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COUNCIL

Hundred and Forty-eighth Session

Rome, 2-6 December 2013

Report of the 114th Session of the Programme Committee (11-15 November 2013)

Executive Summary

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

- Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15 (paras. 6-9)
- FAO's work in Social Protection (para. 10)
- Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa (para. 11)
- Evaluation of FAO's role and work in disaster risk reduction in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean (para. 12)
- Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition (para. 14)
- Follow-up on Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development (para. 15)

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

Suggested action by the Council

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

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REPORT OF THE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Rome, 11 – 15 November 2013

Introduction

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

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

3. The Chairperson informed the Committee that Ms Debra Price had been designated to replace Mr Eric Robinson as the representative of Canada for part of the session. A summary of the qualifications of the substitute representative can be downloaded from the FAO Governing and Statutory Body Web site at: www.fao.org/unfao/govbodies/gsbhome/programme-committee/en/.
4. The Programme Committee expressed its solidarity for the people and Government of the Philippines in the wake of devastation and loss of life caused by the typhoon Haiyan.

Election of the Vice-Chairperson for 2013

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

Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15¹

6. The Committee welcomed the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2014-15, noting that they reflected accurately the decisions and requests of the 38th session of the Conference.
7. The Committee expressed satisfaction that budgetary savings had been identified in line with Conference's guidance for the need to fully implement the Programme of Work in the most cost effective manner.
8. The Committee welcomed the progress made on preparing the results framework and work plan for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the MTP 2014-17 / PWB 2014-15. In acknowledging the full managerial scope of the Director-General and the internal governance role of the Corporate Programmes Monitoring Board, the Committee:
 - a) underlined the importance of the Organization's work in production of global public goods, and of the Technical Cooperation Programme;
 - b) supported the additional attention to FAO's work on statistics, in particular continuous refinement and improvement of statistics on global hunger;

¹ CL 148/3

- c) noted the progress on mainstreaming of gender and governance as cross-cutting themes, and emphasized the importance of gender disaggregated data in indicators across all Strategic Objectives;
 - d) supported the five guiding principles outlined in the document for identifying, prioritizing and elaborating outputs;
 - e) welcomed the outline of areas of emphasis and de-emphasis, and encouraged further work to identify such areas;
 - f) recalled the importance of external partnerships for the successful implementation of the programme of work *inter alia* with Member Governments, and other multilateral and UN organizations, including other Rome-based agencies;
 - g) recognized that the design of the monitoring and evaluation framework was sound in principle though complex in process, and looked forward to its effectiveness in measuring the implementation of the programme of work;
 - h) in recalling the need for clear definition of indicators, and for coherence between outcomes and indicators, requested a note outlining further details on the process and methodology for developing indicators be presented to the 148th session of the Council, as part of an update to Annex 5 of document CL 148/3.
9. In addition, the Committee:
- a) recommended the Council approve the revised budgeted post establishment;
 - b) recommended the Council approve the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in the document;
 - c) noted that further budgetary transfers could arise as a result of work planning, as well as from using the most efficient and effective modalities of implementation during the biennium. In this context, the Committee recalled that within chapter transfers and transfers from one chapter to another required to implement the PWB during the biennium would be handled in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.5.

FAO's work in Social Protection²

10. The Committee welcomed the document and noted that it responded to the request of the Conference. The Committee:
- a) underlined the importance of FAO's work in social protection in pursuing its goals of food security and poverty reduction, as well as in relation to its work in nutrition, agriculture and rural development;
 - b) recognized the institutional priority given and resources allocated to social protection;
 - c) requested the Organization build its internal expertise on social protection to leverage synergies consistent with its technical capacity and comparative advantages in nutrition, agriculture and rural development to enable provision of policy advice and technical cooperation to member countries for the benefit in particular of rural poor;
 - d) stressed the need for effective collaboration with Member Governments, external partners, and other UN agencies on social protection, including sharing of knowledge and learning from experience.

² CL 148/12

Evaluation of FAO's Regional and Subregional Offices for Africa³

11. The Committee welcomed the high quality of the Evaluation, and agreed with the Management Response. The Committee:
- a) appreciated the efforts underway, and encouraged further work on decentralization with the aim of achieving decentralized empowerment alongside robust monitoring and accountability within the Africa region and throughout the decentralized offices network;
 - b) stressed the need for effort at all levels so that FAO can deliver as one in full participation with Member Governments;
 - c) emphasized the importance of clarifying and communicating roles and responsibilities at the different levels of the Organization;
 - d) was of the opinion that capacity development, appropriate staffing and recurrent skills mix assessments and adjustments are important elements for ensuring full and effective delivery;
 - e) welcomed the successful use of partnerships highlighted in the Evaluation, and encouraged further attention in this regard, including in partnerships with regional organizations, national institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations;
 - f) emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming;
 - g) encouraged the ongoing efforts to shorten the appraisal and approval time for TCP projects;
 - h) suggested that the role of the Shared Services Centre should be part of upcoming regional evaluations, as appropriate;
 - i) suggested that regional evaluation reports should be put on the main Agenda of the respective Regional Conferences.

Evaluation of FAO's role and work in disaster risk reduction in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean⁴

12. The Committee welcomed this timely Evaluation, along with the Management Response. The Committee saw it as essential that FAO move to a holistic disaster risk reduction (DRR) approach, incorporating it into the Organization's core development-based activities for a speedier delivery. DRR inclusion will strengthen work on climate change adaptation and resilience efforts under Strategic Objective 5 (SO5). The Committee:

- a) was of the opinion that the recommendations of the Evaluation were applicable to FAO's work globally;
- b) recognized that capacity building in the disaster risk management was a key aspect;
- c) recommended that FAO develop strategic partnerships on DRR, building on its comparative advantages, especially its network, technical expertise and statistical databases;
- d) recommended that FAO build its DRR work into the reviewed Strategic Framework and Strategic Objectives and particularly under SO5;
- e) endorsed a distinct focus on gender which should be apparent in all DRR work. One aspect of this was the use of gender-disaggregated figures;
- f) suggested that DRR work be integrated into Country Programming Frameworks;
- g) recommended that DRR work be adequately followed up, and lessons learned (for example, from the successful work carried out in connection with the H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) be taken into consideration;
- h) suggested that a follow-up report to this Evaluation be presented in three years' time.

Progress in the recruitment of the Director of the Office of Evaluation

13. The Committee was informed that following the recommendation of the panel for review of candidates in line with the Charter for the Office of Evaluation, the Director-General had made an appointment to the position of Director of the Office of Evaluation.

³ PC 114/2; PC 114/2 Sup.1

⁴ PC 114/3; PC 114/3 Sup.1

Follow-up to the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition⁵

14. The Committee was satisfied with the follow-up and the validation reports on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work in nutrition. It recognized that the validation report provided a circumscribed view of FAO's progress on implementation of the Evaluation's recommendations. In addition, the Committee:

- a) welcomed the appointment of the new Director of the Nutrition Division;
- b) commended FAO for integrating nutrition into the reviewed Strategic Framework and the Programme of Work and Budget;
- c) encouraged further work on creating a common understanding of nutrition, and increasing the visibility of FAO's work in nutrition *inter alia* through a communication strategy, including at country level;
- d) welcomed the strengthening of nutrition work at country level through the establishment of new nutrition positions at regional and subregional levels;
- e) encouraged FAO to take the opportunity of the ICN2⁶ and the connected preparatory period to further nutrition work, while using FAO's advantage and expertise;
- f) reaffirmed the importance of partnerships, and looked forward to further efforts in this regard;
- g) reiterated the important link between gender and nutrition;
- h) requested a further update in 2015, including information on activities at the national and regional work done, as well as challenges relating to specific recommendations;
- i) suggested that findings from events such as the "Forests for Food Security and Nutrition", 13-15 May 2013, and World Food Day on "Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition" in 2013 should be considered in the Organization's work on nutrition.

Follow-up on Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development⁷

15. The Committee welcomed the follow-up and validation reports on the Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to gender and development. The Committee:

- a) welcomed the Director-General's policy on gender equity endorsed by Conference;
- b) applauded the progress made in mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting theme in the reviewed Strategic Framework and the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-15, and the inclusion of gender specific indicators under all Strategic Objectives;
- c) recognized FAO's work with external partners on gender, including with other Rome-based agencies, as well as the engagement with UN Women on the Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Project;
- d) noted that the ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the Evaluation within the Organization should be strengthened, in particular in increasing gender capacity and gender balance at FAO at all levels;
- e) underlined the need for high visibility of gender to reflect adequately FAO's efforts;
- f) underscored the importance of creating a satisfactory mechanism of accountability;
- g) requested to be informed regularly, with a formal progress update in 2015.

16. The Committee requested that, in future, validation reports should not contain proposals or recommendations.

⁵ PC 114/4; PC 114/4 Sup.1

⁶ Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

⁷ PC 114/5; PC 114/5 Sup.1

Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW) of the Programme Committee⁸

17. The Committee reviewed its draft *Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPOW)* for July 2013 – June 2015 prepared by the Chairperson. The approved MYPOW 2013-15 is presented in Annex 1.

Date, place and items for discussion at next session

18. The Committee was informed that the 115th Session would take place on 26 to 30 May 2014.

Any other business

19. There was no discussion under this item.

⁸ PC 114/6

Annex 1: Multi-year Programme of Work July 2013 – June 2015

Overall objective for the Programme Committee

The Programme Committee will provide a solid analytical basis for sound, timely, cohesive, effective and efficient decision-making in the FAO Council. The foundations for the Committee's recommendations are the Strategic Framework,⁹ and the approved the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) of the Organization.

Results

Programme planning and priority setting

A.1) **Result:** Programme Committee recommendations on priorities are considered useful and adopted by the Council

A.2) **Indicators and targets:**

- a) The Committee's recommendations on priorities are adopted by the Council
- b) The Committee's recommendations on the Strategic Framework, the Medium Term Plan and the Programme of Work and Budget are adopted by the Council
- c) The Committee's working methods are improved on the basis of lessons learned from Council decisions on its recommendations

A.3) **Outputs:** Clear, precise and consensual recommendations to Council

A.4) **Activities:**

- a) Review of proposed priorities, taking into account the Reports of Regional Conferences and Technical Committees, as well as lessons learned, availability of resources, and recommendations of evaluations
- b) Review of the Strategic Framework (once every four years)
- c) Review of the proposed Medium Term Plan for consistency with the Strategic Framework and incorporating lessons learned in the previous biennium
- d) Review of proposed biennial Programme of Work and Budget, including proposals and resource allocation amongst strategic objectives, cross-cutting themes and areas of corporate technical work

Working methods:

- a) Informal consultations with Deputy Directors-General, Assistant Directors-General (ADGs), Strategic Objective Coordinators and other key members of the Secretariat
- b) Close collaboration with the Independent Chairperson of the Council
- c) Close collaboration with the Finance Committee on matters of synergy and overlap
- d) Standard approach for receiving and reviewing advice from Technical Committees and Regional Conferences

Results-based monitoring of programme implementation

B.1) **Result:** Council advice and decisions on implementation of the programme of work reflect the recommendations of the Programme Committee

B.2) **Indicators and targets:**

- a) The Committee's recommendations on programmatic adjustments of the PWB are endorsed by the Council
- b) The Committee's recommendations on allocation and management of extra-budgetary resources are endorsed by the Council
- c) The Committee's working methods are improved on the basis of lessons learned from Council decisions on its recommendations

B.3) **Outputs:** Clear, precise and consensual recommendations to Council

⁹ C 2013/7

B.4) Activities:

- Annual review of PWB implementation and proposals for adjustments, including:
 - a) rationale for programmatic adjustments within the PWB
 - b) review of allocation and management of the integrated budgetary resources arising from all funding sources
 - c) review of the allocation and use of extrabudgetary resources in alignment with the reviewed Strategic Framework and Country Programming Frameworks, integration of activities, and consistent with relevant international initiatives such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Accra Agenda of Action, Busan declaration, and the Rio +20 and UN post 2015 agenda
- Review of the biennial Programme Implementation Report (PIR) and lessons learned for preparation of subsequent PWBs

B.5) Working methods:

- a) Close collaboration with the Finance Committee on matters of synergy and overlap

Evaluation**C.1) Results:**

- a) Evaluation plans and schedules focus on strategic issues of importance for the achievement of the Organization's Strategic Objectives
- b) Evaluation recommendations are incorporated in the implementation of the strategic framework, and in new policies and strategies
- c) Evaluation function reflects UNEG best practices and norms and standards

C.2) Indicators and targets:

- a) All agreed recommendations are implemented by Management and reported back to the Programme Committee
- b) Evaluation recommendations are practicable, duly resourced, and consistent with other evaluation and oversight recommendations
- c) Evaluations follow the UNEG norms and standards

C.3) Outputs: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations by the Programme Committee**C.4) Activities:**

- a) Keep under review the Charter for the FAO Office of Evaluation
- b) Review and endorse the rolling work plan of strategic and programme evaluations, focusing on:
 - strategic issues
 - good balance among topics and types of evaluation
 - taking into account the geographic balance between regions
 - focused joint evaluations with other organizations
 - emphasis on feedback from evaluation to programming and implementation
 - assess the adequacy of evaluation resources
- c) Oversight of follow-up of evaluation recommendations
- d) Review of individual evaluations
- e) Biennial peer review of evaluation practices (2016 and 2018) and independent evaluation of the evaluation function at least once in six years (2016)

C.5) Methods of work:

- a) Close contact with the Office of Evaluation, Management and concerned units

Improved methods of work and efficiency of the Programme Committee

D.1) Results: The Programme Committee works in a proactive and inclusive way, and has a forceful advisory role for Council, as well as providing a platform to better understand the concerns of Members and incorporate this in the work of the Organization

D.2) Indicators and targets:

- a) Agenda of the meetings focus on selected strategic issues
- b) Recommendations of the Programme Committee achieve regional consensus
- c) Programme Committee documents are made available in languages of the Organization at least two weeks prior to the start of each session of the Committee
- d) Efficient use of available resources, and optimal use of innovative instruments, in particular Internet-based and audio visual technologies
- e) Succinct, relevant and informed reports to the Council

D.3) Outputs: Clear, precise and consensual recommendations to Council

D.4) Activities:

- a) Prepare the Multi-year Programme of Work for the Programme Committee
- b) Report on the Multi-year Programme of Work at the end of the biennium

D.5) Methods of work:

- a) Informal consultations on the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Committee
- b) Consultations on major strategic issues with Strategy Teams
- c) Clear mandates for Programme Committee Members from their Regional Groups
- d) Close collaboration with the Independent Chairperson of the Council
- e) Close collaboration with all governing bodies
- f) Early engagement in the preparation of MTP and PWB, as well as any reviews of the Strategic Framework
- g) Timeliness of availability of documents in languages of the Organization
- h) Engagement with senior FAO staff responsible for issues covered by the Programme Committee
- i) Open meetings allowing silent observers from Members and staff responsible for items discussed by the Programme Committee