting was adjourned. And again this morning, the ICC opened the proceedings with that proposal for a vote, which had been proposed by Indonesia.

And as we were moving to that vote, one Member raised a point of order, which the ICC ruled against; and then that Member appealed against the Independent Chairperson's ruling.

At this point in time, we are still dealing with that point of order raised by the Member this morning, and the Council needs to deal with that appeal by voting to agree with the Independent Chairperson's ruling of this morning or against it.

CHAIRPERSON

I think the situation is clear. We have to vote on my ruling. So, now I go to the Council for a vote on my ruling, which is contested, to have a vote on the proposal of Indonesia. The vote will be done by default by roll call. We have to follow now this procedure.

I give the floor to Egypt, but this can only be a point of order because we have to follow this procedure, otherwise we have to look to other options because we cannot continue our Council in this manner because we have the Basic Texts and Rules of Procedure to conduct our Council in an orderly manner and to respect the integrity of the Council.

I have to proceed with the vote. I cannot do anything else. I would ask you to put down your flags and let us start with the vote.

As was explained by the Secretary-General, I have to go directly to the vote on my ruling. So, I put to the Council the vote on my ruling to propose. I was supposed to bring the proposal of Indonesia to a vote. That ruling was contested by the United States.

So, as explained by the Secretary-General, if a decision of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) is contested, it directly has to be brought to a vote. So, I bring that now to a vote. I give the floor to the Secretary-General to explain “yes” and “no”, because that is important.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Council is now voting on the text that appears on the screen, which is a vote on the ruling of the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) on the point of order raised by the United States to proceed with the vote proposed by Indonesia. The Members will then be asked to say, yes, no or abstain.

What this means is, and I will go back a step here, the Independent Chairperson was proceeding with a vote that had been proposed by Indonesia yesterday.

Then, the United States of America raised a point of order saying that this was not consistent with the rules. The Independent Chairperson ruled that that is not the case, and that the vote proposed by Indonesia may proceed, to which the United States appealed.

So, the consequences of voting ‘yes’ would mean that the Council would then immediately move to the vote proposed by Indonesia. If the Council votes ‘no’, then the Council would not move immediately to the vote by Indonesia next. So, those are the implications, and I am being informal here, but I hope I am being clear as to what would be the implications of the outcome of this vote.

I also recall that now that the vote has started, the floor may not be taken by anyone, except for a point of order on this vote and nothing else. No other points of order. So, I just want to contextualize what the rules and the processes are in this instance.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have ended the call.

CHAIRPERSON

Just to make sure that we have a quorum. We have 44 Members in the Plenary and one Member on Zoom.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, the results of the vote on the ruling of myself to go to proceed with the vote proposed by Indonesia:

The number of votes cast, 37. The majority required is 19. Votes for are 25. Votes against are 12. Abstentions, 9.

That means that the Council upholds the ruling of the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Vote on appeal to the Chairperson's ruling; whether his ruling stands to proceed to a vote on whether to proceed directly to a vote en bloc of the proposal contained in document CL174/INF/11

7 December 2023, 10:00

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	37
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	19
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	25
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	12
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	9

Votes for: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan

Votes against: Australia, Canada, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America

Abstentions: Bahamas, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand

No reply: Angola, Georgia, Uganda

Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

I would now directly move to the vote on the proposal of Indonesia. There is a point of order of the United States and Brazil, but it can only be on now starting with the vote.

I give the floor on a point of order on this to the United States.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I do raise a point of order on moving to the vote as I noted in my previous point of order that I would have a second one. In your ruling on your previous point of order you said that when a Member proposes a vote, you must put that proposal to a vote.

Yesterday in our discussion many Members called for a vote on the proposed decision, which you ignored, which by your decision just now, on our previous point of order, should have moved the decision to a vote following regular order immediately. We call on the Chairperson, as our point of

order, that you take those proposals, move to a vote on the decision under regular order of the Council immediately per your previous decision.

CHAIRPERSON

The Council has ruled now, unless Brazil wants a point of order on this.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

As a Member I am entitled to explain the vote of Brazil, as has been read. Brazil abstained on the latest vote as a matter of principle. As has been said many times, this Council has dedicated too many hours on procedural questions, not fighting hunger. It is not that we do not understand the gravity of this crisis and we will agree it is an unprecedented one. Having said that, Brazil suggests that next Council dedicates most of its valuable time on substantial matters.

CHAIRPERSON

As was ruled by the Council, I now go to the vote on the proposal of Indonesia.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

A proposal to move to a vote is not a point of order, it is a proposal to move to a vote. I made a point of order and I request under paragraph 20 that you immediately decide on that, as is required. I will assume by your response that your decision was to deny the point of order, not return to regular order and not recognize the proposals of many Members of this Council yesterday. If that is your decision, I appeal it and call for a vote immediately under paragraph 20.

CHAIRPERSON

There are now four points of order.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

My point of order, which is going to be explained, is that the voting process has been initiated and it is not legal to interrupt it. This discussion should not be a bilateral discussion. It should involve all Members. The voting process has started, and it is illegal to interrupt this process and you can refer back to the legal advice, Legal Counsel, if you wish.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I would like to carry on from what Qatar has said. Just 20 minutes ago you had ten points of order on your screen, and you decided to move to the voting because the voting started and the Council decided that this is what we want to do.

So, very briefly, call for voting now because the voting process has started. This is an integral part of the voting that we had five minutes ago. So, just calling for your indulgence to do the practice that you have done ten minutes ago, to refrain from taking any more points of order and move to voting.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Yesterday, when we were leaving this hall, and we agreed to start with what is on the screen now, that is the agreement we left here yesterday, and I recall perfectly that when we took the floor we said, okay, we hope that that will not change, that we will start voting this morning. And that is what you did, you ruled to vote, and that is what we are supposed to do.

And then there was a position to that ruling and we voted for that ruling. This is a democratic element. Yes, we voted for that ruling. Everybody should accept the result of the vote. I believe so. Unless we want to bring new rules. We voted for your ruling. So, if we voted, that ruling is okay. Then we move on to that ruling. There is no other thing we can do.

So, I would advise us or I would draw the attention of the Council to accept that we now move to the ruling directly.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I will move forward but I would like to put on the record, and on the Verbatim that our point of order was not addressed by the Chairperson and we were denied the vote to appeal that point of order, both under paragraph 20. We also just want to make the point that we consider this vote that you are proposing to be contrary to the General Rules of the Organization, the Council's Rules of Procedure, outside the Chairperson's authority as Chair.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

We are proceeding to a vote as all the colleagues and as our Group is pressuring for going on the vote. This is what our colleague from the European Union said yesterday. We have to respect this democratic procedure. So, we respect it very good. Let us please move on to the count.

CHAIRPERSON

We now move to the vote on the proposal of Indonesia. There are in the room 45 Members and one Member on Zoom. So, we have a quorum. We start with Sudan.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have finished the call.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Argentina to explain their voting.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Teníamos instrucciones de votar a favor de esta propuesta que habíamos recibido varios días atrás, en el entendimiento que se refiere a todos los civiles en Gaza incluye también a los rehenes. Teniendo en consideración que el 10% de los rehenes son argentinos, por lo tanto, quiero dejar asentado como lo he conversado informalmente con los colegas del Medio Oriente que iba a hacer esta explicación para poder dejar en claro que cuando dice todos los civiles, en nuestro entendimiento incluye también a los rehenes.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We want to explain our vote. We got instructions from our Capital on the basis of the initial text, which was then when this morning we received the proposal from the United States of America. It was considered that it is totally a new text, which we can look after as another proposal, not an amendment to the new text. So, that is what we got from our lawyers.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

This vote was clearly contrary to the General Rules of the Organization, the Council's Rule of Procedure. It is outside the Chairperson's authority, as Chair, to have called this vote. We did not join this vote on this decision, and we do not consider this matter properly before this Council for decision.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

As we said yesterday, we would have been ready, and we are ready to vote on the text as proposed, but we consider that the way this vote is phrased, asking for a vote without amendment, is clearly in contradiction of the Rules. We agree with all those who have said that they have not participated because it is indeed contrary to those Rules, and that is why we voted against.

Sr. José Luis DELGADO CRESPO (México)

En relación con el subpárrafo (j) del texto aprobado, México desea subrayar que de acuerdo con el derecho internacional humanitario, la terminología adecuada sería referirse al control de alimentos y agua como método y no como arma de guerra. Lo anterior en virtud de que el derecho internacional humanitario reconoce tanto medios y métodos de guerra; mientras los medios se refieren al equipo táctico, los métodos hacen referencia a los procedimientos táctico-estratégicos por medio de los cuales

se conducen los actos bélicos: término que resulta más adecuado para nombrar los actos antes mencionados.

México también desea reiterar la necesidad de abstenerse a utilizar el control de los alimentos y el agua como método de guerra en zonas de conflicto y expresa la necesidad de un acceso fiable, sostenido y suficiente y sin obstáculos a los bienes y servicios esenciales para los civiles en toda la Franja de Gaza, incluidos entre otros agua, alimentos, suministros médicos y energía.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia voted no in respect of this motion because we consider it a serious deviation from the Basic Texts. We take note of those who have queried the ability for this vote to actually proceed and support that decision.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Ayer no asistí a la parte de la reunión correspondiente al Tema 5 y 6 justamente porque mi malicia indígena me decía que esto iba a pasar y Costa Rica es un país de paz donde abolimos el ejército hace 75 años. Por eso mi decisión de votar neutral o no participar en estas reuniones. Por curiosidad me conecté virtualmente ayer y, efectivamente, me di cuenta de este escenario que se estaba montando aquí digno de pasar este foro al circo máximo o pasarlo al Coliseo donde dos mil años atrás se enfrentaban a fuerzas y no había ningún tipo de coordinación. Se han presentado batallas verbales entre Miembros, irrespetos, presiones unos a otros para obligar a tomar decisiones.

Pienso que aquí se está practicando la prueba del más fuerte, la ley del Talió, el tema bíblico de David y Goliat. Para hablar en términos populares, tigre suelto contra burro amarrado. De esa manera, nosotros nos vamos a abstener en todo lo que tenga que ver con este tema, de una vez lo adelanto y esa es mi aclaración porque creo que está totalmente fuera de lo que debemos estar haciendo aquí que es velar por la alimentación mundial.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

I would like to thank all Members who voted yes, no, abstained, wherever the Rules have been bent or however they wish. This is the Council, and this is part of the Council to proceed to voting, whether you like it or not. Many times, people did not get whatever they wished on this Council, but we have to accept it. We have to understand that this is part of Council.

We would like also to listen to the results because we still do not know, so we can move on to the next, because we are talking about human lives in this decision. We are talking about the severity of the situation, and I understand what my dear colleague from Argentina was saying, civilians, all civilians, and we would love to see the hostages go back, we would love to see everybody in the Israeli prisons also go back to their families, kids and children, everywhere.

They are not supposed to be in this situation. We are talking about children and women who should not be in this situation, whether it is on the left, on the right, across the border. This is our mentality, this is what we ask for. And we please would like to go on and vote for the draft decision *en bloc*.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn to the results on the vote proposed by Indonesia to move directly to the vote on the draft decisions contained in *CL 174/INF/11 en bloc* without amendments.

Number of votes cast, 26. Majority required, 14. Votes for, 24. Votes against, 2. Abstentions, 11.

With this result, the Council has approved to move directly to the vote on the draft decision contained in *CL 174/INF/11 en bloc*.

174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to proceed directly to a vote en bloc of the proposal contained in document CL174/INF/11

7 December 2023, 10:45

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	26
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	14
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	24
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	2
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	11

Votes for: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand

Votes against: Australia, United Kingdom
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Bahamas, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Norway, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea
Abstenciones:

No reply: Angola, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Uganda, United States of America
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

With that, I move now directly to the vote on *CL 174/INF/11 en bloc*. Unless there is a point of order, because we now have to go to the vote because that is the decision of the Council.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

With respect to your decision to move forward on a vote on a proposal that is contrary to the General Rules of this Organization, the Council's Rules of Procedure, we raise a point of order as such a decision is inconsistent with Rule XI. Given your decision to do so, and pursuant to paragraph 20 of Rule XII, we also appeal against your decision and note that under the Rules, that appeal should immediately be put to a vote without debate.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

What I would like to try to do is to present a suggestion that we can get some kind of consensus out of this conundrum and get out of here. If the President allows me to present it just for the Members to know.

CHAIRPERSON

The Council decided to go to the vote, so I go to the vote because it is the decision of the Council, it is not my ruling.

I now draw the country with which we start the vote. The Bahamas.

The quorum is there because we have 45 Members in person in the room and one on Zoom.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have finished the call.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Norway for an explanation of the vote.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)

Norway would have strongly wished for a consensus decision on this Agenda Item. We very much regret that this was not possible. We are grateful to the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) and delegations who worked earlier for a consensus text.

FAO is worse off without a consensus decision, and certainly with the proceedings we have had over the last hours. We have a shared responsibility to take care of the multilateral institutions, and this has not been a glorious time. As to the substance, Norway would have abstained on the text, but I would like to say that we are in agreement with, or could accept, in the spirit of consensus, most or almost all of the text, with the exception of one or two minor elements.

Lastly, I would like to say that Norway has reiterated its call for a durable and sustained humanitarian ceasefire numerous times and for full humanitarian access. As mentioned by you, Chairperson, the UN Secretary-General yesterday invoked Article 99 of the United Nations Charter, urging the Members of the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, an appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared. We support this view. This is a further, very clear indication of the seriousness of the situation.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

This purported vote was held contrary to the General Rules of this Organization and the Council's Rules of Procedure and was outside of your authority as Chairperson. We accordingly did not join a vote on this decision, as it was not properly before the Council for a decision. Given the failure of the Chairperson and of this Council to abide by the Rules of Procedure, we do not recognise this as a valid decision adopted by this Council. The purported vote on this resolution was invalid. No decision was validly adopted by the Council. We would like this position clearly reflected in the record of these proceedings.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Como lo he expresado en la anterior votación, quiero reiterar que tuvimos instrucciones ya hace varios días de apoyar esta resolución en la comprensión de que cuando se habla de todos los civiles, incluyen a los rehenes, de los cuales el 10% son argentinos.

La segunda parte de mi explicación es decir que después del daño que se ha generado en este Consejo durante esta semana será muy importante que haya mucha voluntad política de los Miembros para poder reparar esos daños y reconstruir el espíritu de solidaridad entre nosotros. Es muy grave que no entendamos el daño que se ha producido. Ojalá tengamos la capacidad, la lucidez para poder reconstruir y reparar los daños en el espíritu de solidaridad entre todos nosotros.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Brazil has joined the majority, as we have done in similar votes in other organisations, including during our Presidency of the United Nations Security Council, but regrets the lack of consensus that led to a voting procedure on this Agenda Item.

I must stress that we had a proposal for consensus. Although part of its Rules, voting weakens this Food and Agriculture Organization. About the decision itself, my delegation highlights that the expression "*food and water as weapons of war*" does not reflect the standard terminology enshrined in the Geneva Convention of 1949, and in additional protocols which prohibits the use of, and I quote, "*starvation as a method of warfare*."

Brazil believes that multilaterally agreed language should always be preferred choice for our documents, and we also regret the missed opportunity in this case.

Sr. José Luis DELGADO CRESPO (México)

En seguimiento a nuestra intervención anterior, México desea reiterar en relación con el subpárrafo (j) que consideramos que la palabra correcta es método y no armas de guerra cuando nos referimos al control de alimentos y agua.

Mr Yousef JUHAIL (Kuwait)

We wish to warmly thank all Members truly, those who supported us today, those who supported the truth, nothing other than the truth. I would also like to thank the Observers who supported us, who stood by our side when it comes to this resolution and decision. I would also like to thank Gaza from the bottom of my heart.

Gaza has managed to send out a clear message. I am done. I cannot speak anymore.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom (UK) really regrets the situation that has developed in this Council where, as we have said, we feel that the Rules established for this Governing Body have not been respected. We have said that that represents a serious question in terms of governance and ensuring that we follow those Rules and proceed accordingly.

The Rules clearly set out that there are options for amendments to be proposed, to be considered, to be voted on, and then for the text to be voted on. And we regret that that process has not been followed. That is the reason why we voted no in the first instance, and why we could not participate in this vote because it was not in alignment with the Rules.

Had we followed the Rules and moved to a vote on the text, in terms of the substance, the UK could actually have supported the majority of the text, notably on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the need for sustained and unhindered humanitarian aid into Gaza, and the importance of averting the negative impact on food security.

The UK would have disassociated, however, from implications in the text that Israel has breached international humanitarian law with respect to forcible transfer or targeting of civilians, which do not match our assessment at present. The UK continues to monitor developments and to call on Israel to comply with international humanitarian law.

The UK does recognise Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law against the terrorist attacks committed by Hamas on the 7th of October. The UK will continue to call for humanitarian pauses to allow for vital and lifesaving aid to be provided to the Palestinian civilians. So, with these views set out for the record, we want to underline that alleviating the suffering is a priority for the UK. And the UK did not participate in the vote because it was in contradiction to the Rules of Procedure. We do, however, strongly believe in the security and justice of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to explain our vote as follows. First of all, we would like to thank all those who voted for Palestine. Thank you for standing on the right side of history and thank you for thinking about all the Palestinians and their plight when the vote for this decision.

Indonesia voted in favour of the decision because it was the right thing to do and the just thing to do when it comes to the core mandate of the Council. We supported it because it is in line with the Basic Texts and the mandate of this Organization. We deeply regret that we even had to vote for such a draft decision in an organization whose goal is ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger.

How can we achieve Zero Hunger if we turn a blind eye on the situation faced by the Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory? It is shocking that the Council could not reach consensus. The same Council that deliberately discusses the impact of conflicts on food security all over the world. We are certainly not better off after this whole procedure for the whole two days, but I tell you that this was a double standard and, to tell you the truth, it is no longer surprising.

The decision that we adopted today is still not ideal, but Indonesia believes that, as FAO Council, we can do better. This must be the spirit that we carry on when revisiting this issue. Indonesia will always stand ready to support the Council in achieving its mandate on contributing to the struggle of the Palestinian people, and we call for the international community to do the same. I would like to end with, we would like to also know the results of the voting.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada is deeply preoccupied by the evolving situation in Gaza. Canada would have been pleased to vote on this Item following the Rules of Procedure, considering amendments first, then the full text. Given this was put to a vote counter to the Council Rules of Procedure and the General Rules of the Organization, Canada was unable to participate in the vote and does not accept as valid the results of the process.

We hope this Council will find a path forward that is in accordance with the Rules and return to be a more functional body to guide this Organization. Canada emphasises the need for all parties to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law, including terrorist organisations. Canada stands firmly with the Israeli and Palestinian peoples in their right to live in peace, security and with dignity and without fear.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

Dear colleagues, it seemed that we were very close to reaching consensus first, and then when this was not possible, we were hoping that this Council would proceed according to the Rules of our Organization. We are all united by the concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

We are concerned about the situation relating to food security and related matters under the mandate of this Organization. Germany is the largest humanitarian donor to the people of Palestine. We were hoping to adopt a consensus text and at least hoping that we could proceed according to the Rules of Procedure yesterday evening already, and the latest chance for that was today.

Unfortunately, we now are confronted with a text that does not reflect the fact that on 7 October, Israel fell victim to an unprecedented terrorist attack carried out by Hamas and thus committed unspeakable atrocities, including systematic sexualised violence. They spared no one and deliberately targeted women, children and the elderly because they knew that this would hit Israel's society at its core and create the problems also that we have been discussing today.

For Germany, Israel's security is not negotiable. We welcome the negotiated release of some hostages. However, Hamas must unconditionally and immediately release all hostages, allow the International Red Cross access to them, stop its rocket attacks and refrain from abusing civilians as human shields and civilian infrastructure for military purposes. These are exactly the points that were not reflected in the draft presented, but which we even could not decide upon, as far as Germany and many others are concerned, because we were prevented from discussing or adopting or maybe out voting amendments that were presented by one Member State that would have addressed these problems we had.

Mr Akeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I too would like to explain our vote. On the issue at hand, we were able to reach consensus here in Council. We consulted and negotiated for three days, and there were plenty of opportunities to come up with consensus-based opportunities – Monday, Tuesday, yesterday even. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Consensus was not reached. Unfortunately, that is not new to this Council.

The Council already took decisions last year that were not based on consensus. I wish to thank those countries that supported this decision, which is a humanitarian decision with no political dimension whatsoever. We are simply witnessing the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Again, this decision could have been adopted based on consensus without the insistence on the part of other parties and the establishment of firm positions.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

Italy, like others, tried all its best to agree on a text that might have been adopted by this Council by consensus. Like the United Kingdom and many others have pointed out, we too share the humanitarian parts of the decision, and we firmly stand by it. We did not participate in the vote as we consider it in breach of General Rules of the Organization and regret the diverging from the Basic Texts. We got today, a text that is far from ideal.

We call on unity of intent of all FAO Members for the future. As the Italian Deputy Minister Tajani said on November 26, and I quote, "*Besides reaffirming Italy's clear condemnation of Hamas brutal aggression and reiterating our support for Israel's right to defend itself, I want to emphasise the importance that the Italian government attaches to dialogue with countries in the region to help the Palestinian people.*"

Italy expresses its greatest concern for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and calls for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach all the civilians in need through all necessary measures, including humanitarian pauses for humanitarian needs. Italy works closely with FAO, UN agency and partners in the region to protect civilians, provide assistance and facilitate access to food, water, medical care and shelter, and during that such assistance is not abused by terrorist organisations.

To show its concrete commitment, yesterday the Italian government announced the allocation of EUR 10 million more for Palestinian civilians to bring assistance, starting with food and water. Also, thanks to our cooperation with FAO, Italy will continue to do its part.

Let me conclude by saying that our heart is with those who lost their lives and their families, including the UN workers, and with those who are suffering, all the civilians and all the hostages that should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Mr Mohammed Ahmed M. ALGHAMDI (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to warmly thank all those who supported Palestine. I would have liked for countries that say that there are violations of our Constitution to look at the situation in Gaza, especially since we negotiated with the Chairperson of the Council so that we could come up with a consensus-based decision.

We simply appeal to the right to food, water and energy or fuel, and for a ceasefire. There are still aggressions underway. We would like you to think about what the Palestinians have suffered through for 75 years, given the occupation over 50 days, where every day is a 7 October for the Palestinian people. Some feel this decision is too much for the Palestinian people.

Once again, I wish to thank those who supported the decision.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

En nombre de la Unión Europea (UE), sus 27 Estados Miembros y, desde luego, también la posición nacional española, hemos trabajado denodadamente todos los días de atrás con todas las partes en pro del consenso que creo que es la obligación de todos nosotros. Y la verdad es que fue esperanzador desde el principio porque veíamos avances.

Lamentamos profundamente que al final hayamos tenido que darnos cuenta de que no era posible este consenso, pero eso no nos puede hacer perder fuerzas en seguir trabajando en pro de alcanzar acuerdos entre todos nosotros. Así seguirá siendo. La UE seguirá comprometida con el multilateralismo, agradeciendo desde ya todo el trabajo hecho a todas las partes hasta ahora y agradeciendo en el futuro el mismo trabajo de colaboración que tendremos.

Seguimos, por supuesto, comprometidos en la lucha contra el hambre y la desnutrición y apoyando a FAO en esta labor tan importante en su esfuerzo, en virtud de sus competencias, y basándose en sus propias reglas. Es imprescindible para el bienestar del mundo que continuemos esta lucha contra el hambre y la desnutrición y deseamos que todos los males que atañen al mundo, de los que somos testigos, puedan finalizar de la mejor manera posible y con el menor sufrimiento humano para todas las partes.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

We consider that FAO is a technical body of the UN, and because it is a technical body of the UN in charge of food and agriculture, Cameroon has seen that everywhere there are problems pertaining to food and agriculture, the FAO should be present.

And after looking at this proposal, which hopefully after the result will be adopted, hopefully, Cameroon has accepted to join this proposal because it had no political bearing at all. It is a technical proposal which aims to secure humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Sentimos que se han trasladado los conflictos armados que se presentan en todo el mundo y que tanto hemos criticado y cuestionado a este foro donde no corresponde. Este no es un foro político, sino técnico. En consecuencia, hago un llamado a que volvamos, por favor, a “Pura vida”, la solidaridad, la flexibilidad y el respeto para poder avanzar.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia restates our position that the procedures adopted today have not facilitated a valid vote on this issue within the Rules of the Organization. We thank those who work to seek to develop consensus text on this issue, a consensus that we would have been pleased to join to reflect solidarity on this critical matter. Consensus would also have been a demonstration of the effective functioning of this Council. Australia views that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire and human suffering is widespread and unacceptable. If we were able to vote on a substantive discussion in a legal and valid way today, we would have abstained with disappointment.

Australia would like to formally reflect our view that the proposal, as drafted, did not recognise Israel's right to defend itself. Australia affirms Israel's right to defend itself, while also saying the way it does matters. We reiterate our calls for safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access into Gaza so that food, water, medicine and other essential assistance can reach people in desperate need and so that the civilians can get to safety.

The devastating crisis in Gaza and the protracted conflict will exacerbate the existing acute food insecurity situation. Australia calls for practical steps to be taken as soon as possible to find an enduring solution to the end of the conflict. That political process must end and adjust an enduring peace in the form of a two-state solution, where Israelis and Palestinians can live securely and prosperously within internationally recognised borders.

We hope Council can return to full adherence to the General Rules of this Organization in its future procedures and to restore FAO Council to effectively guide the Organization in the implementation of its important mandate. However, we do not recognise the decision taken by Council today.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

Before I present my statement, can we ask to receive the official voting results of the vote that we just had? And then we can follow with our statement.

I do not finish, Chairperson. We will explain it after the results.

M. Abdellah LARHMAID (Maroc)

Ma Délégation tiens à faire cette explication de vote. Donc, nous avons proposé ce projet de résolution, dans le cadre du Near-East and Africa Group, et je tiens à souligner l'importance que pendant plusieurs jours, nous n'avons pas atteint le consensus, nous aurions bien aimé avoir adopté

cette déclaration par consensus, mais nous regrettons d'avoir adopté cette question d'une manière qui n'ait pas atteint un consensus.

Donc, la décision, c'est un minimum qui reflète une solidarité à exprimer à égard de la population qui souffre de la situation humanitaire catastrophique à Gaza, et nous tenons à remercier toutes les délégations qui ont apporté soutien à cette décision.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I present you the results of the vote on the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/11*, Agenda Item 5, *The situation in Gaza related to the food security related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations*.

Numbers of votes cast: 26; Majority required: 14; Votes for: 26; Votes against: 0; Abstentions: 9.

With this, the result is that the draft decision, as proposed in document *CL 174/INF/11* is adopted by the Council.

174th Session of the FAO Council

4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to adopt the draft decision contained in document CL 174/INF/11

7 December 2023, 11:00

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	26
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	14
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en favour	26
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	0
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	9

Votes for: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Cote D'ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand

Votes against: -
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Bahamas, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Norway, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea
Abstenciones:

No reply: Angola, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Slovenia, Spain, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

First of all, we would like to congratulate everyone in the Council for adopting this decision. As several colleagues have mentioned here, we reiterate our request to refrain from the politicisation of FAO.

As our dear colleague from Cameroon has mentioned, we worked so hard to come up with a technical text within the mandate of FAO. And we have seen, and we have listened to several interventions, including explanations of positions that included political content, and we think this is not the right place to discuss. We reiterate that our draft decision has been within the mandate of FAO.

Second, I would like to highlight that this is a successful day for multilateralism. Over the past ten days, Egypt, along several other delegations, have been involved in extensive discussions and consultations on the draft decision to reach consensus-based language, which we were very close to reach, but unless some delegations have rejected this language just two minutes after approving the agreement two days ago.

I would like to highlight that we thank all the Members of the Council, as well as the Observer delegations, who supported our draft decision. But also, we take note of all the Member delegations as well, the Observer delegations, who worked so hard to block consensus.

We have heard a lot of comments regarding the legality of this procedure to vote, but I think the Council has been very clear and, as we mentioned yesterday, we may have different legal interpretations on the procedure, but the Council is the body to decide, and it was very clear that it decided to move forward with the ruling, then with the motion from Indonesia, and finally on the decision itself.

Once again, we thank everyone here. We reiterate our support for all civilians in Gaza who are suffering one of the hardest catastrophic humanitarian crises in the history of mankind. And as our dear colleague from Kuwait has mentioned, that includes all civilians, hostages and everyone. We hope for peace, and we work hard to reach peace within our mandate of FAO.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, last week, during the weekend, and also on Monday, I was hopeful that we could reach a consensus decision on this Item. And I know that we all worked hard, and certainly all those who were participating in these informal consultations.

Many suggestions were made to find consensus, because that would have been the best decision of this Council for the unbelievable situation in Gaza, but also as a signal to all unbelievable situations when we speak about wars and conflicts. Unfortunately, that was not possible. Over the last two days, we have seen that, as Council, we have taken a decision, but we are heavily divided on many things. Strong statements were made. And, of course, if you see the situation, we have all those emotions, but it is also a clear signal that we have to do better.

I strongly believe and remain believing in our multilateral approach. I strongly believe in the strength and our love for the Food and Agriculture Organization and its role in the international community. And indeed, we should not lose hope that we can do better. I think we are, when I listened carefully over the last two days, but also over the last two weeks, we all are united in our concern for the human suffering, not only in Gaza, but in all conflict areas and wars.

We are also united, when I listen to your statements, that we all want to avert the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. That should remain our goal and target, and we should continue our efforts within United Nations, within FAO, to achieve our Sustainable Development Goals. Working in solidarity. Working in respect. Also, working with integrity. We have to do better because only then we can achieve our ultimate goal of food security for all.

With this, I close Agenda Item 5. I break for five minutes to take up Agenda Item 6. So, we start at 11:40 hours again.

***The meeting was paused from 11.34 to 11.48 hours
Pause dans la reunion de 11 h 34 à 11 h 48***

Se suspende la sesión de las 11.34 a las 11.48

- Item 6. The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**
- Point 6. Impact de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO)**
- Tema 6. Repercusiones de la guerra en Ucrania sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO)**
(CL 174/4; CL 174/INF/13; CL 174/INF/14)

CHAIRPERSON

We now open Item 6, *The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

The introduction by Mr Máximo Torero Cullen has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 6: The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

The outbreak of the war in Ukraine, involving two major suppliers of food and agricultural commodities to world markets, raised significant concerns about its implications for global food security at a time when the world was on a recovery path from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The war has unsettled global food and energy markets, exposing them to heightened risks, including tighter availabilities due to disruptions in exports from the Russian Federation and Ukraine, unmet import demand, and higher international prices. The 2023 edition of *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)* revealed that progress in fighting hunger has been undermined by higher food, energy and agricultural input prices magnified by the war in Ukraine. The report projected that around 23 million more people will face chronic hunger in 2030 compared to a scenario in which the war had not occurred.

The war has increased humanitarian needs in Ukraine. Disruptions to basic services, worsened by events like the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in June 2023, have deepened the needs of millions of people who were already displaced or required assistance. By directly constraining agricultural production, limiting farming activities, and raising prices, the war has undercut the purchasing power of local populations, leading to increases in food insecurity and malnutrition.

Fortunately, the worst-case scenario of a total halt of supply from either Ukraine or the Russian Federation, or both countries, did not materialize. In Ukraine, the war initially caused the suspension of activities by private grain and crushing operators and the cessation of all commercial shipping operations. However, the European Union's "Solidarity Lanes" and the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) facilitated exports from Ukraine, allowing over 84 million tonnes of grains and other foodstuffs to be exported from the country between May 2022 and September 2023. In the Russian Federation, despite challenges related to the economic impacts of the conflict, crop production did not face major challenges, with wheat production and exports reaching record high levels in 2022 and 2023.

While international food commodity prices, as measured by the FAO Food Price Index (FFPI), started to increase in mid-2020 and reached a peak in March 2022, they have since declined. As of October 2023, the FFPI was 10.9 percent below its value a year ago and as much as 24.5 percent below its March 2022 level. However, this decline should not be interpreted as market stability, as increased

climate variability, rising conflicts and geopolitical tensions, bleak economic prospects, increased agricultural input costs, and sudden changes in trade policies continue to pose uncertainties and significant challenges to global commodity markets.

Declines in the FFPI mask different market developments across commodities. For example, while world wheat prices were at their lowest levels in three years, prices of sugar were at their highest level since 2021, and rice prices increased significantly in recent months driven by export restrictions and unfavourable climatic conditions, particularly due to the El Niño event.

Furthermore, the cessation of the BSGI might have severe implications for global food availability and the stability of world food markets beyond the current marketing year. Considering that the non-marine shipping channels (rail, road, river) used as “Solidarity Lanes” are costlier than maritime shipping, this may reduce prices received by Ukrainian farmers. Low prices combined with increased input costs may lead them to reconsider their product choices in the future, leaning towards more profitable crops, such as oilseeds, which would further reduce the availability of grains on the global markets. At the same time, with the decline of energy prices, world fertilizer prices dropped; however, fertilizer affordability and access continue to represent major challenges, especially in low-income countries.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, FAO responded swiftly by providing data and information, assessing the risks and impacts, elaborating concrete policy proposals, and organizing briefings for the Members. FAO also co-leads the workstream on food of the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group (GCRG) on Food, Energy, and Finance, established by the United Nations Secretary-General following the eruption of the war. Furthermore, already in April 2022, FAO developed a Rapid Response Plan for Ukraine that was updated subsequently to meet the evolving challenges. With the aim to facilitate access to information by the FAO Members, a dedicated webpage was developed for the crisis which is updated regularly.

CHAIRPERSON

We have in front of us two draft decisions, one contained in document *CL 174/INF/13* and one contained in document *CL 174/INF/14*. Before taking up those decisions, I open the floor for interventions by the Members as we used to do.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

Sudan would like to take the floor in order to ask Iraq to give the statement on behalf of the Near East Group.

Mr Zaid Tarik AL-ANI (Iraq) (Observer) (Original language Arabic)

We would like to express our concern regarding the deteriorating situation of global food security. Today we are facing a lot of challenges, the most important of which is the deteriorating of the food security crisis that reached the highest level over the last few years. These are due to a number of reasons.

Number one, the consequences of COVID-19, the outbreak of wars as well as the lack of stability. Therefore, we need to look in a different way that would be in line with the difficult situation that we are living today. It requires us to have a speedy response in order to have a dialogue, constructive one, in order to achieve the stability and sustainable development as well as facing the shocks that are affecting all aspects of lives. The people are the ones that are suffering. We depend upon the international community efforts in order to find the most suitable solutions in order to guarantee the stable and sustainable life for all within the framework of environment and decent life for all.

The Member States of the Near East countries seek to be a part of the solution which is related to the Russian-Ukrainian war. Our group will continue to work in order to establish lasting peace in line with the international laws as well as resolutions. We urge all countries to carry out their effective role in order to stop any escalation of this war and to establish solid rules for the establishment of peace.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados miembros, además de otros nueve Estados Miembros, que se adhieren plenamente a nuestra declaración y que son los siguientes: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Monaco, Montenegro, San Marino, y la propia Ucrania.

Debido a la guerra de agresión no provocada y no justificada de la Federación de Rusia contra Ucrania, uno de los principales exportadores de grano, este país ha experimentado un drástico descenso de sus exportaciones, con la consiguiente destrucción de casi 300 000 toneladas de grano, lo que ha reducido el potencial exportador de Ucrania en al menos un 40%. Esto ha provocado importantes problemas de seguridad alimentaria para millones de personas en todo el mundo, especialmente en los países vulnerables, como se ha reconocido en el informe del estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI 2023).

La UE y sus Estados miembros también destacan con satisfacción los esfuerzos de la FAO para analizar, evaluar e informar sobre el impacto de la guerra de agresión de la Federación de Rusia contra Ucrania en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición mundiales. Recordamos las proyecciones presentadas por la FAO que indican que, como consecuencia de esta guerra, 23 millones de personas más sufrirían inseguridad alimentaria en 2030 en todo el mundo en comparación con un escenario sin guerra.

La decisión unilateral de Rusia de poner fin a la aplicación de la Iniciativa de Grano del Mar Negro y sus ataques deliberados contra las instalaciones ucranianas de almacenamiento y exportación de cereales, así como sus acciones para obstaculizar la libertad de navegación en el Mar Negro (BSGI), demuestran que la Federación de Rusia sigue utilizando los alimentos como armas y socavando la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Deploramos la rescisión unilateral del Iniciativa de Granos del Mar Negro y condenamos los ataques a las infraestructuras portuarias por parte de la Federación de Rusia.

Subrayamos la importancia de la seguridad y la estabilidad en el Mar Negro, vitales para la exportación sostenible de cereales. Apoyamos todos los esfuerzos, especialmente los de las Naciones Unidas (ONU), para facilitar las exportaciones de cereales y otros productos agrícolas de Ucrania a los países más necesitados, especialmente a África y Oriente Medio.

Estamos tomando medidas para garantizar el restablecimiento de la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Seguimos mejorando las Corredores de Solidaridad de la UE, que han garantizado la exportación de cereales, semillas oleaginosas y productos afines desde Ucrania. Acogemos con satisfacción y apoyamos la iniciativa *Grano desde Ucrania II* y la Cumbre conexas del 25 de noviembre en Kiev.

Además, la UE está movilizando ayudas para los agricultores más afectados. El apoyo global de la UE, a través de la respuesta de Equipo Europa a la seguridad alimentaria mundial, asciende a 18 000 millones de euros entre 2021 y 2024, con 7 millones desembolsados en 2022, lo que demuestra nuestro compromiso tangible.

Para concluir, la UE y sus Estados miembros mantienen su compromiso de fomentar la estabilidad mostrándose solidarios con Ucrania y tomando medidas decisivas para mitigar las consecuencias de la guerra de agresión rusa sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial. Para ello, instamos a la FAO a que continúe su ardua labor de análisis, evaluación e información sobre la evolución de la situación y continuar sus esfuerzos en las cuestiones pendientes de los mandatos del 169º, 170º, 171º y 172º período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO y 43º período de sesiones de la Conferencia de la FAO.

Señor presidente, estamos entre los 41 cofirmantes de la propuesta de decisión de este punto de la agenda establecido en el documento *CL 174/INF/13*. Solicitamos que el Consejo adopte dicha propuesta *en bloc*.

Mr Morten VON HANNO AASLAND (Norway)

I deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway. We fully align ourselves with the European Union statement just held.

The food security situation in the world continues to be alarming. Humanitarian needs are increasing due to conflicts, climate crisis and economic shocks. Russian Federation's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine reinforces and has meant worsening global food insecurity.

Russian Federation's unilateral decision to leave the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its attacks on Ukrainian ports and grain infrastructure has worsened the situation. Russian aggression has destroyed key infrastructure and hinders agricultural production in Ukraine. Rebuilding the country will take years. Meanwhile, despite being subjected to the unprovoked aggression, Ukraine, one of the world's major bread baskets, has shown impressive efforts to address the challenges of global food insecurity.

In this dire situation, with increasing humanitarian needs and scarce resources worldwide, we appreciate that FAO is delivering on its mandate. The FAO Council has clearly condemned Russian Federation's actions and provided guidance on how to tackle the global impacts, including on food security. We, the Nordic countries, request FAO to continue implementing the 169th Council decisions.

We strongly support the call to keep food trade open, avoid all export restrictions and resume food export from Ukraine. We highlight the importance of AMIS and continued collaboration with all relevant partners to monitor the situation and share transparency, and minimise any adverse effects on global markets.

Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal full-scale invasion has inflicted incalculable devastation on Ukraine, including potentially irreversible consequences for Ukraine's environmental landscape. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam is just one example.

We also share the concerns for risks related to animal health and diseases, and the need to address these in line with FAO responsibilities, and particularly through a One Health approach.

It is crucial that we respond to the immediate humanitarian needs in Ukraine and in other crises around the world. The Nordic countries are major donors to the UN Development System, and we will continue our support to humanitarian crisis all around the world.

We will continue to focus on flexible and predictable core support, and we encourage others to do the same. We strongly reiterate the call for Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression against Ukraine and withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States appreciates the Secretariat's update on the impacts of global food security of Russian Federation's unprovoked war against Ukraine. Sadly, the Report underscores the real time and long-term harm that Russia continues to inflict on world markets and vulnerable populations in every region.

This Council must remain steadfast in its condemnation of and deep concern about the global food security impacts of Russian Federation's war against Ukraine. Russian Federation's war against Ukraine has had unprecedented negative impacts on global food security, will have implications for years to come, and will continue to be felt around the world, especially by the most vulnerable.

According to FAO's 2023 *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* Report, 23 million more people are projected to face hunger in 2030 than if this senseless and illegal full-scale invasion had not occurred.

For the one year the Black Sea Grain Initiative, or BSGI, was in place, 64 percent of wheat exported through the initiative went to developing countries, including those most vulnerable to severe hunger and malnutrition. Nearly 33 million tonnes of grain food were exported during that time, contributing to a 23 percent drop in global food prices. That had a lifesaving impact on acutely food insecure countries.

Since its unilateral withdrawal from the BSGI in July, Russian Federation has intentionally destroyed over 300 000 metric tonnes of Ukrainian grain, enough to feed nearly 15 million people for a month. Moscow's aggression has made global food markets more volatile, thereby imperilling food availability with humanitarian implications well beyond Europe.

Russia is executing a deliberate Strategy. Destroy Ukrainian livelihoods, sink the Ukrainian economy, and keep food from the world's hungriest, exacerbating the global food crisis and inflicting further pain on communities around the world who already struggle to get enough to eat.

We do not yet know the long-term implications of reducing the diversity of international grain sources of Russian Federation's ongoing destruction of Ukraine's agricultural land and infrastructure. Of the impacts on agricultural supply chains and food sources for people and nations that have traditionally relied on Ukraine for food, but we will continue to watch the data that FAO produces for the answers to these questions and more in the months and years ahead.

However, we do know this, Ukraine's fertile farmlands have the ability and the capacity to feed people around the world, as they did before this war. And we must do everything in our power to end the war and get back to this. Russian Federation must stop destroying livelihoods and economies and holding food back from the world's most vulnerable in its war against Ukraine. We urge all FAO Members to continue to condemn Russian Federation's incessant attacks on grain storage and port infrastructure in Odessa and along the Danube. And FAO Members should also urge Russian Federation to rejoin the BSGI, allowing grain to leave Ukraine.

Colleagues, the Council stance on this issue has been consistent, principled and endorsed by the Conference, until the circumstances change radically, we must stay the course, adhere to the purpose of this Organization and keep the interests of globally food insecure people everywhere as our central focus.

Sra. Mónica ROBELO RAFFONE (Nicaragua)

Agradecemos el Informe preparado por la División Económica. Permítame, en primer lugar, reconocer los valiosos esfuerzos realizados por FAO en estos últimos años en las áreas rurales de las zonas afectadas por el conflicto, esfuerzos que se enfocan en proporcionar apoyo y asistencia de emergencia en ámbito técnico, programático y operativo.

No es una novedad que la inseguridad alimentaria mundial en el mundo, mucho antes del estallido del conflicto en Ucrania a finales de febrero de 2022, se venía agudizando desde hace algunos años producto entre otras causas de la pandemia, la crisis climática y otros factores.

Nicaragua veía desde entonces con gran preocupación el incremento excesivo de los precios mundiales de alimentos, insumos agrícolas, cadenas de suministros y las afectaciones que eso tendría en el funcionamiento de los mercados a nivel mundial, afectando sobre manera a los países en desarrollo, a los productores e importadores netos de alimentos y, por consecuencia, a los consumidores en general. Hoy día tenemos lamentablemente que agregar el estadio y la intensificación recientes del conflicto de Israel en Palestina que supone otras crisis con repercusiones de gran alcance en la inseguridad alimentaria, tanto aguda como crónica.

Sobre el Informe, dada su importancia, nos referimos en particular a la iniciativa sobre la exportación de cereales del Mar Negro promovida por las Naciones Unidas, la Federación de Rusia, Turquía y Ucrania, prorrogada tres veces de noviembre de 2022 hasta mediados de 2023, que ha permitido las exportaciones de cereales, otros productos alimenticios y fertilizantes a través de un corredor humanitario marítimo contribuyendo a mejorar la disponibilidad de alimentos a nivel mundial y estabilizar los mercados mundiales de alimentos.

Por lo anterior, auspiciamos un pronto restablecimiento de la iniciativa abogando por una solución diplomática seria, constructiva, realista de la actual crisis, así como la paz, la estabilidad y la seguridad regional e internacional, incluyendo la eliminación de toda medida unilateral que impiden el suministro de cereales y fertilizante de la Federación Rusa a los mercados internacionales. Instamos, por tanto, a recordar siempre el párrafo 30 de la Agenda 2030 y seguir adelante en nuestros esfuerzos por un mundo sin hambre.

Alentamos a la FAO a no politizar su labor dentro de su mandato y como institución de conocimiento a seguir proporcionando asistencia, datos y análisis sobre las implicaciones de los conflictos en curso para la seguridad alimentaria y la agricultura mundial.

Mr Joachim BLEICKER (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. Germany welcomes the information provided by FAO on the impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of FAO.

The data and facts provided by FAO are clear. Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine has exacerbated the already severe situation of global food security and nutrition. The latest *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)* Report shows that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine alone has caused 23 million more people worldwide going to bed hungry.

Germany is deeply concerned by rising global hunger and malnutrition. Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to contribute to a dramatic global food and nutrition situation. It has triggered disruptions in agricultural production, supply chains and trade. Germany strongly condemns the deliberate attacks on Ukraine's grain storage and export facilities, and Russia's unilateral decision to not prolong the Black Sea Grain Initiative. It has been crucial for ensuring the export of Ukraine's grain to global markets, helping vulnerable populations in need.

Together with the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, the partial reopening of the Black Sea ports and the establishment of a corridor of free navigation in the Black Sea have been instrumental in stabilising and lowering unprecedented high food prices to which Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine contributes.

We remain committed to fostering stability by standing in solidarity with Ukraine and by taking decisive action to mitigate the consequences on global food security.

Germany is asking FAO to keep a strong focus on the negative impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on world food security by continuing to analyse, evaluate and report on the evolving situation.

Mr Antanas VENCKUS (Lithuania)

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

The unprovoked and illegal war of aggression of Russian Federation against Ukraine continues to strain the food security. Russia is waging war not only on the battlefield, it is also striving to cause a global food crisis, destroying the civilian infrastructure of Ukrainian ports and grain storage facilities, blocking the Black Sea coast of Ukraine and disrupting legal transit in the territorial waters of Ukraine. Why is it doing so if it is really concerned about food security? Over the centuries, the names of Russian Federation's state have changed, but not its nature and methods of operation. Almost a century after Stalinist regime crimes in Ukraine later, Russian Federation is violating international and humanitarian laws and once again seeking to turn food into a weapon. Russian Federation hopes to exhaust the determination and patience of the global community by taking advantage of various geopolitical tensions. However, this time, with the help of all the democratic countries that support Ukraine, such ambitions will not be successful. The scale and speed of international support to Ukraine cannot be reduced. Therefore, Lithuania's assistance to Ukraine will continue until it wins the war and recovers.

But when we hear different information from another side it is very important not to confuse causes with the consequences, not to forget who aggressor is and who is a victim, and to bear in mind who started the invasion by illegally attacking sovereign territory and who has a right to self-defence according to UN charter.

Talking about food security in this time, Lithuania welcomes and supports alternative routes for the export of Ukrainian grain and other goods, such as the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes as well as "Grain from Ukraine II" initiative. Lithuania is ready to contribute by transporting Ukrainian grain and other products to global markets through Klaipeda seaport: we have increased the port's export capacity, proposed simplified transit procedures and hope that, in cooperation with neighbouring countries, we can turn the Baltic Sea Corridor into another important path for Ukrainian grains to world markets.

However, the only sustainable solution for both global food security and sustainable and just peace in Europe is Ukraine's victory in this unjustifiable and unprovoked war.

To conclude, we would like to echo the support for FAO's work and efforts to analyse, evaluate and report on the global food security challenges and its drivers, particularly on the impact of Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security and nutrition and urge FAO to continue its hard work on evaluating the situation.

M. Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Nous remercions la FAO pour ce rapport. Nous avons déjà pu débattre de ce sujet en long et en large, et réaffirmons les conclusions de la 43^e Conférence, qui rappelle les décisions précédentes du Conseil sur ce sujet. La faim extrême ne devrait ni servir de monnaie d'échange, ni servir d'arme de guerre.

L'invasion illégale de l'Ukraine par la Russie, contraire à la charte des Nations Unies, a exacerbé la faim dans le monde, comme le souligne le rapport sur l'état de la sécurité alimentaire dans le monde de 2023, qui prévoit qu'environ 23 millions de personnes de plus seront confrontées à la faim chronique en 2030 par rapport à un scénario sans guerre.

Nous sommes consternés par le fait que la Russie continue de cibler délibérément les stocks alimentaires et les infrastructures agricoles ukrainiennes, en violation directe du droit international et malgré les conséquences pour l'ensemble de la communauté des Nations, notamment les pays qui peuvent le moins se le permettre. Le Canada appuie les efforts visant à atténuer les déficits à l'exportation attribuables à l'invasion russe et à réduire les prix mondiaux des aliments.

Nous regrettons profondément la résiliation unilatérale par la Russie de l'initiative céréalière de la Mer Noire.

Continues in English

Last year Canada committed USD 52 million for the FAO to support Ukraine's urgent need for additional grain storage capacity, along with funding from other donors, Canada's support helped FAO deliver close to 30 000 grain sleeves capable of storing 6 million tonnes of grain. This allowed more than 1 600 Ukrainian farmers to store their crops and preserve their source of income and create a temporary employment for thousands of farm labourers.

In October, Canada allocated a further USD 10 million to FAO for a project that will help up to 1500 small scale Ukrainian farmers and rural households who have had to cease or cut production due to land mines and other explosive remnants of war to recover their livelihoods.

Such targeted programmes will not reverse the catastrophic damage that Russian Federation has caused to Ukraine, the global food system and to vulnerable individuals around the world in that value chain. Moreover, despite their claims of making efforts to avert a global food crisis, Russia's determination to attack grain silos, agricultural infrastructure and trade routes means it is on track to destroy more grain than it has offered to donate. The longer this war lasts, the more dire the global food security consequences will be.

Canada urges Russian Federation to end its aggression and pursue a path to peace. Until then, we will continue to expect FAO to implement the earlier decisions of this Council and look forward to its regular analysis and updates.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia remains clear in our condemnation of Russian Federation's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine, and we reiterate our calls for Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory.

In addition to the undeniable human costs of Russian Federation's war in Ukraine, it has exacerbated global food insecurity. We acknowledge FAO's assessments of Ukraine's agriculture sector, which make clear the negative consequences of Russian Federation's war.

Food markets are global, and the restrictions in supply caused by Russian Federation's actions are a direct cause of food shortages and price rises globally. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Low-

Income Food-Deficit Countries (LIFDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are struggling most with the impact of higher food and higher fertiliser prices. And food insecurity globally is continuing to rise in the face of this protracted war.

The damage to Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure, transport networks and storage and processing facilities continues to significantly lower Ukraine's production and exporting capacity. This raises the cost of production, limits access to credit and insurance, and ultimately impacts trade. The reduction in Ukraine's capacity to supply grain to world markets is significantly impacting countries highly dependent on grain imports with prevailing grain prices remaining high. This includes countries in Australia's region of the Southwest Pacific.

Australia supported the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), and we highlight the 32.9 million tonnes of agricultural commodity trade it facilitated. This was essential to stabilising world food markets. Since Russia's termination of the BSGI, Ukraine is increasingly reliant on non-maritime shipping channels that are costlier than maritime channels and which ultimately erode the farm-gate prices that Ukrainian farmers receive.

Australia reaffirms our support for initiatives that can alleviate food supply impacts of war. Australia supports effort to address the global food security crisis and deliver on our partner's priorities. We have provided humanitarian assistance to ensure immediate food security needs are met, including 157.5 million to the World Food Programme in 2021-22, and 124.9 million in 2022-23.

The longer term prospects for Ukraine's agriculture sector are concerning. We encourage FAO to continue to provide necessary support for affected farming households. We once again thank the FAO for its ongoing work to support Ukraine and request FAO to continue to keep Members informed of the implications of Russia's war on food security.

Finally, we support the calls to adopt the proposal outlined in *CL 174/INF/13 en bloc*.

Mr Mitsuaki SHINDO (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the European Union proposal for the draft addition for this Agenda Item. Japan appreciates FAO's ongoing efforts to its fair and neutral analysis and reporting on the impact of Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine to the global food security. A UN brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative has facilitated grain export from Ukraine and highly contributed to global food security. Japan strongly regrets Russian Federation's unilateral termination of the initiative and the attacks against Ukrainian grain storage and transportation facilities.

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture and the Ukraine's Minister of Agriculture have together launched the Japan Ukraine Joint Task Force in October, and it plans to draw policies for agriculture cooperation in the areas, including agriculture imports, machinery, irrigation and the digitalization.

Working with FAO, Japan has also promoted the rehabilitation of Ukrainian agriculture production and the facilitation of grain export with provision of grain storage facilities, and Japan will, in collaboration with FAO, continue to contribute to the promotion of the global food security.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Colleagues, you know you will be aware, well, what should we say? We are seeing what is happening. What has happened yesterday. What is happening today. What we can see is that yesterday we were considering a draft *en bloc* and that was not possible, but then today it is possible. For example, so these are problems, and I think that the problem is actually worse in my view, why can some countries be bombed, and others cannot?

One kind of infrastructure can be destroyed, and another kind of infrastructure cannot be destroyed. We are convinced of one thing, and I already said that yesterday. We should not kill people. We should not destroy infrastructure. We should not prevent the delivery of food and fertiliser, no matter how well publicised these people, food and fertiliser are. Any other approach is open double standards, and it is an open unfairness, which is something that we have seen before, unfortunately.

If we look at the draft proposed by Belarus, then it is characterised by one difference from that proposed by another group of countries and we are adding in other issues. For example, if the

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power plant were to be bombed, then that would be not good for anyone. We also need to open up access for Russian food as well as for Ukrainian food. Russian fertiliser should also be allowed to be exported and so on.

Here the only difference in our draft is that no infrastructure should be destroyed. No people should be killed. No food or fertiliser should be restricted. That is the only difference. And I am absolutely convinced of the following that this is not going to be heeded. There will be no rapprochement positions. We all clearly understand what is happening and who is proposing whose interest.

I propose that we break off our consideration or discussion of this discussion. We break off discussion and that we put it to a vote.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

May I just clarify with you, Chairperson, on whether you are giving me the floor or whether we are responding to the request just opposed on which we should then go immediately to a vote in line with the Rules of Procedure? Thank you for your clarification.

CHAIRPERSON

I would ask Belarus if it would be feasible, but it is up to you that we first finalize the list of speakers and then go to the vote, because we have to anyhow vote. What do you want to have to vote now? Because then it means that we have to go to a vote.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Yes, we will have to vote. That is an official proposal of Belarus to move the closure of the debate.

CHAIRPERSON

Then we go to the vote proposed by Belarus to close the debate. I will do it by roll call.

I now draw the country with which we start to vote. We start with Qatar, and I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have ended the call.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, vote for the proposal made by the Republic of Belarus to close the debate, here are the results:

Numbers of votes cast: 23. By the way, we have 32 Members in Plenary in person and 3 on Zoom, so we have a quorum for the vote. The majority required are 12. Votes for are 7. Votes against are 16. Abstentions are 21.

So, the Council has rejected the proposal to close the debate.

**174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023**

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: Motion to close the debate on Agenda item 6

7 December 2023, 11:30

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	23
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	12
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	7
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	16
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	21

Votes for: Belarus, Egypt, Indonesia, Kuwait, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Sudan
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania,
Votes contre: Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D' Ivoire,
Abstenciones: Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama,
Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Morocco, Qatar, Uganda
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/REJETÉE/RECHAZADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

We will continue our debate after the lunch break. We break now for lunch until 14:00 hours and we start our meeting again at 14:00 hours. Meeting adjourned until 14:00 hours.

The meeting rose at 12:38 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 38

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.38

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session
Cent soixante-quatorzième session
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023**

**EIGHTH PLENARY SESSION
HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
OCTAVA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

7 December 2023

The Eighth Plenary Meeting was opened at 14:12 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La huitième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 12
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la octava sesión plenaria a las 14.12
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Portions marked as [XX] were inaudible due to technical reasons. Please submit all corrections
to: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Les parties signalées par [XX], pour des raisons techniques, étaient inaudibles. Veuillez communiquer
toute correction à: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Las partes marcadas como [XX] fueron inaudibles debido a razones técnicas. Por favor, envíe todas
las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

- Item 6. The impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security and related matters under the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (*continuación*)**
- Point 6. Impact de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et questions connexes relevant du mandat de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) (*suite*)**
- Tema 6. Repercusiones de la guerra en Ucrania sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FAO) (*continuación*)**
- (CL 174/4)

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, we continue our statements from Item 6.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The world is in the midst of a food security crisis. As we have said it is unacceptable that on the current trajectory 600 million people will still be going to bed hungry every night and under-nourished in 2030 – far off from our Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 Zero Hunger commitment at the heart of this Organization's mandate.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns Russian Federation's illegal war in Ukraine. It is exacerbating global food insecurity and increasing price volatility. FAO Council and Conference decisions on this are clear and consistent. We thank FAO for the continued data and analysis on the impact of the conflict in Ukraine on global food security conditions. We support those FAO recommendations including on the need to keep trade flowing and ensure transparency of markets.

The ramifications of Russian Federation's war in Ukraine are global. As the paper underlines, due to the fact that both Russia and Ukraine are major producers of agricultural commodities and exports to many of the poorest countries in the world. Beyond the devastation in the Ukraine, this is directly affecting many of the poorest and most vulnerable countries in the world that FAO and the Rome-based Agencies are committed to supporting.

As *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)* reports, an additional 23 million more people worldwide are going hungry in the world as a result of the Russian war in Ukraine. The Black Sea Grain Initiative allowed millions of tons of grain to reach those who needed it most. Yet Russia has terminated the initiative, even further worsening the situation. We call for its renewal.

Despite this, we note that Ukraine has succeeded in establishing a maritime corridor to enable it to export goods from its Black Sea ports. Increasing close of shipping are using this corridor, and as of 20 November, 133 vessels exported over 5 million tons of goods, including 3.5 million tons of grain since the corridor became operational.

However, Russian Federation is continuing with targeted and relentless attacks on Ukraine's ports and grain infrastructure, clearly intending to prevent Ukraine exporting its grain. The United Kingdom strongly condemns these attacks and calls on Russian Federation to cease them with immediate effect.

We are engaging with Ukraine, insurance providers and industry to try to insure the commercial viability of its maritime corridor, and with Ukraine and its international partners, to develop security arrangements to prevent and deter Russian attacks.

The UK supports the Grain from Ukraine Humanitarian Initiative carried out in partnership with the World Food Programme, which is succeeding in getting Ukrainian grain to some of the people that need it most, including in Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen.

As we have said from the outset, this war goes far beyond Ukraine. It is hitting the world's most vulnerable people and countries. Those that were already struggling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and devastating effects of climate change. They simply cannot cope with this too – the sky rocketing prices, and broken supply chains.

We reiterate the call on Russian Federation to end its war on Ukraine and the impact it is having on global food security. In the meantime, we call on FAO to continue to keep Members updated with its regular reporting and analysis. At country level and in so many countries, FAO has a key role to play in protecting livelihoods to save lives, and in building resilience. We encourage FAO to step up the support provided to those affected, in partnership with others, including World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD).

Finally, we support the text as originally proposed and would welcome its adoption *en bloc* in line with the Rules and Procedures of this Governing Body.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Chile agradece el informe Repercusiones de la guerra en Ucrania sobre la seguridad alimentaria mundial y asuntos conexos en relación con el mandato de la FAO.

Chile ha respaldado los esfuerzos de los organismos especializados como FAO, Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA), Oficina de Coordinación de Asuntos Humanitarios (OCHA) y el Grupo global de respuesta de crisis del Secretario General de Naciones Unidas por generar diagnóstico, evaluación y toma de decisiones, alentando las acciones multilaterales concretas para enfrentar las encrucijadas de la seguridad alimentaria, incluida la implementación de la Iniciativa del Mar Negro que permitió generar una respuesta a la crisis alimentaria mundial y un impacto positivo en los mercados internacionales entre julio de 2022 y julio de 2023.

A la fecha 22 meses han transcurrido desde la invasión de Rusia a Ucrania, y como lo ha señalado el Secretario General de la Naciones Unidas (ONU), en violación de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, miles de civiles han resultado muertos o heridos mientras que millones de personas han sido desplazadas, la infraestructura esencial ha sido destruida y 17,6 millones de ucranianos –casi la mitad de la población del país– ahora necesitan asistencia humanitaria.

Chile, junto con reiterar su llamado a la paz, insta a que el Consejo interceda para que se retome la iniciativa del Mar Negro y se fortalezcan todos los mecanismos necesarios para mantener abierto el comercio internacional de alimentos y fertilizantes, así como de commodities para la producción agrícola. Muchas gracias.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

Italy fully aligns itself to the declaration made by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. In my national capacity I would like to express Italy's deepest concern for the ongoing food crisis, the worst in many decades.

I would like hereby to thank FAO Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, and his team for the comprehensive Report they have prepared. We very much support their suggestions. Food systems have proven to be vulnerable as they can be severely affected by a range of different shocks, including climate shocks, economic shocks, pandemics, conflicts and wars. In this framework we cannot ignore the unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression waged by Russian Federation against Ukraine, and it is a continuing source of uncertainty for global agricultural markets, as *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)* has very clearly stated once again.

The repercussions of this unlawful act have had a disruptive impact on global food security and effects all regions in the world. This is the reason why we discuss this Item here in Rome during FAO Councils, because we are all responsible for finding ways together with FAO, to alleviate the global food insecurity generated by the systematic targeting of Ukrainian ports and infrastructures necessary to agricultural trade and production.

We strongly condemn the ending of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and welcome the Grain from Ukraine Initiative. Italy and the UN hosted in July in this very building, the Food Systems Stocktaking Moment that intended to be a contribution along the way forward. We are determined to stay consistent and continue to work in this direction, even during our G7 presidency in 2024.

As already said on many other occasions, a collective action is necessary to win the current challenges and make the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus operate for the benefit of all of us in the long term.

To that end, we ask FAO to continue its hard work analyzing, evaluating and reporting on the evolving situation as stated already several times in the past Councils and lastly, during the 43rd FAO Conference.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

The Bahamas wishes to take this opportunity to once again reiterate its previous position. The Bahamas and the Caribbean region has jointly condemned Russia's unprovoked attack on the people of Ukraine and we have done so in various platforms in the United Nations (UN).

The unprovoked aggression has negatively impacted the global economy, not to mention our region which has suffered greatly, and the economic impact that we have endured has been an enormous one, bearing in mind our dependence on tourism and the fact that we import more than 90 percent of food into our country – from issues such as feed and grains and all the things that we need to sustain ourselves in the region.

This for us, more so than any other region, we believe have had a tremendous negative impact. We therefore once again renew our call for the cessation of the conflict and the Bahamas and the Caribbean region strongly supports the right of self-determination and the protection of territorial integrity.

We call therefore once again, and will continue to call, for the cessation of this conflict.

M. Sylvain FOURNEL (France) (Observateur)

La France souscrit à la déclaration prononcée par l'Espagne au nom de l'Union Européen (UE) et de ses 27 Etats membres et souhaite ajouter ce qui suit à titre national.

Depuis février 2022, la France n'a cessé de condamner la guerre d'agression illégale de la fédération de Russie contre l'Ukraine, qui est contraire au droit international et à la Charte des Nations Unies, comme l'ont notamment affirmé la Cour Internationale de Justice (CIJ) et l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies (AGNU).

L'invasion russe de l'Ukraine a considérablement aggravé l'état de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale.

La décision unilatérale de la fédération de Russie de se retirer de l'Initiative de la mer Noire en juillet 2023 a privé un grand nombre de pays d'approvisionnements alimentaires vitaux. La fédération attaque depuis de manière systématique les infrastructures agricoles, les ports et les unités de stockage ukrainiens, dans une stratégie cynique visant à détruire la capacité de l'Ukraine à exporter ses produits agricoles.

Ce sont les populations les plus vulnérables dans le monde entier qui payent le prix fort des conséquences de cette guerre, avec la hausse des prix alimentaires, de l'énergie, et des pénuries d'engrais. Le rapport de la FAO sur l'État de la sécurité alimentaire et de la nutrition dans le monde en 2023 (SOFI 2023) indique que cette guerre a placé 23 millions de personnes supplémentaires en situation d'insécurité alimentaire grave dans le monde. Répondre aux conséquences de cette guerre sur la crise alimentaire est au cœur du mandat de la FAO. Son rôle est en effet crucial pour analyser les impacts de la guerre en Ukraine sur la sécurité alimentaire mondiale et prévenir une nouvelle détérioration de l'insécurité alimentaire dans les pays où la situation est déjà alarmante.

La France continue de se tenir aux côtés de l'Ukraine et aux côtés des populations qui, dans le monde, sont affectées par la guerre d'agression décidée par la fédération de Russie. Nous joignons les actes à les paroles. La France soutient activement la nouvelle initiative *Grain from Ukraine II*, qui permet de livrer des denrées alimentaires de base aux pays dans le besoin. La deuxième édition de cette initiative a permis de rassembler un total de 100 millions d'euros. A Kiev le 25 novembre, a annoncé une nouvelle contribution de 3 millions d'euros pour la livraison de céréales ukrainiennes vers des pays particulièrement affectés. Cela s'ajoute aux opérations de livraisons de céréales que nous avons déjà financées pour le Nigéria, le Soudan, la Somalie et le Yémen. Nous continuerons cette solidarité, sur le court et long terme, pour l'Ukraine et pour aider les pays à renforcer leur souveraineté alimentaire.

Avec ses partenaires, la France veillera à ce que les décisions du Conseil de la FAO adoptées lors de ses 169^{ème}, 170^{ème}, 171^{ème}, et 172^{ème} sessions, et endossées par la Conférence de la FAO, continuent

d'être mises en œuvre. C'est une question de crédibilité et d'efficacité de la FAO de remplir les missions qui lui sont confiées.

Nous appelons par conséquent le Conseil à approuver en bloc le projet de décision soumis à ce Conseil.

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Nous appelons par conséquent le Conseil à approuver en bloc le projet de décision soumis à ce Conseil.

Ms Catalina Maria CONSTANTIN (Romania) (Observer)

Romania aligns itself to the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. We would like to reaffirm our support and solidarity with Ukraine. Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine has resulted in a significant decrease in the availability of food, animal feed, fertilizers; significant increases in food, energy and fertilizer prices; and has exacerbated global food insecurity as also reflected in the FAO Report.

Also, the attacks by the Russian Federation on the Ukrainian infrastructure facilities including in the proximity of the Romanian border, significantly affected the transport and delivery of Ukrainian grains to the international market.

Romania is committed to contribute to the global food security efforts by ensuring grain exports from Ukraine to international markets, and especially to the most vulnerable countries. Our country already played an important role in ensuring the transit of Ukrainian grain to international markets, ensuring that more than 60 percent of the total exports were delivered through the Romanian transport corridors.

As of 1 December this year, more than 32 million tons of grains and derivative products have transited Romania since the beginning of this war. Romania will continue to play its role in facilitating these exports through the solidarity corridors created at the level of the European Union. In the next period we aim to ensure an increase of transport capacities throughout the entire chain of supply, through a significant national budgetary effort, as well as with the direct support of the European Union and our international partners.

We will take all the necessary measures to continue to secure the solidarity lanes in the case of transport operations, and to support the delivery of Ukrainian grains where they are mostly needed. In this regard, we have a constant and effective coordination with Ukraine, with the European Commission and all our European and international partners, in order to address all challenges we face in regard, including at national level.

We commend the efforts of the FAO in addressing the challenges this war poses for food security and we encourage FAO to continue to observe the evolutions on this issue.

Mr Yuriy GRYNEVETSKYY (Ukraine) (Observer)

We noted with thanks a series of assessments and analyses of FAO on the impact of Russian Federation's invasion on Ukraine's agricultural sector and express our thanks to FAO's ongoing operational and technical support to Ukraine.

As of today, unfortunately, Ukraine's agricultural sector remains the subject of Russian Federation's aggression. Damages and losses amount to more than USD 40 billion. Russian Federation continues to use food and hunger as weapons on a global scale. Russian Federation's blockade of Ukrainian seaports and obstruction of international navigation in the Black Sea, provoked food shortages in many countries in Africa and Asia.

This problem resonates in every state. Food inflation, less affordability of food, and the worst, less access to food and increased hunger. The number of people suffering from food insecurity increased by 500 million.

Russian Federation withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) and started attacking Ukrainian ports storing grain intended for export. In one year of BSGI, Ukraine exported nearly 33 million tons of products to 45 countries. 60 percent of the volumes went to the countries of Africa and Asia. Ukraine could provide at least 57 million tons if Russia had not blocked the grain corridor. Russia has used the blocking of the Black Sea Grain Initiative as a bargaining chip for relieving the sanctions regime established in response to Russia's aggression and violation of international law, is unacceptable.

This country has stolen millions of tons of Ukrainian grain worth about USD 1 billion. Since July, Russia's targeted attacks destroyed nearly 300,000 metric tons of grain. According to WFP it is enough to feed 10.5 million for a year.

The lives of about 400 million people around the world depend on Ukrainian food exports. Ukrainian people who once experienced terrible artificial famine organized by Moscow 90 years ago, are particularly empathetic to the threat of famine to any other people. Even in these difficult times we are ready to remain a guarantor of global food security.

Out of the anticipated harvest of this year, more than 50 million is going to be sent to countries in need. In August this year, temporary routes for civilian vessels to and from the Black Sea ports of Ukraine came into effect. As of now, we managed to transport more than 5 million tonnes of food. 200 vessels have already used this new alternative sea corridor.

On 25 November, the second International Summit of Grain from Ukraine was held in Kiev, despite an attempt of Russian Federation to disrupt this Summit by launching a record high UAVs attack on the capital of Ukraine. The key goal of this Summit was to consolidate efforts to ensure global food security and develop alternative logistic routes for export of agricultural products from our country.

This year's event was attended by representatives from 41 countries. The regional scope of the Summit included Europe, North America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. We highly appreciate the readiness of States to join this humanitarian programme.

Mr Nuno MANANA (Portugal) (Observer)

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its Members.

We condemn Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine that has had, and continues to have, an obvious impact on global food security and nutrition.

Portugal also deplores the termination by Russia of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and condemns the attacks on infrastructure, including ports and grain-storage facilities.

Ukraine is one of the world's most important export markets for grain and other agricultural products – and millions of people worldwide depend on Ukrainian grain supplies to ensure their food security, particularly in Africa and Asia.

The war in Ukraine is hindering the production and trade of grain and other food commodities, thus exacerbating price volatility, with negative consequences for food security in the Least Developed Countries and Low-Income Food-Deficit Countries. We commend FAO efforts to analyze, evaluate and report on the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security and nutrition.

Despite the tremendous efforts of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Russia has successfully weaponized global food security, hitting hardest the most vulnerable, especially our partners in Africa.

This is why we support all efforts, notably those of the UN, to facilitate exports of Ukraine's grain and other agricultural products to the countries most in need, especially in Africa and the Middle East.

Portugal also supports President Zelensky's Peace Formula. In that context, we are strongly committed to contribute to "food security".

In particular, we support the expansion of the Grain from Ukraine initiative to new countries, with a strong focus on Africa. To this end we have pledged EUR 5 million for the Grain from Ukraine initiative through the World Food Programme. We fully support the expansion of the geography of grain supplies from Ukraine under this programme.

We need a global alliance for peace as we need a global alliance for food security. In this regard, FAO should continue to play its role in promoting and contributing to increased international coordination and multilateral solutions to address increased food insecurity and malnutrition.

Finally, like others, we request that FAO to keep up its efforts on the issues still ongoing from the mandate of the 169th, 170th, 171st, and 172nd Sessions of the FAO Council and the 43rd Session of the Conference, and we support the draft decision proposed in this Agenda Item by Council Members and 28 Observers dated 4 December 2023

Ms Dilyara RAVILOVA-BOROVİK (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian) (Observer)

I would like to thank the delegation of Belarus who proposed that we have a vote because the vote was very useful, if we compare it with who has spoken on the Item, and who actually came to the room with preprepared statements. We would like to mention that. Therefore, thank you very much to Belarus and thank you to all of those who took part in the vote.

I am not going to once again call for the debate not to be made political or to call for the fact that we should not turn this Council into the Security Council of the General Assembly because that has already happened, and all of the opinions that we have already heard about peace for Zelenskyy and all those other things, all of these are issues that have a very distant relationship to FAO's mandate and to the Organization as a whole. But if colleagues want to, then they are of course free to continue to talk about those things.

I have a preprepared statement but in fact it includes answers to many of the things that have already been said, therefore I would suggest that you look at this statement and it is also a right to reply. Our position on the unfortunate situation with food security is as follows: as you know, before each Council we disseminate a paper, including new facts, and therefore I am not going to repeat myself. I am just going to make a few comments.

Firsty, in the last agricultural year from June 2022 to July 2023, Russian Federation exported more than 60 million tons of grains, and in addition, it also made free deliveries of urgent food assistance to countries in need through the World Food Programme (WFP), and also bilaterally. If some of the prosperous countries who claim that Russia is using food as a weapon, behaved the way Russia does, if they had the strength to behave that way then there would be no hungry people – or at least those 300 000 additional people who are suffering from hunger, who are mentioned in *The State of World Food and Nutrition (SOFI)* report.

My second comment is the following: after the first eight months of this year, Russia was the second largest supplier of fertilizer to the United States and the fourth largest supplier of grain to Europe, and today from the most recent data of the European Union statistical authorities, it is the largest deliver of liquid gas to Europe.

I have a question, when we talk about our own interests then we might want to pay attention to very many things, but having said that, there is a group of countries who tell everybody else that they should not do business with Russia because it is an aggressor, but at the same time, they buy everything from us that they need.

My third comment, the European Commissioner on Transport, Ms Adina-Ioana Vălean – and I apologize if I mispronounced her name – made an official statement at a press conference, where she said that from May 2022 to August 2023, from the Ukraine to the EU, 53 million tons of agricultural products were imported, including 48 million tons of grain. The income for Ukraine from these deliveries was EUR 38 billion.

At the same time, WFP asked for 2 billion to provide food assistance to Ukraine for 2024. Could you please tell me, are there other countries in the world that are at war, who have these exports and receive this kind of income just from exporting one product, and at the same still ask for financing for humanitarian assistance? Perhaps they should not be exporting these goods to well-fed countries in order to then have to ask for assistance to feed Ukrainians who are going hungry. I very much love Ukraine and respect its people but have become a hostage to these geopolitical games.

The last thing I wanted to say, I did not want to get into the personal things but I have to talk about our colleagues from Lithuania. You have mentioned my country a number of times, and I wanted to mention Great Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and that is what we were and that is what we will be.

It gives us the possibility to have an independent foreign policy and to define what and how we want to do things. Unfortunately, not all countries are able to do this, therefore many countries try to hide behind those who are stronger, and in fact, this was very clearly visible from the most recent thing that happened on the 31st, there were the Ministers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that met, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, they met on the 1 December in Skopje, and it was clear who was strongest and those who know how foreign policy is done. But of course, the people expressed what their relationships were.

Mr Ender SARITEKIN (Türkiye) (Observer)

The War in Ukraine continues to cause serious concern for our region and beyond. As increasing interest in diplomacy indicates the negotiated end to the war, based on International Law, is possible and we are trying. The current dynamics may not be conducive to resuming negotiations but when the right moment emerges, we must be ready to engage. In the meantime, we all feel the negative effects of this war, including food security.

Our diplomatic efforts, together with the United Nations, brought the Black Sea Initiative to life. It lasted for a year and averted a global food crisis. This initiative was significant not only to help stabilize the global food market, but it has also proven to be an effective security arrangement in keeping the calm over the Black Sea. This is why, together with the UN, we continue our efforts to revive this process, or develop an alternative, by preserving the essence of Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI). The discussions are underway, and we are working hard to deliver on this issue.

CHAIRPERSON

Before going to the vote, I give the floor the Chief Economist or at least his assistant.

Mr Boubaker Ben BELHASSEN (Director, Market and Trade)

I would just provide a few comments or feedback on behalf of the Chief Economist who had to leave for another meeting. First to appreciate the positive feedback received from the Members on our work. I also wish to confirm that FAO will continue to monitor and assess the impacts of the war on global food markets and food security, including through the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), and also to say that we are actually strengthening our capacity to cover fertilizer and vegetable oil markets and also on modelling work.

In this regard, I would also like to stress the critical importance that countries supply to FAO up to date and complete data, to allow us to conduct timely and credible assessments, with the objective to support Members and the international community to take informed decisions.

On the Black Sea Grain Initiative, FAO regrets its termination and we fully support its resumption given the importance of the initiatives for improving global food supplies and stabilizing markets as well as allowing Ukrainian farmers to export their produce and earn income.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I turn to the vote, the two decision vote on the proposal contained in *CL 174/INF/13* and it is clearly stated. I requested that it is a vote to adopt the Draft Decision *en bloc*. But I see a point of order from Belarus.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

I wanted to recall that I suggested that we had a secret vote.

CHAIRPERSON

I turn the floor to the Council because there is a proposal to have a secret vote on this proposal. I give the floor to Indonesia for a point of order.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Exactly what are we voting for? I am sorry. Are we voting on the amendments? I am confused.

CHAIRPERSON

I clarify there are two draft decisions. There is a draft decision proposed in document *CL 174/INF/13*, and yesterday we received a letter from Belarus stating that they proposed a separate draft decision, which is contained in document *CL 174/INF/14*. So, what I did is I put forward the proposal which was presented first, and that is *CL 174/INF/13*.

A point of order by Spain.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

La Unión Europea y sus 27 Estados Miembros nos oponemos a esta petición de Bielorrusia de celebrar el voto en secreto en este asunto tan sustancial e importante. Hemos tenido y hemos participado en debates muy importantes sobre la transparencia en ese foro y es, precisamente, basándose en la transparencia que nosotros llamamos a que el voto no sea secreto sino nominal. El voto secreto debe ser reservado, a nuestro juicio, exclusivamente para los procedimientos de elección.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I put on the screen, because we have to first vote on the modality of the vote.

Brazil, point of order.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Just checking out. We are voting what? Are we going to vote a secret ballot on the first proposal? So we are not considering the second as an amendment of the first.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General to explain what the vote.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

There is a proposal for a decision by Council *en bloc* contained in document *CL 174/INF/13* and the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) had moved to have a vote on the proposal contained in that document, by the default modality, which is as we all know, by roll call vote.

There is now a proposal by one Member, the Republic of Belarus, to hold that vote by secret ballot. As there is no consensus attained by the ICC, we are now moving to a vote, by roll call vote, to decide on the modality of the vote for the proposal contained in *CL 173/INF/13*. You will have three options on this vote by roll call – Yes/No/Abstention. If this vote carries, then we will move to the vote for the decision contained in that document *CL 173/INF/13* by secret ballot vote. If it does not, we will then move to a vote on that decision by roll call.

CHAIRPERSON

Egypt.

When it comes to the quorum, we have 36 Members in person in the room, and three Members of the Council online. So, we have a quorum. Assistant Secretary-General.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have completed the call.

CHAIRPERSON

The results of the vote on the proposal of Belarus to vote by secret ballot on the Draft Decision contained in *CL 174/INF/13*:

Number of votes cast: 27; Majority required: 14; Votes for: 9; Votes against: 18; Abstention: 16.

With this result, the Council has rejected the proposal to have a secret ballot.

174th Session of the FAO Council

4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to vote by secret ballot on the proposal contained in document
CL 174/INF/13

7 December 2023, 11:45

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS**Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal**

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	27
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	14
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	9
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	18
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	16

Votes for: Belarus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Lesotho, Nicaragua, Qatar, Sudan
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Argentina, Bangladesh, Chile, China, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, Uganda
Abstenciones:

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Cameroon, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/REJETÉE/RECHAZADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

That means that we now go to a roll call vote on the draft decision in *CL 174/INF/13*.

I give the floor to the Assistant Secretary-General so that Spain can make itself ready for the vote.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have completed the call.

CHAIRPERSON

I present you the results of the votes on the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/13*.

Number of votes cast: 25; Majority required:13; Votes for: 20; Votes against: 5; Abstentions: 20

The result is that the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/13* is approved.

174th Session of the FAO Council

4 – 8 December 2023

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to adopt the draft decision contained in document CL 174/INF/13

7 December 2023, 12:00

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS**Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal**

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	25
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	13
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	20
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	5
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	20

Votes for: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Cote D'Ivoire, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain,
Votes pour:
Votos en favor: United Kingdom, United States of America

Votes against: Belarus, Egypt, Kuwait, Nicaragua, Qatar
Votes contre:
Votos en contra:

Abstentions: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea,
Abstenciones: Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Mauritania, Morocco
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

ADOPTED/ADOPTÉE/ACEPTADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to the vote on the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/14*. And I have to do this because the proposal of Belarus is not objecting the text in *CL 174/INF/13*, but we have had two or three additions, so that is why it has to be put to the vote.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

Just a point of order. My understanding is when a draft decision is voted upon, that decision stands. You cannot have another decision on the same topic; it would be superseded by it. The time to offer amendments would have been when the vote started, at which point Belarus or any other delegation could have offered amendments. But to vote on a separate decision on the same topic does not seem like correct procedure. That is my point of order.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

My understanding is we have had two proposals related to this Item: one was the decision in *CL 174/INF/13* and the second was in *CL 174/INF/14*. The first was taken up and has just been adopted by the Council. The second is now being presented by you, Chairperson, for consideration. In this context I note – and here again it would be a matter for consideration of the Council – if one looks at the cover communication from the proposer of the draft decision in *CL 174/INF/14*, it has been submitted not as an amendment, but as a decision.

In that regard, I refer you to the cover letter where it says – and I believe this is the approach that the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) is taking – the letter indicates “*having thoroughly considered the Draft Decision contained in the document CL 174/INF/13 and in order to receive a broad consensus, the Republic of Belarus had the intention to propose amendments*”, and it then goes on – I will not read all of it – saying “*The Republic of Belarus decided to present its own draft decision on Item 6.*”

Thus, in the same context, I would nevertheless note that paragraph 26, where it refers to amendments, does indicate that – and here in the middle I will read it – “*Where you have the adoption of one amendment necessarily implies the rejection of another, it would not be put to a vote. Or indeed, if this is seen as a substitute vote, an amendment by way of substitute vote shall not be voted on until the vote has been taken on the original proposal and any amendments thereto.*”

Thus, if this is considered an amendment, then yes, a decision would not be taken on the amendment because of the decision already adopted in the context, already adopted on the basis of *CL 174/INF/13*.

However, if one takes this as a substitute, indeed our Rules are silent, it simply says, “*an amendment by way of substitute shall not be voted on until the vote has been taken on the original proposal and any amendments thereto.*” It does not say more. So, I am in your hands, ICC.

CHAIRPERSON

Unless Belarus could withdraw that proposal to avoid another vote, which would be helpful for time’s sake.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

In order to save time, I would ask you to relate with respect to those countries, to all countries in the world, not only the United States. Therefore, there is a draft put forward by our country, a Member of the Council. There is no justification for not having a vote further, we could have a vote on this vote, and therefore I ask for the vote to be held. I am not going to suggest we have a vote in secret once again, as some of our colleagues would have done, I am simply asking you to respect the proposals that come from all Members of the Council.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

My question was simply a point of order and I do not think we have received a decision on that, which is required to be done without debate. So, if we can get a decision on my point of order then I think we can move forward.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Para tratar con la total transparencia poder dar un poco más de luz a esta edición. Voy a pasar a leer la carta que hemos recibido de Bielorrusia en su versión española y dice así: “Hemos mantenido todo el texto del documento *CL 174/INF/13* añadiendo varias enmiendas que, en nuestra opinión, harán que el proyecto de decisión sea más equilibrado y subrayarán la necesidad de garantizar la producción agrícola, las exportaciones de alimentos y productos alimenticios desde Ucrania, así como...” y sigue. Es decir, y cito textualmente la carta de Bielorrusia, “*Hemos mantenido todo el texto del documento recién aprobado, añadiendo varias enmiendas*”. Esto es lo que dice Bielorrusia, “*añadiendo varias enmiendas*”. Por tanto, tiene que considerarse a juicio del propio remitente de la carta una enmienda, por tanto, de acuerdo con lo acaba de decir la Asesora Legal no ha lugar la votación. Muchas gracias.

I give the floor back to the Legal Counsel because we have to be absolutely clear on how to proceed based on the legal advice.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I believe the question here is whether this is an amendment or a substitute proposal, and I believe that in this context, as there is no consensus, that needs to be a decision which is taken by the Council, or for you to make a ruling on.

CHAIRPERSON

I followed the request of a number of Members when it came to document *CL 174/INF/13*, as a draft decision to be taken *en bloc*. Yesterday we received a letter from one Member which clearly stated that it is a separate draft decision. So, that is how we have taken it. If the Council wants to rule that this is not a separate decision, that is then what the Council has to decide. I bring it back to the Council, because the Member proposed that it should be dealt with as a separate draft decision, because that was in the letter and was explained by Belarus.

They presented it as a separate draft decision – dealt with it as a separate draft decision. That is the request of the Member. But if the Council, looking to the content, says it is not a separate draft decision, that ruling should be made by the Council and not by me.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

I just want to clarify that under paragraph 20, which states that “*following a point of order the matter shall be immediately decided by the Chairperson*”, your decision is that this matter belongs to the Council. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON

Yes.

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Colleagues, do you not have the feeling that we are spending ten times more time than we need to on this, going through the procedure, rather than just voting. As the proponent of this draft, I understand the results of a vote. Colleagues, if this was a proposal or an amendment, and if we had interpreted it that way, then we would have had to have voted on it before the draft, and then we would have to go back to the procedure, cancel the vote, vote on the amendment, and then vote on the new draft decision.

If you want to follow that line of procedure, let us think about whether we can do that, but I doubt it. But I do not really understand how the Council can decide whether my draft is an amendment or not. We said this is a draft decision, we said that very clearly. It is not an amendment.

The Council cannot change the status of a document that has been submitted for its consideration. It is defined only by the person who proposes it, and in paragraph 20 it does not say that the Chairperson

can change the status of a draft. This is a draft decision. The Council cannot change it, as far as I understand it.

CHAIRPERSON

I look to the Council. It is clear that it is presented as a draft decision. So that means that, as asked by a Member to bring this draft decision to a vote, I have to bring it to a vote unless the Council wants to decide otherwise. So, we start the voting procedure. I have as a first Member to cast its vote, the Bahamas. I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General.

Vote

Vote

Votación

ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have completed the call.

CHAIRPERSON

May I present you the results of the vote of the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/14*.

The number of votes cast: 24; Majority required:13; Votes for: 7; Votes against: 17; Abstentions: 21.

With this result, the Council has rejected the draft decision contained in document *CL 174/INF/14*.

With that, we have concluded our work on Item 6.

**174th Session of the FAO Council
4 – 8 December 2023**

VOTE RESULT SHEET

Proposal: to adopt the draft decision contained in Document CL174/INF/14

7 December 2023, 12:15

RESULT SHEET/RESULTATS/RESULTADOS

Roll Call Vote/Vote par appel nominal/ Votación Nominal

Number of votes cast/ Nombre de suffrages exprimés/ Número de votos emitidos	24
Majority required/ Majorité requise/ Mayoría requerida	13
Votes for/ Votes pour/ Votos en faveur	7
Votes against/ Votes contre/ Votos en contra	17
Abstentions/ Abstenciones	21

Votes for: Belarus, Egypt, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nicaragua, Qatar, Saudi Arabia
Votes pour:
Votos en favor:

Votes against: Australia, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lithuania,
Votes contre: Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of
Votos en contra: America

Abstentions: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cameroon, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote D'Ivoire,
Abstenciones: Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Mexico, Pakistan, Panama,
 Peru, Sudan, Thailand, Uganda

No reply: Afghanistan, Angola, Mauritania, Morocco
Aucune réponse:
Ninguna respuesta:

REJECTED/REJETÉE/RECHAZADA



Elections Officer/ Fonctionnaire électorale/ El oficial de elecciones

Mr Kiryl PIATROUSKI (Belarus) (Original language Russian)

Since this has not gone through, I would like to put in a footnote for subparagraph (a) in the document that was done, that the various Members of Council said there were votes and that the votes should be noted, the number of voting should be noted. I do not think anybody should object to that.

CHAIRPERSON

It will be automatically done because it is a decision by vote, so that will be reflected in a footnote, as we have seen in the previous Council when we have voted.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I just need to make a brief statement and this statement reflects our position in the region. The Bahamas see the practice that we have been exercising that has led us to this vote, as an abuse of the Council's time. We wish to caution Members that those who seek to use what we consider an

unreasonable approach in tendering this process of voting for much of which we consider to be unnecessary and a misuse of the Council's time. From our position, we will protest by voting against these issues, these amendments, and it does not matter which country brings them forward. I think it is thoroughly a waste of the Council's time.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement will be recorded in the Verbatim.

Item 12. Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security (Rome, 23-27 October and 25 November 2023)

Point 12. Rapport de la 51^e session du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (Rome, 23-27 octobre et 25 novembre 2023)

Tema 12. Informe del 51.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (Roma, 23-27 de octubre y 25 de noviembre de 2023) (C 2025/19)

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to Item 12, *Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)*, and the document before you is *C 2025/19*. The introduction by the Chairperson of CFS, Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 12: Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security (Rome, 23-27 October and 25 November 2023)

H.E. Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security

I have the pleasure to introduce to you the *Report of the 51st Plenary Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)*, held in hybrid modality from 23 to 27 October, and on 25 November 2023. Its final Report is submitted to the Council for endorsement in document *C 2025/19*.

The Session was attended by 130 Members and 10 non-Members of the Committee. Participants included one Vice-President, 10 Ministers, 13 Vice-Ministers and three State Secretaries, as well as delegates from the United Nations (UN) system, financial institutions, civil society, research organizations, private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to the following points:

1. Discussions between Members and participants during CFS 51 illustrated the deep concern about the prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition in different regions of the world and the immense challenges that remain in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger by 2030. The deliberations on the ongoing conflicts triggered a call for FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), within their respective mandates, and in coordination and collaboration with other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions and relevant bodies, to assess and address the impact of conflicts on food security and nutrition.
2. The Committee endorsed the following policy agreements resulting from the work of the intersessional period and transmitted them to the Governing Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD, with a request to support their use at country level:
 - a. The "CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition"; and
 - b. The "CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening the Collection and Use of Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Data and Related Analysis Tools to Improve Decision-Making in Support of the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security".

3. Another key milestone has been the Committee's endorsement of the new CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027, which reaffirms the strategic vision of the CFS and lays out cross-cutting focus areas, prioritizes thematic workstreams and supports activities focused on the transformation of agriculture and food systems. Overall, the new four-year plan provides a comprehensive framework to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and the achievement of SDG 2.
4. The Committee also received the 18th Report of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN), entitled "Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition", as a basis for the preparation of an agreed set of policy recommendations to be proposed for endorsement at CFS 52 in October 2024.
5. The "Progress report on follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), including implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition", jointly presented by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO), outlined the work done by various institutions to promote the use of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition at country level.
6. Furthermore, the agenda allowed for an in-depth exchange among Members and participants on:
 - a. Global Interlinkages of international food and agricultural fora and the intersections of the Rio Conventions with the CFS; and
 - b. Lessons and experiences arising from implementing CFS Policy Recommendations on price volatility and on social protection.

The full report of CFS 51 was adopted by consensus and it is available on the CFS website.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite Members to provide their comments to this Report.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines recommends the Council's endorsement of the *Report of the 51st Plenary Session of the Committee on World Food Security*. The Philippines acknowledges the call to Members to utilize the endorsed policy products of CFS 51 with the national policies, strategies, and regulatory frameworks.

While noting that some of the guidelines and policy recommendations are already embedded in current programmes, we welcome the support that FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) or International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) can provide to support the utilization of this policy products at a country level, in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of National Food Security.

The Philippines supports the endorsement of the CFS Programme of Work 2024-2027 and we encourage the dissemination, ownership and update of relevant CFS products towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Philippines also joins the call for Rome-based Agencies to honour their commitment to equally share the costs of the Secretariat through either cash or in kind contributions, while encouraging the Chair and the Secretariat to continue efforts to expand and diversify the CFS financing base.

Lastly, the Philippines wishes to thank Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero of Spain, for his able and dedicated Chairmanship of the CFS in the last two years, and we also wish to extend our full support to the new CFS Chairperson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile of South Africa.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es de nuevo para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE), sus 27 Estados miembros y otros nueve Miembros de FAO que se adhieren completamente a nuestra declaración y que son los siguientes: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro, San

Marino y Ucrania.

En primer lugar, nos gustaría agradecer al Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA), el Sr. Gabriel Ferrero, su liderazgo integrador y sus amplios esfuerzos, tanto en la presidencia del 51º periodo de sesiones del CSA como a lo largo de todo su mandato. Nos gustaría exponer los siguientes comentarios.

Valoramos la alta calidad constante de los informes del Estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo (SOFI). Nos encontramos profundamente preocupados por las tendencias mundiales negativas de aumento de la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición en todas sus formas, como se señala en el último informe SOFI. Este informe muestra claramente que seguimos lejos de alcanzar el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible número 2 (ODS 2).

La seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo ya estaban bajo presión debido a múltiples factores, en particular la pobreza, las desigualdades y ralentizaciones económicas, los conflictos, la crisis climática y de biodiversidad y la pandemia COVID-19. La guerra de agresión de la Federación de Rusia contra Ucrania agrava aún más la inseguridad alimentaria mundial y la inestabilidad de los mercados.

La UE y sus Estados Miembros acogen con satisfacción los debates exhaustivos y el espíritu de compromiso y multilateralismo que ha reinado a lo largo de esta 51ª sesión plenaria. Nos comprometemos a trabajar conjuntamente con el CSA, destacando su importante papel como plataforma intergubernamental central, más inclusiva y con múltiples partes interesadas, para promover la seguridad alimentaria mundial, la nutrición y los sistemas alimentarios sostenibles y resilientes, así como para coordinar las respuestas políticas mundiales a las múltiples dimensiones de la crisis alimentaria y para hacer realidad el derecho a una alimentación adecuada. Pedimos a la FAO que refuerce su apoyo al CSA junto con los demás organismos con sede en Roma (OSR), como firme muestra de una visión compartida y de una cooperación eficaz con las agencias con sede en Roma.

La UE y sus 27 Estados Miembros acogen con especial satisfacción la aprobación de las *Directrices Voluntarias del CSA sobre la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas (GEWE)* en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición. Acogemos también con especial satisfacción que el Mecanismo para la Sociedad Civil y los Pueblos Indígenas (MSCPI) se haya sumado al consenso. También acogemos con satisfacción las Recomendaciones sobre políticas para fomentar la recopilación y el uso de datos relativos a la Seguridad Alimentaria y La Nutrición (SAN) así como reforzar los instrumentos de análisis conexos, a fin de mejorar la adopción de decisiones en apoyo de la realización progresiva del derecho a una alimentación adecuada en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria nacional.

La adopción de estos dos nuevos instrumentos ilustra la capacidad de rendimiento del CSA y nos anima a seguir colaborando con espíritu constructivo para superar los retos que tenemos por delante. También acogemos con satisfacción la aprobación del *Programa de Trabajo Plurianual (PTP) estratégico del CSA para 2024-2027*, en consonancia con la consecución del ODS 2. Alentamos a la FAO y a los organismos con sede en Roma a que apoyen plenamente la aplicación de estas directrices y a que promuevan una mayor asimilación, difusión y utilización de las recomendaciones políticas y directrices voluntarias del CSA, tal como se acordó en el Programa De Trabajo Plurianual, recordando que es ante todo responsabilidad de los Estados miembros del CSA fomentar la aplicación de los productos del CSA. Por último, nos gustaría felicitar a la nueva Presidenta del CSA, la Sra. Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, y expresar nuestro pleno apoyo a su liderazgo.

Con estas observaciones, la UE y sus 27 Estados Miembros acogen con satisfacción el Informe de la 51ª sesión plenaria del CSA y apoyan su presentación a la Conferencia para su aprobación.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Permítame decir que hablo en mi capacidad de Representante de la Argentina y que en este punto como en los demás puntos de todo lo que pasó durante el Consejo, la región de América Latina y el Caribe no ha definido ninguna posición regional, así que cada uno de los países habla en su propia representación.

Para comenzar, nos gustaría destacar el compromiso por el consenso mostrados por los miembros en la finalización de la 51ª Sesión del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA). Sin este espíritu de trabajo, hubiera sido poco probable que estemos hoy discutiendo este documento.

Más allá de las dificultades experimentadas, la plenaria 51ª Sesión del CSA nos permitió aprobar dos documentos sumamente importantes.

En primer lugar, el documento “*Directrices Voluntarias sobre la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres y Niñas*”, que nos brindaron la oportunidad de abordar holísticamente la necesidad de implementar políticas y acciones que potencien y faciliten la autonomía y el empoderamiento de las mujeres a través de los sistemas alimentarios.

En paralelo, sobre el contenido de las Directrices Voluntarias sobre la Igualdad de Género y el Empoderamiento de las Mujeres y Niñas, nos gustaría subrayar que el documento contiene una multiplicidad de propuestas y mensajes que incorporan no sólo un amplio abanico de enfoques agro-productivos (por ejemplo, desde la agroecología a la siembra directa), pero también elementos que hacen al acceso a la salud, a la educación y el financiamiento.

Por ese motivo, avizoramos que la utilidad práctica de este documento podrá responder, de manera efectiva, a las necesidades concretas que se presentan en el terreno, en particular en los países en desarrollo; ello, independientemente de las evaluaciones tríptico- conceptuales que podamos realizar, por ejemplo, en un ambiente académico.

Por otro lado, también deseamos la valía de las “*Recomendaciones de Políticas sobre la Mejora de los Instrumentos de Recopilación y Análisis de Datos sobre la Seguridad Alimentaria*”.

En esta línea, el valor del documento puede ser dividido, al menos, en dos dimensiones. La primera, está relacionada con promover la importancia y los beneficios de utilizar soluciones tecnológicas y análisis estadísticos para informar las decisiones sobre seguridad alimentaria y nutrición. Es indudable que, en este momento de múltiples desafíos, la ciencia y la innovación están llamadas a acompañar y robustecer los procesos de diseño de políticas públicas para hacerlas más precisas y efectivas. El documento es exitoso en subrayar este mensaje.

Adicionalmente, en materia de recolección, propiedad, tratamiento e o interpretación de datos, nos parece imperioso recordar el rol central que cumplen las agencias públicas, en particular los institutos estadísticos nacionales de cada País, para custodiar los principios rectores de licitud, finalidad, exactitud y minimización que, por ejemplo, forman parte vertebral de los estándares internacionales en este campo.

Culmino dando la bienvenida a la nueva Presidenta del Comité, mi querida compañera y amiga la Embajadora de Sud Africa. Estamos absolutamente seguros de que el CSA irá por muy buena senda.

Con estos comentarios Sr. Presidente, y esperando que el Programa Multianual Panual de Trabajo se implemente de una manera abordable para todas las Delegaciones, acompañamos el documento.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Antes que nada, muy satisfecho que ya superamos esos bochornosos momentos que pasamos con los temas anteriores.

Quisiera hacer referencias a unos puntos en particular del Informe del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria. Nos complace que las Directrices Voluntarias que sobre la igualdad de género y empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y de nutrición fueran adoptadas luego de un largo proceso de debates y negociaciones del texto. Quisiéramos agradecer la excelente labor de los copresidentes del 2022, Tanja Grén de Finlandia y el embajador Tomás Duncan de Panamá, así como la cofacilitadora del grupo de trabajo de composición abierta sobre igualdad de género y empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el 2023, Ms Berioska Morrison de República Dominicana.

Costa Rica apoya la elaboración de estas directrices las cuales entendemos son voluntarias y no vinculantes, pero confiamos en que exista un esfuerzo por parte de todos los países para que sean aplicadas en sus políticas, estrategias, programas y marcos reglamentarios. Esperamos que en un

futuro podamos compartir los progresos y buenas prácticas en el marco del Comité cuyo fin es la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de todas las personas. Agradecemos también los otros documentos e informes presentados durante la sesión del Comité. Agradecemos asimismo el esfuerzo realizado por el embajador Gabriel Ferrero por cumplir con el cierre de la Sesión 51 del Comité antes de la actual sesión del Consejo a través de una sesión extraordinaria realizada un sábado 25 de noviembre.

Nos complace saber, además, que el párrafo pendiente de discusión para esa fecha fue adoptado por consenso, sin necesidad de aplicar el voto, como debe ser. Por último, agradecer al embajador Ferrero por sus labores como Presidente del Comité y felicitar a la nueva presidenta, mi querida amiga, embajadora Sra. Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, representante permanente de Sudáfrica a quien le auguramos el mayor de los éxitos en sus funciones. Sepa que cuenta con el apoyo de Costa Rica para el avance en los diferentes trabajos del Comité. Muchas gracias. Pura vida.

Mr Hanghao LI (China) (Original language Chinese)

China has noted that you are responding to the global food crisis, especially to the negative impacts of regional conflicts. The 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has provided a platform for governments, international organizations, civil societies, private sector organizations, philanthropic organizations and other stakeholders to discuss the issues, and has made a useful attempt to build consensus.

We would like to congratulate the CFS for adopting two voluntary policy products and the Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-27. China would like to thank Ambassador Ferrero for his work during his tenure as the Chairperson of the CFS.

I would like to congratulate Ambassador Nosipho again on her election as the new Chairperson. China encourages the Committee under the leadership of the new Chairperson to continue to focus on delivering its mandate and to make greater contribution to the enhancement of global food security and nutrition.

On the basis of the above comments, China agrees in principle that the Council endorse the programme and budgetary matters contained in the Report of the 51st Session of the Committee.

Ms Yuriko FUKAUCHI (Japan)

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the Members of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the Chairperson Mr Gabriel Ferrero and the Secretariat for their hard work and collaborative spirit. It enabled the CFS to come to a consensus on the recommendations and observations in the final Report.

We also congratulate the new CFS Chair, Ambassador Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile from South Africa, as well as Dr Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann, from our country, who has been appointed last week as the Chair of the Steering Committee of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN). Our congratulations also go to other HLPE experts for the upcoming two years. Japan hopes that we can further collaborate for global food security and nutrition. We look forward to the impactful contribution to be made by HLPE in the future.

Amidst the ongoing severe food insecurity situation, it is imperative to build sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems from a medium and long term perspective. It is likewise important in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger.

Japan reiterates its willingness to contribute to achieving Zero Hunger by building resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Ms Ruth MALLETT (Australia)

Australia would like to start by acknowledging the outgoing Chairperson, Mr Gabriel Ferrero, on his efforts to move the Committee on World Food Security forward over the last two years, despite some unprecedented global challenges. We congratulate the incoming and inaugural female Chair, Her Excellency Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile and look forward to working with her during her tenure.

Australia provides the following brief comments.

Australia welcomes the approval of the voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition and believes that through its implementation the guidelines can be an important tool for governments, international organizations and policy makers, to make strides towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and many inter-related SDGs. We encourage the Rome-based Agencies to support the utilization at country level.

We urge the implementation of policy recommendations on strengthening the collection of food security and nutrition data, to support data collection in regions such as the Southwest Pacific where there is a significant lack of data, which can impede truly reflective reporting of regional variation, and thus effective policy making.

Australia is pleased to see the workstream on the uptake and use of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) policy products, which we hope will inform future CFS products that are fit for purpose and impactful. We are also pleased to see the work on Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems. Australia's First Nations people are the first custodians of the land, and their knowledge systems can provide invaluable contributions to food security, broader land management, environmental custodianship and sustainable development.

With these comments, Australia is pleased to endorse the Report of the 51st Session of the CFS.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Brazil has sent a very large and high level delegation to the 51st Committee on World Food Security (CFS), so we will not repeat what we have already said during the CFS. I would like to make just a few brief comments.

CFS is the only multistakeholder in the main international forum for food security. As this, its existence is a strengthening priority for Brazil and the current government. Unfortunately, in the last two Sessions of the CFS, geopolitical questions brought a lot of confusion to the meetings, and we hope that it will not be repeated again. Although Chairperson Gabriel Ferrero tried his best to bypass those, like you did here at this Council, we were a bit stuck on those issues.

I would like to thank Mr Ferrero on this note, for his able Chairpersonship of the Council, and congratulate our esteemed colleague Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Nazile and express our commitment to entirely work with her in the next CFS.

With these comments, Brazil is pleased to endorse the text.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Chile refrenda el informe y destaca que la última edición del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria haya culminado exitosamente con la entrega particular de dos instrumentos voluntarios negociados en esta sede y ampliamente valorados por los Estados Miembros y representantes de la sociedad civil.

Me refiero a la adopción de las Directrices Voluntarias del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria sobre la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición como marco fundamental de políticas mundiales acordado a nivel intergubernamental.

Y a la adopción las recomendaciones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria sobre políticas para fomentar la recopilación y el uso de datos relativos a la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición, así como respecto a los instrumentos de análisis conexos a fin de mejorar la adopción de decisiones en apoyo de la realización progresiva del derecho a una alimentación adecuada en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria nacional.

Chile reitera que los planeamientos en materia de políticas, medidas e inversiones para promover eficazmente la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición deben guiarse con una mayor inclusión y participación de las mujeres en toda su diversidad y una comprensión más acabada del continuo rural-urbano y los sistemas agroalimentarios. Ello confiamos ayudará en la reducción de la desigualdad en sus múltiples dimensiones, un área en la que aspiramos seguir trabajando en el seno de este Comité.

A su vez, mi delegación enfatiza el acuerdo logrado en cuanto al reconocimiento de la necesidad de abstenerse de usar los alimentos y el agua como armas de guerra en zonas de conflicto, así como la necesidad de permitir el acceso confiable, sostenido, suficiente y sin trabas a bienes y servicios esenciales a la población civil en toda la franja de Gaza y en todas otras zonas de conflicto.

Finalmente, una vez más nuestro agradecimiento al Presidente saliente del Comité, embajador Gabriel Ferrero de España y nuestras felicitaciones a la Presidenta entrante, Embajadora de Sudáfrica, Nosipho Nausca-Jean Nazile con quien esperamos trabajar muy estrechamente.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá)

Panamá acoge con beneplácito el Informe del 51 período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) y agradece la labor realizada por el presidente saliente, Gabriel Ferrero, y reitera su felicitación y bienvenida a la Embajadora Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile de Sudáfrica como la nueva presidenta de los nuevos Miembros de la Mesa del CSA. Les confirmamos el compromiso de Panamá con el programa de trabajo plurianual 2024-2027 en aras de promover el fin del hambre y lograr que todas las personas gocen de seguridad alimentaria y de una buena nutrición.

Tal como se expone en el informe, las mujeres y las niñas siguen siendo grupos vulnerables afrontando violencia y discriminación, así como desigualdad en todo el mundo y ante todos los desafíos que enfrentamos hoy día. Es por ello que Panamá alienta a todos los Miembros a apoyar y promover en todos los niveles la difusión, el uso y la aplicación de las Directrices Voluntarias sobre la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres y las niñas en el contexto de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición. Debemos reconocer que estas Directrices Voluntarias pudieron ser más inclusivas, sin duda es una tarea pendiente para todos.

Abogamos a que estas directrices sean utilizadas en la elaboración, implementación de políticas, estrategias, programas y marcos reglamentarios y sean compartidas con los órganos rectores del Programa Mundial de Alimentación (PMA) y del Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola (FIDA). Panamá reitera su compromiso de coadyuvar en todos los procesos que garanticen la seguridad alimentaria para toda la población mundial con atención a los grupos vulnerables.

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

Kenya, South Africa and Zambia deliver this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group on this Agenda Item. The Africa Regional Group congratulates the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for the successful conclusion of the 51st Session of the Report thereon. We take note of the stakeholder representation of this Committee, which is critical in delivering on the mandate of CFS, especially on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, taking note that we are at the tail end of the decade of nutrition action.

The Africa Regional Group welcomes the endorsement of the voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment during the 51st CSF Plenary Session. The Africa Regional Group recognizes that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment is essential to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as ensuring food systems that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

We acknowledge the effort made by all stakeholders involved in the consultation and negotiations of these draft voluntary guidelines, and express our gratitude to the co-chairs and the CFS Chairperson for their efforts.

We welcome the endorsement of the CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of food security data, and related analysis tools, to improve decision making in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and the transmission to the Governing Bodies of FAO, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to support the realization at the country level.

Chairperson, good policies are fundamental to advance food security and nutrition, yet policies can only be as good as the evidence and the data that informs them. We take note that food security and nutrition call for food systems transformation in order to achieve the necessary improvements in the production, national food stocks, accessible safe and nutritional food in a sustainable manner, and is

based on having reliable and disaggregated official statistics on agriculture and rural development at all levels.

We acknowledge with appreciation, the work of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, in preparing the Report on data collection and analysis tools for food security and nutrition, and call for consistent collection, analysis and dissemination of data, in all dimensions of food security and nutrition, including statistics on age, gender and statistical information on vulnerabilities. We are in support of the agreed set of CFS policy recommendations on reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition, which will be presented to the Committee for endorsement at the CFS 52nd in October 2024.

We acknowledge Members and all stakeholders to document lessons learnt from using the policy recommendations, and to share progress and experiences based on the principles of participation, transparency and accountability, with the Committee and each other, in order to assess the continued relevance, effectiveness and impact.

They should ensure youth participation in the sharing of progress and implementation, monitoring implementation, and monitoring reports.

Africa Regional Group acknowledges the outgoing Chairperson of CFS, Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero for his dedicated leadership and also, we welcome and congratulate Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile of South Africa, as the new Chairperson of CFS.

In conclusion, the Africa Regional Group has taken note and endorses the recommendation of the Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr Gabriel Ferrero and to commend his extensive efforts during his Chairpersonship of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and we would like to underline the importance of the CFS, being a multinational and multilateral platform that gathers all the stakeholders related to the global food security and nutrition, especially in the face of the challenges ahead of us.

The food insecurity and malnutrition has recorded a deterioration, especially in our region, the Near East, due to the climate change, wars and conflicts and an example of this is what the civilians in Gaza are going through. We also encourage in order to reach consensus in all these issues.

We also commend the adoption of the voluntary guidelines on the gender equality and women and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, and here we reiterate the interest of Sudan in the work of the CFS and we reiterate our full support to the new Chairperson of the CFS; we will provide her with every support and with this, we endorse the recommendation and Report of the 51st Report of the CFS.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada thanks outgoing Chairperson Mr Gabriel Ferrero and warmly welcomes the incoming Chairperson, Ambassador Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile of South Africa. We also recognize the important work of the Secretariat and the Vice-Chairperson in moving the work of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) forward.

We welcome the endorsement of the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment, following a long and difficult process that nevertheless managed to find a solution by consensus. A positive example of multilateralism.

Similarly, we are pleased with the adoption of the policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of data, that also saw a constructive spirit of collaboration and flexibility across diverse stakeholders, that allowed for its finalization in record time.

We recognize the important contributions of FAO to these documents from a technical perspective and look forward to those important contributions continuing for upcoming processes, including on inequalities and Indigenous Peoples' food systems.

We welcome CFS efforts to give additional attention to uptake for its products in the 2024-27 work cycle, and we look forward to FAO's contributions in this regard, both at headquarters and in the field.

With this, we are pleased to endorse the Report.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We welcome the work of Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and we congratulate CFS for the adoption of newly adopted CFS policy products in general in the data workstream. We agree that CFS should focus more on the uptake. That is why Indonesia is supportive of the new workstream on the uptake that will be facilitated by Dr Joy of Philippines.

Lastly, we welcome, the most important one, we welcome the adoption of paragraph 11 on Gaza in the Report by consensus.

Indonesia endorses the Report of the CFS.

Ms Ekaterina VYBORNOVA (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

It is unfortunate that for the second year in a row the Committee was not able to finish its work. We as usual, feel that the Committee has been following its mandate and it is responding equally to all food emergencies in any country, and this is the reason why Russian Federation included and approved the inclusion of a paragraph on the results of the catastrophe in Gaza.

For this reason, we are disappointed, however, in the fact that despite the fact that many different countries, including Russia, and the civil society mechanism of the Committee, the Committee has persistently remained silent on the measures that need to be taken to counter the unilateral sanctions that are affecting food security and nutrition.

Now, last but not least, we feel that the Committee and the Member States have done quite a bit of work on the voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. The Russian Federation is convinced that the recommendations in the document pretty much will facilitate national policies to empower women and girls.

At the same time, however, we take into account that in the text of the document there are references to several principles that do not have broad international interpretation. The Russian Federation has distanced itself from those points. We express our hope that when you continue to work on these recommendations, the Committee will use internationally agreed upon wording.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE (Eritrea) (Observer)

Eritrea appreciates FAO, the Secretariat, and Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for preparing the 174th Session.

Eritrea allies itself with the statements delivered by Kenya on behalf of the Africa Regional Group (ARG).

Food insecurity and malnutrition is the immense challenge in achieving Zero Hunger by 2030. Hence, the support from all United Nations (UN) Organization needs to upgrade their cooperation and address, within their respective mandates, to enhance food security and agriculture.

The ongoing food insecurity and malnutrition of the world and the ongoing negative impact on health and nutrition, especially in developing countries, remained critical and in this regard, urgent joint efforts at all levels to respond to the situation in a coherent and effective manner is pertinent. The prevailing food insecurity and malnutrition in the world, with globally around 9.2 percent of the world population is still suffering from hunger, and the need for reliable, sustainable, sufficient access of essential goods and services is required.

The trends of chronic hunger, acute food insecurity and malnutrition are a result of compounding effects of conflicts, wars, climate variability and weather extremes. As a result, increased resource constraints, economic slowdowns, and hunger continues to rise mainly in developing countries. Particularly, climate variability affects agriculture and productivity and increase the demand in food imports as countries try to compensate for domestic production losses. Eritrea is dedicated to implement the objectives of food security and nutrition based on the Multi-Year Programme of Work.

To that extent, considerable achievements gained in rehabilitation degraded land and constructing water-holding structures of varying sizes and types, which help to enhance agricultural production and productivity. Hence, in the past years, Eritrea has registered commendable achievements in different sectors of agriculture and many agricultural products that were previously imported from other countries are now being produced in the country. Eritrea underlines the valuable input of FAO in the implementation of food security and malnutrition strategies direction toward 2030 and appreciates FAO for further support.

Sra. Claudia GONZÁLEZ TOLEDO (Cuba) (Observer)

Primeramente, quería confirmar la intervención del Embajador de Argentina cuando expresó que todas las declaraciones hechas por los países de nuestro grupo regional han sido a título nacional.

Entrando en el informe del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA), acogemos con agrado que el informe se haya alcanzado por consenso. Consideramos que los documentos aprobados son un paso de avance para avanzar en los objetivos de la seguridad alimentaria. Lamentamos igualmente que el Comité no se haya pronunciado acerca del impacto negativo que tienen la adopción de medidas coercitivas unilaterales contrarias a derecho internacional sobre los sistemas alimentarios de los países y las poblaciones que la sufren. Agradecemos también la nominación por parte de nuestro grupo regional de nuestro país como parte de la mesa de comité para los próximos dos años y también agradecemos al Comité por haberlo refrendado.

Por último, quisiéramos felicitar también a la Embajadora de Sudáfrica por haber sido electa como Presidenta de ese comité y reafirmamos el compromiso de Cuba de trabajar en conjunto con todos los países para llevar a cabo los objetivos.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to the new Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security, Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile.

Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean JEZILE (Chairperson of the Committee on Food Security)

I would like to start by appreciating the comments that were made by Members of the Council and its Observers, and begin by stating that it is also important for me to first recognise from Chairperson Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero, for preparing the ground for the new Chairperson, both in working with the Secretariat which is a professional team of people and working hard and quite agile considering that they are also constrained in terms of the capacity.

I would like to also thank the new Vice-Chairperson, Ms Jenny Read from New Zealand, who has gladly started to work with me, in our new team, with the new Members of the Bureau to steer the Organisation or the work of the Secretariat in the context of the approved Multi-Year Programme of Work (MyPOW).

I would like to just draw the Members' attention just to a few points that we outlined in the Report for the FAO Council Members, in particular, reference to the endorsement of the new Committee on World Food Security Multi-Year Programme of Work in the area where it is encouraging Member States to also bear in mind their encouragement to the FAO and the other Rome-based Agencies to honour their commitment, to share equally the costs of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Secretariat budget.

I further would like to underscore the strategic direction that is outlined by the CFS in respect of encouraging Members and Member States in line with the CFS Reform Document that the FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) as well as other CFS stakeholders, to provide space for the CFS considerations in Agendas of their Governing Bodies, and also referencing the original Conferences as may be appropriate.

These are the key points that I thought I would like to underscore, so that we are able to then live up to the expectations of the Members in line with the Basic Texts.

I further wish to appreciate all the Members of the CFS, which are also Members of this institution, the FAO, in their commitment to multilateralism, and especially with concluding CFS 51.

I further wish to continue to count on the FAO support in terms of being the host to the Secretariat for CFS and do then appreciate and encourage that such is encouraging and I would like to indicate that both myself as an incoming Chairperson, as well as the Vice-Chairperson in the Bureau, we are not taking that for granted.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Ms Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, and I wish you all success and I know that you will be successful in your role as Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security.

With that, I turn to the draft conclusions of the Report of the 51st Session of the Committee of World Food Security. I will read them out first and then we will go one by one.

29. The Council considered the Report of the 51st Session of the Committee of World Food Security (CFS), and:

- (a) commended the CFS for the endorsement of the “Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition”, and encouraged the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other relevant actors to support utilization at country level;
- (b) commended the CFS for the endorsement of the “CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Collection and Use of Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Data and Related Analysis Tools to Improve Decision-Making in Support of the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security”, and encouraged the RBAs and other relevant actors to support their utilization at country level;
- (c) emphasized the importance of increased collection, analysis and dissemination of data on all dimensions of food security and nutrition for evidence-based decision-making and encouraged FAO and other RBAs to continue to assist Members in strengthening their capacity to apply the newly endorsed guidelines;
- (d) welcomed the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027, with its cross-cutting focal areas, prioritized thematic workstreams and supporting activities as a comprehensive framework to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and the achievement of SDG 2;
- (e) encouraged the RBAs, including FAO, to honour their commitment to equally share the cost of the CFS Secretariat, either through cash or in-kind contributions, as a symbol of joint ownership and shared commitment to the Committee via effective RBA collaboration;
- (f) encouraged, in line with the CFS Reform Document, FAO, IFAD and WFP as well as other CFS stakeholders to provide space for CFS considerations in the agendas of the Governing Bodies and Regional Conferences, as appropriate; and
- (g) welcomed the 18th Report of the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN), entitled “*Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition*”, and looked forward to the elaboration of an agreed set of policy recommendations to be presented for endorsement at CFS 52 in October 2024.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e).

Sr. Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

Can we go back to subparagraph (d) please? Just in order to utilize the language. If my recollection is correct, we say, “*the right to allocate food in the context of national food security*”.

CHAIRPERSON

That is the exact title – can we agree to this? Thank you very much. So agreed.

Then we go to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (f). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (g). I do not see any objections.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Siento que no me haya visto a tiempo. Proponemos sencillamente al conjunto de los Miembros, que creemos que sería apropiado incluir un párrafo de felicitación y agradecimiento tanto al presidente saliente como a la presidenta entrante. Creo que es importante destacarlo. Podemos incluso citarlo. Si quiere le hago una propuesta en inglés. “*Congratulate the outgoing Chairperson, Gabriel Ferrero,*” or “*Dr Ferrero*”, as you wish, “*and acknowledge his leadership, and congratulate the incoming Chairperson, Nosipho Nausca-Jean Jezile, and expressed support for her leadership*”.

Sr. Tomás Alberto DUNCAN JURADO (Panamá)

Solo para apoyar la propuesta de mi colega de España.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Espero que sea también acogida como esta y doy las gracias al resto de los Miembros por haberlo hecho.

Cuando se habla, si lo he visto bien, en alguna forma a lo largo del texto de la bienvenida al Informe del 51.º período de sesiones del Comité De Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA), corrijanme si me equivoco, pero creo que no figura en ningún momento y, en ese caso, nos gustaría añadirlo que se apoya la remisión a la Conferencia para su aprobación. “*And supports its submission by CFS to Conference for endorsement.*” Referida al informe del 51.º período de sesiones Si quiere le hago una sugerencia. Es que no me ha dado tiempo honestamente a leerlo en detalle y querría saber si lo pone. “*Welcomed the Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security and supports its submission by CFS to Conference for endorsement.*” Creo que es necesario destacar que se remita a la Conferencia para su aprobación. Yo no lo veo, pero me puedo estar equivocando.

CHAIRPERSON

Give us one moment to check previous Reports of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), how we dealt with that. We are trying to get the exact language. The idea would be, “*Council welcomed the Report and endorsed*”, because that is the mandate which is given to the Council, “*the aspects falling under its mandate*”. Can we agree to this?

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We prefer to use “*considered*” than “*endorsed*”. Or if we want to use “*endorsed*”, then we prefer “*endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of CFS*” rather than this new formulation because we see in previous Council Reports that we did endorse the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of CFS. We can check in the previous FAO Council Reports.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

Our understanding is that it is the Conference’s job is to endorse, so we would respectfully submit that it would just be, “*the Council welcomed the Report*”, because “*endorsed the aspects falling under its mandate for endorsement*”, the Council does not have a mandate to endorse.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

Just to recall what I am sure most of the Members know, the Report of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) comes in front of the Conference for endorsement – that is absolutely correct. But it comes through the Council on specific dimensions that relate to programmatic, financial, legal, or constitutional aspects. And this is actually outlined quite clearly in the CFS Report itself, as Argentina mentioned earlier. What you have in front of you, thus, is a rather inelegant formulation trying to capture that process.

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Queríamos hacer simplemente una corrección. Los españoles tenemos dos apellidos y el Señor Ferrero también tiene dos, entonces querríamos dictarlos, por favor. Si van a donde hemos puesto su nombre, sería Gabriel Ferrero y “*de Loma-Osorio*”.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

In the spirit of flexibility and working together, could we strike the first “*endorsed*” so that the Council “*welcomed the Report and emphasized the aspects falling under its mandate for endorsement by the Conference*”?

CHAIRPERSON

I see nodding. Is that agreeable? I do not see any objections.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Can we change “*emphasized the aspects for endorsement*” to “*recommended for endorsement*”?

CHAIRPERSON

I was thinking that as well. I see now thumbs up. It is getting a very positive mood. So, let us get those thumbs and we agree. With that, we have concluded Item 12.

Item 14. Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Rome, 17-21 July 2023)**Point 14. Rapport de la 19^e session ordinaire de la Commission des ressources génétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (Rome, 17-21 juillet 2023)****Tema 14. Informe de la 19.^a reunión ordinaria de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (Roma, 17-21 de julio de 2023)**

(CL 174/13)

CHAIRPERSON

Then we turn now to Item 14, *Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. The document before the Council is CL 174/13. Introduction by Ms Deidre Januarie, Chairperson of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 14: Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Rome, 17-21 July 2023)

Ms Deidré A. Januarie, Chairperson of the of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

I am pleased to present the Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

The Conference, at its last session, mandated the Council to consider the Commission’s Report for endorsement (C 2023/REP, paragraph 41).

The Council is invited to endorse the Report, to adopt the resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* and to endorse two new subsidiary bodies the Commission established at its last session.

The Commission held its 19th Regular Session from 17 to 21 July 2023; its Report is contained in document *CL 174/13*.

The Commission considered at this session draft reports on the state of the world's plant and forest genetic resources, reviewed the implementation of its global plans of action on aquatic, animal, forest and plant genetic resources, and addressed specific functional groups of microorganism and invertebrate genetic resources.

The Commission also considered various cross-sectoral matters, including the role of genetic resources for food and agriculture in mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and endorsed a draft resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted in December of last year by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The draft resolution is contained in Appendix C to the Report, for consideration by the Council.

In accordance with its Statutes, the Commission established two new subsidiary bodies and invited the Council to endorse them. Subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture should meet before the Commission's next session.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I invite Members, if they wish to, to give comments to the Report.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Costa Rica ha tenido una activa participación durante este año en los grupos de trabajo intergubernamentales sobre recursos zoogenéticos, genéticos acuáticos y fitogenéticos, cuyas reuniones se llevaron a cabo en la sede de FAO Roma; así como en el taller regional de Latinoamérica y Caribe en Biodiversidad, realizado en Chile. También contamos con participación desde capital durante la 19ª Sesión de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (CRGAA).

Este es un tema de gran interés para nuestro país y estamos comprometidos con los resultados en las diferentes reuniones de los grupos de trabajo, para su debida implementación a nivel nacional.

En cuanto a los recursos zoogenéticos, resaltamos el trabajo de nuestros técnicos para la elaboración del 3 Informe País.

En cuanto a los recursos fitogenéticos deseamos avanzar en las herramientas e instrumentos que proporciona la FAO sobre adaptación y mitigación del cambio climático para aplicarlo a los diferentes contextos de estudio. También trabajamos de la mano con el punto nacional del Comité de Verificación de la Observancia del Tratado Internacional sobre los Recursos Fitogenéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (TIRFAA) para un trabajo coordinado y de estrecha comunicación técnica. Es de nuestro interés también crear conciencia entre partes interesadas clave, incluidos los pueblos indígenas y las comunidades locales, así como organizar talleres abiertos sobre temas relacionados con la información digital de secuencias con el fin de facilitar el diálogo nacional y aumentar el desarrollo de capacidades.

También es relevante para nosotros la implementación del Plan Mundial y otras acciones asociadas a los recursos genéticos acuáticos para la alimentación y la agricultura.

En cuanto a la biodiversidad, el principal desafío es hacer una revisión de los marcos normativos institucionales para identificar vacíos para la integración de los sectores y actores transversales. Deseamos que la FAO nos colabore con proyectos piloto para el fortalecimiento de capacidades a través de la investigación, la educación y la capacitación, así como reforzar los marcos jurídicos de política e incentivos.

Durante la 19^a. Reunión ordinaria de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos, apoyamos la creación y establecimiento del Grupo de trabajo técnico intergubernamental sobre los recursos genéticos de microorganismos e invertebrados para la alimentación y la agricultura, así como el equipo especial de expertos en materia de biodiversidad para la alimentación y la agricultura.

Con estas ideas, acogemos las conclusiones y recomendaciones contenidas en el Informe de la 19^a Reunión de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura, aprobamos la resolución sobre el Marco Mundial de Biodiversidad de Kuning-Montreal y reiteramos nuestro respaldo para el establecimiento del grupo de trabajo técnico intergubernamental sobre los recursos genéticos de microorganismos e invertebrados para la alimentación y la agricultura, así como el equipo especial de expertos en materia de biodiversidad para la alimentación y la agricultura.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines supports the endorsement of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA).

We support the adoption of the resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*, which invites Members to consider, as appropriate and in accordance with national circumstances, priorities and capabilities, integrating CGRFA's action plans and related FAO instruments and policies on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into relevant national and regional policies, programmes and actions, including when seeking funding and support from various sources, such as the Global Environment Facility, and the Green Climate Fund.

The Philippines also supports the request made under this resolution to FAO, CGRFA and the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures to contribute to the implementation of *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*, including to support countries and collaborate with relevant stakeholders with a view to avoiding duplications and to enhancing effectiveness.

The Philippines also endorses the establishment of the International Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

Once established, the Philippines will be one of the five Members for Asia in the Working Group together with Bangladesh, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Thailand.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

Genetic resources for food and agriculture play a critical role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supporting more resilient and sustainable food systems, and tackling global challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss.

The United States supports endorsing the Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. We support adoption of the resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)*, as presented in Appendix C of the Report.

We also support endorsing the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate General Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

M. Koffi ADJOUANI (Côte d'Ivoire)

Cette déclaration est faite par la Côte d'Ivoire, le Niger et le Mozambique au nom du Groupe Régional Africain (GRA). Le Groupe Régional Africain salue les efforts colossaux de la Commission des Ressources Génétiques pour l'Alimentation et l'Agriculture pour faire valoir l'importance que revêt l'identification, la conservation, l'utilisation rationnelle et la mise en valeur de matières durables, responsables de la biodiversité. La base génétique de cette biodiversité subit une érosion importante depuis quelques décennies. À titre illustratif, plus de 6 400 animaux et 3 100 espèces de plantes sont menacées d'extinctions en Afrique.

Les populations d'espèces vertébrées ont diminué de 39 pourcent. Le bassin du Congo, considéré comme le 2^e poumon vert du monde a perdu environ 30 pourcent de sa couverture arborée. Le déclin

de cette riche biodiversité écologique, qui constitue un arsenal de capital génétique bénéfique, non seulement pour plus de 61 pourcent d'africains vivant dans les zones rurales, mais aussi pour le monde entier, menace des millions de moyens de subsistance et entraîne une insécurité alimentaire accrue, des conflits pour les terres et la transmission des maladies zoonotiques pouvant conduire à de nouvelles pandémies.

Face à ces menaces, le Groupe Régional Africain considère qu'une meilleure conservation et une gestion plus durable de cette biodiversité passe absolument par l'adoption de politiques audacieuses et l'investissement dans des solutions basées sur la nature qui permettraient de réduire les impacts de l'agriculture sur la biodiversité, de promouvoir la restauration des systèmes dégradés, et les ressources naturelles et de réduire les impacts des industries extractives et l'utilisation non durable des ressources naturelles.

C'est pourquoi le Groupe Régional Africain se félicite de la tenue de la 15^e réunion de la Conférence des Nations-Unies sur la biodiversité à Montréal, qui s'est achevée par l'adoption de l'accord historique intitulé Cadre Mondial de la Biodiversité de Kunming Montréal, destiné à guider l'action mondiale pour la nature à l'horizon 2030. Il convient de noter que grâce aux orientations fournies par la Conférence ministérielle africaine sur l'environnement (CMAE), l'Afrique a participé activement à l'élaboration de ce cadre mondial de la biodiversité.

La plupart des priorités proposées par l'Afrique ont été dûment incluses dans les 23 objectifs de ce Cadre Mondial de la Biodiversité. Le Groupe Régional Africain se félicite de l'alignement des recommandations du Rapport aux objectifs du Cadre Mondial de la Biodiversité. Le Groupe Régional Africain souscrit aux recommandations de la Commission dans la perspective de prendre en compte les réalités nationales et locales dans la mise en œuvre des plans d'actions mondiaux sur les ressources génétiques, aquatiques, animales, forestières et végétales, et elle accorde une grande importance au groupe fonctionnel consacrée spécifiquement aux ressources génétiques des micro-organismes et des invertébrés.

L'Afrique a également progressé sur la question controversée des informations sur les séquences numériques, grâce à un compromis visant à poursuivre les négociations sur cette question lors de la 16^e Conférence des Parties (COP 16) qui se tiendra en 2024 en Turquie. Il est donc impératif qu'en plus de l'approbation des conclusions et des recommandations figurant dans le Rapport de la 19^e Session Ordinaire de la Commission et ressources génétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, les États membres déploient des efforts concertés pour mettre en œuvre le Cadre Mondial de la Biodiversité.

Mr Su GUO (China) (Original language Chinese)

China fully recognizes the vital role of genetic resources in ensuring food security and biodiversity, and acknowledges the resolutions and arrangements made at the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, in particular the endorsement of a draft resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*.

We recommend that the Council adopt the Report and expect the Commission to continue its cooperation with all parties to further level up the conservation and use of genetic resources for food and agriculture through a pragmatic engagement.

Sra. Carolina HERNÁNDEZ (Argentina)

En primer lugar, queremos destacar el trabajo realizado por la comisión basada en el respeto, la colaboración y el diálogo constructivo de los Miembros. Dado que las principales conclusiones y recomendaciones ya se han capturado en el Informe presentado, solo quisiera puntualizar algunas cuestiones que nos resultan más relevantes. En un contexto de creciente consolidación del tema de la biodiversidad en la Agenda mundial, resulta importante destacar que la labor de la FAO en relación a la implementación del marco adoptado por el Convenio sobre Diversidad Biológica, así como también en la implementación de la Estrategia del Plan de Acción 2024-2027 debe ser guiada por los Miembros teniendo siempre en cuenta las competencias de la Organización.

En este sentido, consideramos que FAO debe contribuir de forma coherente y adecuada adoptando un rol de facilitador para apoyar la implementación de documentos ya elaborados y evitando la duplicación de esfuerzos con otros foros, en especial en el desarrollo de alineamientos e indicadores.

Asimismo, consideramos importante garantizar una representación regional equilibrada en los diversos grupos de trabajo que se constituyan con miras a desarrollar productos y obtener resultados, consolidando así un enfoque más inclusivo, eficaz y colaborativo.

Por último, nuestro país acoge con agrado el consenso alcanzado sobre la propuesta de creación de un nuevo grupo de trabajo dedicado a microorganismos e invertebrados y un Equipo de Expertos ad Hoc sobre Biodiversidad para Alimentación y Agricultura. En cuanto al primero, entendemos que existe un gran potencial de trabajo ya que los microorganismos e invertebrados son fuente de servicios ecosistémicos muy importantes, estrechamente vinculados con el concepto de Una Salud, ya sea en el desarrollo de productos fitosanitarios más amigables con el medio ambiente y de métodos de diagnóstico de plagas y enfermedades emergentes, y también el desarrollo de vacunas y tratamientos, entre otros.

Con estos comentarios, damos la bienvenida al documento y apoyamos su endoso.

Ms Amanda BROWNING (Australia)

As a participating Member of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), Australia notes with appreciation the Report. We take the opportunity to congratulate the outgoing Chairperson, Ms Deidré A. Januarie (Namibia) on a well-conducted meeting. Australia welcomes the election of Mr Benoît Girard (Canada) as the Chairperson for the coming biennium.

We support the adoption of the resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)*. Australia welcomes the inclusion of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture under the One Health umbrella and supports the efforts to raise awareness of the role of the Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in increasing both biodiversity and nutrition outcomes.

FAO is to be congratulated on the work being undertaken to address biodiversity loss globally, which we recognise as an upstream driver for emerging infectious zoonotic diseases.

We also note our support for the Commission's work on access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources for food and agriculture.

With these comments, Australia endorses the Report.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Mi delegación agradece y endosa el informe de la última reunión de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (CRGAA). Chile apoya el proyecto de resolución sobre el Marco Mundial de Biodiversidad de Kunming-Montreal y destacamos la contribución que realiza la Comisión, así como los niveles regionales, nacionales y locales en su implementación.

Respecto de la labor futura de la Comisión, respaldamos la propuesta de establecer el Grupo De Trabajo Técnico Intergubernamental sobre los Recursos Genéticos de Microorganismos e Invertebrados para la alimentación y la agricultura y, a su vez, solicitamos a la FAO que convoque a ambos órganos antes de la 20ª Reunión ordinaria de la Comisión con sujeción a la disponibilidad de recursos extrapresupuestarios.

Finalmente, proponemos que, como complemento a lo anterior, se pueda solicitar que la Comisión analice la factibilidad técnica y presupuestaria de establecer un Grupo de Trabajo Técnico Intergubernamental sobre Biodiversidad para la Alimentación y la Agricultura

Sr. Juan PRIETO GÓMEZ (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea y de sus 27 Estados Miembros y otros siete Miembros que se adhieren completamente a nuestra declaración y que son los siguientes: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldavia, Montenegro, San Marino y Ucrania.

Reconocemos el importante papel de la FAO, de la Comisión y de sus grupos de trabajo intergubernamentales en el proceso de finalización del segundo informe sobre el estado de los recursos genéticos forestales en el mundo y del tercer informe sobre el estado de los recursos fitogenéticos en el mundo, y esperamos con interés su publicación durante el período entre sesiones. Asimismo,

acogemos con satisfacción la aprobación de la preparación del tercer informe del estado de los recursos zoogenéticos del mundo.

Acogemos con satisfacción la adopción del Marco Global de Biodiversidad de Kunming-Montreal (KM GBF) en diciembre de 2022 y la aprobación del proyecto de resolución asociado. Subrayamos el alto grado de apoyo mutuo entre el KM GBF y el Marco de Acción de la Comisión en materia de Biodiversidad para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (FA BFA), aprobado por el Consejo de la FAO en 2021, y los Planes de Acción Globales (GPAs). Además, valoramos de manera muy positiva el compromiso de la FAO de respaldar a sus Estados miembros en la aplicación de ambos marcos, ya que constituyen las piedras angulares de una nueva agenda política internacional en materia de biodiversidad.

Recibimos con satisfacción la creación del Grupo de Trabajo Técnico Intergubernamental sobre los Recursos Genéticos de Microorganismos e Invertebrados para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (ITWG MIGR) y del Equipo Especial de Expertos en materia de Biodiversidad para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (BFA) como uno de los principales resultados de la 19ª reunión. Esperamos con interés sus primeras reuniones con vistas a identificar las necesidades y prioridades actuales en materia de conocimientos y políticas para el nuevo grupo de trabajo técnico, identificando lagunas y posibles trabajos sobre el BFA.

Acogemos con satisfacción las actividades emprendidas por la FAO en apoyo de la aplicación del Plan de acción Mundial para la Conservación, la Utilización Sostenible y el Desarrollo de los Recursos Genéticos Acuáticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura. Apreciamos el compromiso de la Comisión con la aplicación efectiva del Plan de Acción Global y la necesidad permanente de apoyo, formación y colaboración continuos tanto a escala nacional como internacional.

Por último, agradecemos el trabajo realizado por la Comisión de la FAO y sus Estados Miembros en la revisión del acto especial “*Conectar los puntos: biodiversidad, alimentación y agricultura*”, con motivo del 40 aniversario de la Comisión. El acto subrayó las sinergias y vínculos entre el trabajo de la FAO sobre la integración de la biodiversidad, las políticas de la Comisión sobre conservación y uso sostenible de los GRFA y BFA, y el KM GBF.

Con estos comentarios, aprobamos el informe de la 19ª reunión ordinaria de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura, incluyendo el proyecto de resolución del KM GBF y el establecimiento del ITWG MIGR y del Equipo Especial de Expertos en materia de Biodiversidad para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (BFA).

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

I am speaking on behalf of the Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country Norway) and Switzerland. We fully align ourselves with the European Union statement.

This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. We believe that genetic resources are the very foundation for future sustainable and resilient food systems and forestry.

We fully endorse the conclusions and recommendations in the Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission. Particularly, we support the recommendation that the FAO Council requests FAO to take into account Commission decisions when developing budget allocations. We also stress the need for additional resources supporting countries in their efforts to implement the Global Plans of Actions and the Framework for Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

A major milestone at the last Session of the Commission was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. We request FAO to convene these two new inter-sessional groups before the Twentieth Regular Session of the Commission.

A year ago, *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* was adopted. It provides new opportunities for strengthening FAO's work on mainstreaming biodiversity. It also underpins the implementation of the Commission's global plans for action as well as the International Plant Treaty

and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) at the national level. We encourage all Members to take advantage of this momentum when updating their national biodiversity strategies and plans.

FAO should take a lead in supporting implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Framework – both at global and national levels. In order to fully take advantage of the competence of FAO, we call on FAO to finalize the recruitment of the Secretary of the Commission on Genetic Resources and to strengthen FAO's biodiversity team.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Brazil welcomes the conclusion of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA). We particularly support the endorsement by the Council of *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)* resolution, given the significant implication of the framework for agrifood systems, as well as the important role FAO has to play in its implementation.

We also support the endorsement of the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

In the sense, Brazil highlights the importance of ensuring inclusivity in the activities of both new subsidiary bodies, namely by means of the Secretary supporting the participation of developing countries, making documents available in a timely manner in all UN languages and providing interpretation during meetings.

Mr Hiroyuki TANAKA (Japan)

Japan welcomes the effort by the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) and the *Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*, including a draft resolution on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)* and the establishment of an Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, as well as the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

With regard to *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*, I would like to reiterate that FAO is strategically promoting collaboration with international environmental fora, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), by leveraging the collaboration and actively providing technical input to the intergovernmental discussion. Japan would like to recall that FAO plays an imperative role in supporting the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework in the area of FAO's mandate and technical expertise, including not only genetic resources but also other agriculture issues, including plastics.

Finally, bearing in mind the role and function of the CGRFA, while closely monitoring the development in the CBD and other areas, Japan acknowledges that the CGRFA plays the role of providing information to Members as necessary, however, not be a venue for negotiations on the digital sequence information on genetic resources.

Sra. Any Lam CHONG LEON (Panamá)

Panamá considera que el informe recoge la ardua labor realizada y el compromiso de esta Comisión y por ello acogemos con beneplácito el informe de la 19.^a reunión ordinaria de la Comisión de Recursos Genéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura (CRGAA) con sus conclusiones y recomendaciones. Asimismo, respaldamos el establecimiento del

Grupo de Trabajo Técnico Intergubernamental sobre los Recursos Zoogenéticos para la Alimentación y la Agricultura y el equipo especial de expertos en materia de biodiversidad para la alimentación y la agricultura.

Panamá seguirá trabajando y contribuyendo con la Comisión al ser titular en el grupo de trabajo subgenético, así como suplentes en el grupo de trabajo forestal y con miras de membresía en el grupo de trabajo de microorganismos e invertebrados.

Ms Anna RODENBERG (Germany)

Germany aligns itself with the statement given by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States.

We also support the intervention just made by Norway on the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). FAO should take an important role in supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework; sufficient resources should be allocated to activities related to the field of work of FAO and its Members.

We request FAO to allocate sufficient human and financial resources to support its Members in implementing mutually supportive activities that address both FAO's work and the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

M. Yahya BOUZID (Maroc) (Langue originale arabe)

Au nom du Groupe du Proche-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord, nous prononçons cette allocution et pour commencer, nous exprimons notre gratitude au Conseil général de l'alimentation, de l'agriculture et des espaces ruraux (CGAAER) et nous louons ses efforts dans le domaine de la collecte des ressources phylogénétiques et leurs distributions, ainsi que sa prise en charge des ressources phylogénétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture et pour l'alimentation des générations à venir.

Nous appuyons ce que le Rapport a souligné en matière de ressources phylogénétiques et l'appui à la diversité biologique et leurs mises en œuvre pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture. Cela compte tenu de l'importance des ressources phylogénétiques et dans le domaine environnemental et dans la sécurité alimentaire, dans toutes ses dimensions. Ainsi que dans le développement durable, notre groupe appui la teneur du Rapport en matière de renforcement des capacités dans le domaine des ressources génétiques et leurs mises en œuvre par les pays en développement, particulièrement dans le domaine du renforcement des récoltes et le bénéfice du système mondial des données.

Notre groupe juge à leurs justes valeurs les efforts de la FAO ainsi que la Commission des ressources phylogénétiques, du fait de leur rapport dans le domaine du travail technique par les pays de notre région. Notre région a, pendant des siècles, été le berceau de l'agriculture, compte tenu de la diversité énorme en ce domaine. Les ressources dont nous disposons qui devraient contribuer à promouvoir l'agriculture et les ressources phylogénétiques et forestières, ce résultat n'est pas possible, rendant les pays incapables de s'adapter au changement climatique.

La sécurité alimentaire et nutritive est une chose nécessaire qui s'appuie sur la préservation des ressources phylogénétiques, compte tenu de l'importance de ces dernières, il est nécessaire que nos pays puissent les obtenir, les utiliser, de façon durable. Le défi à l'avenir consiste à aboutir à des systèmes alimentaires durables. Le Maroc et le Soudan en tant que pays de notre région, demandent à l'Organisation de jouer un rôle important dans l'appui aux pays de notre région pour qu'ils puissent jouer leurs rôles dans le domaine de l'agriculture et de la nutrition. Ainsi que pour renforcer la capacité dans le domaine de la collecte des données, permettant de renforcer la coopération dans notre région.

Avec ces remarques, nous appuyons ce rapport.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Le Congo s'associe à la déclaration faite au nom du Groupe régional Afrique (GRA) par la Côte d'Ivoire. Nous voulons juste soulever que le réseau génétique impacte dangereusement les ressources génétiques, et on ne reviendra pas sur le rôle que jouent les ressources génétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, pour la sécurité alimentaire, mais nous devons appeler donc la FAO à appuyer la mise en place des Commissions nationales de ressources génétiques parce que dans les pays en développement, souvent, il y a des problèmes de fonctionnement des Commissions nationales, et il y a une certaine divergence entre les preuves au cours de traités pour les ressources génétiques pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture et la Commission des ressources génétiques.

Donc, il faudrait bien une coordination nationale et essayer d'harmoniser les informations de collecte et de conservation, surtout dans le fonctionnement des banques des gènes, parce que l'information devrait partir à ce niveau. Si on n'appuie pas au niveau des Commissions Nationales des Ressources Génétiques, il serait difficile qu'on puisse avoir les informations que nous recherchons sur les

ressources phytogénétiques. Avec ces quelques observations, nous appuyons donc l'adoption de ce rapport.

Ms Yvonne VAN LAARHOVEN (Netherlands, Kingdom of the)

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States and would like to take this opportunity to support the statement made by Norway on *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*.

FAO should take a leading role in the implementation of the framework. We, therefore, would like to underscore the importance of adequate capacity for the implementation of this work.

CHAIRPERSON

Now because there are no direct questions to Management, for times' sake, I really would like to go directly to the draft conclusions of the Report. I will put them on the screen.

31. The Council endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the 19th Regular Session of the Commission of Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and in particular:

- a). adopted Council's Resolution 1/174, *The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*, set out in *Appendix D*, and
- b). endorsed the establishment of the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Microorganism and Invertebrate Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Ad Hoc Expert Team on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture.

Can we agree to this? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

With that, we have concluded our work on Item 14.

We congratulate the Commission for the hard work, and really it is a very interesting Committee.

Now we break and we come back in this room at 17:45 hours to get more work done.

Meeting adjourned.

The meeting was suspended from 17.18 to 17.51 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 18 à 17 h 51

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.18 a las 17.51

Item 15. Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies

Point 15. Participation d'observateurs du secteur privé aux sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO

Tema 15. Participación de observadores del sector privado en períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO

(CL 174/INF/9)

CHAIRPERSON

We continue our work with Item 15, *Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the Governing Bodies*. You can find it in document, *CL 174/INF/9*. The introduction by Ms Beth Bechdol, the Deputy Director-General, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 15: Participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies

Ms Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General

At the 171st Session of the FAO Council, the complexity of the topic of the participation of private sector observers in sessions of FAO Governing Bodies was noted, and the Council requested that a consensus should be reached on general principles for participation.

This document briefly summarizes the analysis of current rules and practices for private sector participation in FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies. The analysis indicates that the current rules for observer participation in FAO meetings are adequate and do not require revision. However, the analysis did find that there are inconsistencies in the application of approaches of the various Governing and Statutory Bodies to the participation of observers that could benefit from further internal guidance.

To respond to this, the Council is invited to recommend that FAO examines possibilities for clearer guidance to the Secretariats of its Governing and Statutory Bodies on the participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), including those classed as private sector, in FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies and develops further proposals for practical modalities for participation, where necessary. The Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) will be involved in this process.

FAO will initiate this process in early 2024 and will report back to Members in late 2024.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for Members if they wish to make a comment.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

We want to thank FAO and the Independent Chairperson of the Council for conducting extensive consultations with Members on this subject. The United States of America strongly supports the FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement that was adopted in 2021. We agree that no changes are needed and that the current rules allow for private sector observers per FAO's Basic Texts.

We encourage FAO to consider transparency of procedures as an additional principle that should guide private sector participation and FAO Governing Body meetings. Recognizing that procedures may differ between Committees and meetings, FAO should clarify publicly the procedures for private sector participation in each specific meeting.

The United States believes that transparency is inherently linked to inclusiveness and will better enable the participation of private sector observers in FAO meetings, particularly for small and medium sized enterprises that may lack detailed knowledge of FAO procedures.

Sr. José Teófilo ESONO ASANGONO (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial hace esta intervención conjuntamente con Argelia y Madagascar en nombre del Grupo Regional

de África los cuales agradecen a la Secretaría por la calidad del documento y reconocen el papel central que desempeña el sector privado en la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios, ya que contribuye a promover la inversión y la innovación para que los sectores alimentarios y agrícolas sean más eficientes, inclusivos, resilientes y sostenibles.

El Grupo Regional de África expresa su satisfacción por esta estrategia que integra un amplio abanico de agentes del sector privado, actividades interdependientes e instituciones responsables que promueven la plena participación de organizaciones de todas las dimensiones en el desarrollo de políticas de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional. En este sentido, el Grupo Regional de África anima a los Miembros del Consejo a continuar los debates encaminados a fortalecer este instrumento de planificación estratégica, diálogo y consulta teniendo en consideración los principales desafíos de los países, las prioridades de los gobiernos, el valor añadido que el sector privado pueda aportar en términos de asistencia técnica e innovación, en el conocimiento de experiencias compartidas y buenas prácticas para fortalecer las capacidades regionales y nacionales, a fin de asegurar el máximo impacto de los programas de desarrollo de los países.

Grupo Regional de África pide a FAO que siga trabajando para garantizar una mayor coherencia en la orientación de la participación de las organizaciones internacionales no gubernamentales, en

particular, las clasificadas como sector privado en las reuniones de IFAO, de conformidad con sus normas jurídicas. El Grupo Regional de África anima de que se invite al Consejo a recomendar que FAO estudie la posibilidad de proporcionar información más clara a la Secretaría de los órganos rectores o estatutarios, sobre la participación de las organizaciones no Gubernamentales (ONG) en las reuniones y formular nuevas propuestas sobre la modalidad práctica de dicha participación, según proceda.

FAO iniciará este proceso a principios de 2024 e informará a los Miembros a finales del año. Compartimos la importancia de que el Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos participe en dicho proceso, por ello el Grupo desea subrayar que se respete estrictamente los principios asociados al estatuto de observador, en particular los de transparencia. Derecho a poder hacer una declaración en reuniones de gobierno o estatutario y prohibir la participación de empresas privadas.

Por último, el Grupo Regional de África considera que la participación debe ser lo más inclusiva posible, flexible y equilibrada desde el punto de vista regional con mira a contribuir a las actividades de FAO bajo la posibilidad de orientación de las Conferencias Regionales de FAO.

Sr. Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

En primer lugar, quisiera reconocer todo el trabajo previo que viene realizando la FAO a través del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (CCLM), así como a través suyo, para encontrar una base de acuerdo entre los miembros sobre la participación del sector privado en calidad de observadores en los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO.

Nuestro país entiende necesario contar con normas y procedimientos armonizados para la participación del sector privado, ampliando de esta forma el alcance de la Resolución 44/57, pero sin perder de vista la potestad exclusiva de los Estados Miembros para la toma de decisiones en la FAO.

Los múltiples desafíos actuales requieren de un enfoque inclusivo e innovador. En esta línea, el sector privado, al ser una parte esencial en las cadenas de producción de alimentos, puede contribuir a un valioso intercambio de conocimientos especializados y experiencias, para sumar así a los esfuerzos globales para abordar los desafíos en materia de seguridad alimentaria.

No obstante, somos conscientes de que esta decisión debe tomarse con base en el consenso de los Miembros, y teniendo en cuenta que cualquier avance en esta dirección debería ser cuidadosamente evaluado y ajustado para garantizar que refleje los intereses colectivos y fomente la colaboración equitativa.

Con estos comentarios esperamos tener un diálogo constructivo para avanzar hacia soluciones que beneficien a todos los miembros de la FAO.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China) (Original language Chinese)

China extends its gratitude for the work by the FAO Management and the Independent Chairperson of the Council in this regard. China commends FAO's multidimensional engagement with the private sector within the framework of the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement. We emphasize the institutional nature of FAO as an intergovernmental organization and the imperative that the Governing Bodies' meetings and FAO's activities must ensure independence and impartiality.

We appreciate FAO's note that it will not formulate relationships with individual private sector organizations, which we believe this is an effective way to prevent conflicts of interest. We request that before establishing formal relations with any new Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including private sector organizations, FAO shall conduct thorough and robust background checks to ensure that NGOs concerned have not violated any United Nations (UN) Resolutions.

We encourage FAO to explore suitable approaches to achieve regional balanced representations as much as possible.

Ms Praiya SAVETJINDA (Thailand)

Thailand delivers this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We take duly note the draft "*Note on the Private Sector Participation in Governing Body Meetings*". In this regard, Asia Regional Group would like to share its views with regard to the said note:

First, we are not working in a vacuum on this issue. We already have a guidance when we adopted by consensus the Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025.

If we could follow the spirit and guidance provided therein, we believe possibilities for clearer guidance and practical modalities for participation of the private sector, where necessary, could be discussed.

Having said this and in line with the spirit of the Strategy, the Basic Texts, rules, procedures or composition of FAO's Governing Bodies should not be changed nor should it be affected.

Second, the participation of the private sector has been guaranteed in the mechanism of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as provided for by the Basic Texts.

Lastly and most importantly, given the intrinsic nature of its membership and governance and FAO's status as an Intergovernmental Organization of the United Nations System, the main interlocutors of FAO are the Members.

This is why FAO's decision-making process should be maintained and consequently, Members have the exclusive power to take decisions in this regard.

In conclusion, where necessary, Asia Regional Group stands ready to discuss and remain seized of this matter.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia thanks the Management for the preparation of a succinct and clear paper on this important topic. We also thank you, Independent Chairperson of the Council, for your ongoing efforts to progress this matter through informal consultations with Members.

Australia recognizes that the Basic Texts already provide an adequate foundation to enable appropriate private sector engagement. Nevertheless, we do see value in FAO undertaking processes to promote consistency and modalities of participation across relevant bodies and we recommend Management examine possibilities for developing guidance to support this objective.

In terms of the proposed guiding principles, we fully support the five elements set out in subparagraphs (a) through to (e), noting that we particularly welcome and emphasize the inclusion of regionally based and regionally focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in subparagraph (d). And we take this opportunity to highlight the valuable contributions such organizations can and do make to FAO's work.

We look forward to further updates on this work in 2024.

Ms Makiko OHYAMA (Japan)

Japan appreciates the hard work on this matter by the Independent Chairperson of the Council and Members. Japan believes that facilitation of innovation is cornerstone for achieving more inclusive and resilient food and agriculture systems. Investment into private sector, including start-ups, plays a vital role.

In this regard, Japan looks forward to further discussion among Members on involvement of private sectors into FAO's achieved activities. Japan also expects the Secretary to promote collaboration with the private sector, including further elaboration on the role of FAO Informal Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG).

Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados Miembros. Esta declaración es apoyada por otros nueve Miembros de la FAO: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Montenegro y San Marino, Turquía y Ucrania.

La cuestión de la participación de actores del sector privado en calidad de observadores en los periodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO se ha debatido ampliamente en los últimos años. Al término de estos debates detallados y prolongados, dos puntos parecen claros.

En primer lugar, la necesidad de consenso entre los Miembros para preservar el carácter

intergubernamental de la FAO y, por tanto, de sus órganos rectores, estatutarios y técnicos.

En segundo lugar, la necesidad de consenso entre los Miembros de que los Textos Fundamentales proporcionan un marco jurídico adecuado que debe aplicarse de forma coherente en todos los órganos de la FAO en lugar de ser revisado.

Por lo tanto, apoyamos la propuesta de elaborar orientaciones destinadas a garantizar la coherencia en la aplicación de las normas sobre la participación del sector privado en todos los órganos rectores, estatutarios y técnicos de la FAO.

Insistimos en que cualquier orientación relacionada con el funcionamiento de los órganos intergubernamentales debe ser elaborada, examinada y, en última instancia, aprobada por los órganos rectores pertinentes, es decir, el Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (CCLM) y el Consejo.

Destacamos a este respecto que el CCLM se ha implicado desde el principio en esta cuestión, que entra directamente dentro de su mandato, de conformidad con el artículo XXXIV, apartado 7, del Reglamento General de la Organización.

Por último, aprovechamos esta oportunidad para reiterar nuestro apoyo a la Estrategia de la FAO para la Colaboración del sector privado (2021-2025) y su aplicación, incluida la publicación de todos los acuerdos de asociación con el sector privado en el portal CONNECT con vistas a garantizar la transparencia y el intercambio de información

Mr Denis CHEREDNICHENKO (Russian Federation) (Obsever) (Original language Russian)

First of all, I would like to thank you for the consultation in November of this year on continuing to work with Members and the recommendations and in their preparation. As for the Russian Federation, at the basis of recommendations, we should see transparency and fairness when we work with the private sector. Especially, we have to understand about fair geographic distribution and no discrimination against various private sector bodies when they participate in the FAO work.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to Ms Beth Bechdol for some remarks.

Ms Beth BECHDOL (Deputy Director-General)

I will be very brief. Thank you to everyone for the comments provided here in this Session, but also for much of the very important input that was provided during the earlier informal consultations, Chairperson, that you hosted and that we were able to provide inputs to. Let me just offer a few maybe summary points of what I have heard here.

First, it is very clear that we have Members support in the recognition that the private sector is truly an important stakeholder and partner to FAO and our work. That has been, I think, very clearly articulated and again, very much supported by all of you as Members in the Private Sector Engagement Strategy that truly is serving as the foundation for the work that we are undertaking to try to build more cooperation and engagement, ultimately perhaps partnerships with the private sector.

The third thing that I would point to is a very clear recognition from all of us that indeed the Basic Texts do already provide opportunities as outlined in the paper for international non-governmental organizations, which do include private sector entities to participate in the Governing and Statutory Body meetings.

We can commit, as the paper outlines, to ensuring that part of the exercise that was undertaken in this review was a recognition by us in leadership and Management that we were using somewhat inconsistent approaches across different Committees and structures. And from a leadership perspective, we should always be looking for ways to harmonize and bring consistency to the approaches that we apply to the work that takes place in all of these different Governing Body structures.

The clear principles that I think many of you echoed are very clearly stated in the paper and we commit to upholding those throughout this next step of the process. I want to also recognize and

emphasize perhaps while it is maybe not stated specifically in the suggested actions for the Council, I appreciate the references to full transparency, and we will commit to ensuring that we work closely with all Members in developing this guidance that will take us forward on this particular issue.

We will take this assignment up over the course of 2024, as is outlined, and also very much look forward to involving, working closely with the Members of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) as an important collaborator in putting this guidance together.

Thank you again very much, Chairperson, to you for your leadership, and thank you to everyone who has contributed with input and perspectives on this matter.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor for the draft conclusions, and I put them on the screen.

34. The Council welcomed the following principles to guide the implementation of participation of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), including those classified as private sector, in FAO Governing and Statutory Bodies:

- (a) FAO remains an intergovernmental body, which means that decisions are taken by its Members. INGOs, including the private sector, are observers and cannot participate in the negotiations and decision-making process;
- (b) implementation of the rules and procedures for participation of INGOs in the Basic Texts should be transparent;
- (c) INGOs should, in accordance with the rules and procedures in the Basic Texts, be given the possibility to make a statement in a Governing Body or Statutory Body meeting that they participate in;
- (d) participation should be inclusive, flexible and regionally balanced, including regionally based and regionally focused INGOs who can contribute to FAO's work. In this regard, FAO Regional Conferences could give further guidance; and
- (e) individual companies are excluded from participating in Governing and Statutory Body meetings.

35. The Council recommended FAO to examine possibilities for clearer guidance to the Secretariats of its Governing and Statutory Bodies on the participation of INGOs in its meetings and develop further proposals for practical modalities for participation, where necessary and in close consultation with, and guidance from, CCLM.

36. The Council looked forward to future updates on the progress on participation of private sector observers in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to paragraph 35.

Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)

Nos gustaría que en el párrafo 35 quedara más claro ya que deberá ser examinado y aprobado por los cuerpos relevantes de gobierno, principalmente el Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos y el Consejo. Y por ello sugerimos la siguiente modificación, después de la coma, "*requires formal examination and approval by the relevant Governing Bodies, namely the CCLM and the Council*".

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

On paragraph 35, I think the language formulated by the Secretariat, I think, covers it all. We do not need any further instructions on that because it is redundant. I think the guidance is clear enough that it will need further consultation and guidance from the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM).

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

We would agree with Indonesia's statement, and we do not believe or we would ask for clarification from the European Union or Spain as to what requires approval because our understanding here, we are not approving anything.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

We would like to echo the colleague from Indonesia and the US because we already have in the original version the inclusion of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and CCLM will report to the Council. So, we have the pertinent Governing Bodies already included here. It would be redundant to make this inclusion.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Igualmente, nos sentimos muy satisfechos con la presentación de la Secretaría. Estamos de acuerdo con Indonesia, Estados Unidos y Argentina en que se mantenga la versión original.

CHAIRPERSON

Listening to the remarks, could we agree not to take up the text?

I see nodding from Spain. We have an agreement on 35.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

If we can go back quickly to subparagraph (c). Just a little proposal here to change the word "*should*" to "*could*", because if you see the Basic Texts, there is a possibility, not always mandatory. Because "*should*" it means mandatory.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I suggest it should be "*may*". It was "*may*".

CHAIRPERSON

We should delete "*should*", that is clear. I will leave it up to the native English speakers, if there was a preference for one or the other.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

With "*may*".

CHAIRPERSON

We go with "*may*". Then we go to the last paragraph.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

With your indulgence, could you please scroll up again for the subparagraph (b)? We totally align with this principle. We all think that the implementation of the Rules of Procedures should be transparent. But our issue here is that always when we talk about transparent, this word itself in principle is very clear, is very good and it is also what we are advocating for, but when it comes to the Council's decision, we are supposed to give clear guidance to the FAO Secretariat and Management.

So here, if we only say that it should be transparent, actually it did not imply anything. My suggestion, it would be the "*implementation of the Rules and Procedures for participation of INGOs should be in line with the Basic Texts*".

CHAIRPERSON

And delete "*should be transparent*".

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

Yes. And here we are totally fine and okay with this, “*the principle should be transparent*”. If there are any colleagues that think that it needs to be more specific, we would be very flexible and welcome to listen to the other comments. This is our position.

CHAIRPERSON

The proposal of China is on the screen. Would that be agreeable?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Very minor one. I think FAO “*is*” an intergovernmental body. When we say “*remains*”, it is like there is a tendency for driving it out of.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that is factually correct. I do not think anybody wants to have a discussion about direction at all. Could we agree to it? I see nodding.

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

On subparagraph (b), I am not a native speaker, but I am confused. I do not know if it should be, “*should be in line or shall be in line*”? Perhaps my Australian colleague can help us here.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I think either “*shall*” or “*must*” or I think what we are looking to do is remove any discretion in the word “*should*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to “*shall*”? I see nodding.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think that that is improving the text there. I wonder if we could do both in terms of the transparent piece – “*shall be transparent and in line with the Basic Texts*”.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

We agree with the “*shall*”, to change the “*should*” into “*shall*”. I remember previously Legal Counsel made a very clear explanation about the difference of these two words. “*Shall*” is a legally binding word and “*should*” is recommended to you, so that we are happy that it be changed to “*shall*”.

Again, for the transparent, this word we would really appreciate our colleague from Canada can give us clearer guidance in which direction should it be? How should the Management do so that it will meet the requirement of being transparent instead of just state the principle here, because we have many different understandings on transparent.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

It is an interesting question of which direction transparency goes. I think the interesting thing about things that are transparent is that you can see through them in both directions. In a sense that is the spirit of this, that it is possible to see where things are going and fundamentally it comes down to effective communication and openness. I think the idea as we often see in these texts that where we call for transparency is that spirit. So, we think it is an important concept to be integrated, welcome others' views but openness and communicative around how it is being applied would be what we are looking for.

Mr Mina Rizk ATTIA RIZK (Egypt)

I have, maybe it is an editorial concern, but when we say, “*shall be transparent and in line with the Basic Texts*”, that gives the meaning that the Basic Texts is not transparent. Can we say, “*shall be transparent, in line with the Basic Texts*”?

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je crois que ma voisine de Chine peut comprendre, parce que le terme de "transparence" vient du fait que quand nous avons discuté, lors des consultations informelles, je crois que c'est l'Argentine qui avait insisté là-dessus pour que la procédure soit transparente. Si la collègue de Chine peut accepter qu'on le mette quand même, parce que ça reflète un point de vue qui a été exprimé lors de la consultation informelle, et si cela ne la dérange pas. Je pense que "transparente" vaudrait bien d'être là.

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

When you write "*transparent*" there, it is a relative term. What is transparent to me may not be transparent to somebody else. So, it "*should be transparent*". If you say, "*shall be transparent*" it is a legally binding transparency. I may not like somebody's view on that. So, it will be relative. So, better it "*should be transparent*". And when you say "*in line with*" it means exactly as per the Basic Texts. It is not. So therefore, we do not require another "*shall*" if you write "*in line with the Basic Texts*".

CHAIRPERSON

My suggestion would be, should we not say, "*shall be in line with the Basic Texts and should be transparent*"? Then it is a little bit clearer that it has to be in line with and should be transparent. Would that be agreeable?

Mr Jujavarapu BALAJI (India)

Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON

Do we have an agreement? I see nodding.

Then we go to the last paragraph. Can we agree to paragraph 36? I do not see any objections.

Mr Abdelaziz ZIDANI (Morocco)

I just want to go back to the point if it is possible? Can we go back to the paragraph? We propose "*INGOs, including the private sector shall be in line with the Basic Texts and UN principles*".

CHAIRPERSON

You say "*UN principles*" but it is not clear which principles you mean because I think there could be a question. If there is not a clear reference to where you can find them, then there will be an interpretation what your principles are.

Ms Ellen LUGER (United States of America)

I would just second what you just said. We believe it really is quite clear that we have "*shall be in line with the Basic Texts*" which govern. I am not saying we add any language. I am saying the Basic Texts govern the FAO Council and that is very clear. I respectfully do not believe we need "*and UN principles*".

CHAIRPERSON

Is there flexibility not to insert "*UN principles*"? Because before you know it, we are going to have a lengthy discussion on which principles we should adhere to.

Mr Abdelaziz ZIDANI (Morocco)

I am very flexible and that is what I consider under UN fundamental principles.

CHAIRPERSON

As long as we do not have a clear definition what the principles are, my suggestion would be let us leave the text as it is. If there is flexibility to go along with the text without "*and UN fundamental principles*" because we have to specify which principles we do mean and then we have a very lengthy Session this evening. Thank you for your flexibility. So, you could agree to the text as it is now?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Just "*FAO Basic Texts*", because it could be confusing if it is the "*Basic Texts for the INGOs*".

CHAIRPERSON

That is correct, it is clear that which text we refer to. With that, we have concluded now our work on this Item.

Item 17. World Food Programme:**Point 17. Programme alimentaire mondial:****Tema 17. Programa Mundial de Alimentos**

Item 17.1 Election of Six Members of the WFP Executive Board

Point 17.1 Élection de six membres du Conseil d'administration du PAM

*Tema 17.1 Elección de seis miembros de la Junta Ejecutiva del PMA
(CL 174/15.1; CL 174/LIM/4)*

CHAIRPERSON

We continue our work with Item 17, the *World Food Programme*, Sub-Item 17.1, *Election of Six Members of the WFP Executive Board*. I welcome online our colleagues from WFP.

Under Item 17.1, the Council is requested to elect six Members to the WFP Executive Board. Documents before the Council are *CL 174/15.1* and *CL 174/LIM/4*. Now I give an update on the candidates listed in the document *CL 174/LIM/4*.

For list A, there are two candidates for two seats, Morocco and Zimbabwe. We have been informed of two seat sharing arrangements within List A. One seat will be shared by Morocco and Egypt with Morocco occupying the seat from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 and Egypt will occupy the seat from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2026.

The second seat will be shared by Zimbabwe and Gabon with Zimbabwe occupying the seat from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, and then Gabon occupying the seat from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2026.

For List C, there is only one candidate for one seat, that is Argentina, and as required, we are informed of a seat sharing arrangement within List C, in which one seat will be shared by Argentina, Mexico, and Chile with Argentina occupying the seat from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024, Mexico occupying the seat from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 and Chile occupying the seat from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026.

In List D, there are two candidates for two seats, Ireland and Switzerland. We are informed by the Coordinator of List D that an internal arrangement between the Member States of List D is intended to be applied from 1 January 2025, in which the two aforementioned countries could, if necessary, be led to cede their seat to other Member States from List D for the remainder of the mandate in question, and, of course, Council will be informed about that.

For List E, there is only one candidate and that is Hungary.

Dear friends, given that we have the same number of nominations as seats to be filled for list A, C, D and E, I propose that the Council appoint these countries by clear general consent.

Applause

I wish to congratulate all newly-elected WFP Executive Board Members and wish them well for the work that lays ahead of them. It is crucial, eminent and important work, certainly when we see the very much needed humanitarian work to be done all over the world.

With this, we have concluded Item 17.1.

Item 18. Review of the Decentralized Offices Network of FAO**Point 18. Examen du réseau des bureaux décentralisés de la FAO****Tema 18. Examen de la red de oficinas descentralizadas de la FAO**

(CL 174/INF/10)

CHAIRPERSON

Now we turn to Agenda Item 18, *Review of the Decentralized Offices Network of FAO*. The relevant document is *CL 174/INF/10* and I would like to open the floor for Members for remarks or comments.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

The Philippines has the honor to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

The Asia Group underlines the importance of Decentralized Offices, especially Country Offices, in providing support to Member States, as well as in accelerating the implementation of global policies and the transformation of agrifood systems on the ground – in collaboration with local governments or agencies as well as other stakeholders such as the private sector and research institutes having useful knowledge and technology, and in alignment with country priorities and policies.

We recognize the challenges posed by global paradigm shifts and changing external landscape, and we appreciate FAO for its continuous efforts to implement its Decentralized Offices business model, in particular in light of the UN Development System repositioning, and to improve relevance, timeliness, cost-efficiency, technical quality, and effectiveness of the support provided to Members through Regional, Subregional and Country Offices.

In this regard, Asia Group would like to share seven views on this important issue as follows:

First, we encourage the Decentralized Offices further strengthening the cooperation with host countries, especially on the design and implementation of Country Programming Framework (CPF). The right of informed consent of the host country must be respect and guaranteed on the dissemination of CPF.

Second, the programmatic role of FAO Decentralized Offices should be enhanced, and FAO should prioritize addressing the root causes of weaknesses in governance structure, such as the control gaps between corporate divisions in headquarters and Regional Offices and lack of capacity of Decentralized Offices, especially Country Offices.

Third, we encourage FAO to provide adequate, predictable, flexible and continuous financial resources for Decentralized Offices to ensure (a) the delivery of the strategic programmes and better respond to the needs and priorities of member countries; (b) to enable observance of international standards of accountability, internal control and good management.

Fourth, Human Resource Management at Decentralized Offices needs improving with specific regard to the issue of prolonged vacancies of budgeted posts at Decentralized Offices to ensure the efficiency of program delivery at local level.

Fifth, we support FAO's focus on digitalization and innovations, which we believe could streamline communication, and enhance autonomy of operation process and efficiencies of the Decentralized Offices Network and enable them to better collaborate, share experiences, good practices and solutions to common challenges in food and agriculture across all five regions.

Sixth, we encourage FAO utilizing the available resources and furthering the resource mobilization to promote dissemination of knowledge products and services in local languages where possible in order to reach a broader target audience and thus, facilitate communication and implementation of FAO activities at local level.

Lastly, we emphasize the need to tighten the alignment of FAO's results framework to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and request FAO to monitor and evaluate capacities to strengthen FAO's country-level monitoring and reporting tools.

We look forward to an efficient Decentralized Offices Network.

M. Tamba TOLNO (Guinée)

La République de Guinée, le Soudan du Sud et le Zimbabwe font cette déclaration au nom du Groupe Régional Afrique sur le point XVIII de l'Ordre du Jour, portant sur l'examen du réseau des bureaux

décentralisés de la FAO. Nous remercions le Secrétariat de la FAO pour l'inscription de ce point à l'Ordre du Jour de cette Session, mettant ainsi en lumière les actions de l'Organisation pour améliorer l'efficacité et l'efficience des bureaux décentralisés.

Le Groupe Régional Afrique salue les réformes pertinentes entreprises par la FAO depuis 2020 pour améliorer la performance des bureaux décentralisés en vue de soutenir la mise en œuvre de ces cadres stratégiques dont celui de 2022-2031. Nous notons avec satisfaction des progrès importants réalisés dans ce domaine, parmi lesquels on peut noter la suppression du bureau de l'appui aux bureaux décentralisés au siège en 2020, qui a permis de renforcer l'intégration des bureaux décentralisés dans la structure et la gestion de la FAO.

La refonte de la structure organisationnelle des bureaux régionaux et sous-régionaux dans le but d'augmenter la pertinence, la rapidité, la qualité technique et l'efficacité de l'appui apporté aux États membres. Le lancement de l'outil de suivi pour une gestion améliorée des bureaux décentralisés COMIT, qui rend plus efficace les capacités de contrôle permettant d'évaluer les résultats des bureaux décentralisés et l'exécution des programmes.

Ces réformes répondent à la plupart des recommandations formulées à ce sujet, par la 31^e Session de la Conférence Régionale pour l'Afrique, tenu du 26 au 28 octobre 2020 à Hararé au Zimbabwe. Par ailleurs, le Groupe Régional Afrique encourage la FAO à poursuivre ses efforts en renforçant davantage les capacités des bureaux pays pour leur permettre de répondre efficacement aux défis spécifiques à chaque État membre.

Le Groupe Régional Afrique réitère à la FAO sa détermination et sa disponibilité habituelle leurs collaborations pour accroître la performance des réseaux des bureaux décentralisés de l'Organisation en vue de répondre efficacement aux demandes de plus en plus croissantes des États membres.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I am delighted to give this statement on behalf of the Southwest Pacific region. The Southwest Pacific region notes the update on the ongoing restructure of the Decentralized Offices Network. We strongly encourage FAO to undertake consultation with Members who are most affected by these changes, particularly smaller countries who lack representation in Rome for whom the Decentralized Offices are their only point of contact with FAO. This is certainly the case for the Southwest Pacific region with the Subregional Office in Apia, Samoa providing an invaluable resource for agricultural development.

As the only Member on Council from the Southwest Pacific region, it is my pleasure to relay some comments from the Cook Islands that they have asked me to convey on their behalf. I will start the quote, *"The Cook Islands supports the importance of FAO decentralization. The Subregional Offices in the Pacific are our link to the FAO headquarters in Rome."*

The capacity of the Subregional Office in Samoa needs to be further strengthened with more permanent employment positions and a regular budget in order for this office to provide more efficient and effective support to the Members in the Pacific. The Pacific countries and territories are important Members of FAO.

With the UN principle of leaving no one behind, we respectfully propose the Decentralized Offices in the Pacific should be provided sufficient resources and capacity to better provide the services to the Pacific region." I end their statement.

The message from the Cook Islands is very clear. We note the information in the paper that states that documents are being prepared for the 2024 Regional Conferences regarding proposed measures for Country Offices. We would like confirmation that these documents will also extend to matters relating to the Subregional Offices like the one in Samoa.

As demonstrated by the comments from the Cook Islands, Subregional Offices play a crucial role in implementing FAO's mandate and connecting with policy makers and stakeholders in the region. Despite the restructuring and so-called transformation of Regional and Subregional Offices in 2022, as evidenced by the comments from the Cook Islands, additional capacity and resources still need to be strengthened.

We request the topic of Subregional Offices also be the subject of discussion at Regional Conferences. Notwithstanding the continued concerns of the Southwest Pacific region regarding the timeframes and modalities for the Asia Pacific Regional Conference, I do hope these issues can be fully examined during that meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

Later on, I will give the floor to Management to specifically ask your questions about the Subregional Offices.

Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados Miembros. Esta declaración es apoyada por otros nueve Miembros de FAO: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Islandia, Macedonia del Norte, Moldavia, Montenegro, San Marino, Turquía y Ucrania.

La UE y sus Estados Miembros abogan por una revisión exhaustiva de la red de oficinas descentralizadas de la FAO. Esta revisión es crucial teniendo en cuenta la abolición de la Oficina de Apoyo a las Oficinas Descentralizadas (OSD) en 2020, tras lo cual cesó la supervisión periódica realizada por la FAO sobre esta cuestión dentro de los órganos rectores. Nos gustaría saber si el objetivo de integrar las oficinas descentralizadas en la estructura y gestión de la Organización en el espíritu de Una FAO y los esfuerzos para empoderar a las oficinas regionales han dado resultados.

Reconociendo el papel fundamental de la red descentralizada en las operaciones de la FAO y su importancia para todos los miembros, destacamos la necesidad de una evaluación exhaustiva. Esta evaluación debe abarcar los recursos humanos y las funciones asignadas, y cualquier revisión debe canalizarse a través de las conferencias regionales.

Si bien la UE y sus Estados Miembros respaldan el trabajo realizado por las oficinas descentralizadas de la FAO, es importante reiterar que, aun reconociendo sus capacidades, deben mantenerse las capacidades técnicas en la sede de la FAO para cumplir el mandato de la Organización. En consecuencia, proponemos que la preservación de la destreza técnica en la sede de la FAO sirva de principio rector a la hora de determinar las asignaciones de personal.

Instamos a la FAO a centrar sus esfuerzos de revisión en áreas donde los ajustes simplificados pueden producir resultados más impactantes, considerando contextos regionales específicos. Este proceso debería incorporar comentarios y consultas con los órganos rectores, en particular las Conferencias Regionales, teniendo en cuenta la evolución de las circunstancias. Abogamos por una evaluación de la estrategia de financiación y normativa de las oficinas descentralizadas. Por lo tanto, instamos a la FAO a encargar a la Secretaría la tarea de diseñar principios y propuestas de financiación actualizados para presentarlos al Comité de Finanzas (FC) en su próximo período de sesiones.

Por último, solicitamos a la FAO que presente informes periódicos y evaluaciones continuas que proporcionen información sobre la eficiencia operativa y los avances logrados en toda la red de oficinas descentralizadas. Estos informes servirán para informar tanto a la Sede de la FAO como a los órganos rectores, permitiendo mejoras continuas dentro de la Organización.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

First of all, Japan echoes concerns over the scheduling of the 2024 Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) meeting raised by Australia. Japan aligns itself with the Asia Regional Group joint statement delivered by the Philippines. Japan appreciates FAO's initiative to put more emphasis on decentralization such as Regional Offices and Country Offices which create impact on site.

In close collaboration with the Liaison Office in Japan (LOJ), the Government of Japan has implemented speedy assistance activities to global food security, including assistance to the rehabilitation of Ukrainian agriculture production and provision of grain storage facilities.

Japan will continue to collaborate with FAO and its Decentralized Offices, particularly the LOJ toward achievement of global food security as well as sustainable and resilient food assistance.

Japan looks forward to further updates on the Review of the Decentralized Offices Network.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada welcomes FAO efforts since 2020 to address the efficiency and effectiveness of the business models of Decentralized Offices and that the restructuring of Regional and Subregional Offices was completed in 2022.

We support efforts to decentralize and become more focused and targeted to contacts on the ground. However, we also stress the importance of coherence across the Organization and of ensuring that projects have consistency in quality assurance in the use of technical tools and in the application of lessons and knowledge learned in diverse contexts, noting these represent a significant valuable resource for the Organization.

We further appreciate FAO work on pooling resources at the regional level. As part of that process, we would like to understand better how FAO Regional Offices deploy regional technical staff in support of country projects. We stress the importance of consistency in this approach to ensure consistent, high technical quality by leveraging the deep knowledge base of FAO staff.

In addition, we would welcome seeing how FAO can participate in and contribute to capacity building and resource sharing more broadly among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) at decentralized levels, as appropriate.

Finally, we would welcome more FAO investment into developing context-specific innovation, as we see this as FAO's comparative advantage in delivering and implementing country projects.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India aligns with the Asia Regional Group on this important topic. I would like to congratulate FAO's commendable initiative to strengthen its Regional Offices. In particular we applaud the forward-thinking approach adopted by FAO in addressing the evolving global context and the challenges and gaps identified.

India appreciates the proposed measures, including strategic staffing adjustments and increased resource flexibility, as they signify a commitment to enhancing the efficiency and adaptability of Country Offices, crucial for addressing the evolving challenges of sustainable agriculture.

As we collectively strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative that we consider the aspirations of individual countries. India, with its ambitious developmental agenda and priorities, is committed to contributing meaningfully to these global objectives while voicing the collective concerns of the Global South.

We appreciate FAO's recognition of this need and its dedication to incorporating the aspirations of the nations into its strategies and the support of the Country Offices in the same. We like to express our appreciation for the invaluable support of FAO headquarters as well as the India Office during India's Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency throughout the Agriculture Working Group meetings and deliberations, especially the Presidency's deliberations on millets and other ancient grains.

We express our gratitude to FAO's ongoing support, and we look forward to collaborating closely to resolve the ongoing discussions on the prevalence of undernourishment aspects or the state of the food security and nutrition in the world in *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report*.

As we move forward, we hope FAO will extend its support as we jointly endeavour to construct a more sustainable, equitable and resilient future for agriculture and food security. We highlight the necessity for the Regional and Country Offices to design support mechanisms tailored to the needs of developing countries, focusing on technology transfer, capacity building, and sustainable agriculture practices.

Let us make sure that we enhance global collaboration, underscoring the importance of incorporating country contexts into the broader policy dialogue, to ensure FAO's support results in effective and inclusive solutions for our shared challenges.

Ms Elizabeth NASSKAU (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

The United Kingdom welcomes the review of FAO's Decentralized Offices to ensure alignment with organizational structure and ensuring that they are fit for purpose. Indeed, we need to hear more from Country Offices in these Governing Bodies.

We want to hear more about their results, their challenges, and how they are developing their country programme frameworks, and monitoring results. This is particularly important, as we have discussed during this Council, with a continuing shift towards greater levels of voluntary funding at country level, helping to provide the Governing Bodies with greater levels of oversight.

On this, we are really interested in hearing more about the launching of the Country Office Management and Monitoring Indicators Tool to support more effective oversight capacity and assess performance and delivery on programme implementation.

Country programme frameworks provide an opportunity for engagement with different partners and better communication would certainly help to facilitate that. Indeed, we welcome more recent progress in having published all FAO Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) on FAO's website.

We would also like to hear more about how FAO is partnering with other agencies at country level, including International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP), and developing joint country plans where possible. We look forward to updates and documents for the 2024 Regional Conferences, looking at a revised business model, better reflecting country context.

Ms Elsa Barbosa DE OLIVEIRA (Cabo Verde) (Observer)

Cabo Verde supports the statement delivered by Guinea on behalf of Africa Regional Group.

We would like to thank FAO for preparing this information paper, updating us on the progress made towards reorganizing Decentralized, Regional, Subregional, and Country Offices, making them more fit for purpose. We congratulate the work already done and FAO's unwavering engagement in improving the efficiency of these offices while keeping in mind regional and national challenges.

We recognise the efforts made to enhance Management efficacy within the framework of efficiency and cost savings to improve delivery, increase delegation of authority to the Decentralized Offices, and effort to improve efficiency and timely use of technical cooperation programme.

As a Small Island Developing State, we would like to highlight the need of special attention to the challenges we face in agriculture and climate change, and expectations we have in receiving FAO's support in specialised areas.

Aspects such as adjustment of staffing profile to accommodate specific country level needs, a swift and efficient procurement service, creating an enabling environment of dialogue at national level, and strengthening the work between decentralized FAO offices and FAO office on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) to support resource mobilization, to accelerate mitigation and adaptation, is in our view, paramount if we are to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 and 2.

Cabo Verde supports FAO's work in this workstream and we look forward to having future updates.

Mr Luis COELHO-SILVA (Observer) (Portugal)

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

We are very pleased for the confirmation that the Decentralised Offices Network will be assessed in each region, by the Regional Conferences, and that a report of the findings will then be evaluated by the Governing Bodies.

We will look forward knowing the findings on the offices network, considering distinctly its executive role, the liaison functions, and oversight and management functions, and the relationship of the Decentralised Office with the proposed regional knowledge hubs.

CHAIRPERSON

I now turn the floor to Management to react and respond to remarks and also specific questions by some Members.

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Assistant Director-General and Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget)

It is a pleasure to be here this evening on this topic, which indeed is a topic we look very forward to discussing with all of you in the Regional Conferences in 2024.

So it is as we outlined in this brief document to give this update, we have been on a path of ensuring that with the resources that we have at our disposal that we really use those in the most efficient, effective, impactful way possible, and so we had a very good restructuring discussions for the Regional and Subregional Offices and now we are moving forward, moving on to the Country Offices.

Many of the points that were raised by the distinguished Members here today are indeed exactly the types of things that we are looking at and that we hope to present back to you our ideas and suggestions. Looking at what are the country specific situations and how might we need to address our support to those specific needs and capacities, with maybe specific attention going to certain Small Island Developing States (SIDS) offices, for example, which were mentioned by a few of you SIDS countries.

We also see a lot of opportunity here in line with the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's efficiency agenda to look at potential for cost avoidance or improved efficiency in the way that we work at the country level, the types of exercises that we do at the country level, and these are the types of things that we hope to bring into the documents for further discussion at the Regional Conferences.

There was one specific question also about the Subregional Offices; we will indeed, while the review of the Subregional Offices was completed in 2022, we are, throughout all of these processes, looking at how do all of these structures work together, in particular the Country Offices with the Subregional Offices, the Regional Offices, and headquarters.

I believe Canada also asked about the technical support, or I may have the Member wrong, but there was a question around the technical support provided by the Regional Offices. I would also just stress that under the approach of One FAO, technical support is provided by whichever location or expertise is most fit for that role.

So, that can include headquarters, it can include the Subregional offices and it, of course, can include the Regional Offices. Through the implementation of the Strategic Framework and the internal processes we are setting up for the implementation of the Strategic Framework, we hope to continuously improve on the way that that is done between our different locations acting as One FAO.

I believe the United Kingdom also mentioned the tool COMET which, indeed, this is mentioned in our document and we are very proud of that. One of the challenges that we face in FAO is that over the years different systems have been built that all contain very important and interesting information, but for a manager, for example, at the country level, it is not always easy to get all information together in one spot, but that is what this new COMET tool has really done.

It has a focus on the managers, the FAO representatives at the country level, and brings together all information that is important for them to be able to do their job, to make decisions, to see risks coming, to manage budgets, to make decisions, and it brings data together from different sources. It has been very welcomed and well received by our Country Offices and we hope to, of course, continue to improve on these types of tools to make sure that all of our staff can perform as efficiently and effectively as possible.

But just again then to thank you for all of the comments today, and I think it is a good start to this discussion that we will be taking forward with you in the Regional Conferences.

Ms Saadia Elmubarak Ahmed DAAK (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

I would like to pay tribute to the important and valuable report on Decentralized Offices and the system and the various reform processes embarked upon by the Organization to increase its performance. Indeed, the objective is to increase and improve the efficiency of this Organization.

This, in principle, commands our support and appreciation because this would indeed lead to better performance by all staff members, enhance, make the Organization achieve its targets and goals within its Strategy and we would like to call for a sound framework for the Decentralized Offices which would heed the need of the various countries.

These offices should be given the necessary human and financial resources so that they can reach the adequate decision whenever they need it. Particularly when it comes to our region, the Near East, which is suffering from instability and conflicts. We believe that Regional Offices should be given the necessary wherewithal and the necessary capabilities.

I believe that the Organization should nominate the efficient staff members and this should be done in a neutral and transparent way, particularly when it comes to Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) programmes.

Finally, we would like to say that we shall coordinate in a continuous way with the Organization in order to reach clear and well delineated objectives and visions concerning the redevelopment of our region.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I turn to the draft conclusions of this Agenda Item 18, *Review of the Decentralized Offices Network of FAO*, and in the footnote you see the document.

40. The Council welcomed the information document, and:

- a) appreciated efforts implemented to address the efficiency and effectiveness of the business models of Decentralized Offices;
- b) welcomed the completion of Restructuring of Regional and Subregional Offices under the principles of One FAO aiming to achieve a renewed business model;
- c) noted that documents on the Country Offices are being prepared for discussion at the 2024 Regional Conferences, which proposed measures to address the evolving context and the challenges and gaps identified; and
- d) looked forward to further information on the outcome of the Regional Conference discussions.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then I go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia proposes an addition before the semicolon in subparagraph (b) and that would read “*and stressed the importance of the continued monitoring of these Offices*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this addition? I do not see any objections.

Then we continue with subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d).

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India proposes to add a subparagraph after (c) and between (d).

CHAIRPERSON

Please go ahead.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

“Encouraged FAO’s Decentralized Offices to enhance engagement with the Member countries, especially developing countries, in designing and implementing support mechanisms tailored to the country context.”

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

It was to propose another subparagraph.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the proposed paragraph by India? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to Canada for an additional subparagraph.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Perhaps it could even be joined on to subparagraph (d), but I will read it first as an individual subparagraph, *“encouraged continued efforts to ensure consistency in the deployment of technical resources across Country and Regional Offices in line with One FAO.”*

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

I would like to go back to subparagraph (d).

CHAIRPERSON

Let us first now deal with (e). Can we agree to subparagraph (e)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go back to Indonesia.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

Just would like to add after *“Member countries”*, *“and RBAs”*. And *“the country context”* – it should be singular, not plural.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the subparagraph as it is now? I see no objections.

Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)

En línea con nuestra petición relativa a que FAO solicite informes periódicos y evaluaciones continuas para así, tanto la sede de la FAO como los Órganos Rectores permita mejores continuas para la propia Organización, nos gustaría sugerir en el subpárrafo (d) después de *“offices”* el siguiente texto, *“including regular Reports and evaluations across them”*.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this addition? I do not see any objections.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Just a clarification, I do not have anything against this text, but I did not understand the addition by Indonesia.

Subparagraph (d): *“Encouraged FAO’s Decentralized Offices to enhance engagement with the Member countries and RBAs”*. Okay, they already have engagement with FAO, that is obvious, but with the other Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), they will link directly to World Food Programme (WFP) and to International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in Rome? That is the question.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

It is about Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaborations at country level.

CHAIRPERSON

Shall we not then say, *“at country level”*? Because it makes it a little bit clearer. There is a proposal to insert *“at country level”* because that is what we are aiming at. I see flexibility to include it. I see nodding.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I want to address the last addition by Spain, “*stressed the importance of continued monitoring of the performance of these Offices.*” I think we should end it there because including “*regular reports and evaluations across them*”, I have difficulties to understand what it is, what it means here, because we welcome something. We are welcoming the completion of this.

Sra. Beatriz MARTÍNEZ ZAMORANO (España)

En aras de la claridad, la Unión Europea (UE) y sus Estados Miembros han solicitado que se proporcionaran informes y evaluaciones continuas que vienen, por supuesto, derivadas de la monitorización. Pero una vez que hemos realizado esa monitorización, es necesario, y por eso así lo hemos solicitado, recibir la información y la evaluación de esa monitorización.

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

It is still the one on the Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs).

Mr Su GUO (China)

We do understand the importance of monitoring the performance of these offices and we share the same thing as the colleagues from Cameroon. I just want further clarification from Management what exists now in the present system of reporting and evaluation on the Regional Office or Subregional Office. What the present system is and if we require regular reports and evaluations on the performance on the Regional and Subregional Office, does it mean there is any budgetary implications? Because we know that evaluation work needs abundance of resources and that they have requirements and budgetary limits, so I need this clarification.

CHAIRPERSON

May I turn the floor to Ms Beth Crawford related to this question?

Ms Beth CRAWFORD (Assistant Director-General and Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget)

I can certainly confirm that we have monitoring, evaluation, audits, procedures in place for all of our entire programme of work. The way that I would interpret this is that we should be paying in particular attention to the Regional and Subregional Offices as they have recently completed a restructuring and that is indeed something that we could do as part of the normal monitoring process that we have in place in the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

If we need to make a reference, could we not just say “*including regular updates*”? Because reports and evaluations makes it something as we are requesting something new, and it is part already I think on the regular reporting system, as I understand what was said by Ms Beth Crawford.

So, could we just say “*including regular updates*”? I see nodding from China. I see agreement.

Mr Per MOGSTAD (Norway)

I would just like to draw your attention to Item 13 where we are talking about the FAO’s collaboration with the whole United Nations (UN) system and all the relevant UN organizations, not only the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). I do not want to add language, but it is just to point out that is, *One UN* is the main point there.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just for clarity, one word in subparagraph (d), just after “*RBAs*”, “*engagement with Member countries and RBAs at country level, especially in developing countries*”.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, we have concluded our work on this Agenda Item.

Item 19. Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions**Point 19. Cinq années d'action pour le développement dans les régions montagneuses****Tema 19. Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones de Montaña
(CL 174/INF/8)****CHAIRPERSON**

We turn now to Agenda Item 19, *Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions*. The relevant document is CL 174/INF/8 and the introduction by Mr Zhimin Wu, Director of the Forestry Division (NFO), has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 19: Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions

Mr Zhimin Wu, Director of the Forestry Division.

This agenda item provides information on the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions, on recent progress related to its implementation.

The Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027 was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly through resolution A/RES/77/172¹ on 14 December 2022 to “enhance the awareness of the international community of the problems of mountain countries and to give new impetus to the international community’s efforts to address the challenges and problems of mountain countries”. The Resolution invites Member States and relevant United Nations agencies, within their mandates, to further enhance support to sustainable mountain development, including through participation in the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

FAO is the lead agency for sustainable mountain development within the United Nations (UN) system and, since 2003, hosts the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS). At its 172nd Session, held from 24 to 28 April 2023, the Council took note of the Five Years of Action.² At its 173rd Session, held on 10 July 2023, the Council took note of the discussion relating to the Five Years of Action.³

The Mountain Partnership Secretariat has facilitated the development of the Global Framework⁴ for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023–2027. The Global Framework provides a basis for all stakeholders to enhance existing efforts and initiate new ones aimed at improving the resilience and sustainable development of mountain regions across the world and engaging in impactful advocacy for mountains at the global level.

The Global Framework proposes four interlinked pathways for action by all stakeholders: 1) scale up nature-based solutions to reduce climate risks and promote adaptation and mitigation in mountains; 2) improve mountain communities’ access to services and sustainable infrastructure; 3) enhance international cooperation, security and multi-level governance in mountain regions; and 4) empower mountain communities and reduce inequalities, with a priority focus on women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The Global Framework outlines five action areas for increased collective efforts during the Five Years of Action: 1) leverage regional and international processes in support of mountain development; 2) strengthen policies, governance mechanisms and institutions; 3) promote inclusive research, innovation and data collection; 4) increase awareness and communication on mountain issues, challenges and solutions; and 5) increase sustainable public and private investment under the institutional umbrella of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

The Global Framework⁵ was launched by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic during the High-level Political Forum on 19 July 2023, in New York. The Kyrgyz Republic shared the Global Framework with UN Member States in September 2023, and the President of Kyrgyz Republic presented it at the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly on 10 September 2023.

¹ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/77/172>

² See the Report of the 172nd Session of the Council of FAO: <https://www.fao.org/3/nm116en/nm116en.pdf#page=17>

³ See the Report of the 173rd Session of the Council of FAO: <https://www.fao.org/3/nm791en/nm791en.pdf#page=8>

⁴ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc6910en/cc6910en.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.fao.org/3/cc6910en/cc6910en.pdf>

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor to the Members.

Sr. Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (España)

Es para mí un honor hablar en nombre de la Unión Europea (UE) y de sus 27 Estados Miembros. Esta declaración es apoyada por otros ocho Países Miembros de la FAO: Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Islandia, Moldavia, Mónaco, Montenegro y San Marino y Ucrania.

Las montañas cubren alrededor del 27% de la superficie terrestre y albergan a 1 100 millones de personas. Además, albergan alrededor del 50% de los puntos calientes de biodiversidad del mundo y proporcionan agua dulce a miles de millones de personas en todo el planeta, tanto en las tierras altas como en las bajas.

En los últimos 20 años, la vulnerabilidad a la inseguridad alimentaria no ha dejado de aumentar en las zonas de montaña, y en la actualidad unos 346 millones de habitantes de las zonas rurales de montaña de todo el mundo son vulnerables a la inseguridad alimentaria.

La pobreza, la marginación y las dinámicas de género desiguales son las causas profundas de la vulnerabilidad de las poblaciones de montaña. Además, los ecosistemas montañosos son especialmente sensibles a los impactos de la crisis planetaria que plantean el cambio climático, la naturaleza y la pérdida de biodiversidad, y se ven afectados a un ritmo más rápido que muchos otros hábitats terrestres.

Las mujeres desempeñan un papel clave en la protección del medio ambiente y el desarrollo social y económico de las zonas de montaña. A menudo son las principales gestoras de los recursos de las montañas, guardianas de la biodiversidad y custodias de los conocimientos tradicionales. Empoderar a las mujeres rurales es crucial para erradicar el hambre y la pobreza.

Estamos convencidos de la necesidad de actuar de forma colectiva para acabar con el hambre y la malnutrición de las poblaciones de montaña, incluidas las mujeres, los jóvenes, los niños y los pueblos indígenas. Por ello, se acoge con gran satisfacción la inclusión de este punto en el orden del día del Consejo. Solicitamos acciones concretas para mitigar los efectos negativos del cambio climático, garantizar medios de vida dignos a las comunidades locales y reducir la inseguridad alimentaria para todos.

Como organismo custodio del objetivo Montañas de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS 15.4), la FAO puede desempeñar un papel único y tomar la iniciativa en el Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones de Montaña (2023-2027) declarada por la Resolución *A/RES/77/172* de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas (UNGA) adoptada en Nueva York el 14 de diciembre de 2022 y elaborar un Plan de Acción Mundial que incluya todos los aspectos relevantes relacionados con la vida en las regiones de montaña y los ecosistemas de montaña para acabar con el hambre y la malnutrición, en colaboración con las agencias hermanas competentes de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) – por ejemplo, la Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT), el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA), ONU-Hábitat, el Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (UNFPA), el Programa Mundial de Alimentos (PMA), la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura UNESCO, la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) y el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD).

Creemos que, al hacerlo, la FAO también cumpliría sus propias prioridades y avanzaría enormemente hacia el ODS 2 Hambre Cero.

Somos conscientes de que la FAO necesita un mandato sólido del Consejo para asumir el liderazgo mundial en esta cuestión fundamental, por lo que animamos a los miembros a permanecer unidos y pedir a la FAO que elabore un Plan de Acción Mundial sobre el Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones de Montaña.

Mr Bruno ARCHI (Italy)

Italy fully aligns itself to the remarks delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States.

Italy has always supported the importance of the sustainable development of mountain regions. Mountains are indeed a critical ecosystem that we need to protect and foster. We think this is a collective thought that goes beyond the duty of those countries that have the privilege to host mountains.

In 2002, Italy, together with Switzerland, FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) took up the challenge to set up a new alliance to strengthen cooperation for the needs of mountain people and environments. As a result, the Mountain Partnership was created.

Today, the coalition counts 60 governments, 16 international organizations, and over 280 civil society groups. FAO is the custodian agency of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 15.4 and plays a unique role in the development of mountain development but we deem that as 2030 is approaching, we do need to escalate our action to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

We therefore decided to call for concrete actions to mitigate the negative effects of climate change, ensure the decent livelihoods of local communities, and reduce food insecurity for all. With this objective in mind, in 2022, we celebrated the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development at the proposal of the Kyrgyz Republic and then supported the adoption of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027 declared by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 14 December 2022.

In order to achieve our common goals, we now ask FAO to assume the leadership and draft a global action plan that involves all the relevant aspects attached to mountain regions, life, and ecosystems, to end hunger and malnutrition, engaging with all the competent United Nations (UN) sister agencies. The initiative may build on the already existing global framework developed by FAO and the Mountain Partnership in 2023. From what we know, it does not imply additional costs or changes in the current Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

We ask FAO to step up because we are sincerely convinced that by acting collectively, we can end hunger and malnutrition also for mountain people, including women, youth, children, and Indigenous Peoples. Mountains host about 50 percent of the world's biodiversity hotspots and provide freshwater to billions of people worldwide, both in the highlands and lowlands.

As it was already recalled in previous intermissions, women play a key role in environmental protection and social and economic development in mountain areas. They are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians of biodiversity, and keepers of traditional knowledge. Empowering the role of women is crucial to eradicating hunger and poverty.

Echoing what Spain has just said, we, too, understand that FAO needs a strong mandate from the Council to take on the global leadership on this matter, and therefore, we encourage the Members to stay united and ask the Organization to draft a global action plan on the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

On behalf of the Asia Regional Group, the Philippines has the honour to deliver the following joint statement.

The Asia Regional Group would like to thank the group of 22 Member States under the leadership of Italy for bringing this Agenda Item to this Council's attention. The Asia Regional Group looks forward to the Five Year Global Action Plan 2023-2027 for the Development of Mountain Regions envisaged in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution A/RES/77/172, adopted in New York on 14 December 2022 and co-sponsored by 110 countries.

We also wish to acknowledge that the proclamation of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions envisaged in the Resolution was proposed by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

We expect FAO to take the lead in developing this action plan that would involve all relevant aspects attached to the life and ecosystem of mountain regions as a means to help end hunger and malnutrition, and as mentioned by our distinguished delegate who spoke on behalf of the European

Union (EU) earlier and as well as Italy, there is a need for FAO to engage with all the competent United Nations (UN) sister agencies, such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and others in developing and fostering the implementation of this plan.

We look forward to the approval of the action plan in December 2024 at the FAO Council's 176th Session, upon evaluation by the pertinent FAO Committees.

Relatedly, we also wish to recall FAO's 2019 publication entitled *Mountain Agriculture: Opportunities for Harnessing Zero Hunger in Asia*, which focuses on the multidimensional status challenges, opportunities and solutions of sustainable mountain agriculture development for Zero Hunger in Asia. It provides an analysis with evidence on how mountain agriculture could contribute to satisfying all four dimensions of food security, and to transforming food systems to be nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient, economically viable, and locally adapted.

From a national perspective, Chairperson, the Philippines aligns with the Asia Regional Group statement in looking forward to an approved global action plan for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027.

The Philippines looks forward to providing input to the development of the action plan. We recall that through the Philippines' participation in the Mountain Partnership, the FAO, Slow Food International and the Philippines Department of Tourism developed a pilot called "Food and tourism for mountain development" aimed at promoting linkages between high-value mountain products and ecotourism services.

The pilot supported innovative producers and sought to uncover potential new products, creating and improving local livelihoods and promoting rural development in the region of the Cordillera Mountains where the Ifugao rice terraces – which are recognized as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site and FAO Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems – are located.

Such projects can also help rural people to safeguard valuable traditions and biodiverse foods while still making the living income necessary for a Zero Hunger future. #MountainsMatter.

Ms Thato Maleloko Regina NKHAHLE (Lesotho)

This statement is delivered on behalf of the African Regional Group by the Kingdom of Lesotho, Uganda, and Kenya.

The group wishes to express its appreciation to the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) for including in the Agenda of this FAO Council the discussion of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions, as requested by 22 FAO Members in their letter signed on the third instance envisioned in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution *A/RES/77/172*, adopted in New York on 14 December 2022.

The desired outcome in Council is to encourage FAO to take the lead on this topic and to draft a global action plan that involves aspects attached to mountain regions, life, and ecosystems, to end hunger and malnutrition. This will enable FAO to pursue its priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To draft a global action plan, the group encourages FAO, like other Members have already eluded, to engage other United Nations (UN) Agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the like.

The plan, once completed, will be evaluated by the Committee on Forestry (COFO) in July 2024 and Programme Committee (PC) in November 2024 and then approved in Council thereafter. It is envisaged that the initiative will not require any additional funds or a change in the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). Should some of the initiative's activities require funding in the future, Members may decide voluntarily to contribute to the existing multi-partner trust fund.

This initiative has gained cross-regional support and the African Regional Group hopes that the Council will approve it. The development of mountain regions is a topic that unites Members and gives FAO the chance to better fulfil its own mandate.

The African Regional Group would like to stress that between 2000 and 2017, vulnerability to food insecurity has constantly increased in mountain areas. It is worth noting that in 2017, about 346 million mountain people in developing countries were vulnerable to food insecurity, and this number has increased since due to a contrast of global trends and crises.

Mountain ecosystems are particularly sensitive to crises posed by climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, pollution, and are affected at a fast rate than other terrestrial habitats.

Women have been found to be major role players in the social and economic development of mountain areas, are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guardians of biodiversity and custodians of traditions. Empowering rural women is crucial for achieving Social Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger.

Sra. Carla SIERRA ZÚÑIGA (Costa Rica)

Nosotros tenemos una intervención nacional, pero antes quisiera, si es posible, cederle la palabra a Ecuador que dará una intervención regional como Presidente pro Tempore.

Sr. Juan Fernando TINOCO CORDOVA (Ecuador) (Observador)

Tengo el honor de realizar esta intervención en nombre del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC). Durante la anterior sesión del Consejo varias delegaciones solicitaron a la FAO asumir un papel de liderazgo en el marco de su mandato en la implementación de la resolución 77/72 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas adoptada en diciembre de 2022 sobre el desarrollo sostenible de las montañas.

La citada resolución hace un llamado a la comunidad internacional a luchar contra la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición en el ámbito de las montañas, poniendo de relieve la importancia de las comunidades y de los pueblos indígenas de las regiones montañosas que se dedican principalmente a la agricultura familiar como custodios del patrimonio natural y cultural.

Asimismo, alienta a apoyar las actividades relacionadas con el Decenio de las Naciones Unidas de la Agricultura Familiar (UNDAFF) 2019-2028. En su parte sustancial, la resolución alienta a todas las entidades competentes del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas a que, en el marco de sus respectivos mandatos, redoblen los esfuerzos para fortalecer la colaboración interinstitucional a fin de promover el desarrollo sostenible de las montañas. Al respecto, vale recordar que la FAO es el organismo custodio del único indicador de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) para las montañas, el 15.4, y una de las dos Agencias de las Naciones Unidas responsables de la implementación del Decenio para la Restauración de los Ecosistemas.

Es por ello fundamental que la FAO sea quien coordine con los demás organismos y agencias del Sistema la redacción de un plan de acción global que involucre todos los aspectos relacionados con la vida y el ecosistema de las regiones montañosas orientados a erradicar el hambre y la malnutrición. Esta labor tendría, además, como apoyo la experiencia de la Alianza Internacional para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Regiones de Montaña, que es la única coalición dedicada a mejorar la vida de los habitantes en las zonas montañosas y a proteger los entornos montañosos en todo el mundo con un marco de acción para la implementación de la Agenda 2030.

En 1799 Alexander von Humboldt zarpó en un viaje de descubrimiento científico de cinco años y ocho mil kilómetros a través de América Latina. Su viaje por los Andes enalteció el lugar de las montañas para comprender la biodiversidad de la tierra XX sobre los procesos que determina la distribución de la vida y se adelantó a su tiempo mostrando cómo los seres humanos influyen en el mundo natural a escalas local, regional y global.

Su legado sigue moldeando hasta nuestros días la manera de comprender esta relación de cómo todas las fuerzas de la naturaleza están entrelazadas y entretejidas. Por tanto, las montañas siguen siendo parte fundamental para la vida del planeta, para los seres humanos y para su subsistencia.

De su preservación y desarrollo sostenible depende el futuro de unos 300 millones de personas que se enfrentan a la inseguridad alimentaria y desnutrición, así como a la mortalidad infantil. Es hora de actuar ya.

Sra. Carla SIERRA ZÚÑIGA (Costa Rica)

Nos unimos a la declaración regional pronunciada por la Presidencia Pro Tempore del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULA)C, siendo además Costa Rica miembro de la Alianza para las Montañas. Costa Rica agradece a la FAO la elaboración del documento *CL 174/INF/8* relativo al Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo de las Regiones de Montaña. La FAO como agencia líder en el Sistema de Naciones Unidas sobre el tema, debe darle la importancia a las zonas de montaña como ecosistema clave para el bienestar del planeta.

Como ya lo hemos expresado en los dos Consejos de FAO anteriores, es de gran importancia para nuestro país la resolución *A/RES/77/172* del 14 de diciembre de 2022 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas (UNGA) cuando se proclamó el período 2023-2027 para el Quinquenio de Acción.

Agradecemos al gobierno de la República Kirguisa y a la Secretaría de la Alianza para las Montañas, así como el resto del equipo de tareas por el trabajo realizado para dar a conocer el marco mundial para la puesta en práctica del Quinquenio de Acción y que de esta manera se puedan poner en práctica iniciativas que apoyen las zonas de montaña en el mundo y que sí se puedan enfrentar los desafíos actuales que repercuten en todos nosotros.

Los ecosistemas de montaña son altamente sensibles al cambio climático y a otros factores sobre los cuales nos vemos todos afectados. Debemos trabajar en ello y, en particular, debemos dar alta atención al papel de las mujeres en las montañas, quienes son actores clave para la conservación de la biodiversidad, el uso del conocimiento tradicional y ancestral, y el uso sostenible de los recursos. Siendo FAO el organismo responsable del indicador del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS 15.4.2) para la conservación de los ecosistemas de montañas, solicitamos que tome el liderazgo para la elaboración y ejecución del plan de acción global acompañado de la Secretaría de la Alianza para las Montañas y las otras agencias de Naciones Unidas que también están vinculadas con este tema.

Al mismo tiempo, solicitamos que el tema de las montañas sea incluido de manera más evidente en la estructura de la FAO.

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

Kenya aligns itself with the statement made by Lesotho on behalf of the African Regional Group. I thank FAO for circulating the document of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

We recognize that target number one of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 in particular explicitly mentions mountains among the ecosystems to be conserved, restored, and sustainably used in line with international agreements.

We take note that since 2003, FAO has been hosting the Mountain Partnership Secretariat as well as taking the lead in the compilation of the triennial Report of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General on Sustainable Mountain Development and is also the coordinating UN agency for the annual observance of the International Mountain Day.

We support pathway that seeks to empower mountain communities and reduce inequalities with a priority focus on women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. We take note that this pathway aims to promote action for protecting traditional and indigenous food systems, securing community and private land and tenure rights, and safeguarding and enhancing youth and women's participation, inclusion and empowerment.

We appreciate that mountain communities, and especially women, youth and Indigenous Peoples remain the key stakeholders to be engaged in the implementation of the global framework. We recognize that the global framework is intended to regularly update and to be utilized by all stakeholders to enhance existing efforts and initiate new ones with the aim of improving the resilience and sustainable development of mountain regions across the world. We expressed our support for the

global initiative and commit to engaging in impactful advocacy for the development of mountain regions at all levels.

We take note that the global framework is a voluntary mechanism meant to be adopted by governments to align with their national priority areas. It encourages governments to intensify action with the aim of promoting mountain regions' sustainable development in accordance with their respective national frameworks.

We further note that special reference to the global framework was included in the UN General Assembly Resolution *A/RES/77/172*, which calls on mountain countries to increase partnerships with all relevant stakeholders, including governments, UN organizations, academia, the private sector and investors, to improve international cooperation. This should include partnerships between mountain countries for furthering financing mechanisms and attracting investments.

Urgent attention is required to reverse the declining trend in traditional mountain agricultural systems and the loss of biodiversity in mountain ecosystems, so that they can contribute effectively to global food systems as well as to mountain ecosystems, which could be important to those living upstream and downstream in mountain areas.

With these remarks, Kenya takes note and supports the implementation of the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027 and the related global framework.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

El Perú se alinea a la declaración regional realizada por la delegación de Ecuador en su calidad de Presidencia Pro Tempore del Grupo Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (LARC). Las montañas albergan a nivel global al 15% de la población mundial y aproximadamente la mitad de la reserva de la diversidad biológica del mundo, además de suministrar agua dulce a más de la mitad de la humanidad. Su conservación está considerada en el objetivo 15 de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS 15) de la Agenda 2030 referida a la preservación de los ecosistemas terrestres.

Definida territorialmente por la cordillera de Los Andes, la más larga y la segunda más alta del planeta, el Perú como país megadiverso presenta ecosistemas de montaña que abarcan más del 40% de su territorio y es en este espacio donde habita más de un tercio de su población. Por esta razón nuestro país tiene entre sus prioridades el desarrollo sostenible de las montañas y como miembro de la Alianza para las Montañas asume la responsabilidad de promover e impulsar iniciativas concretas en todos los niveles para abordar las amenazas, la mejora de la calidad de vida y mantener ecosistemas saludables en las regiones montañosas del mundo.

Por todos sus servicios ecosistémicos, las montañas enfrentan importantes desafíos por los efectos del cambio climático, la pérdida de la biodiversidad, la sobreexplotación y, en particular, en los países en vías de desarrollo, la prevalencia de altos índices de pobreza en las zonas rurales. Las comunidades y ecosistemas de montaña son particularmente sensibles a los impactos de la triple crisis planetaria, los componentes básicos, agua limpia, aire puro, un clima estable y predecibles se están viendo afectados a un ritmo más rápido que muchos otros hábitats terrestres amenazando el bienestar y la supervivencia de millones de personas en el mundo. No está de más recordar que los habitantes de las montañas se encuentran entre las poblaciones con mayor inseguridad alimentaria del mundo.

En diciembre de 2022 con el apoyo de 110 gobiernos, la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas (UNGA) adoptó la resolución *A/RES/77/172* y proclamó el período 2023-2027 como el Quinquenio de Acción para el Desarrollo Sostenible en las Regiones Montañosas, por lo que consideramos que la FAO tienen un rol preponderante en su implementación y, por lo tanto, consideramos que debe liderar la elaboración de un plan de acción mundial para contribuir a la mejora de la producción agraria, el uso y conservación de los recursos naturales y contribuir al bienestar de las comunidades de montaña.

Ms Yuriko FUKAUCHI (Japan)

Japan welcomes this initiative. Japan also aligns with the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by the Philippines.

Ms Praiya SAVETJINDA (Thailand)

Thailand aligns itself with the statement of the Asia Regional Group delivered by the Philippines and takes note of the informative document prepared by the Secretariat *CL 174/INF/8*.

In Thailand, highlands and mountains represent nearly 17 percent of our territory with around 1 million people living in those areas, and most of them are small-scale farmers and family farmers. Therefore, the highland environment plays a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, which is essential for ensuring food security and nutrition. However, the unique geographical setup of highland areas presents complex challenges, including poverty, limited access to public services, and the degradation of natural resources.

To respond to these challenges, since 1969, Thailand has implemented a long-standing national policy on sustainable highland development, working in collaboration with various government agencies, private entities and international organizations.

Thailand's strategy is fully aligned with the four pathways and the five action areas of the global framework for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027.

In this regard, we support the implementation of this action plan to ensure food security and transform food systems to be nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient, economically viable and locally adapted. We also look forward to collaboratively working in sharing inputs and experiences with Members.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

India aligns itself with the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Regional Group on this important Agenda Item. India recognizes the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027 as a critical initiative for sustainable mountain development.

While appreciating the global framework's objectives, India would like to emphasize that the Himalayan region, being home to a significant portion of biodiverse and indigenous communities, faces unique challenges. We stress the need for equitable representation and consideration of the Himalayan region's specific environmental and socioeconomic dynamics.

We propose the inclusion of targeted programmes addressing the vulnerabilities of these mountain ecosystems, including climate change impacts and sustainable livelihoods. India is committed to contributing towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through mountain development. We emphasize the need for specific strategies to address SDG 15, Life on Land, considering the Himalayan region and its significance to India's ecological and cultural heritage.

India acknowledges the importance of technology and innovation in sustainable mountain development. However, we urge for technology solutions that are accessible and beneficial to smallholder farmers and indigenous communities in mountain regions, promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

India values the collaboration between FAO and other United Nations (UN) agencies in mountain development. We highlight the necessity for more robust support mechanisms to address the needs of developing countries with significant mountainous regions, especially in capacity building, technology transfer, and sustainable agriculture practices.

India supports the initiative's focus on empowering local communities, particularly women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples. We advocate for more inclusive policies that recognize and integrate the traditional knowledge and practices of diverse mountain communities in developmental plans.

India seeks to address methodological issues in the implementation of the initiative, particularly those affecting the representation of the diverse ecological and cultural landscapes of India's mountain regions. We propose a review of the methodologies and implemented strategies to better reflect the realities of mountain development in India.

With these remarks, India supports the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Region 2023-2027.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I turn to the Observers.

Ms Veronica TARAN BACIU GEORGESCU (Romania) (Observer)

[XX] a positive long-term impact, building a more equitable and resilient global future in line with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FAO plays a fundamental role in advancing the common agenda for the sustainable development of mountain regions. The Organization provides an essential platform for coordination and cooperation among Members, facilitating the exchange of expertise, best practices, and resources. FAO becomes a crucial catalyst in achieving UN objectives for sustainable development, establishing itself as a reliable partner in shaping a sustainable future for mountain areas worldwide.

In Romania, we have a specific legislation for the development of the mountain area. We have the Mountain Law that establishes the general development priorities, based on which support programmes are created to finance the mountain area separately.

We firmly believe that in order to discuss about developed mountain area in the next five years, we must act in the following directions: multi-generational communities performances, mountain area connectivity, green economy based on territorial specifics, respect for nature, empowering mountain communities, and FAO's key role.

We are committed to actively contributing to activities aimed at improving the quality of life for mountain residents and environmental protection, and Romania firmly expresses its commitment to support initiatives initiated at the FAO level.

Considering our legislation and experience in this field, Romania has all the advantages to become a significant partner in identifying and implementing innovative solutions for the specific issues of mountain regions. By supporting FAO's initiatives, our country reaffirms its active role in the international community, aiming to disseminate and expand nationally acquired experiences, significantly contributing to the achievement of global goals for sustainable development in mountainous areas.

In conclusion, we strongly encourage FAO to seriously and decisively consider these issues, understanding that the development of mountain regions is not only a necessity but also an opportunity for a better and more equitable future.

Mr Nuno MANANA (Portugal)

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by Spain on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

We would like to join also our voice to Ecuador, Italy and all other distinguished representatives here today that highlighted the challenges of mountain regions.

Mountain regions, by nature, are ecosystems facing significant natural constraints that experience specific conditions making farming more challenging or difficult.

In this regard, we commend FAO for leading the sustainable mountain development issues within the United Nations system, for hosting the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, and for being the main contributor for the triennial report of the UN Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development.

To conclude, we look forward to the development of the Global Framework for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

Ms Ekaterina VYBORNOVA (Russian Federation) (Observer) (Original language Russian)

The Russian Federation supports the active involvement of FAO in work to implement the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions. We would particularly like to thank the Government of Kyrgyzstan for how proactively and energetically it has advocated this topic, including at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

We would particularly like to underscore the unifying spirit of this initiative, which has brought together dozens of countries across all continents. Mountains and mountain systems account for some 30 percent of the Russian Federation's territory, which is the largest in the world in terms of territory.

We have long and successfully carried out monitoring the state of mountain systems, along with research in our country, considering that mountains represent the home and livelihood of a significant quantity of Russia's population, including Indigenous Peoples, and also taking into account that they ensure and provide 80 percent of freshwater and they participate in supporting biodiversity, preserving the climate balance and so on, Russia is implementing a set of measures to preserve mountains in the country.

I would particularly like to draw attention of delegations to the outcome document in the Joint 81st Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Committee on Forests and Forests Industry (COFFI), and the 42nd Session of the European Forestry Committee (EFC) of FAO which took place in San Marino at the end of November.

On our initiative there, a message was sent to the FAO to increase its participation in implementing the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions, which was declared at the UN General Assembly based on an initiative by Kyrgyzstan. We call on other delegations in the future not to hold back but rather to share information more widely about their plans to promote the Five Years of Action of the FAO so that they can duly support this important initiative.

Mr Nuriddin KUSHNAZAROV (Uzbekistan) (Observer)

Uzbekistan is fully in line with the Asia Regional Group statement delivered by the Philippines. We commend the utmost efforts of mountain countries and leadership of the Kyrgyz Republic in promoting the sustainable development of mountain ecosystems in the world.

Mountains and foothills make up about 20 percent of Uzbekistan's territory. Their biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as provision of food and water, are important to millions of people. We support the initiatives of the Kyrgyz Republic and other mountain countries to implement the Five Years Action for the Development of Mountain Regions, to address the challenges countries are facing.

We stand ready to work together with FAO and Members to promote sustainable mountain development in the world. We also strongly encourage FAO to take concrete action to implement the Five Years of Action for the development of this programme.

Mr Taalai BAZARBAEV (Kyrgyzstan) (Observer)

I would like to thank the delegation of Italy and other mountain countries who initiated the process of including the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions in the Agenda of the 174th Session of the FAO Council.

I want to underline that the Kyrgyz Republic has been consistently and actively working on promoting the issue of mountains within all possible international platforms with the aim to attract the attention of the world community to mountain issues. Today, the mountain agenda is one of the key lines of our country's foreign policy.

I want to emphasize that the mountain issue is under the direct control of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. He is raising this important issue on all international platforms, such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP).

The Kyrgyz Republic is taking consistent steps within the framework of the United Nations to gradually build up the global agenda in the field of sustainable mountain development. The sustainable mountain development Resolution initiated by the governments of Italy and the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2022, and was co-sponsored by 110 UN Member States.

I want one more time to thank all our partners who had supported and co-sponsored this important Resolution. We sincerely believe that our initiatives and joint activities will contribute to raising not only the ecological but also the economic and social levels of development of mountain countries.

I want to thank the Director-General of FAO, Dr QU Dongyu, and his team for permanent support of the mountain agenda. Taking into account that paragraph 36 of the adopted UNGA Resolution on

sustainable mountain development invites Member States and relevant UN Agencies within their mandates to further enhance support to sustainable development.

We strongly believe that FAO, as the lead UN Agency for mountains, having a clear mandate to develop mountains' agenda, will play a key role in the implementations of this important initiative.

Therefore, we would like to take the opportunity to encourage International Organizations of the UN system, especially FAO, to take concrete action to promote the design of sustainable policies and practices in mountainous regions.

CHAIRPERSON

With this, we have concluded our list of speakers. I now turn the floor to the Director of the Forestry Division (NFO), Mr Zhimin Wu, whether or not he wants to make some brief remarks.

Mr Zhimin WU (Director, Forestry Division)

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the FAO Members for their strong support and clear guidance on this very important topic. We very much appreciate the leadership of Kyrgyz Republic and Italy on this issue. Mountains are our origin and the solution to many of our global problems. I can clearly see that there is a general consensus in this Council on the importance of mountains and on the urgency to address the challenges facing the mountain ecosystems.

As a custodian of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 15.4.2, we have been closely following the monitoring and assessment of mountain ecosystems, especially including those two important indicators on mountain green cover, which is 78 percent, and also the rate of degradation, which is 1.6 percent, which shows that we have been doing a good job, but there is still room for improvements.

FAO will continue to build on this momentum for the global mountain agenda, develop and implement this action plan, and support Members to promote sustainable mountain development for people and nature.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, we turn now to the draft conclusions on this Agenda Item – the Agenda Item 19, *Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions*.

The Council took note of the information contained in *CL 174/INF/8* and in particular:

- a) noted the Global Framework for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions 2023-2027;
- b) welcomed the lead role of FAO as the main agency for sustainable mountains development within the United Nations (UN) system;
- c) recommended FAO to support Members, subject to available extra-budgetary resources, with tools, methodologies and capacity development initiatives to strengthen their capacity to scale up sustainable mountain development with specific reference to the Five Years of Action; and
- d) encouraged FAO to support Members in raising awareness on the challenges and problems of mountain countries and enhancing global efforts to address them.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

We go to subparagraph (b). Can we agree to subparagraph (b)?

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I think that this is definitely Italy's intention, but I heard also from other FAO Members that it is not only to welcome the leading role of FAO that definitely is there, but to ask FAO to take action and draft an action plan for the Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

Therefore, we think that “*welcomed*” does not really respond to the original intention.

CHAIRPERSON

Do you have a concrete text suggestion for this subparagraph? Because that is the most effective way to continue.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

Yes. I think we should say “*the Council recognized.*” I think we can say that we took note of the information, that we noted the global framework, so this is fine, but then in subparagraph (b), we might say that the Council recognized the leading role. Sorry, “*recognized and reaffirmed the leading role of FAO as main agency*”, and the rest can be the same.

Then I would also have a suggestion for subparagraph (c), but I leave it there for the moment.

Sr. Gustavo Eduardo MOSTAJO OCOLA (Perú)

En este punto y conforme hemos podido escuchar de varios de los Miembros, yo sugeriría agregar ahí después de *Sistema de Naciones Unidas*, “*y encomendó liderar la elaboración de un plan de acción mundial*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the changes in subparagraph (b)?

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I would like to say I support Peru's proposal so much that I would have a separate subparagraph for this. So, I would go down to a new subparagraph (c) “*and call for the development of a global action plan*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we now agree to subparagraph(b) and subparagraph (c)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to paragraph subparagraph (d).

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I suggest that “*extra-budgetary*” should be deleted.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to this? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e).

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Earlier in the week, we had a discussion about a proposal for Australia for FAO to strengthen its work in data collection and analysis for the regions and sub-regions, which was made subject to extra-budgetary resources, as a number of Members expressed concerns about the impact on the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), and I think for consistency we should maintain “*extra-budgetary*” here.

CHAIRPERSON

Listening to the reasoning for it to be consistent, and indeed, there we agreed exactly to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, could we maintain “*extra-budgetary*” here?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I think by limiting to extra-budgetary, we are narrowing down the resources. That is what my worry is. I would suggest “*subject to available resources, especially extra-budgetary*”.

CHAIRPERSON

My concern is then we open another part of the decisions, because we had the discussion. At this moment we cannot, unless we put it to the next Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) in the future, we cannot now take a decision on making regular budgets available.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

In that case, we are flexible. We agree to retain “*extra-budgetary*”.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We support that maintaining of “*extra-budgetary*”.

Just for subparagraph (e), right now it is only framed in the negative, “*challenges and problems of mountain countries*”, and we would propose: “*challenges, problems and opportunities of mountain countries.*”

Mr Guillermo Adolfo SPIKA (Argentina)

On subparagraph (d), we support to keep the extra-budgetary resources, but it reads funny because it says: “*capacity development initiatives to strengthen the capacity to scale up sustainable mountain development*”. Could we not say: “*capacity building activities to strengthen the capacity to scale up sustainable mountain development initiatives*” then we bracket “*development initiatives to strengthen the capacity to scale up sustainable mountain development initiatives*”, something like that. But I am flexible.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I will offer some background on this paragraph. The idea is that, at least to develop the action plan, as we said, no resources are required. Then of course mountains are within the FAO mandate, and so the regular budget can be used for that, but here we are asking FAO to develop a global action plan. No resources are attached to the development itself of the plan.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we could stay with the text as it is now on the screen. Can we agree to this? Then I think we adopted subparagraph (e).

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I would like to add one other subparagraph, the last one, so it will be a new subparagraph (f).

CHAIRPERSON

We have to finish, also for interpretation’s sake. Ideally then put it after subparagraph (d).

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

I would suggest “*The Council looked forward to future updates on the progress on the Five Year Action Plan in sessions of the FAO Governing Bodies.*”

CHAIRPERSON

“*To be considered*” I would say “*in future sessions*”. Thank you.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

A minor edit on subparagraph (e). Change “*countries*” to “*regions*” to be consistent.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to subparagraph (e) now with the latest insertion?

Can we agree to subparagraph (f)?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

The first “*future*” may not be required because we are dealing with the “*future sessions*”.

Ms Ronit KIRSHNER-GERARD (United States of America)

Just a point of clarification on subparagraph (c). It seems more appropriate that the Global Action Plan should be developed by the task force that was created in April 2023 rather than FAO, given that I am not quite sure I understand why a development of a Global Action Plan would not have implications on the budget. If there is a task force that was created, perhaps that is where the Global Action Plan should be developed.

CHAIRPERSON

But do you have a concrete text suggestion?

Ms Ronit KIRSHNER-GERARD (United States of America)

I would like clarification from Italy.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

My understanding is that the task force that was mentioned by my colleague of the United States of America existed but has fulfilled already its mandate by developing the global framework, so it does not actually exist anymore. In our idea, it should be up to FAO to decide how to move forward and who is involved in the drafting procedure of the global action plan.

Regarding the financial neutrality, the development of the plan does not require funds itself, other than the time and dedication of those who already are in charge of forestry and mountains in the Mountain Partnership. Whenever the action plan will, and probably it will, require action to be taken and projects to be developed, then those might be funded in the future through the MUL already existing in the Mountain Partnership, that belongs to FAO and where usually the contributions are voluntary. This is Italy's understanding so far.

CHAIRPERSON

With that, I think there is an agreement to maintain subparagraph (c).

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Just to be clear, a global action plan on what? If whoever knows something about that, can just give a proper title of what it is, a global action plan on mountain development, no issue with it, but just want to know what, a bit of a tighter title please.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

The appropriate title has been given by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution that was adopted on 14 December 2022. It is the “*Global Action Plan on Mountain Regions Development 2023-2027*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Do we have now an agreement on the text? I see no request for the floor anymore, so with that, we have concluded this Agenda Item, and we have concluded for today.

Where we are now it would be feasible to finalize our work tomorrow morning on all the conclusions, because tomorrow morning we go into with the Written Correspondence Procedure and *Any other matters*.

I thank you so much for your hard work today, for your flexibility, your hard work, getting consensus on many Agenda Items now.

We see each other tomorrow 09:30 hours sharp. Meeting adjourned.

The meeting rose at 20:29 hours

La séance est levée à 20 h 29

Se levanta la sesión a las 20.29

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session Cent soixante-quatorzième session 174.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2023 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023
NINTH PLENARY SESSION NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE NOVENA SESIÓN PLENARIA
8 December 2023

The Ninth Plenary Meeting was opened at 09:37 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La neuvième séance plénière est ouverte à 09 h 37
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la novena sesión plenaria a las 09.37
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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Item 7. Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative**Point 7. Informations actualisées sur l'Initiative Main dans la main****Tema 7. Información actualizada sobre la Iniciativa Mano de la mano
(CL 174/INF/6)****CHAIRPERSON**

Good morning, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, it is Friday of the Council, hopefully our last day. This morning we will go through the Written Correspondence Procedure and *Any other matters*.

I hope that with your cooperation we can finish early this morning, because then we can go to the Drafting Committee and then to the Adoption of the Report, hopefully, at the end of this afternoon.

We go now to the Written Correspondence Procedure. You know the Written Correspondence Procedure we have sent you in advance the elements. Management have reacted to your queries and we now go straight to the Draft Conclusions.

We begin with Item 7, *Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, and the document which was in front of this Item is CL 174/INF/6.

The introduction by the Chief Economist, Mr Máximo Torero Cullen was already circulated.

Introduction to Item 7: Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Mr Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist

The FAO Director-General launched the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2019, and invited FAO Members that met the defined criteria to participate in the Initiative. Members primarily are from Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), or Food Crisis Countries (as defined by the Global Network Against Food Crises), and countries with large poor populations.

To date, 66 countries have joined and expressed their desire to participate.

The HIH Initiative in addition to technical and policy assistance support, offers an innovative Geospatial Platform for data and information exchange and analysis. Under the HIH Initiative, the national counterparts are supported by FAO technical task teams to apply innovative analytical methods that help identify territories and populations in participating countries where programmes and strategic investments can unlock market-oriented opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth which have the real potential to eradicate poverty and hunger and reduce inequality.

FAO was recently identified by the UN Deputy Secretary-General as the lead agency for the High Impact Initiative on Food Systems Transformation and has identified HIH as one of the means of implementation for delivering this ambitious agenda and for further encouraging scalable and targeted investments in agrifood systems.

A major milestone for this Initiative in 2023 was the second Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum (HIH IF 2023) that was held from 17 to 20 October 2023, during the World Food Forum at FAO headquarters.

Compared to 2022, there was an increased interest from a number of investors and private sector entities in the HIH IF 2023, including international financial institutions, regional banks, investment and impact funds and the private sector. Thirty-one countries and two regional initiatives (Sahel and Dry Corridor) participated at the IF 2023 and presented their Investment Plans. A special event on Haiti was also held. More than 400 matchmaking sessions were organized, with USD 16.5 billion investment needs identified for 149 million beneficiaries and presented by the countries.

Regarding the content of the country-level investment plans, based on feedback received from partners who attended the HIH Investment Forum in 2022, each participating country was also encouraged to use the FAO EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) for the formulation of the investment notes.

EX-ACT provides its users with a consistent way of estimating and tracking the outcomes of agricultural interventions on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

The upgrading of HIH programming dashboard has also continued, with data from HIH countries made available and directly linked to the ongoing monitoring of progress made in mobilization of identified investments, as reported by the countries. Improvements have been made to partially automatize data collection globally using google data sheets which has proven to be effective.

The dashboard provides regular, real-time reporting of progress against programme activities and processes. It now also provides key monitoring results, such as the case of Ecuador with USD 244 million in government planned investments; Bangladesh USD 543 million from the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); Peru USD 209 million; Guatemala USD 74 million; Nicaragua USD 28 million for government prioritized value chain investments; Zimbabwe USD 20 million for agrifood value chains; Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) USD 55 million from combined private sector and regional development banks; Solomon Islands USD 3 million from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and IFAD financing, in addition to financing for the Dry Corridor Initiative of USD 13 million from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on soil mapping, among others.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Tuesday 14 November 2023, 14:49

The United States thanks FAO for the update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. We appreciate FAO's responsiveness to Member State comments on this initiative, including increased transparency through regular updates, the communication strategy, and efforts to improve to the HIH dashboard. The United States supports evidence-based, data-driven decision making and appreciates FAO efforts to bring data to the forefront of FAO and policymakers' decisions.

We support FAO efforts to expand the donor base for HIH. We are interested to hear more from donors, international financial institutions, regional banks, investment and impact funds, the private sector, as well as beneficiaries regarding the value they find in the HIH Initiative. We encourage FAO to include this information in the dashboard and in other fora, as appropriate.

Concerning the HIH dashboard, we appreciate FAO's efforts to improve the user experience based on ongoing feedback; however, we note that it is taking longer than expected to modernize the information, technology, and the monitoring processes and that the status quo does not meet the objectives of the dashboard to provide regular, real-time reporting of progress against programme milestones and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) objectives. Given the growing interest from countries to participate in HIH, the United States would like to better understand the metrics FAO is using to demonstrate HIH's value and progress. The metrics are critical to understanding whether this approach continues to support countries on their pathways to meeting the SDGs. We would also like the dashboard to provide information on investments made through HIH to provide a real-time picture of the value of the initiative's matchmaking function.

COSTA RICA

Presentado el martes 14 de noviembre 2023 a las 17.46

Costa Rica agradece la información suministrada en el documento CL/174/NF/6 sobre la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano y apreciamos que el número de países que se van sumando va siempre en aumento. Apreciamos también que la iniciativa ahora se haya abierto a todos los países para lograr medidas concretas para la transformación de sistemas alimentarios. Apoyamos las medidas, programas o iniciativas que promuevan una verdadera erradicación de la pobreza, que reduzcan la desigualdad y que permitan una verdadera inclusión a escala social a través de oportunidades concretas que alcancen poblaciones vulnerables. De esta manera, valoramos que la Iniciativa Mano de la Mano esté dentro de las 12 iniciativas elegidas por la Vicesecretaria General de las Naciones Unidas.

En lo que respecta la Iniciativa Regional de Corredor Seco Centroamericano, agradecemos el apoyo del gobierno de Brasil, ya que sin duda ese aporte será de gran ayuda para las poblaciones que ante fenómenos climáticos adversos que afectan nuestra región, tendrían un impacto negativo en lo que a seguridad alimentaria se refiere, entre otras muchas consecuencias ambientales, sociales y económicas.

Costa Rica, como parte de la Iniciativa Regional del Corredor Seco seguirá trabajando con los otros países involucrados, así como con las Secretarías y Consejos de SICA que lideran el proceso. Apoyamos las negociaciones en marcha con Banco Centroamericano de Integración Económica (BCIE) y con el Fondo Verde para el Clima (CVF) para continuar la iniciativa.

Solicitamos a la FAO que continúe la cooperación técnica de esta Iniciativa y que brinde apoyo a todos los países que lo requieran, indistintamente de los parámetros de renta utilizados por el organismo.

COLOMBIA

Presentado el miércoles 15 de noviembre 2023 a las 16.05

Colombia agradece a la FAO la presentación de este reporte con información actualizada acerca de la iniciativa Mano de la mano, a la cual recientemente adherimos. Se participó por primera vez en el Foro de Inversión de la Iniciativa Mano de la mano en octubre de este año. Vemos con agrado que son cada vez más los países que se han sumado a esta iniciativa, demostrando así la importancia de una mayor ambición en las inversiones y medidas para la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios, el desarrollo rural y la garantía del Derecho Humano a la Alimentación.

En Colombia, la iniciativa Mano de la mano apoya el desarrollo sostenible de la cadena de valor láctea en los territorios más vulnerables del Suroccidente del país, particularmente en el Cauca y Putumayo, dos departamentos prioritarios con alto potencial ganadero y que albergan comunidades indígenas, siendo lugares propicios para la implementación del programa reconociendo la importancia cultural y social de estos pueblos.

Colombia avanza en la reconversión productiva del sector lácteo en Colombia, y busca; llevar al sector productivo lechero a niveles y estándares de los grandes productores en la región, generar apuestas productivas que agreguen valor y mejoren la competitividad del sector, incrementar la tasa exportadora neta y fortalecer la productividad de las familias campesinas. Destacamos que la Iniciativa Mano de la mano ofrece una forma innovadora de fortalecer los programas nacionales de transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Colombia es el cuarto productor de leche en América Latina después de Brasil, Argentina y México; además, el subsector tiene gran importancia para la economía nacional, representando el 36,7 % del PIB pecuario y 700.000 empleos directos. Por lo tanto, la Iniciativa Mano de la mano es una herramienta muy valiosa para acelerar la transformación de este sector, así como la erradicación de la pobreza y el fin del hambre y la malnutrición en el país.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 16:39

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. The EU and its Member States take note of the latest progress report on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. The Hand-in-Hand initiative complements the core activities of the Organization, and we would like to recall the continued importance of ensuring the coherence of the Initiative with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the joint programming of the UN development system and the 2030 Agenda. To achieve this, we encourage FAO to continue to closely coordinate its work on the Initiative with other relevant UN agencies and development partners, in line with its mandate.

We acknowledge with satisfaction the information on the growth in membership and new partnerships and initiatives focused on developing and transforming food systems in adherent countries. We also welcome the development of the tools associated with Hand-in-Hand, particularly its geospatial platform, looking forward to further developments that can improve the availability of detailed data for each region, country and initiative.

We would like to recall the importance of the alignment of the initiative's private funding with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment and FAO's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025. In addition, continued attention should be given to ensuring that the Initiative has no further impact on the regular FAO budget as approved and outlined in the 2024-25 Work Programme and Budget.

Finally, we thank FAO for providing information on the Initiative, as a further means of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within FAO's mandate, and we ask that FAO continue to provide regular updates to the FAO Council on the progress made in implementing the Initiative and the results achieved. Particularly, we look forward to getting more information on the outcomes of the 2023 Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum (17-20 October 2023, Rome).

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 16 November 2023, 13:58

Australia appreciates the update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. We note the growth in the number of countries participating in the HIH Initiative and encourage FAO to continue to identify and maximise potential partnerships and investment opportunities, particularly in the Southwest Pacific region.

We observe that FAO is planning further support, in collaboration with the FAO Subregional and Regional Offices, for Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to develop human capital and maximise the use and application of HIH Geospatial Platform and tools. We would appreciate further information on these plans as and when they become available.

We note the increased investment interest in the HIH initiatives, and particularly the strong attendance at the HIH Investment Forum in October. We appreciate the efforts made to bring Members to the Forum to present their Investment Plans. We note, however, that adequate support must be provided to delegations without a permanent mission in Rome to allow them to maximise the opportunities for engagements.

We recognise the ongoing rollout of the HIH communication strategy, and we emphasise the value in regular engagement and coordination with existing development and resource partners in-country to help maximise synergies and prevent duplication and/or misalignment of objectives across programmes and investments. With this in mind, we note recent efforts to engage with other initiatives and corporate efforts across FAO, and would appreciate further detail of such collaborations.

We encourage the ongoing development and upgrading of the monitoring and evaluation dashboard including implementation of developments to improve user experience. We continue to request the inclusion of the monitoring and evaluation elements in the dashboard so that information on evaluation processes and outcomes are accessible to allow users to understand and assess the impact of the initiative.

CHILE

Presentado el miércoles 22 de noviembre 2023 a las 15.50

Chile agradece la información actualizada relativa a la iniciativa Mano de la mano (IMM), en particular comparte el interés mundial y las oportunidades que esta representa para visibilizar espacios que permitan inversiones concretas que favorezcan la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios.

Sobre el particular deseamos señalar que a nivel nacional y en conjunto con la oficina de FAO Chile se está avanzando en conversaciones que permitan a nuestro país incorporarse a la Iniciativa en calidad de beneficiario, a fin de acelerar la transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios a nivel nacional, en pro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

A través de FAO Chile, se buscará el apoyo técnico para desarrollar así en conjunto a la Oficina de Estudios y Políticas Agrarias, ODEPA, un proyecto piloto en Chile de la iniciativa mano a mano, en su segunda versión. Por otra parte, existe un compromiso de movilizar recursos humanos y financieros para el apoyo del piloto. Se definirá la pertinencia, el monto y uso/finalidad de los recursos.

Response from Secretariat

Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

FAO appreciates the United States of America's acknowledgement of transparency and regular updates on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative, which are regularly provided to Members. We recognize that the current HIH Dashboard has been limited, and the Organization is trying to expand its scope and functionality to include commitments, progress and ongoing negotiations on investments. Within the available limited resources, we are working on an upgraded version of the Dashboard.

FAO appreciates the positive feedback from Costa Rica, and the Organization will continue providing support to all Members based on their needs and demands. FAO will continue to support Members with a range of innovative platform, tools and approaches of Hand-in-Hand, including both at national and also at regional Initiative level such as for the Dry Corridor, in which Costa Rica is participating. FAO is pleased to note the high-level ownership of the Central American Integration System (SICA) Secretariats and Councils leading the process.

FAO welcomes the positive feedback from Colombia on the support provided by the HIH Initiative with focus on further development of the dairy value chain, and particularly highlighting, "The Hand-in-Hand Initiative is therefore a very valuable tool for speeding up the transformation of this sector, as well as for eradicating poverty and ending hunger and malnutrition in the country." We also note the specific interest of Colombia in engaging investments under the HIH and will continue to support engagements on investments for Colombia through the online Matchmaking App, which is now open all year round.

FAO appreciates the positive feedback provided by the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States, takes note of the acknowledgement of the ongoing interest in HIH from Members as reflected in the increased membership. HIH now has 68 Members with Mongolia, which joined in November 2023. Regarding ensuring coherence with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), at country level and through the FAO Representative on the ground, closer coordination with the relevant UN agencies and alignment with a joint country programming are pursued.

FAO takes note of the European Union's acknowledgement of the need to further develop HIH data and tools for HIH Members. This is an area where engagement by FAO with EU data sources and standards is being explored (e.g. from the European Space Agency and possibly the Joint Research Centre). Further collaboration and support on improved data and mapping with these leading EU Institutions would be welcome.

To support the government-owned and -led approach of HIH, FAO has included the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment as one of the key references for the HIH Investment Forum. FAO will continue to provide regular updates on HIH to FAO Council as advised, including on the reporting of ongoing negotiations and commitments related to the HIH Investment Forum through the HIH Dashboard, which is being upgraded.

FAO appreciates the positive feedback and recent engagement of Australia at the HIH Investment Forum 2023. FAO is planning a subregional training on HIH Geospatial Platform in the first quarter of 2023 for the Pacific Islands (provisionally planned in Fiji), and the support of Australia for this planned capacity development efforts would be appreciated.

The Hand-in-Hand team continues its engagement and corporate efforts across a number of related Programme Priority Areas (PPAs), including on Scaling up investment and also on Reducing food loss and waste – often mentioned in the investment plans of the HIH Members when presented at the HIH Investment Forum in Rome. This includes support to the Subregional and Regional Offices in utilizing data sources and investments identified under HIH when preparing for climate financing for large investment programmes such as for the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Fund, which are of growing importance for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) governments.

FAO takes note of Australia's suggestion to enhance the HIH Dashboard and, within the available resources, is working to improve the user experience, as well as enhance the visibility of HIH outcomes.

FAO appreciates the positive feedback from the Government of Chile on HIH and the interest and recognition of the opportunities that HIH offers for Member governments to highlight agrifood investments for the transformation of agrifood systems for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

FAO welcomes the interest of the Government of Chile to use the HIH approach, tools and processes in its efforts in close consultation with the national Office of Agricultural Studies and Policies. FAO looks forward to taking this cooperation forward, possibly through a pilot project on Hand-in-Hand in the country, to be developed with the Government, in close consultation with the FAO Representation in Santiago, Chile.

CHAIRPERSON

Now I will read out the draft conclusions and then we take them up one by one.

20. The Council welcomed document *CL 174/INF/6, Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*, and in particular:

- (a) recognized the continued growth in the number of member countries participating in the Initiative, with 67 countries signed up by November 2023;
- (b) appreciated the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) technical support to Members on the design, planning and analysis for increased and targeted investments to accelerate the agrifood systems transformation, in support of SDGs 1, 2 and 10;
- (c) welcomed the ongoing efforts by the HIH Initiative to support Members to include climate actions (e.g. increased use of ExACT) in their investment plans for enhancing engagements with a wider range of investor;
- (d) welcomed the reported engagements of the HIH across all *four betters* and in a range of PPAs such as on Investment and Food Loss and Waste as few examples; and
- (e) noted the increase in demand from member countries for the HIH's support, and the positive feedback from Members on the Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum, welcomed increased support to the HIH Initiative.

Can we agree to the chapeau? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

The wording "*recognized the continued*," can we change "*recognized*" by "*appreciated*"?

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to "*appreciated*"? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (e).

Sr. Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (España)

Consideramos que debería haber alguna referencia a la financiación de la iniciativa Mano de la Mano. En este sentido, proponemos al final del subpárrafo (e) añadir la siguiente frase. Y leo en inglés.

CHAIRPERSON

"Emphasizing the need that funding for the Initiative and the Investment Forum does not further impact the regular approved FAO budget."

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Mine is actually a request for an additional subparagraph between (d) and (e).

The language is “*encouraged the ongoing development of the Hand-in-Hand Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard.*”

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We actually appreciate the introduction from Australia because we had a similar subparagraph that we were going to offer. So, we can go along with that, perhaps with the inclusion “*and further reporting on impact assessments of the Initiative.*”

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je voulais intervenir sur le (f), par rapport à l'ajout de l'Espagne.

CHAIRPERSON

Cameroon, let me first see. Can we agree to subparagraph (e). I do not see any objections.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I said I had something on subparagraph (f) but the insertion of Canada now. I am not very comfortable with the word “*impact assessments.*” It is too early to have an impact assessment of an Initiative which is less than three years. The impact assessment is something which is done after. So, can we use another word? Canada is just suggesting something different. If he can help.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I take Cameroon’s point entirely, that perhaps impact assessment is too soon. So, “*outcomes*” is an earlier stage result. So, “*further reporting of outcomes of the Initiative.*” I think given this is such an important piece of work for the Organization, with lots of resources being leveraged, and we have seen really helpful reporting in the Report on resources going towards this, seeing what the outcomes are of those resources being applied is what we are looking for. So, we are happy with “*outcomes*”.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we now agree to the subparagraph as it is? I see nodding.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

Is “*outcome*” the appropriate word or “*results framework*”? Another paragraph somewhere you said, we do not use “*outcomes*”.

CHAIRPERSON

No, not a “*framework*”. “*Results*” is also another wording. So, is it okay if we use the word “*results*”?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We cannot use that, Chairperson, because we have already “*Dashboard.*”

CHAIRPERSON

My proposal was to only use “*results*” instead of “*outcomes*”, not “*framework.*”

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Okay, yes.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I do not quite understand the last sentence in subparagraph (f).

CHAIRPERSON

We will go to subparagraph (f) in a moment. First, we have to finalize (e).

So, can we agree now to (e) if we use the word “*results*” instead of “*outcomes*”? I do not see any objection.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I think in the hierarchy of results, we think “*outcomes*” is a clearer statement, to be honest, because you have activities, outputs, outcomes and then overall impact. So, I think in that hierarchy we do believe that “*outcomes*” is more precise than “*results*” in globing all of that and given Cameroon’s point on the sequence of where we are at, we would be more comfortable with “*outcomes*”, if India was flexible on that and then if it meant consensus within the room. If not, we can generalize to “*results*”.

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

I would propose that we add “*further reporting on progress and impact on the Initiative.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Now we have three elements – “*impact, outcome, results*”.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

No, Chairperson, this addition by Kenya. I thought she was behind us, the issue of “*impact*”. So, we have addressed that. That was the first proposal of Canada because we said we cannot measure impact for an initiative which is just starting. So, it is too soon to talk of impact. So, I believe that “*outcome*”, in the hierarchy, as Canada mentioned, is the best wording here. Because we can measure the outcome as we are implementing it. The impact can be measured later on.

CHAIRPERSON

I can see my list of speakers growing. Is there flexibility in the room to go along with “*reporting on outcomes of the Initiative*”? Because I think that captures most of the thinking and thoughts/hierarchy. Is that agreeable to the room?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

In my understanding, when you talk of result, it captures outputs plus outcomes. Now, outcomes is much bigger. It is broader compared to outputs. When you talk about Result Dashboard, first you will see the output. There are certain indicators on which the outputs are there. From the outputs we will have broader outcomes.

Is it not too early to see the outcomes? That is what my concern was. I am also flexible if “*outcomes*” is agreeable to all Members. We can put it there. But the best should have been the “*outputs*”, that is all, at this stage. In any case, I am flexible to that. But “*impact*” I think is no more required here because we already discussed this.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

I have maybe a solution. My understanding of an evaluation, it encompasses all those words. Because it is already a mechanism. You have a Monitoring and Evaluation Dashboard, so that includes the progress, the impact, the outcome, the results. So, my suggestion would be, “*and further reporting on updates of the Initiative.*” Finished. Because all those, the progress, impact and outcomes will be in the Evaluation Dashboard.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I think a simple solution is to remove all of the additions and change it to “*Dashboard and further reporting on progress*”, taking out “*impact*”, “*outcomes*”, simply because progress is ongoing and there is no definitive lines in using. So, I think “*progress*” would fix the problem.

CHAIRPERSON

The latest proposal would be, “*and further reporting on progress.*” Is it fine?

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

We support Bahamas words. “*Progress*” is good enough here.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we go along with “*further reporting on progress*”?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Do not love it because I think it is a little bit distinct from having the result. Progress can be the process as well. But we do not want to be here until too late today, so at this point we will go with “*progress*” and hopefully we will hear about the outcomes as well at that stage.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you all for your flexibility. So, we have “*reporting on progress*”. Then we go to subparagraph (f).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I was not very comfortable with the last part of the sentence and I believe also Pakistan will join me. “*Emphasizing the need that the funding for the Initiative and the Investment Forum does not further*”, I do not know whether it was reported that it has already impacted regular approved FAO budget. I was not so certain that it went beyond what was approved. So, I am not very comfortable with this part of the sentence. If we can do away with it... If we cannot, then we can remove the word “*further*”.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense que, comme le Cameroun, nous nous demandons l'impact sur le budget ordinaire, alors que le budget que nous avons approuvé, l'initiative Main dans la Main est alignée et avec un financement de 505 et quelques milles, maintenant, je me demande s'il n'y a pas d'impact. Donc, ça veut dire que le budget que nous avons approuvé va rester en l'état et que cette ligne budgétaire ne sera pas utilisée. Je ne sais pas si l'Espagne peut nous expliquer ce qu'il en est. Parce que l'initiative est alignée dans le budget. Donc, s'il n'y a pas d'impact sur le budget, ça veut dire que ce financement-là ne sera pas utilisé ?

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

I feel there is a contradiction in subparagraph (f) that we should deal with. You cannot have increased demand and not further impact the budget. It is either we like or we do not like the Initiative. So, I have a difficulty on this addition from Spain, if we can develop the text a little bit better to give some margin for the administration to use money on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative since there is an increasing number of countries using it at the same time.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

We echo the comments made by Cameroon, Congo and also Brazil. There are some concerns for us. First of all, we do not think that any initiative can have impact on the approved FAO budget, the regular budget. Since it is already approved, so whatever the Management do should only adhere to the approved budget. So, we do not think that is necessary to indicate here.

Secondly, as the Brazil colleague mentioned, if you notice an increase in demand from Members, it is not that reasonable to the Council to say on the one hand we see there is an increase and on the other hand, we want to limit the resources allocated to it. Because it is obviously that this is developing countries that have a strong demand for this Hand-in-Hand Initiative but it is not the request from the same group of people, the countries that require it the limit of this resource.

Also, further, that we actually notice that this is a proposal that has been raised every time when the Hand-in-Hand Initiative is discussed, everyone says that we welcome this initiative and we see the increase in demand but always this kind of proposal to limit the resource emerged. So, we hope that we can address it here so we do not add any unnecessary limit on this. So, our proposal is to delete the last sentence of this subparagraph.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

In fact, the points I wanted to raise have already been raised by my colleagues, Cameroon, Congo, Brazil, China, so I will not repeat them again. I will just support the suggestion made by China that we should delete this last sentence. The Hand-in-Hand is a Programme Priority Area and this last sentence seems to be putting a limit on it.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

My comment goes very much in line with what Congo said earlier and with what Pakistan just said. Here I think there are two things in this part of the sentence. There is the Initiative and the Investment Forum. The Initiative, as we understand it, is an approved Programme Priority Area (PPA) within a Strategic Framework and so therefore does receive regular approved budget and that is going to go forward. So, it has an impact on the budget and we have agreed to that. So, I think the funding to the Initiative is already clear and will proceed.

I think the Investment Forum is a distinct piece that sits on top of that as a vehicle outwards for the PPA and, as we have understood it, the Investment Forum, as part of the World Food Forum, the World Food Forum, as we understand it is funded by voluntary contributions when the Food World Forum takes place. And so there, that seems to be fully funded from voluntary contributions. So, maybe we need to separate the two ideas but I think at this stage it does not work the way it is, as it stands, and perhaps on that clarification on where the Investment Forum funding comes from would be helpful for Management.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

La última frase no agrega al subpárrafo. Estábamos conformes hasta donde dice “iniciativa”. La iniciativa ha crecido respecto al año pasado, de un poco más de 50 países a 67, si no me equivoco, y entendemos que esta última frase, en realidad, no agrega mucho al subpárrafo original.

Sr. Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (España)

La idea detrás de esto era resaltar que no tuviese un impacto financiero más allá de lo ya aprobado, Sería, como ha dicho el colega de Canadá, sí que se reciben fondos voluntarios para la financiación del Investment Forum. Quizás podríamos, en una solución de consenso, utilizar lenguaje aprobado en el Consejo 172 que resalta que, “*there is an increased need for additional voluntary, technical and financial support*”, No estamos limitando la financiación, sino que simplemente señalamos que, puesto que cada vez más países, como bien han resaltado los Miembros del Consejo, participan y quieren participar de esta importante iniciativa, es necesario este apoyo voluntario técnico y financiero.

CHAIRPERSON

Could you repeat your proposal so we can put it on the screen?

Mr Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (Spain)

Borrar después de “*emphasizing*” y escribir, “*that there is an increased need for additional voluntary, technical and financial support*”.

Lo que es palabra por palabra lo incluido en el pasado Consejo 172. Correcto, así quedaría una propuesta escuchando y buscando un apoyo de los Miembros.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I raised the flag before Spain has provided this language. This looks appropriate but I can add a few words, if you permit. After the word “*Initiative*”, “*is within the regular approved FAO budget*”. That is what my idea was but I am flexible.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is the outcome of the Investment Forum. That is what we want to express here. So, the idea of regular or additional voluntary contributions, this is totally different because it is embedded in the FAO budget. So, I would suggest something different, if we can move that last section on another subparagraph, or before this final one, we move it to a new subparagraph, because this is a different idea.

I will suggest that we put after “*increased*”, “*welcomed increased partnerships in the form of investment opportunities to support the Hand-in-Hand Initiative*”. So, here we deal with the Hand-in-Hand Forum results. Then the next one, which concerns the FAO budget, can be treated in a different subparagraph, before this one.

CHAIRPERSON

Following your idea, my suggestion would be that we have after subparagraph (e) indeed a separate subparagraph stating, “*emphasized the need for additional voluntary, technical and financial support for the Initiative.*” And then we delete that part at the end, and we include what was suggested by Cameroon. Would that be a way out of this subparagraph? Can we agree to it as it is now? Thank you so much.

With that, we have concluded this Agenda Item and I think it is an incentive for the Chief Economist to continue this great Initiative.

Item 13. Update on FAO’s collaboration with other UN system entities

Point 13. Informations actualisées sur la collaboration entre la FAO et les autres entités du système des Nations Unies

Tema 13. Información actualizada sobre la colaboración de la FAO con otras entidades del sistema de las Naciones Unidas

(CL 174/12)

CHAIRPERSON

We now continue with Item 13, *Update on FAO’s collaboration with other UN system entities*. The relevant document is CL 174/12. The introduction by Ms Beth Bechdol, Deputy Director-General, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 13: Update on FAO’s collaboration with other UN system entities

Ms Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General

This report focuses on the collaborative efforts between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations (UN) system, including the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), to drive the transformation of agrifood systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report highlights key global, regional, and country level mechanisms and modalities guiding the Organization in the implementation of more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, as outlined in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31.

FAO’s partnerships with other UN agencies, funds and programmes have proven effective in consolidating expertise, devising innovative strategies, and mobilizing resources for transformative outcomes. These partnerships are built on shared strengths and a shared vision, enabling FAO to translate its aspiration of the *four betters* into tangible results. Within this context, the report underscores the critical role played by the RBAs in achieving FAO’s strategic objectives and the SDGs, in particular SDG 2, Zero Hunger. It then takes a broader perspective, offering insight into the significance of FAO’s partnerships across the UN system and their role in reshaping agrifood systems to achieve the SDGs.

This report underscores the tangible outcomes achieved through FAO’s strategic positioning within the UN system, advocating for agrifood system transformation as a central element of the UN’s development agenda. This includes supporting strategic initiatives such as the Global Crisis Response Group and the Global Food Import Financing Facility, with the aim of improving responses to food security challenges, fostering resilience and sustainable development.

At the regional level, FAO’s leadership in Issue-Based Coalitions has been instrumental in providing regional public goods, including knowledge products, data, tools and policy recommendations to address regional challenges.

Additionally, the report highlights FAO’s efforts in establishing country-driven partnerships with various specialized UN agencies, funds and programmes. This strategic interconnectivity ensures that FAO’s global expertise and resources integrate seamlessly with UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams’ efforts to address critical development challenges, including through SDG acceleration, policy integration and development financing. FAO actively participates in 130 UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and has supported the development of 87 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).

As an initial effort, this report documents FAO's commitment to sustainable agrifood systems and the SDGs. It offers a comprehensive overview of FAO's current UN partnerships, setting the stage for a series of forthcoming updates to be presented to FAO Governing Bodies. These updates will continue to document FAO's unwavering commitment to partnering with the RBAs and the broader UN system in their shared pursuit of transforming agrifood systems to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and realize the SDGs.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Tuesday 14 November 2023, 14:49

The United States thanks FAO for the update on its engagement with UN Partners and appreciates the details on FAO's collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), and also across the entire UN system.

As Secretary Blinken said during the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit in September: "The United States remains unwavering in our commitment to achieve the SDGs by 2030." Reducing hunger and strengthening global food security are critical to achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Only through working together and seeking and establishing effective and value-added partnerships – and evaluating these partnerships – will we advance this collective ambition.

For this reason, we welcome the RBA's global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding signed in South Sudan on 1 August 2023 and appreciate the increased collaboration between FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP).

We note that FAO collaborates with over 40 entities across the UN system and is implementing a two-year UN partnership roadmap. We would welcome receiving additional information and details related to the roadmap. As further reporting on FAO collaboration in the UN system is provided, we would welcome updates on the challenges as well as the successes and achievements. It is critically important to understand the obstacles that FAO confronts to improving and strengthening coordination.

We encourage FAO to continue to establish, expand, and deepen its collaboration and partnerships across the UN system – within its mandate. Given continuing complex food insecurity challenges globally, with the need to reach as many individuals as possible within available funding, joint UN collaboration and coordination needs to be efficient and effective to build sustainable, resilient and inclusive food systems that support the achievement of the SDGs by 2030.

JAPAN

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 15:00

Japan expresses its gratitude to FAO for regular progress updates on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities. We submit the following comments:

We welcome the new global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (Paragraph 8). This marks a positive step towards collaboration, and we look forward to updates and advancements resulting from this agreement.

Furthermore, we welcome the prospect of collaboration with organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) at country level (Figure 2, Paragraph 25). While supporting such partnership in general, we would like to seek clarification on the specific nature and implementations of this collaboration. We also would like to get a better understanding of concrete examples or details illustrating how this partnership will manifest.

In terms of collaboration between FAO, and other key international frameworks and entities in the field of climate change and biodiversity and the environment including United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (Paragraph 48-50), achieving practical and flexible outcomes is crucial while the

topics related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and the environment are increasingly on the agenda. It is essential to reflect the diverse conditions of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries among countries, aiming to enhance food security and address environmental challenges simultaneously. With the growing number of agro-environmental issues, Japan encourages FAO to actively provide its technical inputs to environmental discussions, leveraging its expertise. This effort should make use of FAO's existing voluntary guidelines and the ongoing development of the Plastic Voluntary Codes (VCoC). Particularly, these guidelines can form the basis for discussions on the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the negotiations for the plastic treaty, and at other international meetings on the environment including the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Japan hopes to strengthen collaboration with FAO on these issues.

COLOMBIA

Presentado el miércoles 15 de noviembre 2023 a las 16.05

Colombia agradece la presentación del informe sobre la colaboración de la FAO con otras entidades del sistema de las Naciones Unidas; reconoce que el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030 plantea múltiples interdependencias entre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, y destaca que la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios plantea unos retos que van más allá del sector de la agricultura, y que implica desafíos en materia ambiental, económica, social, de género, salud, entre otros.

Por lo tanto, consideramos que el trabajo articulado entre la FAO y las demás entidades de Naciones Unidas es no solamente positivo, sino necesario, si se quiere allanar el camino hacia la consecución de las metas de la Agenda 2030. El trabajo conjunto y articulado de los Organismos de Naciones Unidas con sede en Roma (FAO, FIDA y PMA) se hace más necesario y estratégico que nunca, habida cuenta de las diversas crisis que enfrenta el planeta, y de la necesidad de que las respuestas a estas sean coordinadas, eficaces y sostenibles.

Recalamos la importancia de que la FAO siga siendo un actor central en todas las discusiones y acciones con miras a la transformación de los sistemas alimentarios y el desarrollo sostenible, así como en los Equipos de Naciones Unidas en los Países (ENUP), pues las asociaciones y alianzas juegan un papel decisivo en estas metas comunes, y se encuentran en el centro de las cuatro mejoras definidas por la Organización (una mejor producción, mejor nutrición, un mejor medio ambiente y una vida, sin dejar a nadie atrás).

Destacamos el trabajo articulado de la FAO en materia de ciencia y tecnología con la Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones (UIT), y de medio ambiente con el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente (PNUMA). Sin duda, la transformación digital del campo y su adaptación a los efectos nocivos del cambio climático, la pérdida de biodiversidad y la degradación ambiental son fundamentales y comportan una importancia decisiva para alcanzar las aspiraciones estratégicas de la FAO y los ODS.

En conclusión, Colombia expresa su agradecimiento por el informe y alienta a la FAO y a las demás entidades del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas a seguir trabajando de manera articulada y mancomunada en todas las dimensiones del Desarrollo Sostenible para alcanzar los Objetivos Globales de manera idónea.

NORWAY

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 16:20

Norway is delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway).

Thank you for the insightful and detailed update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities.

To maximise the impact of actions and programmes, to avoid overlaps and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of available financial and human resources, cooperation among the Rome-based

Agencies (RBAs), as well as all other relevant UN organizations in-country, on the ground is critical. We also encourage FAO to strengthen its cooperation with the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.

We welcome the focus on the repositioning of the UN development system, country-driven partnerships, UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams.

We also welcome the recently signed global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), recognising that RBA collaboration is built on a broad spectrum of work that spans from responding to emergencies and shocks, to humanitarian and long-term development activities. The recently launched joint FAO and World Food Programme (WFP) strategy on anticipatory action is also important in this regard.

Formalised agreements should translate into action on the ground. Lessons can be learned from the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment. The programme is jointly implemented by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Women and WFP and adopts a holistic approach that builds on each agency's comparative advantage and strengths.

The Nordic countries would welcome more details on how FAO collaborates and coordinates its work with multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and African Development Bank.

There is a strong focus on the contribution of collaboration to the *four betters*. We would welcome a stronger emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals as the overarching and universal call to action.

We would also like more detail on how collaboration with UN system entities contributes to all sectors that the FAO works with, including fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry.

The Nordic countries underscore the importance of not just measuring the quantity of collaborations, but also their quality. FAO should create baselines, clear metrics of success, and ensure that they measure impact and the contribution of collaborations in helping us achieve Agenda 2030.

The Nordic countries highlight that collaborations should capitalise on FAO's unique comparative advantage as the utmost provider of technical and normative expertise that contributes to evidence-based guidance and good practice for food systems solutions.

The administrative burden, reporting and monitoring responsibility, and financing should also be shared across collaborations and build on each organizations' comparative advantage.

Finally, the Nordic countries have been longstanding supporters of the UN Development System Reform. It is important to ensure that the reform of the UN Development System keeps moving forward and is fully implemented.

The Nordic countries highlight the prerequisite that the UN delivers as One UN at the country level. We would like to see more reporting on how FAO implements UN reform.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 16:39

I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States regarding the aforementioned Agenda Item for the 174th Session of the FAO Council.

The EU and its Member States thank FAO for the information provided in document *CL 174/12* and welcome that the update covers FAO's collaboration across the UN system, including but not limited to the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), and appreciate FAO's stated ambition to strengthen and deepen its collaboration within the UN system. We particularly welcome the focus placed on the UN Development System (UNDS) repositioning and collaboration through the Resident Coordinator (RC) system and the UN Country Teams.

Partnerships within the United Nations system, including with the RBAs is paramount if we want to transform food systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We very much welcome the new global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which emphasizes the spectrum of the RBA collaboration, spanning from humanitarian to development activities. We

encourage FAO in collaboration with RBA to focus on the five long-term priorities and the set of recommendations resulting from the 2021 evaluation.

We commend FAO for playing a key role in the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, as well as the Global Network Against Food Crises, and in the coordinated efforts and collaboration of the RBAs in response to the ongoing global food crisis.

In addition, we very much welcome FAO's continued engagement with the outgoing and incoming Conference of the Parties (COP) Presidencies, to make food systems visible, and have a positive contribution to tackle the climate crisis. The document rightly puts a strong emphasis on the crucial role of FAO Regional and Country Offices with the UN country teams, coordinating mechanisms, thematic networks and UN joint programmes. In that respect, the EU welcomes the review of FAO's Decentralized Offices Network as a first step for further, more in-depth discussions. Unfortunately, the document does not put enough emphasis on the importance of continued, or even, where possible strengthened RBA support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), including through financing and staffing, and of ensuring that the CFS, its High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and its products, remain an integral part of the RBAs' follow-up activity to the Food Systems Summit, with the aim of consolidating the position of CFS as the leading international platform for policy coherence and convergence on food security and nutrition.

The EU appreciates the collaboration with the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, hosted at FAO, to actively advance the goals set by the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit to transform global food systems in alignment with the SDGs. We appreciate the broad overview of FAO's current UN partnerships and the informative examples of thematic engagements (nutrition, health, food safety, gender equality and women's empowerment, transparent markets and trade, integrated policy support, climate change, biodiversity and the environment, emergencies and resilience, science technology and innovation). Here we underline the importance of the work of the Quadripartite on the One Health approach.

We welcome FAO's planned actions to continue to enhance UN collaborations at all levels, notably the further strengthening and institutionalizing of key UN system partnerships and the leveraging of joint funding mechanisms and investments as a key driver of UN collaboration.

The EU and its Member States welcome further regular updates on the progress made by FAO in partnering with the wider UN system, including the RBAs.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 16 November 2023, 13:58

Australia appreciates this update on FAO's collaboration with UN system entities including Rome-based Agencies and over 40 other UN agencies, funds, programmes and other entities. We support FAO working collaboratively in pursuit of the SDGs and sustainable development outcomes through long-term, systemic and transformative actions. We note the different paths and programmes that the FAO works on with various agencies, which areas they are focused on, and key themes they work across. We appreciate the inclusion of highlights and examples of work undertaken.

Considering the ongoing food security crises occurring around the world we thank FAO for its leadership during these challenging times and appreciate it has a role as a valued partner for many other UN entities given FAO's highly relevant mandate and areas of expertise.

In line with the commitment by FAO Management to continued, open and transparent communication with Members, for which we express thanks, we look forward to further updates from FAO on partnership initiatives going forward, including the provision of finalised documents such as MoUs, active circulation to Members of the MoU between the Rome-based Agencies, and workplans mentioned at paragraph 25. In particular, in future updates to FAO Governing Bodies we would like to see some assessment of the impact and value-add of a range of both new and traditional partnerships.

CHILE

Presentado el miércoles 22 de noviembre 2023 a las 15.50

Chile comparte lo señalado en el documento puesto a disposición, particularmente sobre la necesidad de contar con un enfoque multidimensional para el tratamiento de transformación de los sistemas agroalimentarios, que incluye, como bien se señala a la agricultura, el comercio, la salud, el medio ambiente, el género, la educación y las infraestructuras, entre otros.

A fin de abordar de manera multisectorial y con la debida coordinación entre agencias, Chile cuenta, con dos instrumentos fundamentales, que han sido renovados para el período 2023 – 2026. Nos referimos al Marco de Cooperación del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas con el Gobierno de Chile 2023 – 2026 y el Marco de Programación País de la FAO con el Gobierno de Chile 2023 – 2026.

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

FAO expresses its appreciation for the strategic guidance and specific comments from Members on Item 13, *Update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities*. FAO takes note of all suggestions and is pleased to acknowledge Members' recognition of the importance of enhancing collaboration with all United Nations (UN) system entities, including the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As highlighted in the report, FAO remains steadfast in contributing to, and building upon, the benefits of the UN development system (UNDS) repositioning. The Organization aims to further enhance its participation and leadership within UN Country Teams, leverage Resident Coordinator (RC) support to integrate agrifood systems perspective into relevant frameworks, expand participation in joint programmes, and increase access to UN inter-agency pooled funds, with an overall objective to increase the impact and value addition of UN collaboration on the ground, to assist countries in their SDG attainment.

Further updates on the implementation of the UN reform may be made available next year through the UNDS Checklist for UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Entities' Governing Bodies, which was developed by the Chairperson of the UNSDG. At present, the outcomes of internal assessment showcased that, with few minor exceptions, some of which are still in the process of being addressed, FAO is in consistent alignment with the UNDS repositioning and is implementing its recommendations in accordance with the suggested timeline.

The recent global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the RBAs, circulated to Members through the Members Gateway in August 2023, and the deepening and institutionalization of collaborations with other UN entities mark significant steps towards unified efforts in tackling global challenges. FAO is committed to providing more detailed and regular updates on these partnerships, including concrete examples of joint RBA work and results emanating from the MoU.

The referenced two-year UN partnership roadmap, developed in collaboration with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC), serves as an internal guide for developing FAO's vision and building and enhancing the tools and capabilities of FAO's technical, regional and country offices to fully engage with the larger UN system, thereby reinforcing the collective approach to UN partnerships with a focus on country-based results. The outcomes of the roadmap implementation would be duly reflected in FAO's future reporting to its Governing Bodies on UN collaboration as well as on Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) implementation.

FAO welcomes Members' desire for further clarification on the nature and implementation of these collaborations at all levels. As such, the Organization recognizes the need for providing concrete examples and detailed descriptions of how these partnerships manifest and contribute to various sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, as well as water in an integrated way, for example, through blue transformation, ecosystem restoration and other thematic areas, highlighting their contribution to the SDGs. FAO will also be launching soon a new external website on the Organization's collaboration with UN system partners, which will put greater spotlight on these important partnerships.

FAO is strategically collaborating with a range of UN and other environmental fora related to climate change and biodiversity. By leveraging these collaborations, and actively providing technical inputs to

intergovernmental discussions, FAO aims to support the implementation the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in the areas of FAO's mandate and technical expertise, including food waste, pesticides, genetic resources, agricultural reform subsidies, restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems, and agriculture plastics. A recent example of this is FAO's ongoing discussion with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) aimed at strategizing existing collaboration.

FAO appreciates the emphasis on not only the quantity but also the quality of these collaborations. To this end, FAO is developing metrics of success and impact measurement methodologies with the support of UNSSC, as part of the two-year UN partnership roadmap. These will assist in evaluating the effectiveness of our UN partnerships and their contributions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

FAO also agrees to include specific case studies in future updates and progress reports, highlighting both the successes and challenges faced in these collaborative endeavors.

FAO has developed long-standing and trustful relationships with international financial institutions (IFIs), including through FAO Investment Center, and is currently engaged in ongoing UN system-wide discussions on enhancing collaboration with IFIs at country level. Specific examples of FAO's engagement – together with other UN agencies – in various country-level collaborations with IFIs can be included in next year's report. Regarding the regional dimension, the Regional Conferences may be considered a more relevant fora for updating the Membership on the wide range of regional-level partnerships and collaborations.

Additionally, the report's emphasis on the importance of continued and strengthened RBA support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is noted. FAO acknowledges the significance of ensuring that the CFS remains a key component in the RBAs' activities post UN Food Systems Summit.

Finally, with regard to the provision and circulation of MoUs with Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), the matter was referred to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) under Rule XXXIV, paragraph 7(m), of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) and will be addressed during the 174th Session of the FAO Council, in December 2023. Steps can be taken to disseminate all MoUs concluded with other Intergovernmental Organizations through a dedicated password-protected portal, should the Members decide so, provided that FAO obtains the express consent of the other parties prior to dissemination or publication.

CHAIRPERSON

We directly go to the draft conclusions, which we will put on the screen.

32. The Council:

- (a) welcomed the update on FAO's collaboration with UN system entities, acknowledged the foundational importance of RBA collaboration, and commended the Organization for its ongoing efforts to diversify and strengthen its thematic collaboration with other UN entities at the global, regional and country levels;
- (b) encouraged FAO to enhance its collaboration across the UN system in support of achieving the SDGs by leveraging joint funding mechanisms, developing policy tools to facilitate integration of the agrifood system approach in key UN development system frameworks at the global, regional and country levels and by strengthening FAO's partnerships with the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Teams; and
- (c) looked forward to future updates on the progress, challenges and impact of FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities.

Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b). I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (c).

Mr Hiroyuki TANAKA (Japan)

Japan would like to propose adding a new subparagraph (c).

“Encouraged FAO to actively provide its technical inputs in international environmental discussions, leveraging its expertise, while the growing number of agro-environmental issues, and recalled paragraph 20 (m) of the Report of the 171st Council.”

This new subparagraph reflects the Secretariat’s response to written comments by Members on this agenda Item, bearing in mind paragraph 20 of the Report of the 171st Council.

Mr Robert BOENISH (United States of America)

We have a suggestion for subparagraph (b), an addition at the very beginning, after *“encouraged FAO.”* The suggestion is *“within its mandate.”*

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense que nous voulons ajouter un paragraphe, après le (b), qui dit ceci, *«Welcome»*. Donc, *«Accueil favorablement la signature du nouveau memorandum d'accord mondial tripartite entre les organismes basés à Rome, signé au Soudan du Sud, le 1^{er} Août 2023, et à apprécier les six domaines thématiques de cette collaboration.» «Apprécier les six domaines thématiques de cette collaboration.»*

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No sé si es el momento, pero me quería referir a la propuesta de mi estimado colega de Japón. Si usted me dice que es el momento, intervengo, y si no espero.

Sr. Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (España)

Las queremos todos, Presidente, pero puesto que estamos aportando ideas, como ha comentado, desde la Unión Europea consideramos que es importante también incluir una referencia al Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA). En ese sentido proponemos un nuevo subpárrafo también. Iría detrás del (b) y que sería así, *“Emphasize and, where possible, strengthen the importance of continued RBAs support to the CFS, ensuring that its high level panel of experts and its products remain an integral part of the RBA’s follow-up activity to the Food System Summit.”*

CHAIRPERSON

I think to be correct it has to be the *“World Food Systems Summit”*.

First, I want to collect whether there are more additional subparagraphs because then we go one by one through the insertions.

If there are no requests for new subparagraphs, then we go to the first insertion made by the United States in (b). Can we agree to *“within its mandate”*? I do not see any objections. So, agreed.

Then we go to the new subparagraph (c).

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I personally do not see the necessity for this subparagraph. Is there a doubt on the Rome-based Agency (RBA) support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at the moment? Why are we putting this subparagraph? It gives the impression that the RBAs are not fully supportive of what is happening or what. So, I would suggest we do not insert subparagraphs into the Report which may give the wrong impression.

Ms Stefania COSTANZA (Italy)

Italy supports the insertion of the subparagraph but would like to stress that the World Food System Summit actually was one Summit and one Stocktaking Moment. So, either we have *“World Food System Summits”* or *“World Food System Summit and the Stocktaking Moment of July 2023”*.

Very correctly, our Japanese colleagues let me notice that it is *“UN World Food System Summit.”*

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

Pakistan took the words from my mouth because we know that there is a general understanding on the participation of each of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) in the work of Committee on World Food

Security (CFS). So, do we have a doubt on that? If we have some doubts, then we can insert this but I am not so sure that it was even reported here. That is why we are also of the opinion that this subparagraph is not needed here because it is sending a very wrong message.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

I am aware of doubts about everything, particularly in this subparagraph. I think there has been support for Committee on World Food Security (CFS). I think there should be more support always for CFS but I cannot leave putting together CFS and UN World Food Summit (UNFSS) in the same subparagraph.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

We would also like to support Pakistan and Cameroon. We do not feel that this subparagraph (c) is necessary because we all know that there are already Members participating in all the negotiations and all meetings. This should have gone maybe in the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) draft conclusions, if that was very necessary.

Also, we have inputs on subparagraph (e), if I may.

CHAIRPERSON

No, we go subparagraph by subparagraph.

When we dealt with Item 12, *Report of the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security*, because there we have a subparagraph related to Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) to assist Members. Then we have a subparagraph on RBAs when it comes to the funding by the RBAs, and we have a subparagraph on Governing Bodies. So, we already have quite a strong language in the Report on RBAs. But it is up to you whether or not we want to continue.

Sr. Junior Andrés ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Yo lo que estaba viendo es el título de este párrafo precisamente. El título del punto que estamos tratando y, en realidad, dice “*la colaboración de FAO con otras entidades del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas*”. El tema del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria (CSA) ya está integrado en la colaboración que tienen estos entes con este Comité, así que no creemos sea necesario enfatizarlo en este informe del Consejo.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We have no real issue with what is in the subparagraph, but it mixes two different things, both of which perhaps either do not belong here or belong somewhere else. One is the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) support to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the other is the role of CFS and its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) in follow-up to the UN Food System Summit Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2), and those are two different things.

We have already spoken earlier about RBAs’ support to the CFS in other Items. So, I think that first part of it perhaps does not belong here. And then we could offer some simpler language which would be “*emphasized the importance of the CFS and its HLPE in the follow-up to the UNFSS*”, which I think captures the essence of the second half of the sentence but, that said, that seems more like a CFS decision rather than a Council decision.

So, while we accept the spirit of what subparagraph (c) says, it may not be for this Council, under this Agenda Item, to actually include it. So, we are okay with it being included.

Ms Baoying ZHU (China)

We echo the comments made by the colleagues from Pakistan, the following colleagues and Canada’s comments. We think that first of all, the first part about the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) is another topic and it has already been addressed.

Also, for the second part, for the UN Food System Summit Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2), as we all know this is the UN Secretary, they are the owner of this activity and also the Council has no right

to say what should be the integral part of the follow-up activities of the whole system of this activity. So, we also agree to delete this subparagraph.

Sr. Carlos LORENZO AMIGO (España)

En vista de las numerosas referencias que tenemos ya al Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA) y la opinión mayoritariamente manifestada en la sala, en vista de la flexibilidad y continuar trabajando en torno al consenso, podemos renunciar a la inclusión del subpárrafo.

CHAIRPERSON

So, we go now to subparagraph (c). Can we agree to this subparagraph? I see that Observer Nigeria has asked for the floor but as we are in the text negotiations on draft conclusions, Observers cannot participate in this part of the Session. I apologize but those are the Rules.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I think we can simplify this simply to say, “*welcomed the new MoU*” because we have reference to the signature later on.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the subparagraph as it is on the screen now?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We are conveniently placed next to each other, so I can convey part of the spirit from my neighbour. “*Welcomed the new tripartite MoU between the RBAs*”. I do not know if the date is important, given that we say it is new. “*And appreciated the six thematic areas of this collaboration*” because I think that is an addition from whoever initially proposed, I believe it was Congo, to keep it in. So, “*welcomed the new tripartite MoU between the RBAs and appreciated the six thematic areas of this collaboration.*”

CHAIRPERSON

Is the subparagraph now agreeable to the Council? I see nodding.

Then we turn to subparagraph (d).

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Con respecto a este subpárrafo, la verdad es que estoy tratando de ser constructivo con la propuesta de Japón. Creo que la primera cuestión que haría es colocar luego de “*encouraged FAO within its mandate*”. La segunda sugerencia constructiva es que no existe lenguaje acordado sobre “*agroenvironmental issues*”. Tendríamos que abrir una discusión, que no creo que tenga sentido en este contexto, por lo cual sugiero eliminar esa parte de la propuesta. “*While the growth of a number of agroenvironmental issues*”, eso yo lo sacaré.

Con respecto a “*recalled paragraph 20(m) of the Report*”. El párrafo 20 en el Informe del 171 ° período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO incluye muchas cuestiones que no son las que están aquí. Mi estimado colega de Japón toma solo una parte, por lo cual, me parece que siempre hemos tratado de evitar hacer “*cherry picking*” en este tipo de conversaciones para acordar, por consenso, un Informe. Por lo tanto, mi sugerencia es directamente no identificar el párrafo y plantear “*of the Report of the 171st Session of the Council as appropriate*”. Y eso nos da la posibilidad, de alguna manera, que lo que corresponda de ese Consejo pueda ser utilizado.

Con estos comentarios, podríamos aceptar la propuesta de Japón.

Mr Purna Cita NUGRAHA (Indonesia)

We support the insertion made by the delegation of Argentina in this regard but would like to add two things here. First, I think in the first line, after “*technical*”, we would like to add, “*and legal inputs*” and in the second line, after “*leveraging its expertise*”, “*including through FAO Legal Office.*” Because we also discussed this in the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), on the involvement of the FAO Legal Office in all UN processes in this regard.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I do not know if this can help but I agree with what Argentina said. It is a little bit difficult to understand here. We are talking about collaboration with UN bodies, not UN activities. So, the difference should be if they are enough in our heads. So, we will rather suggest, if Japan will allow us, a modification of this, which is much more encompassing. "*Encouraged FAO to bring its expertise in agriculture, agrifood systems, nutrition, rural development, fishery and forestry in the context of the UN system*". First, there is the issue of the mandate of FAO and then we do not do the cherry-picking. So, we look at it globally. But I leave it to Japan, whether they can accept this proposal. We can add also "*environment*", please, somewhere. After "*rural development*", we can use "*environment*." And that is it.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Si Japón está de acuerdo, yo apoyaría también la sugerencia de Camerún que, me parece, simplifica, clarifica el mensaje. Pero estamos en manos de nuestro querido colega de Japón.

Mr Hiroyuki TANAKA (Japan)

Japan is flexible, so we will accept the majority of comments from Members.

But finally, I would like to stress that this sentence for the negotiation in international environmental issues will be more imperative, taking into account FAO's current strategic collaboration with the relevant environmental fora, to ensuring the achievement of environmental sustainability without compromising global food security. International negotiations on environmental issues, some discussions such as to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution are going on.

However, Japan recognizes that the participation of experts in agriculture, forestry and fisheries is generally low, so making it difficult for opinions on the agricultural fields to input. So, in this regard, Japan would like to stress that FAO, as UN sole expert organization on agriculture, forestry and fisheries could have high expectations in such international environment negotiations. But, anyway, Japan is flexible.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we then agree to the alternate subparagraph?

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

I do not want to complicate your life, but I think there is quite a distinction between subparagraph (d) and subparagraph (e), and I believe the point that Japan was making is quite important. There is a significant capacity within FAO that is worth sharing with the Bodies, but noting what Cameroon stated in terms of what this Agenda Item is on, on UN system entities, perhaps in addition to the original subparagraph (d) could be "*technical and legal inputs in international environmental discussions convened by UN system entities.*"

CHAIRPERSON

But I was hoping that we could go to subparagraph (d), simpler subparagraph alt, because I think Japan was flexible to agree to that subparagraph.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

It is Japan's subparagraph. So, if they are happy, then we are happy.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense que le paragraphe ajouté par le Cameroun est intéressant, et je voudrais quand même qu'on dise, «*Encourage, la FAO a continué à apporter son expertise.*» Maintenant, si j'ai bien compris, le Japon, parce qu'il a parlé un peu des négociations internationales, est-ce que vers la fin, si on met, «*Dans le contexte du changement climatique, les négociations sur le changement climatique* » Ça peut aller ? Vers la fin du paragraphe. «*Et dans le contexte...* »

CHAIRPERSON

Or we could say "*including*."

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Yes, including. « *Dans le cadre des négociations sur le changement climatique* » Okay, si ça peut aller, on résout le problème.

Mr Robert BOENISH (United States of America)

As I noticed, this subparagraph is becoming larger and larger as we continue. I would just note that there is some redundancy in agrifood systems. Fisheries and forestry are part of agrifood systems. So, if it is okay with Japan, for simplicity, I would suggest, "*agrifood systems, nutrition, rural development*," and then it can continue in the context of the UN system, including the case negotiations of climate change, et cetera.

CHAIRPERSON

Is the subparagraph agreeable as it is now on the screen? I see nodding. So, with that, we have agreed to subparagraph (e).

Then we go to the last subparagraph. Can we agree to the last subparagraph? I do not see any objections.

With that, we have concluded this Agenda Item.

Item 16. Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 172nd Session of the Council (Rome, 24-28 April 2023)

Point 16. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa 172^e session (Rome, 24-28 avril 2023)

Tema 16. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 172.º período de sesiones (Roma, 24-28 de abril de 2023)

(CL 174/LIM/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We continue with Agenda Item 16, *Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 172nd Session of the Council*. The relevant document is CL 174/LIM/3.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Submitted Tuesday 14 November 2023, 14:49

The United States supports FAO's continued work and analysis documenting the global food security impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine. We encourage FAO to continue updating its publications and analysis, following from the conclusions and decisions of the Councils 169, 170, 171 and 172.

We also look forward to the finalization of FAO's policy on private sector participation in Governing Body meetings.

JAPAN

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 15:00

Japan expresses its gratitude to Status of implementation of decisions taken at the 172nd Session of the Council. We submit the following comments:

Japan appreciates the UN-brokered Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), which continued outstanding contribution to ensuring global food security by promoting grain export from Ukraine via the Black Sea.

For the continuation and strengthening of efforts to support the information based decision-making and the promotion of policy coordination, Japan has continued to prioritize further utilization and enhancement of neutral and objective statistical information that are provided by FAO and other international organizations in order to ensure global food security and build more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive global food systems.

In this regard, we would like to see more transparency in agricultural markets through platforms such as the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) and more practical use of data in a timely and appropriate collection of data from each country.

EUROPEAN UNION

Submitted Wednesday 15 November 2023, 16:39

I have the honour to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States. We thank FAO for updating Member States on the status of implementation of the decisions taken at the 172nd Session of the Council.

The European Union and its Member States note with appreciation FAO's efforts to analyse, evaluate and report about the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on global food security and nutrition, issue already expressed in Item 6 of the Agenda.

We reiterate the need to renew the political and technical support for the restoration of an initiative similar to the Black Sea Grain Initiative, noting its importance to ensuring availability of and access to food for countries in all regions, especially for the most vulnerable populations. The EU remains committed to supporting a multilateral UN-led solution to tackling the global food crisis and calls on FAO to play an active part in discussions designing such an initiative.

We request FAO to keep the compilation and use of data as key element to improve the decision-making process to advance in the right to feed, and in the end, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.

Finally, we request that FAO keep up its efforts on the issues still ongoing from the mandate of the 172nd FAO Council, so that they can be evaluated in the next cycle of Governing Bodies meetings in the spring of 2024.

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 16 November 2023, 13:58

Australia appreciates the ongoing efforts by FAO to take stock of the global impacts of the war in Ukraine. We encourage future updates where necessary as the situation evolves.

We note the report *The impact of disasters on agriculture and food security: Avoiding and reducing losses through investment in resilience* and its first key conclusion identifying the need for improved data and information on the impacts of disasters in agriculture. We look forward to future editions considering regional and country data from the Southwest Pacific region given the prevalence and impact of natural disasters in the region.

Response from Secretariat Réponses du Secrétariat Respuestas de la Secretaría

FAO expresses its gratitude for the support provided by the United States of America regarding the efforts of the Organization to provide information and analysis. FAO is committed to continuing its efforts in this regard, as part of its core activities and as mandated by relevant Council decisions.

Regarding the point on private sector participation in the sessions of FAO Governing Bodies, it may be noted that the Independent Chairperson of Council held a consultation with Members on this on 31 October 2023, and that the matter will be considered by the FAO Council at its 174th Session in December 2023.

FAO shares Japan's position on the positive impact of the Black Sea Grain Initiative for improving global food supplies and contributing to world food market stabilization. On 31 July 2023, FAO

published a brief assessing the potential implications of the interruption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative for global food markets and food security. FAO also shares Japan's view that the provision of timely and up-to-date information is essential to improve market transparency, inform decision-making and reduce uncertainty in global markets. FAO would like to highlight the expansion of the programme of work of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) to also cover fertilizers and vegetable oils, with the recruitment of experts, as well as the improvement of the analytical capacity of AMIS through linkages to modelling work. In this regard, FAO highly appreciates the financial support provided by the Government of Japan to AMIS.

FAO expresses its appreciation for the comments made by the European Union regarding the work of the Organization in providing information and analysing the impact of the war in Ukraine on global food security. FAO would like to note that it has been supportive of the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, recognizing its significance for improving global supplies of foodstuffs, and stabilizing world food markets. In this regard, a brief was published on 31 July 2023 on the potential implications of the termination of the Initiative. FAO is ready to support any similar effort that would contribute to addressing the current global food security challenges and will continue, as part of its core activities, to provide up-to-date, impartial and timely information and assessments to keep Members updated on developments, as requested by the relevant Council decisions.

FAO appreciates the support of Australia to the Organization's work related to the war in Ukraine and is committed to providing updates, as necessary. With regard to the report on *The impact of disasters on agriculture and food security*, FAO views that disasters and crises can impact food security and nutrition through different pathways, including food access, livelihoods and migration, among others. In this regard, the Organization agrees with Australia that timely and quality data and information are crucial to better assess the impact of disasters on food security and will continue its efforts to provide assessment both at the global and regional levels as part of its ongoing commitment to promoting more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, leaving no one behind.

CHAIRPERSON

We put the draft conclusions on the screen. The draft conclusion is more or less a standard text, and a very simple and short one.

The Council took note of the status of implementation of decisions taken at its 172nd Session.

Can we agree to this conclusion? Short and simple. Yes.

Item 17. World Food Programme:

Point 17. Programme alimentaire mondial:

Tema 17. Programa Mundial de Alimentos

Item 17.2 Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2022

Point 17.2 Rapport annuel du Conseil d'administration du PAM sur ses activités en 2022

Tema 17.2 Informe anual de la Junta Ejecutiva del PMA sobre sus actividades en 2022 (CL 174/15.2)

CHAIRPERSON

We go to Item 17.2, *Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2022*. The document is CL 174/15.2. The introduction by Ms Wendy Bigham, Director ad interim of the WFP Corporate Planning and Protection Division, has been circulated to you.

Introduction to Item 17.2: Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2022

Ms. Wendy Bigham, Director a.i., WFP Corporate Planning and Performance Division

The World Food Programme (WFP) performance highlights summarized below reflect the findings presented in the organization's 2022 Annual Performance Report (APR). The APR 2022 was discussed and endorsed by the WFP Executive Board during its Annual Session in June 2023.

Throughout 2022, the world experienced the worst food crisis in decades, driven by conflicts, weather extremes, rapid inflation, the macroeconomic repercussions of the conflict in Ukraine and the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resulting strain on global and national food systems contributed to catastrophic levels of food insecurity and unprecedented humanitarian needs. WFP estimates that in 2022 up to 349 million people were acutely food-insecure in 79 countries with WFP operational presence, an increase of almost 200 million people compared with pre-pandemic levels. WFP's five largest operations accounted for roughly 44 percent of the total needs assessed, with food assistance needs in Afghanistan quadrupling by the end of 2022. Increased food procurement costs (39 percent higher than in 2019) meant reaching those in need with urgent life-saving action was even more challenging.

WFP and its partners reached almost 160 million people, 25 percent more women, girls, boys and men in 2022 than in 2021. This figure greatly exceeds the 12 percent average annual increase in number of beneficiaries assisted during the previous five years. WFP distributed nine percent more in-kind food (4.8 million metric tonnes) and 40 percent more in cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers (USD 3.3 billion). In the context of record food and fuel price inflation and a sharp increase in needs, WFP stretched its resources and prioritized assistance to a larger number of people by reducing the size of rations or the duration of assistance.

WFP managed five corporate scale-ups and 23 corporate attention emergencies in 2022 and worked with its many partners to deliver emergency food, cash-based and nutrition assistance, reinforce national social protection systems and strengthen the resilience of communities. This support contributed to averting famine in countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia. In response to record levels of food insecurity, WFP increased by 24 percent the number of beneficiaries it reached through general food assistance to more than 113 million people. Globally, 28 million people, primarily mothers and children, benefitted from WFP's malnutrition treatment and prevention programmes, receiving nearly 312 000 mt of food (95 percent of which was specialized nutritious foods), and USD 55.3 million in cash-based transfers. Through its school-based programmes, WFP worked with governments in 59 countries to reach 20 million children directly, nearly half of whom were girls, with nutritious school meals and snacks or take-home rations, 29 percent more than in 2021. As part of WFP's work on lessening the impact of future crises, WFP assisted 9.9 million people through asset creation and livelihood activities, almost 3.4 million people through climate insurance or anticipatory actions, and nearly 845 000 people through its smallholder agricultural market support programmes.

Donors reacted to the unprecedented needs by increasing their contributions to WFP to USD 14.1 billion, nearly a 50 percent increase over 2021. Similar to previous years, while the 10 largest donors accounted for 86 percent of the contributions, WFP made progress in diversification of its funding base through partnerships with national governments, international financial institutions (IFIs), the private sector, United Nations and thematic funds, as well as through an increase in flexible funding. Expenditures continued to be concentrated on humanitarian responses (crisis-related programmes accounted for 86 percent of total 2022 expenditures). While overall direct expenditures increased by 34 percent, to USD 11.6 billion in 2022, in countries such as Yemen, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo direct expenditures decreased from 2021 despite increasing needs. This was likely due to the growing complexity and severity of the global operational environment, with new emergencies emerging and escalating in 2022 in places such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Somalia and Ukraine which affected WFP's ability to respond given the resourcing context.

Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros

COLOMBIA

Presentado el miércoles 15 de noviembre 2023 a las 16.05

Colombia expresa su agradecimiento a la Junta Directiva del PMA por el informe anual de sobre sus actividades correspondientes a 2022, que proporciona un registro completo de las actividades realizadas a través de este programa durante el año.

El informe muestra cómo el PMA mantuvo su actividad en un año en que la humanidad se enfrentó a la peor situación de hambre en 70 años, producto de los efectos de la pandemia, los conflictos globales y la emergencia climática. Celebramos que, para satisfacer estas necesidades extraordinarias, el PMA haya garantizado la prestación de asistencia alimentaria vital para combatir la malnutrición y el hambre de casi 160 millones de personas.

Colombia coincide con la visión de que la paz, la seguridad y la seguridad alimentaria están estrechamente relacionados, por lo que también observamos muy favorablemente que el PMA haya continuado respaldando actividades humanitarias, de desarrollo y de paz complementarias. Para Colombia, la garantía del Derecho Humano a la Alimentación y la búsqueda de la Paz Total son objetivos complementarios con miras a un desarrollo inclusivo que no deje a nadie atrás. Como una de las grandes estrategias de nuestro Plan Nacional de Desarrollo esta la seguridad humana integral, que involucra la protección de la vida y con las seguridades alimentaria, jurídica, institucional, económica, ecológica y social.

Finalmente, esperamos que el PMA mantenga el trabajo articulado con las demás agencias de Naciones Unidas para avanzar en el desarrollo y la consolidación de la paz, así como en la lucha contra el hambre y la pobreza, con miras a alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS).

Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría

The World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes the comment from Colombia, and shares the concern expressed about the unprecedented hunger catastrophe, as a result of the effects of the pandemic, global conflicts and the climate crisis.

WFP remains committed to providing vital food assistance to combat hunger and malnutrition, wherever it is needed, while also addressing their root causes, by supporting complementary humanitarian, development, and peace-nexus activities.

WFP stays committed to collaborating with all partners, especially other United Nations entities, to advance peace and development, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Colombia, WFP is a key strategic ally of the Government and is fully committed to supporting the implementation of the country's National Development Plan.

CHAIRPERSON

We put now the draft conclusions on the screen.

The Council:

- (a) acknowledged the WFP Annual Performance Report (APR) and the results in meeting its Strategic Objectives, supported by Management Results Dimensions;
- (b) recognized the commitment of WFP staff in the field that worked in challenging circumstances to serve people in need, reaching almost 160 million people – 25 percent more women, girls, boys and men in 2022 than in 2021 – and responded to record levels of food insecurity faced by conflicts, weather extremes, rapid inflation, the macroeconomic repercussions of the conflict in Ukraine, and the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (c) welcomed WFP's ability to make progress in the diversification of its funding base, reaching an unprecedented total level of contributions of USD 14.1 billion in 2022; and
- (d) supported WFP's continued efforts to strengthen its collaboration with its many partners at all levels and its contribution to achieve the SDGs, especially SDG 2 and SDG 17.

We go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b).

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I just suggest a word to be added after "*recognized*", "*and appreciated*".

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree with this subparagraph? I do not see any objections.

Let me go to subparagraph (c).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Probably I may be criticized here by the English-speaking countries, native. "*Circumstances*." Can we not use instead the word "*environment*"? I need to understand whether it is subparagraph (b). I mean, we are in subparagraph (b), "*challenging circumstances*" or "*challenging environment*", what is the best word?

Mr Robert BOENISH (United States of America)

I had a comment for subparagraph (c). I am fully supportive of "*circumstances*" or "*environment*".

CHAIRPERSON

So, we can go either way. We stick to the original text. So, I think we have an agreed subparagraph (b).

Then we go to subparagraph (c).

Mr Robert BOENISH (United States of America)

Looking on the World Food Programme website, I see the donations in 2022 were USD 14.17 billion. So, I would suggest either "*over 14.1 billion*," or proper rounding would be "*14.2*".

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

I suggest after welcome, "*welcomed and commended*".

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the subparagraph as it is now on the screen? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). I do not see any objections.

We have concluded this Agenda Item.

Item 20. Developments in fora of importance for the mandate of FAO

Point 20. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO

Tema 20. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO

(CL 174/INF/4; CL 174/INF/4 WA 1-4)

CHAIRPERSON

Now, we go to the Agenda Item 20, *Developments in fora of importance of the mandate of FAO*. The document is CL 174/INF/4, *Web Annexes 1 to 4*, and I go directly to the draft conclusions.

The Council received briefing notes on the following topics for information only:

- (a) Outcomes of the Tenth Session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and Diplomatic Conference on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources;
- (b) The Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia and International Conference on Food Security in Samarkand;
- (c) Processes related to Small Island Development States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs); and
- (d) The 2023 SDG Summit, and Artificial Intelligence and digital solutions for the transformation of agrifood systems.

I go to subparagraph (a). Can we agree to subparagraph (a)? I do not see any objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (b).

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I was expecting the chapeau. You did not mention the chapeau. So, “*the Council*”, I think, instead of “*received*”, “*took note of the briefing notes on the following*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that is more correct. We not only received it, but we also looked into those, hopefully. So, can we agree to the changed chapeau?

Then we go to subparagraph (b). No objection.

Then we go to subparagraph (c). No objections.

Then we go to subparagraph (d). No objection.

We have concluded this Agenda Item.

Item 21. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2023-2025

Point 21. Calendrier 2023-2025 des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO et des autres réunions principales

Tema 21. Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO y otras reuniones importantes en 2023-25.

(CL 174/LIM/1)

CHAIRPERSON

Now, we go to Agenda Item 21, the *Calendar of FAO Governing Body and other Main Sessions 2023-2025*. The relevant document is *CL 174/LIM/1*.

*Comments from Members
Commentaires des Membres
Observaciones de los Miembros*

AUSTRALIA

Submitted Thursday 16 November 2023, 13:58

Australia appreciates visibility of the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other main sessions 2023-2025. We note that the back-to-back scheduling of meetings such as the World Food Forum and Committee on World Food Security presents challenges for Members’ fulsome preparation, engagement and representation at both meetings.

While recognising that the calendar CL174/LIM/1 refers to FAO Governing Bodies, we note that the many other conferences and events organised by FAO which accumulate throughout the year result in an exceedingly busy and heavy meeting load for Members.

We would appreciate more advance notice of key events and conferences so as to coordinate attendance and representation between Capital, the Southwest Pacific region and Rome-based representatives.

*Response from Secretariat
Réponses du Secrétariat
Respuestas de la Secretaría*

The Secretariat takes due note of the comment from Australia on the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other main sessions 2023-2025.

CHAIRPERSON

The schedule before the Council is for information, and we all know that any changes made since the last Session are there.

We have seen also this year and we know that probably more events will take place. We put the draft conclusion for adoption.

The Council approved the Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies for 2023-2025, as we produced in *Appendix E* to this Report.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia will be making this statement on behalf of the Southwest Pacific Regional Group. The Southwest Pacific Regional Group welcomes the preparation of the Governing Bodies' Calendar for 2024.

This document is very useful for Members' planning, as we will once again enter a very busy year. Advance notice of dates allows Members to be well prepared and appropriately represented at meetings, and it is important in guiding timeframes for regional coordination.

Australia, as the only Southwest Pacific Member on Council, had provided written comments through the Written Correspondence Procedure (WCP) process on this Item. However, we take the floor today to note that since we provided our written comments on 16 November, Members of the Asia and Southwest Pacific Regional Groups were formally advised on 30 November that the dates for the 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Asia and Pacific (APRC) are as follows:

A Senior Officers Meeting (SOM) in virtual modality over three half days from 31 January to 2 February. A Ministerial Session in person from 19 to 22 February in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The dates advised on 30 November are inconsistent with the dates for the APRC that are contained in *CL 174/LIM/1*, that Council is asked to approve today. Indeed, that document states that the dates for the APRC are 19 to 23 February, with no mention of the SOM dates.

We are concerned, as a region, that a decision has been made without consultation of the Members to change the format, modality and timing of Regional Conferences. We have been advised in informal consultation with Management that the split or dual modality of a virtual SOM, an in-person Ministerial Meeting at different times will apply to all Regional Conferences in 2024. We would appreciate confirmation during this Council that these changes indeed are not only being applied to the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

If indeed this is the case, it appears that the dates of other Regional Conferences may also be inaccurately reflected in the Governing Bodies Calendar that we are asked to approve today. Accordingly, the Southwest Pacific region requests that FAO Management arrange an Information Session for all Members on the dates and arrangements for all Regional Conferences in 2024 to promote transparency and provide certainty in planning and regional coordination.

Given the first meetings of Regional Conferences are scheduled in late January 2024, we request that this briefing be delivered before the end of 2023. We have a proposed additional conclusion for Agenda Item 21.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

No teníamos información de esto que acaba de expresar Australia. Obviamente, mi máxima solidaridad con su preocupación, con la preocupación de la delegación australiana y decimos en español una expresión que es, "abrimos el paraguas antes que llueva".

Entonces, nuestra región ya tiene claro cuál es la fecha y el lugar, y hemos discutido ya dos reuniones preparatorias con la Dirección Regional del Grupo de Países de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC) y nos gustaría no tener sorpresas. No quiero prejuzgar o decir que esta preocupación que tiene Australia puede terminar teniendo efectos, también, sobre nuestra Conferencia Regional, pero también para nosotros sería importante tener claro el proceso.

Es muy importante porque la vamos a organizar en el Caribe. Es un acto de importancia y de justicia en la región que el Caribe tenga su propia Conferencia Regional: que el GRULAC lo haga en el Caribe. Para Guyana que es quien organiza, es un gran esfuerzo y estamos trabajando todos para ello y, obviamente, es fundamental tener certidumbres. Entonces, con todo respeto y con el máximo

cuidado de no prejuzgar, solicito que dentro de lo posible el Management pueda darnos la tranquilidad, la certidumbre que todos queremos.

Mr Hiroyuki TANAKA (Japan)

Japan fully supports the concerns raised by Australia just now. As pointed out by Australia, we were informed that the Senior Officials Meeting will be separately convened three weeks before the originally scheduled FAO Regional Conference for the Asia and Pacific (APRC) meeting. It gave us a very surprising notice. So, we support Australia's point.

Japan also requests the Asia-Pacific Office at Bangkok to give us the advance notice with regard to the scheduling, if there is any change on the scheduling of the APRC meeting in the future, we would like to request them to consult with us in advance.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I am happy to support Australia in this regard. We recall in the July Council meeting, the Bahamas was absent, and we noted the fact that these meetings are planned in advance. Obviously, on that occasion, we had our 50th Independence Anniversary and all officials were required to be there, so we were absent from the Council.

So, this whole issue of planning would affect the region in a significant way, as colleague from Argentina has highlighted. So, it is a concern, and we would support, again, Australia in this regard.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

I would also like to confirm that Australia has raised a very valid point. In fact, the Regional Office in Bangkok kept contacting us to provide us a briefing on how the Regional Conference would be organized. Finally, when we met, they gave us certain information, and then we find the final information is contradictory with what they told us.

So, I agree with what Australia is requesting.

Ms Erma RHEINDRAYANI (Indonesia)

Just a short statement from us that we also support what Australia has proposed. Also, perhaps we should then also see the Provisional Calendar that is up on the platform, that should also be changed because the dates here are also wrong with what was said during our meeting on the 30th.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

Brazil would like to support the comments by Australia and share the concerns that Argentina just made.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Secretariat.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

In the matter of scheduling of Regional Conferences, there are ongoing consultations led by the Regional Offices and the heads of those Regional Offices with the concerned Regional Groups on the dates of the 2024 Regional Conferences, also on the processes, formats, modalities which naturally are not a matter for Council. So, I will set that aside, and I am sure there will be more briefings in this regard.

With regard to what is in front of the Council today, the Calendar of the dates, indeed, Members are absolutely correct that there are new split dates for three of the five Regional Conferences, which is Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa. Because the Near East split between the Senior Officers Meeting and the Ministerial Meetings is already reflected in the document in front of you And

And the Regional Conference for Europe has a *de facto* split, systemically with the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA), which took place earlier.

Those dates do need to be updated, and we will do that in the Appendix. I can read them out. For the Asia Pacific Regional Conference, that will be a Senior Officers Meeting from the 31 January to 2 February, and the Ministerial Meeting from the 19 to 23 February. For Latin America and the Caribbean, the Senior Officers Meeting will take place from the 11 to 13 March, and the Ministerial Meeting from 18 to 22 March. For Africa, the Senior Officers Meeting from the 22 to 29 March, and the ministerial Meeting on 15 to 19 April.

These updated dates, which have come to our attention after publication of the document that the Council has beforehand, will be subsumed into the Appendix of this Report. And this is not uncommon because, as we know, the Calendar is a moving target, we work with our colleagues in the other Rome-based Agencies, and we have to make accommodations.

This is the reason why the calendar comes to the Council at every Session, so that they may have an update wherever by *force majeure* dates for Governing Bodies, Statutory Bodies and other meetings may need to change.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Tenemos un pequeño inconveniente que me gustaría constructivamente plantear. Es que, hasta ahora, hasta que empezó este Consejo, nadie nos informó de que había la posibilidad de una propuesta de hacer dos reuniones, una virtual y otra en presencia. Por el contrario, el espíritu de la región no va en esa línea. No quiero hablar en nombre de la región, pero nunca ningún país de nuestra región expresó el deseo o la idea de que era positivo pensar en dos reuniones.

Por lo tanto, no hubo ninguna consulta a los Miembros de la región sobre esta cuestión. Nunca el Subdirector Regional nos adelantó o nos consultó sobre esta cuestión. Por lo tanto, mi pregunta a la experiencia – porque no hay seguramente nadie que tenga más experiencia que las dos personas que están ahí en el estrado, el Presidente Independiente del Consejo y el Secretario General – es ¿quién decide la modalidad de una Reunión Regional en la cual la región quiere tener una sola reunión –estoy haciendo una hipótesis– en presencia con las autoridades y por ahí alguien piensa que es mejor hacerlo de otra manera? Es decir, cómo se resuelve esto porque no tengo experiencia en esto y, la verdad, tampoco entiendo la lógica, pero seguramente debe haber una lógica. Yo lo único que quiero entender es cómo se toma ese proceso de decisión para entender.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Je pense qu'à la lumière de ce qu'a dit le Secrétaire Général, est-ce qu'ici, on ne pourrait pas parler de *calendrier* ou bien de *calendrier provisoire* ? Puisqu'il y aura les mises à jour, et si c'est un calendrier provisoire, est-ce que nous allons approuver un calendrier provisoire ou prendre note du calendrier provisoire. Voilà un peu la question. Donc, je pense qu'à la conclusion, nous allons dire, « *On prend note du calendrier provisoire.* » Parce qu'il y aura les mises à jour qui seront faites.

Ms Josyline C. JAVELOSA (Philippines)

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for updating us on the dates, to say that the calendar will be updated, but I just wanted to seek clarification. What we know, as our colleague from Australia said, the 37th Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific (APRC) will be February 19 to 22, instead of February 19 to 23 in the Calendar. I think I still heard from the Secretary-General, it is until 23. So, if he could just confirm that it has been changed to 19 to 22, or is it still until the 23 February?

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

I guess just reflecting on what the Secretary-General said, the Asia Pacific and Southwest Pacific Regional Groups have had two briefings this year, one in April 2023, when we were advised of the dates which currently appear in the Provisional Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies meetings for 2024. And then, without any notice, we are advised of the revised dates.

There was no consultation in-between, and we were told those dates were a *fait accompli* and set, and that the Regional Group had no ability to provide input that those dates could change. So, I think we should very much caveat the so-called consultation procedures that are being talked about.

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Realmente me toma por sorpresa también estos cambios de modalidad de las reuniones que, como decía mi colega de Argentina, en ningún momento nos han consultado o nos habían informado y hoy nos toman por sorpresa y no sabemos quién ha dado esa instrucción. Obviamente, coincido con el colega del Congo que ahorita se levantó de la silla, pero no podemos aprobar jamás un calendario provisional. O sea, tomamos nota, pero no podemos aprobarlo. En ese sentido, quisiera que, en consonancia con el Embajador de Argentina, que nos expliquen cómo se deciden estos cambios y quién toma estas decisiones unilateralmente sin que se nos tome en cuenta a la región.

Sr. José Javier GOROSTEGUI OBANOZ (Chile)

Mi delegación igualmente se suma a los comentarios hechos por los Embajadores de Argentina y Costa Rica y apoya la moción presentada por el Congo respecto al texto que vemos en pantalla.

CHAIRPERSON

As I have a growing list, I would like to see a way forward because as I read the situation, the Calendar was in front of the Members for approval. That means that the Members decide about the dates of the Governing Bodies. Of course, there are suggestions made by the Secretariat, but as it is put forth for approval, it means it is in the hands now of the Council.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

Canada supports Australia's request for clarity and transparency on the matter of Regional Conferences, as also supported by others, and we believe this exchange is an important issue to be clarified given the importance of Regional Conferences in providing specific guidance to the Organization.

On the matter of approving the Calendar, we did want to raise a separate question. We took note of the Calendar notice that, this year, the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) and the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the two meetings are scheduled two weeks apart. For many years, the meetings of the CCP and COAG were back-to-back. This allowed a single set of delegates to attend both meetings.

We understand that it will not be possible in 2024 and will likely impact countries' participation. So, we just wanted to bring this question, and we would be grateful for perhaps the Secretariat also providing and mentioning any reasons why this was changed in the schedule for 2024.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

I am sorry for taking the floor for the second time. To me, honestly, it is quite surprising that this matter became surprising not only for the Asia and the Pacific Regional Group colleagues, but also to the other Regional Groups colleagues, like Argentina and Costa Rica. I believe the insertion of another paragraph would reflect the will of this Council very well. May I read it?

“The Council requested FAO and its Regional Offices to consult with Members on the dates and the modalities of Regional Conferences in advance, if there is any change from former notice, previous”. This is a little bit unsophisticated text, so that there will be room for many improvements, particularly from the English native speakers. But I believe this would reflect the will of the Council very well.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Australia's proposal would be a new subparagraph. *“The Council requested Management to hold an information session for Members, prior to the end of 2023, on the dates and arrangements for all Regional Conferences in 2024.”*

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I did not think that this agenda item will bring so much discussion because people were supposed to address that in writing. But now we are facing some discussions, and I stand to be corrected by the Legal Counsel, but the practice here is that we adopt this Calendar. That is the practice.

So, I do not know if, exceptionally, as Congo put it forward, we can take note of a Provisional Calendar. If that is the case, then we have no problem to that. Then, if that is the case, then the two added sentences may work for us. But if we have to approve the Calendar, then it will be difficult to address those two paragraphs.

M. Abdellah LARHMAID (Maroc)

Tout d'abord, je souhaite bonjour à tout le monde. Ma Délégation souhaite également rejoindre la proposition du Congo, c'est-à-dire, «*Prends note du calendrier provisoire.*» Mais, je voudrais ajouter un autre peut-être à ce paragraphe, une phrase, disons, «*sachant qu'une version d'un calendrier définitif serait circulé entre les États, avant la fin de 2023.*»

CHAIRPERSON

Having the experience of the last couple of years, I know there will be never a final version until we have passed the year because every time, new meetings will pop up. So, we can have the adoption or taking note of an agenda, but that does not exclude that meetings will be added or deleted from that version.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

We would ordinarily hope for this to be a very simple agenda item to complete very quickly. Unfortunately, though, our region was put in a difficult position being asked to approve a Calendar, which we had advice following the closure of the Written Correspondence Procedure, which suggested that provision of that Calendar was actually incorrect.

In this regard, I think there still is an outstanding question asked by my colleague from Argentina regarding the decision-making process around this. If the Legal Counsel can confirm that the Council was able just to take note of, and then perhaps we could just acknowledge that an updated version instead of final version would be circulated, taking your point that perhaps there really is never a final version, but at least one that reflects the understanding of Members as at the end of 2023.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Dos comentarios. El primero es que, más allá de la decisión de si es “*took note*” o “*approve*”, la preocupación que yo tengo es que si no hubiera habido este problema de comunicación entre las regiones y la FAO, seguramente este ítem habría sido muy fácil de poder aprobar muy rápido. O sea, lo que hay es una preocupación.

Entonces, yo creo que sin que el Consejo haga lo que no puede hacer, porque por ahí no es responsabilidad del Consejo resolver esta cuestión, pero sí puede el Consejo pedir clarificación, certidumbre al Management sobre esta cuestión. Entonces, este es simplemente un comentario y después una propuesta de modificación de texto en caso de que hubiera consenso para dejar la propuesta de Japón, quisiera simplemente hacer un pequeño agregado, una pequeña añadidura a la propuesta de Japón, que es, “*The Council requested FAO and its Regional Offices to consult with Members on the dates and modality of the Regional Conference in 2024 well in advance for the approval of the schedule.*”

Insisto en la cuestión. Lo que no tenemos claro y quizás es importante que nos aclare la Secretaría o la Consejería Legal es de qué manera los Miembros tienen la posibilidad de ser consultados e incidir concretamente en las modalidades o en las fechas para llevar adelante las conferencias regionales. Porque, en definitiva, el problema que tenemos es que los que estamos aquí estamos representando a nuestros presidentes, por lo tanto, no me parece que sea un tema menor que tengamos que transmitirles incertidumbre a nuestras autoridades. Tenemos que darle la mayor certidumbre posible y esa es la preocupación. No es una intención de crear un problema con esta cuestión, sino es tratar de buscar certidumbre.

M. Bienvenu NTSOUANVA (Congo)

Si je prends le morceau de phrase que notre collègue du Maroc a ajouté, et l'Australie a amélioré, et par rapport à ce que vous avez dit, je crois que, «*Before the end of 2023.*» On peut supprimer ça, cette partie, qu'on attend qu'un nouveau calendrier mise à jour soit circulé.

Mr Alexander James MCCLEERY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

I think we agree with the general thrust of the changes made, including the addition from our friends from Japan, Australia, Morocco, and Argentina. I would just suggest one small amendment to the new paragraph 45, which would be in the final clause, to change it to "*if there are any proposed changes from the former notice.*" I also would not be averse to deleting "*the former notice,*" but I am happy to go with consensus.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

It is getting more and more complicated because I just want to take reference because countries that are hosting the Regional Conferences, usually before the final date is accepted, usually they go into negotiations with their regions in case there is a change in the date. They have that flexibility. I can confirm that the last Regional Conference for Africa held in Malabo, there was an issue and the country hosting came to the Members and requested that the date should be changed, and it was done to accommodate the calendar of the country hosting the Conference.

So, I believe that if we approve here, if it is an issue of the Regional Conferences, they can agree after that and communicate to the Members that, listen, our Conference date has been changed and this is the new date, and we take note of that.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I understand that there are a number of queries being presented. I think, firstly, it is important to recall that here we are looking at the Calendar of the Governing Bodies. As regards to the specific authority that the Council is exercising at this moment in time, I have to admit I cannot see a specific Rule requiring the approval by the Council. However, it may arguably fall under Rule XXIV, paragraph 5(e), "*performs such other functions as are necessary to assist in the effective functioning of the Organization.*"

Here I would note, as you indeed, Members, have underlined frequently the importance of this Calendar, and why you approve it is to help you plan your coordination of your work, particularly within Rome and between the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs).

But I would concur, I do not see any specific rule which says the Council shall approve. But, as also indicated though by Cameroon, we have had many instances where not only the dates have had to change, but also the location at the last minute. This has happened on many occasions. So, it is not without precedent that you have had an approved Calendar which has been subject to change in the intervening period between one Council and the next.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recall, as provided under Rule XXXV, the arrangements for the Regional Conferences are indeed in the hands of the regional representations, who then work and consult and brief. So, I would urge you to bear that in mind when you are looking at the language, particularly in the context of modalities in this regard.

CHAIRPERSON

I do not want to go in another round of discussion. We have to find a way forward. I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

If I may just add on from the Legal Counsel very briefly, there is no rule because the Calendar of Governing Bodies and other meetings comes to the Council to approve, but not to determine it. It is not constructed by the Council.

Actually, the origin of this Item coming to the Council, and this goes back to the 1970s. The intent, and Mr Khalid Mehboob will confirm this, was not to overwhelm the Secretariat. That is the point of this Calendar. This is why it comes here. So, anyway, that is the background context.

I had a couple of specific questions that perhaps I could address. The one from Canada – indeed, it is unfortunate on this occasion, and again, this comes down to scheduling. We have a thousand meetings for the three Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) in about 200 working days ever year.. There is overlap, there is strain, and there is stress, not only in Rome, but globally, and it is unfortunate for 24. We will go back to our colleagues, which is where the issue came from, for coordination and see if something can be done about it, but it might be a bit tricky.

Philippines, you are absolutely right, I understand that the Regional Office in Asia might be thinking about the 22nd, and we will update that date, as it is.

Of course, Congo is right, as I said in the outset, there will be an updated version to the document that came to the Council and that can be updated already today with those dates I mentioned and be appended to the Report of the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

With your indulgence, I would like to go now to the draft conclusions, because we have spent half an hour now on this, and I think that continued discussion means going around in circles with the arguments.

Sr. Carlos Bernardo CHERNIAK (Argentina)

Las Secretaría General y el Consejero Legal me clarifican mis dudas en alguna parte, pero creo que en el tema de las fechas siempre ha habido posibilidades de modificación de las fechas, pero creo que la preocupación principal para nosotros es el tema del cambio de modalidad.

Creo que eso es el tema más delicado y creo que, por lo que entiendo y comprendí recién, legalmente es un tema que deberemos de discutir cada uno de nuestros Miembros con nuestros subdirectores regionales y creo que les tendremos que explicar a nuestros subdirectores regionales que nosotros estamos o no estamos de acuerdo con cambios de modalidades y menos sin nuestra consulta.

Creo que, con esta manera si clarificamos que las fechas pueden tener diferentes movimientos de acuerdo a las necesidades del país que organiza y, al mismo tiempo, diferenciamos la discusión que tenemos que tener en nuestras subdirecciones generales, quizás podemos salir de este atolladero porque todos tenemos claro por donde vamos a canalizar nuestro reclamo. Pero, es obvio, que ante la incertidumbre tengamos que plantear este tema aquí.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

We thank the Legal Counsel and the Secretary-General for the clarifications. Perhaps I am just suggesting this for future reference, here the documents circulated to us says that we have to approve this Calendar. So, perhaps that is creating some sort of misnomer. Perhaps there may be a better language in future.

CHAIRPERSON

I think it is clear that at the end of the day, the modalities and the dates are in the hands of the Regional Conferences, in close consultation and cooperation with Regional Offices.

With that, I would like to go now to the draft conclusions. Can we agree to "*took note of the Provisional Calendar*"? I do not see any objections.

Can we agree and acknowledge that an updated version of the Calendar would be circulated? I see agreement, and with that we do not need "*before the end of,*" can we agree to the deletion? I see agreement. Can we agree to paragraph 44?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

This is difficult because we have a terrible calendar ahead of us. We have the end of year celebrations. We cannot forego that. So, I really plead with colleagues that let us not add to our really jammed calendar. If we can agree that the updated version of the Calendar will be circulated, and then we address that in writing, that could go.

But if we have to hold a session for Members to agree, we can agree on what is happening here in Rome, but we cannot, I, an African, cannot agree or discuss what is going to happen in the Near East or in Latin America. So, we would prefer that this sentence probably address something totally different. That is the Council will address the new circulated Calendar in writing. So, that may help us probably to save time for ourselves.

CHAIRPERSON

My only problem is if we address it and there is no consensus about it, what do we do then?

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Yo también estoy de acuerdo con usted que tenemos que aligerar esto, pero también este tema es muy importante para todas nuestras regiones y tenemos que tomar el tiempo que sea necesario para llegar a un acuerdo y un consenso.

Yo nada más quería agregar, aunque ya han cambiado los números, pero creo que es el párrafo 45. Dice, “*on the dates*” y ahí pone también “*modality and arrangements*” porque la modalidad también es algo que tenemos que ponernos de acuerdo entre la región y la FAO.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

The inclusion of “*prior to the end of 2023*” recognizes that the newly advised dates for the Asia Pacific Regional Conference are indeed the third week of January of 2024. So, we do need to have this briefing for the benefit of all Members, we believe, before the end of 2023. So, that is why we have been quite specific regarding that language.

In that sense, we are not... a virtual session of one to one and a half hours is something we are not looking for, the whole shebang we have got here today, we are really just looking for an opportunity for transparency, which is really at the heart of it.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

Now that the Council and Secretary-General have clarified that our role is not to approve, perhaps we are to be just informed. So, I suggest in the first paragraph itself, at the end of the “*circulated*”, along with the dates and modalities and arrangements for the provisional Regional Conferences in 2024 – that ends the matter.

CHAIRPERSON

No, but it is not only about this. I would say let us stick to it as it is now.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

In that case, I have a suggestion, Chairperson, in paragraph 45, before the word “*dates*,” “*provisional dates*,” because my understanding is the Regional Conferences also are contingent upon countries' concerns. Sometimes they tend to change the dates. It should always be provisional dates.

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to the paragraph 45 as it is now on the screen?

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I still do not buy that idea. I think we are going too far. The issue here, we should confess, is about the Regional Conferences. The issue is not about the meetings taking place here in Rome. So, really to call everybody to discuss specific Regional Conference, I do not think it will be making good use of our time.

If that is the case, then we would request that the Regional Offices should organise, the Council requested Regional Offices to organise informal consultations with their Members to address the dates of the 2024 Regional Conferences.

CHAIRPERSON

My suggestion, based on what was said by Cameroon, could we not say, "*the Council requested that Regional Offices organise information sessions,*" etc.?

And then I would say "*prior to the end of 2023, as appropriate.*" Because it is not only for all, it does not have to be for all. So that we are not bogged down here in Rome, but that we are giving it in the hands of the Regional Offices with their Members. Would that be agreeable?

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Yo sé que el orden de los factores no altera el producto, pero en este caso se puede prestar para una mala interpretación. Entonces, yo cambiaría donde dice, "as appropriate modality, arrangements, and provisional dates". "*Provisional dates*" de último porque sino quedaría "provisional dates, provisional modalities, and provisional arrangements". Ese provisional se puede agregar a lo demás. Entonces cambiar el orden de eso.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we not agree now to the subparagraph as it is? I go to the list of speakers but you know every time you need now will bring us to the evening or later.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

I insist that this should be "*mandated*". I would agree with the last suggestion that this be handled by the Regional Office, but I think it should be a requirement. It should not be a suggestion. It is important, especially with modality, that the Regional Office consults with its region in order to plan these events. So, my request would just be that it is "*required*" or "*mandated*", please.

CHAIRPERSON

What I said was appropriate, was related to prior to the 2023, because it was not there. My idea would be to request Regional Offices to have those consultation with their Members, but not for all Regional Offices. It has to be done before the end of 2023. So, give a little bit flexibility when they organize.

Of course, for the Southwest Pacific, it has to be done very soon, but for those who have later on in the year their Regional Conference, we should give a little bit more flexibility for the Regional Offices to finalise or to hold that information session.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

In essence, seeing that our Conference is in March, we would then require sufficient time. So middle of January for us.

CHAIRPERSON

Yes, but my idea would be give that in the hands of the Regional Offices and their Members.

Mr Winston PINNOCK (Bahamas)

But there has to be a language to ensure that they comply within a reasonable time. Okay, we will live with that.

CHAIRPERSON

So, delete prior to the end, "*within reasonable time*".

Sr. Jorge Federico ZAMORA CORDERO (Costa Rica)

Se está llenando de textos ahí y, a veces, es difícil de entender. ¿Por qué no vamos borrando. por ejemplo, el párrafo 44 creo que ya no va. Con respecto a la propuesta de Camerún, yo creo que eso no corre. Entonces, podemos borrarlo ya. El tema del Management, "to hold them" eso también, o sea, que sean "regional offices". Vamos limpiando, tal vez, para dejar un solo texto que es más fácil.

CHAIRPERSON

We put it now without the bracket. So, we say "*the Council requests that Regional Offices organise information sessions for their Members within a reasonable time*". Delete "*as appropriate*". Could we agree to this text now? I see nodding.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I thank you and I really thank Costa Rica to bring up the issue of arrangement modalities but could this discussion not to be given to the Independent Chairperson of the Council to conduct informal consultations on the arrangement and so on. Because we have hosted a Regional Conference, we sign an agreement with FAO on the arrangement.

So, this is already something which is done in practice for the arrangement with the host country. That is known. But if now, the modality of how the dates are determined and so on, it is not now that the Regional Conference that can decide that. We can have an informal discussion to hold that and then probably decide. But I see that that is a good point, but how to handle it, it could be different.

Mr Jujjavarapu BALAJI (India)

Attending these Regional Conferences entail a lot of expenditures to the member countries. Perhaps, I suggest after Members in hybrid mode.

CHAIRPERSON

Let us not be too prescriptive. Let us keep it flexible. You cannot micromanage the Regional Offices.

Mr Khalid MEHBOOB (Pakistan)

We have spent hell of a lot of time on this Item and it is not even totally, as being pointed out, the Council's responsibility. It is Regional Offices. They actually do give us briefings. At least for the Asia Group, they kept following us countless times to give us a briefing. Now, the fact that something contradictory happened does not call into question the whole process. So, I think we should move forward, leave it as it is. The present wording of these paragraphs, we should accept and move on.

CHAIRPERSON

I think that is one of the Regional Offices calling now.

Mr Claudio GARON (Brazil)

On a totally personal note, I think it is already midday. I think it is strange that we have to discuss this because I think it should be obvious that information sessions should be held everywhere every time. I fully agree with 44. I would only put a comma after "time".

CHAIRPERSON

Can we agree to paragraph 44? Then we delete paragraph 45 because we have dealt with it. Can we agree to the text on the screen now?

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

I had wanted to suggest we merge paragraphs 43 and 44, because 44 seems to be each year bit for the Secretariat so that we have after "Report" "*requested Management to make further consultations to update the version of the calendar for all Regional Conferences in 2024*". It will be open.

CHAIRPERSON

Could we not stick to this as it is now?

Ms Mary Mabei MWALE (Kenya)

It would be independent. Those discussions would now be independent. They would not be time bound. Maybe it would be easier for the concerns expressed by Cameroon.

Mr Yuki MORITA (Japan)

My original intention to insert paragraph 45, which is now deleted, is to ensure that really advanced consultation is made for sure in future, not only limited to 2024. So, my suggestion is to insert at the end of the paragraph 44 "*and onwards*".

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

In removing paragraph 45, we had an important element there around approval. So, my suggestion would be to amend 44 to say after “*within reasonable time*”, “*for Members to approve their modality arrangements and provisional dates*”. Remove the word “*on*”.

CHAIRPERSON

This suggests that if you say for Members, that means the Council. What I understand, the Legal Counsel says, in general, it is not the Members who have to approve the Calendar. It is up to the regions. If we want to bring in approval, I see already that several not positive reactions to bringing in approval. Again, I ask flexibility to keep paragraph 44 without the brackets.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

Alternatively, we could say, “*to seek agreement on the modality arrangements and provisional dates*”, but this is still in the context of regional Members. We are not talking about the Council here. In the context of this Session, the Council is requesting an information session that then Members at the moment, we have had an information session where we were told, and I will use the language that it is a fait accompli that our Regional Conference would happen on these dates under this modality. That is not in the hands of the Members, and that is really what we are trying to do is put this back in the hands of the Members.

Mr Abdellah LARHMAID (Morocco)

We are here discussing the issue of the Calendar of next year. So, I see so many issues brought here on the table that going beyond our mandate. So, maybe I suggest what was suggested by our colleague from Pakistan. So just keep the paragraph 44 as it stands before and we close this Item.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

We have to be very careful here. A decision-making body is a decision-making body. So, I am not so sure that an information session can be transformed into a decision-making body. So, that is why I could be reluctant for Members to approve. No, we discuss and they agree among themselves without having to make a decision on that or for approval.

So that is why I am really seeking the indulgence of our colleague from Australia to take that into consideration. Not to insist very much on the word “*approval*”. It is a little bit contradictory to the functions of this kind of session or up to what level they can go in decision making.

Ms Emma HATCHER (Australia)

We have had an important discussion today. In the interest of being flexible and noting the time that you have highlighted, Chairperson, Australia and the Southwest Pacific will agree to paragraph 44 with the removal of the bracketed text.

CHAIRPERSON

After this discussion, I expect that Regional Offices will be listening in, that we have to do our utmost, of those who are involved in the Regional Conference that we will find and should find consensus on all those Items. Modalities, arrangement and provisional dates, because I think starting any Regional Conference where there is frustration about the process will not lead to a very good outcome.

So bearing that in mind, can we agree now to paragraph 44? The Council has given a clear signal that hopes that those information sessions will find consensus on all those three items so that we have successful Regional Conferences to be reported in our December Council. Can we agree?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

Yes, we have, agreed. That is not the issue, but the issue is that really for the Regional Conference for Africa, we must give the credit to the Regional Office in Africa because they have been consulting us here in Rome since the beginning of 2003. So that credit, we should give. The issue can happen in other regions, but in our region, we have to give that credit and we want this for the record.

CHAIRPERSON

It is recorded, that credit. Perhaps, it is a good example.

I stop now the discussion. I think we have dealt with the issue, we have dealt with the paragraphs. Let us go on now. “*Approved*” is deleted.

We have found an agreement on the conclusions.

Item 22. Any other matters

Point 22. Questions diverses

Tema 22. Asuntos varios

Item 22.1 Appointment of the Chairperson and the Alternate Chairpersons of the Appeals Committee

Point 22.1 Nomination du président et du président suppléant du Comité de recours

Tema 22.1 Nombramiento del Presidente y los presidentes suplentes del Comité de Apelaciones

(CL 174/LIM/5)

CHAIRPERSON

I turn to agenda Item 22, *Appointment of the Chairperson and the Alternate Chairpersons of the Appeals Committee*. Relevant document is CL 174/LIM/5. I give the floor to our Legal Counsel.

Ms Donata RUGARABAMU (Legal Counsel)

I would be very brief as the paper before you already outlines the requirements. The Staff Regulation requires that the Appeals Committee Chairperson and Alternate Chairpersons be appointed by the Council. We are in a situation where the three positions - the Chairperson and the two Alternates - need to be replaced after some very welcome and very valuable service in this context,

Ambassador Mario Arvelo, who has served since 2014 and Ambassador Jackeline Yonga since 2021, have provided wonderful support in the internal justice system, but their terms are coming to an end. So you have before you the names of three candidates for these positions, which are taken on the basis of personal expertise. They are presented to you for your consideration and for appointment.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, I would like to ask the Council if it is willing to proceed by general consent to the appointment of Her Excellency, Ms Daniela Rotondaro, Ambassador of the Republic of San Marino and Permanent Representative to FAO as the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee for the term of two years taking that position up immediately. Can we agree to that?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Now, we move to the appointment of the two Alternates. Is the Council willing to proceed by the general consent to appoint Her Excellency, Ms Haifa Aissami Madah, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Permanent Representative to FAO, as the first Alternate Chairperson of the Appeals Committee for the term for two years taking effect immediately? Can we agree to this?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I give the floor to the United States of America.

Mr Robert BOENISH (United States of America)

The United States of America disassociates from the appointment of the delegate from the Maduro regime purporting to represent Venezuela as Alternate Chairperson of the Appeals Committee and wishes the sentiment to be included as a footnote in the Council Report.

CHAIRPERSON

This will be reflected in the footnote in the Report.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

We similarly disassociate from the appointment of Venezuela to the Committee.

CHAIRPERSON

Also, that will be reflected in the footnote. I do not see any other requests for the floor. So, I now turn to the second Alternate. Is the Council willing to proceed by general consent to appoint Mr Khalid Mehboob?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

My congratulations on behalf of the Council to the appointment of the Chairperson and the two Alternates for the Appeals Committee. It is important work to be done.

Sra. Madah Haifa AISSAMI (Venezuela, República Bolivariana de) (Observador)

En primer lugar, desearía felicitar a su excelencia, la embajadora Daniela Rotondaro por su reciente designación como presidenta del comité y, por supuesto, a mi querido y distinguido colega de Pakistán con quien tendré la enorme responsabilidad de asumir este encargo del Consejo y estar al servicio de esta Organización y de todos sus Estados Miembros.

Lamentablemente, por alusiones, me veo obligada, para los efectos del registro, lamentar una vez más que dos delegaciones, por razones estrictamente políticas, y sin hacer ningún tipo de distinción con respecto al contexto y a la naturaleza de esta designación, nuevamente pretendan agregar aún más tensiones al ambiente de la buena armonía que debería reinar en el marco de la celebración de este Consejo. Sin embargo, y a pesar de ello, reitero mi compromiso personal para trabajar conforme a los textos fundamentales y al servicio de la buena gobernanza de esta Organización.

Item 22. Any other matters**Point 22. Questions diverses****Tema 22. Asuntos varios**

Item 22.3 Statement by a Representative of the FAO Staff Bodies

Point 22.3 Déclaration d'un représentant des associations du personnel de la FAO

Tema 22.3 Declaración de un representante de los órganos representativos del personal de la FAO

CHAIRPERSON

We now turn to Agenda Item 22, *Any other matters*. We start this Item with the statement by the Representative of the FAO Staff Bodies and the statement will be made by Ms Susan Murray.

Ms Susan Murray (General Secretary of the Union of General Service Staff)

Chairperson of the Council, Director-General, Secretary-General of the Council, Distinguished delegates, Colleagues, the Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) – the Union of General Service Staff at FAO and WFP (UGSS) and the Association of Professionals in FAO (AP-in-FAO) – would first like to thank the Director-General for the opportunity to share staff perceptions and feedback with you, in a spirit of collaboration and with the shared goal of making FAO the best that it can be.

FAO Management holds regular meetings with SRBs, which is very much appreciated, despite the slow pace of concrete progress on the changes that were promised. Interactions between the Staff Representative bodies and Management continue to be characterized by delays or lack of real consultation on important matters.

On the three critical areas of significance for us, namely job growth, flexible working and equal treatment between headquarters (HQ) and Field Offices we would like to provide the following update.

On the topic of job growth, for many years there was little or no avenue for the dedicated staff of FAO to nurture their careers in line with the growth in their expertise and experience. While the corporate job reclassification exercise for the General Service Staff category was recently completed quite successfully recently, a significant milestone, we acknowledge that there is still a long way to go to ensure that everyone within FAO feels treated fairly. There is no indication of when and if an exercise for the Professional Staff category might be undertaken. We believe that fostering an environment where each member is an integral part of FAO's success is crucial.

The long-awaited draft new recruitment policy has still not been shared with the SRBs. The Organization is still struggling with an inadequate policy lacking the transparency and oversight necessary to ensure a fair and impartial process.

We believe our organization must act with greater determination if it genuinely wishes to retain dedicated, experienced colleagues and attract new talent, particularly women. We are still far from achieving gender parity in professional-level positions.

As we affirmed in our last statement to the Governing Bodies, flexible working arrangements are an essential part of any modern and flexible organization. Such arrangements demonstrably enhance productivity, improve staff morale, allow organizations to deliver more efficiently, reduce absenteeism and turnover, support recruitment and retention, especially women, cut costs, promote equality and diversity, and meet environmental goals - to name just a few of the key benefits. It is also in line with the UN's stated policies on the topic and on work life harmony. Employees (which includes consultants) across the entire Organization, in all locations have said that allowing some flexibility for teleworking helps them do their jobs with more energy, is a crucial factor in their career decision making, and they want to see a more modern and flexible working approach in FAO. More than 2 300 employees have signed a petition to the Director-General requesting flexible working arrangements and a similar number gathered in this same plenary room on the call of the SRB to show their determination. We urged FAO Senior Management to build on the experience accumulated during the pilot to emanate a permanent policy which reflects modern approaches, lessons-learned and staff feedback. We are still waiting for a reply to our petition and to see a draft policy.

The dynamics with regard to our field colleagues still needs improvement, starting with consistent and equal treatment. More effort must be made to ensure that the rules are applied equally throughout the Organization – whether it is in relation workload, mobility opportunities, career development, rental subsidy, flexible working, sharing office space or the level of healthcare. The right to official staff representation of our general service and National Professional field colleagues is of paramount importance to the SRBs, however, Senior Management continue to dismiss and delay the issue.

UGSS and AP-in-FAO have not seen the dialogue and the mechanisms already in place, translate into a meaningful and systematic consultation process, followed up by concrete outcomes. We believe this must happen in the best interests of the Organization.

All employees are committed to creating a working environment that promotes equitable treatment, growth and innovation. We believe in FAO's *four betters*, we want Better Production and sustainability, Better Nutrition and health, a Better Environment and most of all, a Better Life for all people! Leaving no one behind.

CHAIRPERSON

I think it is always important to listen to all of us and also to listen to the concerns and wishes of the staff because at the end of the day, the excellence of the Organization is decided by the excellence of the staff.

I do hope that the consultations will lead to a good outcome. But let us again appreciate the crucial work and the excellent work of our staff of our FAO, what they are doing at the country, regional level and headquarter levels. I know how the Council strongly appreciates your work. Thank you so much.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

As was said on Monday, since we have the International Year of Camelids, I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Bolivia to give a statement about the year and also about event of last Monday.

Sra. Sonia Silvia BRITO SANDOVAL (Bolivia, Estado Plurinacional de)

Recordando que la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas (UNGA) aprobó la Resolución A/RES/72/210, que declara el 2024 como Año Internacional de los Camélidos a propuesta del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, con el objetivo de promover la concienciación pública acerca de la importancia económica y cultural de los camélidos y el consumo de productos que se obtienen de estos mamíferos, incluidos productos comestibles, con el fin de contribuir a la lucha contra la extrema pobreza, el empoderamiento de la mujer, la erradicación del hambre, la inseguridad alimentaria y la malnutrición;

Reafirmando los compromisos de alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) y la constante lucha contra el hambre y la malnutrición en las poblaciones vulnerables que habitan las tierras altas y los desiertos; conscientes de que el cambio en el patrón alimentario ha contribuido a la inseguridad alimentaria y la disminución del consumo de alimentos nutritivos sustituidos por productos ultra procesados, con baja densidad de nutrientes y alta densidad de azúcares, sodio y grasa;

Destacando que los camélidos contribuyen al uso sostenible de los ecosistemas terrestres, (ODS 15) y a combatir la desertificación, detener y revertir la degradación de suelos y detener la pérdida de diversidad biológica y también son una fuente destacada de fertilizantes para la producción agrícola y que constituyen el principal medio de subsistencia para millones de familias pobres que viven en zonas hostiles del planeta;

Reconociendo que los camélidos son un elemento importante de la identidad cultural y espiritual de los Pueblos Indígenas ancestrales y que constituyen una importante base social de conocimientos tradicionales contemporáneos que han mantenido, preservado y protegido la biodiversidad genética;

Resaltando la fuente destacada de proteínas, el alto valor nutricional que contienen los derivados de la carne de camélidos que permite una dieta balanceada en particular la carne deshidratada, con un alto contenido de hierro, bajo en grasa y colesterol;

Poniendo en relieve el lanzamiento del Año Internacional de los Camélidos, bajo la copresidencia de Bolivia y Arabia Saudita, realizado el 4 de diciembre de 2023, en la sede de la FAO en Roma que, contando con la participación de autoridades nacionales del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, del Reino de Arabia Saudita y del Director-General de la FAO reiteró el reconocimiento de las contribuciones vitales que estos animales realizan al entorno de vida, a la seguridad alimentaria y nutrición.

Primero, alienta a aunar esfuerzos de todos los Estados Miembros de la FAO para fomentar y promover la importancia de los camélidos para la seguridad alimentaria, sistemas alimentarios sostenibles, así como su importancia económica y cultural para los pueblos que habitan las tierras altas y los desiertos en consonancia con los derechos de la Madre Tierra;

Segundo, insta a elaborar planes y programas de acción a nivel nacional y regional de fomento y fortalecimiento de la producción de los camélidos y sus derivados, así como planes y programas de manejo de poblaciones de estas especies, que aseguren su conservación y la de sus frágiles hábitats, que contemple formas eficaces de cooperación, con miras a celebrar un exitoso Año Internacional de los Camélidos, 2024;

Tercero, propone a los gobiernos desarrollen políticas públicas que fomenten el fortalecimiento de los Pueblos Indígenas y comunidades pastoras de camélidos en la lucha contra la pobreza, la erradicación del hambre y el desarrollo económico y cultural de los productores de camélidos, con particular atención el apoyo a las actividades económicas a cargo de las mujeres indígenas y pastoras;

Además, recomienda realizar actividades y eventos de alcance mundial durante el 2024 que procuren la participación de Pueblos Indígenas, productores y actores dedicados al sector camélido a fin de alcanzar el objetivo del Año Internacional de los Camélidos de socializar su multidimensional

importancia, así como a cooperar y difundir estas actividades por parte de la FAO y de los Estados Miembros y otros que deseen sumarse;

Por último, invita a todos los Estados Miembros y a todos los interesados a que aporten contribuciones voluntarias y proporcionen otras formas de apoyo al Año Internacional de los Camélidos 2024.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for your statement on the International Year of Camelids, and we had a wonderful side event or special event last Monday.

I was just two minutes ago informed that a Member would like to bring forward another not announced point under “*Any other matters*”, but let me consult with the Member to see what the content is and to see how to deal with it.

Thank you very much. I consulted. I give the floor to Canada because it is a point of information, not a point for decision and not for discussion.

Mr Maarten DE GROOT (Canada)

On the basis of our collective experience this week which brought us to examine and perhaps read for the first time many paragraphs on the Rules of Procedure, this gave us pause to consider and make this point of information.

While we fully hope and will continue to work towards decisions on the basis of consensus in this body, we believe we might all benefit from additional clarity on the interpretation and application of the Rules based on the Basic Texts and as appropriate, in the case of ambiguity with reference to other UN bodies and established practice.

In this regard, we believe it would be useful to receive an explanatory note to Members to be presented to the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM). We understand a similar document exists from the 2019 Conference titled, “*Guide on the Conduct of Plenary Meetings*”. That could be updated, made fit-for-purpose for Council and other Governing Bodies based on recent experience and recirculated. We would request CCLM to consider this matter.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Canada, for this information about request to Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) for this Agenda Item. It will come back via CCLM to this Council when discussed.

With that, I think we have concluded our work on all Agenda Items on the 174th Session of the FAO Council.

The meeting of the Drafting Committee will start at 15:00 hours in the Green Room.

It means that it depends on how long it will take the Drafting Committee. We hope to resume the Session still around 18:00 hours. We adjourn the Council until 18:00 hours, and if there is other information, of course, we will circulate it on the Members’ Gateway.

I adjourn the meeting.

The meeting rose at 12:24 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 24

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.24

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Seventy-fourth Session
Cent soixante- quatorzième session
174.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2023
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2023
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2023**

**TENTH PLENARY SESSION
DIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
DÉCIMA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

8 December 2023

The Tenth Plenary Meeting was opened at 21:11 hours
Mr Hans Hoogeveen,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La dixième séance plénière est ouverte à 21 h 11
sous la présidence de M. Hans Hoogeveen,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la décima sesión plenaria a las 21.11
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Hans Hoogeveen,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

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to: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

Les parties signalées par [XX], pour des raisons techniques, étaient inaudibles. Veuillez communiquer
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las correcciones a: Verbatim-Team@fao.org

**ADOPTION OF REPORT
ADOPTION DU RAPPORT
APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME**

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends, we are almost at the end of our 174th Session of the FAO Council. We worked extremely hard this week with a lot of emotions, but we have a Report, which is important, because it paves the way for future action.

Now we proceed with the Adoption of the Report. The relevant document is *CL 174/REP, Report for Adoption*, which has been made available to you around 20:30 hours.

I would like to invite the Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, Mr Anatoliy Shatkovskyy, of Canada who Chairpersoned very capably the Drafting Committee.

Mr Anatoliy SHATKOVSKYY (Chairperson of the Drafting Committee)

I was honoured to have been elected Chairperson of the Drafting Committee of the 174th Session of the FAO Council in hybrid modality. We had a single meeting of the Committee and concluded our work. I very much appreciated the work carried out together with the Members of this Drafting Committee, namely Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Morocco, Peru, Spain, Sudan and the European Union (EU) as a participant.

I would like to express my appreciation for the constructive spirit of collaboration and consensus-building which prevailed in the Drafting Committee, and which allowed a smooth conduct of our work with the positive result that you have before you. This is why I would recommend that the Council Members adopt the Report *en bloc*.

CHAIRPERSON

You gave us a clear recommendation to adopt the Report *en bloc*. Our appreciation to the Chairperson but also to all Members of the Drafting Committee because they did with hard work their work, they achieved consensus.

That is why they made a recommendation to move ahead for adoption *en bloc*. First let us give an applause to the Chairperson and the Members of the Drafting Committee.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

You are now eager, I hope, to adopt this Report *en bloc*.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I give the floor to the United States of America.

Mr Rodney M. HUNTER (United States of America)

The United States of America joined consensus on this Report tonight, but the United States of America leaves the 174th Session of the FAO Council deeply concerned about the governance of our Organization.

Today, for the first time, the Report of the Council contains a draft proposal that was not decided on by this Council. The decision of the Chairperson not to follow the General Rules of the Organization and the Council's Rules of Procedure meant that a proposal put forward by a large number of Member States was not properly put before this Council for decision. It was unfair to those Members who deserved a proper vote on their very important proposal on a very important issue that was before this Council, and it is unfortunate for the credibility of the Council as well.

So, to be very clear about the United States of America position, I will read the following explanation. The purported vote on the draft proposal listed in Agenda Item 5 was contrary to the General Rules of the Organization and the Council's Rules of Procedure and outside the Chairperson's authority as Chairperson. We accordingly did not join a vote on that proposal, and it was not properly before the Council for decision.

The purported vote on that text was invalid. Given the failure to abide by the Rules of Procedure, we do not recognize this as a decision adopted by the Council and neither should this Organization. No decision was validly adopted by the Council for Agenda Item 5.

CHAIRPERSON

Your statement will be recorded in the Verbatim. With this I would like to give the floor to the Director-General.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The 174th Session of the FAO Council shall be recorded in the history of FAO as a unique one. It was not an easy week but based on our Constitution and the Basic Texts (2017), and of course under our mandate, the collective will to go forward with the important work of this Organization prevailed. Although we are sometimes challenged by different interpretations and by disagreements, we are always able to reach compromise and consensus, united under the mandate of FAO moving towards the noble mission for the elimination of hunger and poverty.

I was pleased that we converged this week on the primary importance of empowering youth and women, officially establishing the FAO Office of Youth and Women (FAO-OYW) for the effective transformation of agrifood systems and rural development. A big congratulations to all of you! It is YOU who made history with me, together!

Continues in Chinese

The world belongs to everyone, but the future is in the hands of the youth. Young generations are full of energy, hope, and always eager to make things better. Being young isn't just about age, but also about physical well-being and a positive mindset. To stay young, we all need to embrace lifelong learning, keep working, and seek to make a positive impact to the world around us.

In 1762, 260 years ago, Jean-Jacques Rousseau became the pioneering philosopher to advocate for gender equality through a historical lens. His renowned work, *Du Contrat Social*, put forth the idea of equal rights for women. Seventy years ago, the first Constitution of the People's Republic of China affirmed equal rights of both men and women in the economy, society, culture, and family. Acknowledging the pivotal role of women, the phrase "women hold up half the sky" underscores their indispensable contributions to the peace and prosperity of families, communities, and the world at large.

Continues in English

We need them to think innovatively, be action oriented and results targeted, to change and accelerate national and global pathways towards achieving more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient, and more sustainable agrifood systems. They are real game changers for the Four Betters, and the cross-cutting catalysts for implementing the FAO Strategic Framework over the next decade, and beyond.

The Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2024-25 you have endorsed will ensure that FAO's work over the coming biennium will be targeted, prioritized, and tailored to the needs of Members.

Dear Colleagues, the complex challenges we are facing as an international community demand that we work together – this is not an option. As the UN Specialized Agency tasked with food and agriculture, we must ensure our strategies, action plans, initiatives and priorities should be focused on our mandate.

We need to make every effort to fully equip the Organization to provide the best technical, professional support to Members, to assist them achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Let us continue to work in an open, transparent, and inclusive manner, for effective governance and decision-making, and for concrete actions at the country level. Working as ONE FAO and as part of the ONE UN family.

The ongoing COP28 has affirmed that food and agriculture must be at the top of the international agenda because agrifood systems transformations are the climate solutions. Transformative agrifood systems will also ensure social, economic, and environmental multiple benefits with food security, improved livelihoods, and rural development.

Peace remains a prerequisite for food security, and we need to remember that the Right to Food is a basic human right.

I, together with all our employees from headquarters to the field, have worked tirelessly over the past four years to achieve the goals I had set out in my first Manifesto. I look forward to working with all partners for more deliverables during my second term as FAO Director-General.

Continues in Chinese

The Renaissance and modernization of FAO must rely on its specialized staff, the vitality of young employees, and the modernization of governance, management, and organizational culture. It is crucial to mobilize the collective efforts of all Members, while showing compassion and sharing of wisdom. Working together, we must invest in the future of humanity, and enhance our commitment to better serving the needs of farmers and consumers.

Continues in English

The FAO Renaissance will only happen if we are determined to think together, work together and contribute together to Recover, Rebuild, and Reform. Thank you.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Mr Balaji JUJJAVARAPU (India)

I have taken the floor to thank the Director-General for his august presence among us, for his valuable guidance and the concerted efforts made by him towards establishing the Office of Youth and Women (OYW).

I would also like to thank you, Chairperson, for your leadership and commend your efforts and hard work in the conduct of these proceedings. We appreciate the Secretariat, the interpreters and the staff for their able support.

This is my first Council meeting. I would like to appreciate the Members of this Council for constructive deliberations, collective efforts and flexibility shown on several issues. The Council is also fortunate to have among us distinguished colleagues with vast experience. We have a colleague who has attended 60 *plus* Councils, another colleague who has been with FAO or closely associated with FAO for more than 50 years. We celebrate this unique opportunity to have them around and share their experiences and anecdotes, both formally and informally, while we all agree that their contribution to the Council is enriching.

Notwithstanding this, sometimes we could not achieve consensus on certain issues. It is okay to agree to disagree if FAO has a historic legacy of being known as a rules-based Organization. After witnessing the Council in the last five days, I am of the considered view that we have to do more to ensure that Rules and Procedures of the Organization are interpreted in their purest form and jealously safeguard it.

Therefore, I have no other doubt in saying that this Council has its task cut out. We all are aware that the strength of an organization is its Members and the manner in which the organization is run by its Members. I have great confidence in our collective capabilities and wisdom to do this and leave a lasting legacy.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

We are coming to the closure of the 174th Session of the Council. We worked hard. It was an intense week. We have seen sparking emotions. We have seen that we are divided on issues, both on substance and on procedure.

But I always say when the emotions are there, it shows that our heart is there, because emotion shows passion for where we want to go. And it also means that with the same passion, we have to start again finding each other within the Council on those issues which divide us.

Because if we cannot do it here, how can we show to those who need it the most, wherever they are in the world, that we are taking care of them, that we can overcome our differences, whether it would be on substance, whether it would be on Procedures? Because of our emotions, we have to start building bridges again.

Also, on a personal basis, and certainly you can be assured that I will take initiatives to that, I agree with the words of our Director-General, that youth means the future. It is so great that we are giving so much attention to the youth, and women. I always say without women we would not be here, and they are in the lead, but with the youth, giving them so much attention in our future is crucial.

But it also says that we have to make sure that they have a future, a future wherever they are in the world, to make sure that they have opportunities, that they have the resources, that they are safe, that they have their nutritious food, and it means that we still have a lot to do.

At the beginning of this week I said our actions are our future. When we see the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Gaza, in Ukraine, but let us not forget the other wars and conflict areas in the world. Every day we see the pictures on the news, and I always become sadder when I see them. But it also shows that we have to do more than we think we can do. That is why I applauded the staff of FAO, all staff, and, of course, including the Director-General.

But I also applaud you as Members of the Council, as servers of the Council, but of FAO because FAO is a Membership Organization, a Member-led Organization. Together we can show ways towards the future, and it means besides the discussions here, we have to do more at a national or at the ground level because only there we can change and transform our food systems within the national context. So, that is why I applaud you all. Also for your passion.

And, we have a new Member, our new Deputy Director-General, who with his passion for FAO, for sustainable agriculture and food systems, he will make a difference within FAO and for the work on the ground.

After an *en bloc* conclusion by consensus, we go now to the holiday season. Hopefully everybody has a little bit more time for their families. On different moments, but we will celebrate a New Year. And the New Year, after we have been a little bit more relaxed, hopefully brings us to an even stronger effort to work together, to unite each other to go to actions for all of those who need the most.

Because that should keep us awake. If we cannot do it here in Rome within the mandate of our beloved Organization, which is there for food security, for fighting food insecurity, fighting against malnutrition and also fighting against climate change. I already have seen and I know you and I have respect for all of you, deep in our heart we are equal and we have the same passion.

With that, I would like to thank the magnificent work of the staff but certainly of the interpreters.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

Also for you it was a tough week. And when I see the back, I see there the Messengers. And they are still laughing, even though they are tired.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

I see the technicians. Everything worked this week. And that is great because you can never be sure about the technology. Let us thank them as well.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

Last but not least, I thank those guys and women sitting here at the table, behind the table and even those in the offices.

Without them, where would we be? When we look to all of us, I think they spent the most hours working this week and for many weeks.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

With this, thank you so so much because with the passion we have for our FAO, we can make a difference, *Our Action Our Future*.

I wish you all beautiful things for the holiday season, everything you wish for and even more. I do hope to see you again next year with your passion and with your love. Thank you so much. The 174th Session of the Council is closed.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Before you leave, I also wish to thank my special Legal Counsel, and I also want to mention that I walk the talk. I have now the two youngest Deputy Directors-General (DDGs), and two female DDGs. Maurizio Martina is the youngest DDG in the history of FAO - he is 45 years old. And when Beth Bechdol became DDG, she was also less than 50 years old.

I also want to mention one more important thing: Africa and other developing countries asked me to stress the Decentralized Offices. Next week we will take action on this! You said *Our Actions are Our Future*, right? So, we do not just talk about strengthening the Decentralized Offices, we will take action by holding the very first FAO Representatives Global Working Conference. And, more important, we will get ownership and partnership from the 2024 Regional Ministerial Conferences on how to strengthen the country offices, together.

As you said, we are a Member-owned, Member-led Organization. I have no money. I only have a little bit of wisdom to coordinate the work. You contribute the money, you take the ownership and we take action together! Thank you so much.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

The meeting rose at 21:54 hours
La séance est levée à 21 h 54
Se levanta la sesión a las 21.54