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

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session - Cent cinquante-huitième session -
session - 158.º período de sesiones**

Rome, 4-8 December 2017

VERBATIM RECORDS OF PLENARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017

PROCÈS-VERBAUX DES SÉANCES PLÉNIÈRES DU CONSEIL

Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017

**ACTAS TAQUIGRÁFICAS DE LAS SESIONES PLENARIAS DEL
CONSEJO**

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COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session Cent cinquante-huitième session 158.º período de sesiones
Rome, 4-8 December 2017 Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017 Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017
FIRST PLENARY SESSION PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE PRIMERA SESIÓN PLENARIA
4 December 2017

The First Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.40 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La première séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 40
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la primera sesión plenaria a las 9.40
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the first meeting of the 158th Session of the FAO Council to order.

I wish to welcome Council Members and observers to this session, especially those of you who have travelled to be here today.

Before proceeding, I would like to ask the Secretary-General of the Council to make a short announcement. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to bring to the attention of the Council that the European Union is participating in this meeting in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of Article II of the FAO Constitution.

I have been asked to inform you that the declaration made by the European Union and its Member States is contained in information document CL 158/INF/3. I wish to draw the attention of the meeting to this declaration.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Mr Gagnon.

I now wish to extend a warm welcome to the Director-General, who has joined us and I now invite him to address the Council. Mr Graziano, you have the floor.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Thank you Mr Chairperson. Let me welcome all of you, in particular the eight ministers and vice-ministers that are going to be present during the Council meeting this week: the Minister for Agriculture of Burkina Faso, the Minister for Agriculture and Environment of Cabo Verde, the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of Cameroon, *el Ministro de Economía, Industria y Comercio de Costa Rica*, the Minister for Agriculture of Zambia, *el Ministro de la Secretaría Técnica de Planificación Económica de Paraguay*, the Deputy Minister from the Russian Federation and the Deputy Minister for Agriculture from the Russian Federation.

It is an honour to open the last FAO Council in 2017. Let me start by making a brief retrospective of a few of the many achievements of FAO's work this year.

Last July, the 40th FAO Conference registered more than 1100 delegates and representatives from 181 countries, including presidents, prime ministers and 105 ministers and vice-ministers.

In October, during World Food Day, we discussed the links between food security, rural development, conflicts and distress migration, with the presence of Pope Francis, the Ministers for Agriculture of the G7 countries, and other high-level representatives.

Last month, during COP 23 in Bonn, countries finally agreed to include agriculture in the negotiation process to address climate change, recognized its impact in achieving food security for all.

Let me also highlight that FAO was chosen to co-chair the Global Migration Group in 2018, due to the strong link between hunger, food security and distress migration.

But 2017 also brought some bad news. Unfortunately, there is much. But let me choose one that challenges all the work FAO has been doing in the past years.

The number of people suffering from hunger in the world increased again from 2015 to 2016, up to 850 million after more than 10 years of decline.

It is not only about hunger. Other forms of malnutrition are also on the rise, especially overweight and obesity. And not only in developing countries, but also in developed ones. We need immediate action to reverse this situation.

The most important thing to do now is to build the resilience of poor people to face the impacts of conflicts and climate change.

We must do this by combining humanitarian assistance with development actions.

If we address only emergency situations, we will not be able to eradicate hunger and all forms of malnutrition as envisaged in SDG 2.

This basically means more investment, I would say much more investment, from the public but also from the private sector.

We can only save the lives of people if we protect their crops and animals, if we save their livelihoods.

Next January, the African Union Summit 2018 will be a great opportunity for a strong commitment to reinforce the fight against hunger.

FAO is working on a special side event to address the Malabo Declaration compromise to eradicate hunger in Africa by 2020.

The last FAO Conference approved by consensus the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2018-19.

The new PWB represents a closer alignment of FAO's Strategic Objectives with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

This Council Session is important to promote the necessary adjustments to the PWB, so that it is ready for implementation in the next biennium.

Members of the Programme and Finance Committees already discussed and approved the adjustments, and made recommendations for the consideration of the Council.

One important point is to reinforce the operational capacity of our Strategic Programme (SP) Teams.

The SP Teams play today a crucial role in making FAO more effective, and more focused on achieving its five Strategic Objectives.

Other measures will also be important to strengthen programme delivery, to further decentralization, and to increase South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Two new subregional offices for Mashreq countries and West Africa are expected to be established and become operational next year.

We are also improving FAO's country office network in order to have more flexibility in the use of budgeted resources.

As also requested by the Conference, we are presenting a proposal for the use of any unspent resources from the 2016-17 biennium.

This proposal was already discussed and approved by the Programme and Finance Committees.

Let me underline that carry over is not new money. It is not even surplus money that can be allocated to new activities.

These are resources that we will probably not be able to spend in time by the end of this year, precisely 31 December will be necessary.

This happens, for example, when we need to postpone an event from one year to the next.

So this money will be used to meet previous commitments, and also to provide resources to the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities.

This Special Fund was created to allow FAO to engage more proactively with global funds and international financial institutions.

However, the Special Fund has not yet received any voluntary contributions.

So we need to put this Fund into motion.

This will be important to support countries to prepare projects for the Green Climate Fund, for example.

Let me also call your attention to the fact that, so far, FAO has not yet received almost 40 percent of the Regular Programme contributions for 2017.

I urge member countries to provide their overdue assessed contributions as soon as possible.

In relation to the assessed contributions of 2018, I ask Members to pay in the beginning of the next year, as envisaged by FAO rules.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention recent measures in relation to human resources in the Organization.

As you know, the work of consultants is today of vital importance to FAO.

In fact, FAO has been relying on consultants to increase the technical capacity of the Organization in the context of a flat budget, as pointed out by the recent technical assessment we made.

So it is very important to assure that FAO will hire the best consultants available, and that these consultants will meet the minimum requirements to work for the Organization.

We are introducing an innovative and competitive hiring process, similar to the one applied for professionals, following OIG guidance.

International consultants are now submitted to a panel selection process in order to form a roster.

This will allow us to reduce transaction costs and also guarantee that international consultants will be hired in areas where they are really needed.

I can assure that this new recruitment process for consultants will not be disruptive in the implementation of programmes and projects.

We will pay attention to specific cases, and allow flexibility when it is necessary.

Let me give you some big numbers.

There are more than two thousand consultants working in FAO nowadays, half of them at headquarters, half of them in the field.

By the way, I realized, from the data package that we upload Friday and Saturday, probably you have received them and seen them already, I realized that out of those consultants working for FAO, one in each four are Italians and half of them come from ten countries only. All of them OECD countries.

Since the introduction of the new hiring process, more than 110 vacancy announcements for consultants have been published and already about one thousand candidates have been validated for interviews.

Let me also say that some Members continue to request more and more information on HR issues.

As I said in the last Informal Seminar, organized last week, I requested Management to provide an additional HR data package based on the last time that member countries expressed their satisfaction regarding the level of information on this matter.

I hope you will be satisfied this time.

I started my intervention by making a retrospective. Let me now refer to some important events in 2018 that FAO will be involved in.

At the beginning of January in Mexico, there will be the Latin American Regional Forum on the role of indigenous rural women in agriculture and rural development.

Also in January, the Green Week in Berlin will allow us to discuss the challenges and opportunities that livestock pose to agriculture and sustainable development.

As I said in the beginning of my intervention, the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa will offer a great opportunity to put the fight against hunger back on track again.

In February, there will be the first FAO Regional Conference in the Sudan, Africa, where we will continue to discuss the best way to face the conflicts and climate change impacts on food security.

In fact, the Regional Conferences, from February to May, will be very important to align FAO's work to the regional priorities.

In April, we will organize here at headquarters the Second International Symposium on Agroecology. The event will build upon the outcomes of the regional symposiums that took place in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia last year.

Also in April, FAO will organize the GIAHS High-level Event here at headquarters. This will highlight the contributions of Global Heritage Systems to build sustainable agricultural practices.

We also intend to launch, possibly in May, the International Platform for Biodiversity.

And in June, we would like to promote an International Symposium on innovation for family farmers.

These three events, on agroecology, biodiversity and innovation, are part of the same package.

They intend to support countries to put in place sustainable agricultural practices that combine food production, ecosystem services and climate-change resilience at the same time.

Some countries have already anticipated that it may be difficult to attend three high-level events in consecutive months.

So we are considering to postpone the event on innovation from the second semester of 2018 to the beginning of 2019.

In July, in Cabo Verde, there will be the Summit of the Community of Portuguese Language-Speaking Countries.

And we will have in July the technical committee meetings, COFI and COFO.

The meetings of CCP, COAG, CCLM and also CFS will be organized in September and October.

And to end, I very much welcome the proposal of the Joint Meeting for the organization of a High-Level Event on FAO's role in the context of sustainable development.

The idea is to organize the event during World Food Day 2018, in October, using voluntary contributions.

Management is working on a concept note to share with member countries.

In 2018, we will also promote more initiatives to deepen more and more the collaboration between the Rome-based agencies, following the successful year we had in 2017.

I would like to conclude by highlighting that in 2017 we have been able to keep, and even strengthen, the consensus between us.

The consensus has been one of the hallmarks of my tenure as FAO Director-General.

Let us work to preserve the trust we have built together over the last six years, and keep the focus on the substantive aspects of our common agenda and the challenges we have ahead.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General, for giving us this update on the progress during the year on issues such as migration, fight against hunger and malnutrition, alignment of FAO's Strategic Objectives to the 2030 Agenda, as well as some of the activities in which FAO will be involved in 2018.

Your comments on some of the issues under discussion during this Council Session will, I am sure, also prove helpful to our discussions. I thank you, Director-General.

Ladies and gentlemen, before continuing, in the interest of the safety of all of us, I request your attention for a short video presentation on fire safety.

Video Presentation

Présentation vidéo

Videopresentación

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to the Secretary-General to explain the procedure for asking the floor, and to provide us with an overview of document delivery for this session. Mr Gagnon, you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind delegates that in order to ask for the floor, they simply need to press the red button located by their microphone. The light will flash until the delegate has spoken. The order of speakers will be automatically noted and displayed on the screen above the podium.

With regard to document delivery for this Session, I wish to inform you that out of 15 main documents, ten were published by the deadline of 6 November; five were reports of the Council Committees taking place after this deadline and all were published one week after the end of their Session.

Finally, in line with the UN-wide “PaperSmart” initiative, I wish to inform Members that hard copies of the Council documents are available only on a print-on-demand basis and can be requested at the Documents Desk, if required. The Draft Council Report will also be transmitted through the FAO Members Gateway, and in the password-protected area of the portal, as soon as available.

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 el calendario

(CL 158/1 Rev.1; CL 158/INF/1 Rev.2; CL 158/INF/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move to the first item on the agenda, that is the *Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable* as set out in documents CL 158/1 Rev.1, CL 158/INF/1 Rev.2 and CL 158/INF/3.

Document CL 158/1 Rev.1 contains the Provisional Agenda which was sent to all Members on 4 October 2017, together with the invitation to this Session.

Does the Provisional Agenda meet with the approval of the Council?

I would, however, like to make one announcement, that under item 6, the Report of the Finance Committee, the United Kingdom will be making a statement on one of the JIU documents.

Mr Keun Hyung HONG (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea would like to address the proposed establishment of the World Fisheries University for information under item 15, “*Any other matters*”.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I am taking the floor on behalf of the Nordic countries to thank the Director-General for his opening remarks. Please rest assured that the Nordic countries are supporting the Director-General and the Independent Chairperson of the Council in aiming at a consensus on all issues the Council is faced with.

We would also like to raise another point regarding the Council working methods. The Nordic countries would welcome a more interactive way of working. We would also welcome, as a standing agenda item in each Council Session, regular updates by FAO Senior Management, including the Strategic Programme Leaders and the Regional Directors, on priority areas of work.

We believe that these updates would increase transparency and better understanding of FAO’s achievements and thus, contribute to the Director-General’s efforts to increase voluntary contributions.

CHAIRPERSON

I was consulting the Secretariat since your intervention called for actions on their part.

May I suggest that, since this issue concerns the working methods of the Council, that we take it up at our regular informal meeting between the Independent Chairperson of the Council and the Chairpersons and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups.

I think we will be able to work out something more logical when it is discussed in a smaller group rather than during the Council. So would it be agreeable that we take it up at our informal meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Independent Chairperson of the Council?

I see no comments so I think the suggestion is agreeable.

With these comments, do I take it that we can approve the provisional agenda? I see no comments so it is approved.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

With respect to the provisional timetable, set out in document CL 158/INF/1 Rev.2, I should like to point out that the items on the provisional agenda have been scheduled to allow the Drafting Committee to convene its meeting in the afternoon of Wednesday, 6 December. This in turn should enable the Report to be adopted by the Council on Thursday morning.

Does this Provisional Timetable meet with the approval of the Council?

I see no requests for the floor so it is approved.

Adopted

Adopté

Aprobado

I would like to draw the Council's attention to my pre-session letter of 17 November proposing that, as per previous sessions, issues considered by the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting not be discussed under the respective Reports, but be deliberated upon as follows: "*Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*" to be considered under item 3; and "*Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies Collaboration*" to be considered under item 9.

This approach will assist in keeping our deliberations focused and avoid repetition.

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 nombramiento del Presidente y los miembros del Comité de Redacción

CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to item 2, "*Election of three Vice-Chairpersons, and Designation of the Chairperson and Members of the Drafting Committee*".

Following consultations among the Regional Groups, the following proposals for the three posts of Vice-Chairperson have been received: Ms María Cristina Boldorini of Argentina; Mr Hinrich Thölken of Germany; and Mr Ditya Agung Nurdianto of Indonesia.

If there are no objections, I wish to congratulate the three Vice-Chairpersons on their election.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

For the Drafting Committee, the Regional Groups have proposed Mr Vlad Mustaciosu of Romania as Chairperson, and the following countries as members: Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, India, Japan and Sudan.

Are there any objections?

I see none. Thank you, it is so decided.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

As mentioned in my pre-session letter, I wish to reiterate the need for interventions to be kept as brief and focused as possible, and that preference be given to interventions by representatives of regions whenever feasible, rather than single countries repeating comments already made.

I will now hand over the floor to the Secretary-General for some further information regarding submission of statements. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I should like to remind Members that the full written text of interventions may be submitted for inclusion in the Verbatim Records of this Session, and a shorter version delivered orally in the interest of good time management.

Furthermore, may I also request that if you wish to make a statement during the meeting a copy of the text be provided to the Secretariat in advance? This will allow the interpreters to convey your ideas as clearly as possible. The email address for submission of statements will be projected on the screen behind the podium and is also given in the Order of the Day. Timely submission of texts is also of considerable assistance for the verbatim reporters and ensures greater accuracy.

Finally, I wish to remind Members to speak slowly when delivering their statement to ensure accurate interpretation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

I also wish to remind Members that following the discussions on each of the agenda items, I will draw up conclusions to facilitate the drafting of the report of this session.

The Report will consist of conclusions, decisions and recommendations in keeping with the practice established at past sessions of Council. I invite you to point out any inadvertent omissions that you believe should be included in the draft report rather than waiting for the meeting of the Drafting Committee. In this way the task of the Drafting Committee will be made easier.

In addition, may I remind you that in the interest of good time management, it is important that we start each meeting punctually. Please ensure that you are here in the Red Room at the times indicated in the Order of the Day.

Item 3 Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19

Point 3 Ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019

Tema 3 Ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2018-19

(CL 158/3)

CHAIRPERSON

We now take up item 3, "*Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*". Please ensure that you have document CL 158/3 before you.

I now give the floor to Mr Boyd Haight, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management, to present the report.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

In introducing the Adjustments to the PWB 2018-19, I will touch briefly on the context in which the document was prepared, the adjustments themselves, and the action requested of Council.

The Conference in July of this year approved the Programme of Work and the budget level for 2018-19 as proposed by the Director-General. In line with the Organization's cycle of programme planning, the Adjustments take into account the guidance provided by the Conference, as well as the outcome of work planning undertaken by the Secretariat over the past five months, prior to the start of implementation in January 2018.

The Adjustments therefore comprise, within the approved budget level, the complete results monitoring framework, some further measures to strengthen programme delivery, and the related impact on the post establishment and the budgetary chapter distribution.

Let me turn to the results monitoring framework. The Organization takes seriously its approach to planning, monitoring and reporting on results to achieve our common goals and objectives. Progressive improvements have been made in the FAO results framework in each successive Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget since 2010, as appreciated by the Governing and other oversight Bodies.

Since July, the Secretariat has completed the results framework for 2018-19 biennium at the level of Objectives and Outcomes, as provided in Annex 1 of the document, by updating a few of the Outcome indicators to which FAO contributes. The Secretariat has also prepared the complete set of Strategic Objective Output indicators and targets, which FAO is accountable to achieve. The Output targets are based on a bottom-up work planning process coordinated by the Strategic Programme Leaders and involving FAO country and regional offices, as well as the technical divisions, as provided in Annex 2. These targets provide a more robust basis for measuring FAO's performance in the coming biennium.

The results frameworks were reviewed last month by the Programme and Finance Committees, which have provided useful guidance on further updates, as set out in their reports. The final version of the 2018-19 results frameworks will be published following review by the Regional Conferences in the first half of next year, and will form the basis for reporting on achievements at the end of 2018 and at the end of 2019.

Let me turn to the measures to strengthen programme delivery. The work planning exercise in the second half of this year also identified opportunities to improve FAO's programme delivery, particularly under the five Strategic Programmes and at country level.

Three sets of measures to strengthen programme delivery are being undertaken as highlighted by the Director-General this morning.

First, the five Strategic Programme teams will include a Programme Officer to better coordinate the planning, monitoring and reporting of programme delivery, particularly at country and regional level.

Second, work to deliver programmes at country level is being improved. The two new approved Sub-regional Offices, for the Mashreq Countries and for West Africa, will be established with staffing to help address the needs of the countries covered.

Furthermore, for the FAO Country Office network in each region, the Secretariat will progressively adjust the modalities of coverage and take measures to increase the flexibility in the use of budgeted resources to deliver programmes and technical assistance.

Third, the Shared Services Centre will be transformed into one global team to increase the consistency, transparency and performance of processing back office administrative transactions. This should also provide the basis for further administrative efficiency savings going forward.

The measures to strengthen programme delivery result in two sets of changes in the allocation of budgeted posts among divisions and offices, as shown in Annex 4. These changes arise from the re-profiling of five vacant administrative posts at headquarters to be Programme Officers on the Strategic Programme teams, and transfer of some posts within the Africa region to staff the new Sub-regional Office for West Africa.

These measures, together with Outcome of work planning, have resulted in minor adjustments in the allocation of resources among budgetary chapters, as shown in Table 2. Furthermore the estimates of voluntary contributions have been updated with the latest information, as shown in Table 3.

The Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 have been prepared to take into account the decisions of the Conference, provide the complete results monitoring framework for the biennium, and take measures to strengthen programme delivery. The Council is requested to take note of the elements of the adjustments and approve the resulting change in the budgetary chapter distribution.

CHAIRPERSON

I now give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee and of the Joint Meeting, to report on the discussions on this item during the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee, and during the Joint Meeting held on 6 and 9 November.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

When we look at our challenges, it is quite clear that, as the Director-General said, we are facing the largest humanitarian crisis since more than six decades. In 2017, we are facing the larger crisis because of the conflicts and the climate change. Hunger and malnutrition are on the rise. We are confronted with 38 million people more in severe hunger, and distressed migration. This Council Session and future sessions of the Council have to be seen in this light. It is clear that we have to step up in our efforts and get more results on the ground.

I think every Committee of this Council has to contribute to these efforts and we have to see how we can support FAO and other RBAs to do more and better. As the Director-General said we have to not only join forces but we have to increase our investments in our fight to leave no one behind.

Allow me, against this background, to briefly present the outcome of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee; and also of the Programme Committee on the subject of “*Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*”.

As you are aware, this topic was discussed separately by the Finance and Programme Committees, as well as together by the two Committees in their Joint Meeting.

The Finance Committee focused on the financial, structural aspects of the adjustments, as well as on the functional objectives in the results framework. My colleague, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee will report to you on those discussions.

I was honoured to chair the Joint Meeting of the two Committees, which looked at the overall context of the adjustments, and also the budgetary aspects.

The Joint Meeting supported revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter, and noted the updated organizational structure and budgeted post establishment. It also supported the measures for strengthening of programme delivery, including the organizational arrangements for the Strategic Programme teams.

The Joint Meeting appreciated the Secretariat’s continued efforts to seek efficiencies and savings, including in the area of administration and travel costs, and encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions for implementation of the integrated Programme of Work.

It also welcomed the proposal for a high-level event dedicated to FAO's role in food security matters in conjunction with 2018 World Food Day events, and of course, as the Director-General said to be funded by extrabudgetary resources, and agreed to review its modalities and funding at its next meeting.

The Programme Committee endorsed the results framework targets and indicators, noting that Output targets may be updated after discussion in the Regional Conferences in 2018, and looked forward to reviewing progress in the forthcoming biennium assessments.

The Committee also supported measures to monitor systematically the formulation and results of FAO programmes and projects with an aim to improve their quality and include this information in the results framework for the 2020-21 biennium.

CHAIRPERSON

I would like to invite Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, to report on discussions on this item during the 169th Session of the Finance Committee.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am pleased to complement the Report just presented by the Chairperson of the Programme Committee and share with you the outcome of the discussions of the 169th Session of the Finance Committee on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 presented in document CL 158/7.

The Committee welcomed the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2018-19, noting that they reflected the guidance and decisions of the 40th Session of the Conference.

The Committee welcomed the updated results frameworks for the Functional Objectives presented in Web Annex 1 of CL 158/3 and recommended further updates to: move the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 10.2.B on completion of action on evaluation management responses from 10.2 Oversight to 10.3 Direction to more appropriately reflect the responsible party and add a similar KPI for audit; specify in the wording of KPI 10.3.B the time period of long outstanding audit recommendations; and add a new KPI on the vacancy rate for professional posts under outcome 11.1, Efficient and effective management of human resources.

The Committee noted the updated organizational structure presented in Web Annex 3 of CL 158/3 and the revised budgeted post establishment presented in Web Annex 4 of CL 158/3.

The Committee recommended the Council approve the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as presented in Table 2 of document CL 158/3.

The Committee noted that additional 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 and 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 Finance Regulation 4.5.

The Committee noted the updated estimates of extrabudgetary resources presented in Table 3 of CL 158/3 and encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate achievement of the Strategic Objectives and implementation of the integrated Programme of Work.

Mr Ditya Agung NURDIANTO (Indonesia)

With your indulgence, I would like to pass the floor to our colleagues from Malaysia to deliver a statement on behalf of the Asia Group.

Mr Muhammad Rudy MOHD NOR (Observer for Malaysia)

Malaysia has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group. We would like to thank Mr Boyd Haight for the presentation on the adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 which we find reflects the guidance given by the Conference and is responsive to the Members' needs.

We would also like to thank both the Chairpersons of the Programme and Finance Committees for the briefings on the outcome of the respective committees' discussions on this matter.

Regarding the adjustments, we appreciate the focus on the importance of statistics, in particular to improve statistical accessibility and usability of FAO stats while continuously strengthening Members' national statistical systems.

We believe that statistics are one of the most important tools in evidence-based decision making and call for FAO's increased support to developing countries in this area.

The Group welcomes the cost-effective approaches taken in the adjustment, both at headquarters and in the field. In relation to this, we would like to make two points.

Firstly, the conversion of five non-technical posts into Programme Officers dedicated to each Strategic Programme team should strengthen the capacity of the team to better coordinate the delivery of the agreed contribution under the service level agreements.

Nevertheless, we hope that this conversion does not reduce the support given to the departments from which the posts were taken.

Secondly, in relation to the FAO Country Office Network, we noted the plan to adjust the modalities of country coverage and the measures to increase flexibility in the use of budgeted resources. However, the implementation must ensure that there are no adverse consequences on the service's effectiveness to the Country Offices while carefully taking into consideration the countries' changing needs. The streamlining of Country Office staffing models should aim not only to reduce but also to properly redistribute resources where they are needed.

With these two comments, the Asia Regional Group supports the adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19.

Sr. Elías Rafael ELJURI ABRAHAM (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

En nombre del G77 más China, me gustaría agradecer a la Secretaría por la preparación de este documento y a los Miembros del CP/CF por un debate constructivo y el consenso alcanzado.

El Grupo toma nota de que las orientaciones y decisiones de la Conferencia se ven reflejadas en los Ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto 2018-19. Solicitamos amablemente a la FAO que alinee su trabajo con las áreas de prioridad programática aprobadas por la Conferencia en el próximo bienio, que incluyen: el cambio climático, la agroecología, la nutrición, el género, la biodiversidad y los Sistemas del Patrimonio Agrícola Mundialmente Importantes (SIPAM) y esperamos ver información detallada sobre su desempeño reflejada en el futuro Informe de Ejecución del Programa.

Acogemos con beneplácito los cinco puestos profesionales adicionales que fueron asignados para el equipo de gestión del Programa Estratégico y reconocemos el papel de este equipo que dirige el Programa de Trabajo de la FAO para alcanzar los cinco objetivos estratégicos de la Organización y mejorar la contribución de la FAO a la Agenda 2030. Además, deseamos enfatizar el valor del trabajo realizado por otros departamentos de la FAO, entre otros, el apoyo lingüístico del CPA.

Con respecto al Marco de Resultados Revisados, apreciamos los cambios realizados, especialmente la formulación del indicador de resultados 4.1b, que nos recuerda la naturaleza de la FAO como foro neutral que busca lograr la seguridad alimentaria para todos, a través de diálogos y proyectos, y no como una organización de solo reglas y acuerdos de comercio.

Reconocemos el papel fundamental que juegan las estadísticas de alto nivel en diseñar y focalizar políticas para reducir el hambre, la desnutrición, la pobreza rural y promover el uso sostenible de los recursos naturales. De igual forma, agradecemos la reorientación de las estadísticas y la reformulación de los indicadores claves relacionados. Reconocemos el hecho que algunos países carecen de recursos y personal para mejorar sus sistemas estadísticos nacionales. Reiteramos la importancia de la creación de capacidad en los países en desarrollo, especialmente los menos avanzados.

Apreciamos los esfuerzos realizados para la construcción y el fortalecimiento de las Oficinas Subregionales y creemos que aportarán experiencia y coordinación al trabajo y mejorarán la ejecución del programa. Hacemos hincapié en que el establecimiento de las dos nuevas oficinas subregionales no afectará la capacidad técnica de las oficinas regionales.

Apreciamos la transformación de los tres Centros de Servicios Compartidos en una oficina administrativa global, que respalda la Organización con el modelo "seguir el sol". Esperamos que esto mejore la calidad y la eficiencia del servicio administrativo.

También apreciamos el nuevo nominativo de las Asociaciones y la División de Cooperación Sur-Sur (DPS, anteriormente OPC). La Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular ha demostrado ser efectiva para el aumento de la productividad, la creación de empleos, la construcción de infraestructura, la promoción del comercio y la inversión en países del sur del mundo. Esperamos que la Secretaría y la administración de la FAO den importancia y brinden apoyo a la SSTC en su mandato a través del personal y del presupuesto. De conformidad con la decisión adoptada en la reunión conjunta del

comité del Programa 122 y de Finanzas 169, esperamos que los Miembros hagan contribuciones voluntarias para facilitar la implementación de la Agenda 2030, así como la implementación de los objetivos comunes a través de este mecanismo de cooperación internacional.

También aprovechamos esta oportunidad para reforzar la importancia de los servicios de idiomas para los Órganos Rectores. Si bien la externalización del servicio de interpretación y traducción genera ahorro y conveniencia, solicitamos a la FAO que garantice la calidad general de su servicio de idiomas, evitando los errores de traducción en publicaciones y documentos de las reuniones, lo que puede causar confusiones y enviar mensajes incorrectos a los Miembros.

Apoyamos el establecimiento de las dos oficinas subregionales, la SNM en Beirut para los países de Mashreq y la SFW para los países de África occidental. También apoyamos la intención de la FAO de examinar el alcance de la cobertura de los países en cada región, de conformidad con las orientaciones proporcionadas por la 154.ª periodo de sesiones del Consejo. En relación a esto, queremos llamar la atención sobre el papel clave de las Conferencias Regionales, así como sobre su importancia para el establecimiento de prioridades regionales y subregionales para su consideración en el PTP 2020-2021.

Al enfrentarnos a severos desafíos como conflictos, el clima extremo y el lento crecimiento económico, necesitamos trabajar juntos, hoy más que nunca, y poner en marcha sistemas, mecanismos y políticas sanas para la revitalización rural al fin de acelerar la modernización de la agricultura para lograr un mundo más seguro y sostenible.

Con los comentarios anteriores, el G77 más China aprueba este documento.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We would like to highlight three of the important suggestions made by the Programme Committee on the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget for the coming Biennium.

Firstly, we welcome the conclusion of the Programme Committee related to the Management's assurance that the Output and Outcome indicators are underpinned by methodological notes accessible to Members. We look forward to using these methodology notes to better understand the results that FAO reports in its programme implementation report.

Secondly, we would like to endorse the Programme Committee's conclusion to request Management to clarify which output indicators in the results framework will be used to measure progress with AMR. Members will recall that at the Council held in May we requested that a specific output target be set for FAO's work on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Thirdly, we would like to endorse the Programme Committee's conclusion to request FAO to meet its minimum standards on gender equality as soon as possible. We look forward to reviewing progress in this regard in the Programme Implementation Report for the 2016 - 2017 biennium.

We would also like to highlight the important suggestions made by the Finance Committee on the adjustments to the PWB for the coming biennium. In particular, we welcome the Committee's recommendations to update further the key performance indicators for the Functional Objectives 10.2.B, 10.3.B and 11.1.

Assuming that these recommendations will be taken forward by Management in finalizing the PWB for 2018-19, we would like to conclude by confirming our endorsement of these and the other adjustments to the PWB.

M. MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroun)

C'est un plaisir pour nous de vous voir présider une autre session du Conseil et vous savez pouvoir compter sur la délégation du Cameroun pour vous soutenir dans votre travail.

Le Cameroun a l'honneur de prendre la parole sur ce point de l'ordre du jour, qui traite des *Ajustements apportés au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019 (PTB)*, au nom du Groupe régional Afrique.

Nous accueillons favorablement la production de ce document, y compris les six annexes web qui s'y rattachent et nous le soutenons. C'est un document qui est complet en lui-même, en ce sens qu'il donne aussi bien des informations sur le contexte international dans lequel opère la FAO, que sur le cadre de planification et de suivi du travail de la FAO. Il renseigne sur les mesures à prendre ou déjà prises pour renforcer l'exécution du Programme et il donne des détails sur les ajustements apportés aux postes inscrits au PTB et à la répartition des crédits entre les chapitres du budget; tout cela supporté et complété par des annexes web suffisamment illustratives.

Nous félicitons le Comité du Programme, le Comité financier et la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier, et nous vous savons gré, Messieurs les Présidents, des rapports que vous avez produits sur cette question, qui complètent le rapport du Secrétariat.

Nous vous félicitons donc de l'examen de ce document lors de vos sessions de novembre 2017. Au cours de ces examens vous avez donné au Conseil des orientations importantes pouvant servir à la prise de décision. Nous en prenons acte.

Le Groupe Afrique prend note du fait que les indications et décisions de la Conférence de 2017 ont été prises en compte dans les ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019.

Pour l'Afrique, la priorité reste la prise en compte des décisions de la vingt-neuvième Conférence régionale tenue à Abidjan en 2016, surtout en ce qui concerne les thématiques et toutes les initiatives régionales en cours, notamment l'emploi des jeunes en agriculture, les questions d'urbanisation et de migration, le développement équitable, le changement climatique et la résilience aux chocs, qui permettront de mieux cibler les actions de la FAO sur les priorités de la région, que sont: l'élimination de la faim à l'horizon 2025, l'intensification durable de la production et le développement des chaînes de valeur, ainsi que le renforcement de la résilience dans les zones arides.

Nous prenons acte des versions actualisées du cadre de résultats et des indicateurs et cibles, au niveau des produits, pour les objectifs stratégiques et attendons que rapport soit fait de leur impact dans le cadre de l'évaluation du Programme en 2018.

S'agissant de la structure organisationnelle actualisée et du tableau révisé des postes inscrits au budget, nous en prenons également note et rappelons que pour ce qui concerne les bureaux décentralisés de notre région, la région Afrique, les orientations de la vingt-neuvième Conférence régionale devraient être suivies, notamment en ce qui concerne le renforcement et la redistribution du réseau des bureaux décentralisés, ainsi que la capacitation de ceux-ci en ressources humaines et la mise à disposition de ressources financières idoines.

Nous approuvons la répartition révisée des ouvertures de crédits nettes entre les chapitres budgétaires et faisons nôtre la conclusion de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier à cet égard. Nous sommes conscients des responsabilités du Comité financier dans les virements entre les chapitres budgétaires, si nécessaire, pour faciliter l'exécution du Programme.

Nous prenons note des estimations actualisées des ressources extrabudgétaires, tout en encourageant les Membres à verser des contributions volontaires pour faciliter la réalisation des objectifs stratégiques et l'exécution du Programme de travail intégré. Ces estimations sont faites, nous en sommes conscients, en tenant compte des projets opérationnels, dont l'exécution se poursuivra pendant l'exercice biennal 2018-2019, des propositions de projets en cours d'élaboration et susceptibles d'être approuvées, et des projets potentiels correspondant à des idées de projet et à des contacts positifs avec des partenaires. Il est donc important que les équipes au niveau régional soient suffisamment étoffées pour la préparation de ces projets, mais également avec la meilleure diversification possible.

Enfin, nous attendons la proposition de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme et du Comité financier sur l'organisation d'une manifestation de haut niveau consacrée au rôle de la FAO en matière de sécurité alimentaire, qui serait financée par des ressources extrabudgétaires, cela s'entend, et aurait lieu en concomitance avec les manifestations prévues dans le cadre de la Journée mondiale de l'alimentation.

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

En primer lugar, quisiera expresar el apoyo de Uruguay a la Declaración del Grupo de los 77 más China sobre este asunto. Con relación a ésta declaración, quisiéramos referirnos en particular a la solicitud que se hace para que la FAO pase a alinear su trabajo con las prioridades programáticas aprobadas por la Conferencia para el próximo bienio. En tal sentido, entendemos necesario destacar expresamente otras temáticas para las cuales la Conferencia ha requerido que se les preste atención especial. Corresponde recordar que en el literal h del párrafo 43, al hacer la Conferencia suyas las recomendaciones contenidas en el informe del 25.º período de sesiones del Comité de Agricultura se pide a la FAO que siga reforzando su labor normativa y basada en la ciencia y en datos fehacientes prestando especial atención también a la biotecnología, la producción sostenible, la mecanización, las estadísticas, la inocuidad de los alimentos, la nutrición y los jóvenes.

Cabría recordar asimismo que la biotecnología, se incluye también en el punto 9 c del Informe del 156.º período de sesiones del Consejo de la FAO, al reformularse las definiciones del párrafo 52 b del documento C 2017/3 que asigna 3,1 millones de USD para apoyar la producción agrícola sostenible, en particular a nivel nacional.

Con respecto al documento CL 158/3, en sí mismo, quisiéramos referirnos en particular a la Sección III C, que trata de la Red de Oficinas de la FAO en los países. Al respecto, cabe recordar no sólo la orientación proporcionada por el Consejo en su 154.º período de sesiones, sino también la dada en su 153.º período de sesiones, en cuanto a que “todo posible ajuste” se haga con “un enfoque adecuado a cada caso”. Esto pues, en el párrafo 18 a del Informe del 154.º período de sesiones del Consejo se hace referencia a “los principios y criterios que se aplicarían de manera específica en cada región”.

En cambio, en el párrafo 16 c del Informe del 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo se “recalca la necesidad de realizar todo posible ajuste de modo específico según la región y con un enfoque adecuado a cada caso.” Entendemos necesario que se tenga en cuenta también un enfoque adecuado a cada caso con relación al “modelo simplificado de dotación de personal para las oficinas en los países”, sobre el cual en el párrafo 51 se informa que está siendo elaborado por FAO. Se entiende que la precisión sobre todos los factores en los que dicho modelo se basará requerirá información y diálogo a nivel de los Órganos Rectores y con las Autoridades nacionales correspondientes.

El mismo comentario anterior se aplica con relación a lo expresado en el párrafo 52, en cuanto a la mención que se hace en el mismo de determinados tipos de países en desarrollo, incluyéndose un “etc.”. Al respecto, convendría reafirmar que el enfoque a aplicar comprenderá todos los objetivos estratégicos de la FAO con relación a las diferentes necesidades que presentan los diferentes países en desarrollo de modo tal de comprender a todos los países en desarrollo, con las particularidades que tienen en cada caso; más allá de la simple clasificación y atención por nivel de ingresos.

Con estos comentarios específicos, podemos aprobar en general el documento CL 158/3. Se agradece que se tengan en cuenta estos comentarios.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports the statements of the G77, China and the Asia Group. We thank the Secretariat for this document which has been discussed within the Programme and Finance Committees. On the whole, we support this document as well as the documents from the Programme and Finance Committees.

We have two comments. We hope to get support from the Secretariat on this.

First, on South-South Cooperation. China reiterates the fact that South-South Cooperation is very important for the realization of the 2030 Agenda within developing countries. The South-South Cooperation team has been transferred from one division to another in this context. Strengthening the work and the importance of this team has become very urgent. We need to look at the change of posts and budget in the context of this transfer. We hope that FAO will maintain support for this work which must be guaranteed with a professional post.

On the budget, we hope that the Secretariat will commit to implementing what the Director-General said at the Closing Ceremony of the 40th Session of the FAO Conference, which was to create a new

branch of South-South Cooperation within FAO. For this, we need to have concrete actions, including organizing high-level conferences, international fora and seminars. China hopes to see these types of events in 2018. China hopes that FAO will be able to maintain its leading role in South-South Cooperation in relation to agriculture around the world. We have taken note of the fact that in 2017 IFAD and WFP played a very active role in South-South Cooperation and we hope that FAO will be able to scale up its activities in advocacy.

On GIAHS, the Conference this year authorized the reallocation of USD 3.1 million to support sustainable agriculture, particularly in countries' agroecology, biodiversity, GIAHS, and biotechnology. But China has taken note of the fact that no funds from these USD 3.1 million have been allocated to GIAHS. China believes that, given that the Conference has already taken such a decision, FAO should implement concrete actions for the work of GIAHS. China supports the activities thanks to extra budgetary resources, but we hope that FAO will be able to strengthen its support through the Regular Programme, especially strengthening the capacity of the GIAHS Secretariat, for example, to create an additional professional post, a full-time post, for the implementation of GIAHS work and to strengthen work and effectiveness.

We hope that these adjustments will see qualitative and quantitative changes to strengthen this area. These should not just be words on paper. We need action in order to strengthen representation and increase FAO's work in this area. And within the United Nations, do we have a road map? Is there a timetable? How can we do this concretely? Next year in April there will be a big conference on GIAHS. What do countries need to do to support this conference? We hope to see a presentation from the Secretariat on this issue. With the adjustments made to the Programme of Work and Budget and the prioritization of GIAHS, what are the concrete aspects of GIAHS that will be scaled up and reinforced?

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

We align our statement with the statement of the Chair of the Group of G77 and China. We would like to thank the FAO management and the Chairpersons of the Finance and Programme Committees for their presentation and would like to highlight the following points:

We acknowledge the efforts made to align the PWB to the priorities of Member States as endorsed in Agenda 2030. We believe that this is an ongoing process and should continue to strengthen programme delivery and ensure that alignment of the strategic objectives of the Organization to the SDGs.

We welcome the continued engagement of FAO in supporting Member states implementation of Agenda 2030, including through decentralized offices monitoring of the SDGs.

We welcome the direction for more strengthening of the Strategic Programmes through better coordination with the decentralized offices and by leveraging partnerships with national and regional institutions.

We support more focus on enhancing the statistics work in the organization which can have synergetic effect on national efforts to achieve and measure SDGs considering that FAO is the custodian of 21 SDG indicators.

We believe that resource mobilization is of particular importance at this stage to enable the implementation of the priorities of developing countries, including the TCP which received zero voluntary contributions according to the received estimates.

In this regard, we would like to call attention to the fact the Near East Region continues to be the least recipient of net appropriation of budget 2018-2019 and the least recipient of extra-budgetary resources as shown by Web Annex 6. We call on FAO management to give the highest importance to this issue considering that many countries in the Region continue to suffer from the dire effects of conflicts on their agriculture sector.

We support giving more priority to South-South and Triangular Cooperation within the work of the organization.

We call for more attention to strengthen internal control and risk management in headquarter and decentralized offices. In this regard, we welcome the announcement that the DG will deliver for the

first time in March 2018 a statement of internal control that will accompany the financial statements of 2017.

We support efforts in decentralization efforts in particular through strengthening the decentralized offices through financial and human resources. In this regard, we note the establishment of two sub-regional offices in Beirut through extra budgetary resources and also in West Africa. We stress that this shall go hand in hand with strengthening the regional office in Cairo and strengthening the network of decentralized offices and aligning them to the country needs. In this regard, we support the Finance Committee recommendation to add a new KPI on the vacancy rate for professional posts both at headquarters and the decentralized offices.

With these comments, Egypt endorses the proposed adjustments noting that output targets may be updated following review by the Regional Conferences in the first half of 2018.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

We thank the Director-General for his wide-ranging remarks this morning. And we commend the accomplishments of the Food and Agriculture Organization in 2017, especially the adoption by consensus of a budget at the 40th Session of the FAO Conference and the maintenance of consensus which we welcome as a hallmark of the Director-General's tenure.

Turning to the Programme of Work and Budget, the United States thanks the Director-General and the Secretariat for their efforts to promote good governance and fiscal responsibility. Both are important topics in the context of broader United Nations Reform discussions. We appreciate continued efforts of the FAO Management to contain costs and demonstrate additional efficiency gains to be pursued in the next biennium.

We echo colleagues' discussions of FAO's recognition of an increased focus on internal control issues which is an area that has been highlighted in previous internal audit recommendations. In particular, we look forward to reviewing the Director-General's statement of internal control in future sessions of the Finance Committee. We commend the Secretariat's efforts in this regard. We appreciate the Secretariat's clear delineation of areas of emphasis, de-emphasis, savings, and reallocations of resources, all of which are essential in translating strategy into action.

With these comments, my Delegation supports these documents.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan supports the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Venezuela on behalf of the G77 and China. It also welcomes the positive stand taken by the Programme Committee, the Finance Committee and their Joint Meeting on Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19. Afghanistan is raising the following five points to complement the statement delivered by the G77 and China:

We appreciate the six Web Annexes, especially Web Annex 1 on the Results Framework and Web Annex 2 on Output indicators and targets. Web Annex 1 provides a linkage between FAO's five Strategic Objectives and the SDG indicators. Afghanistan also welcomes the two information notes on the human resources management issued late last week.

In financial terms, the adjustments are minor. Nevertheless, the five Strategic Objectives have gained USD 1.5 million in net appropriation with a corresponding reduction in Chapters 8, 10, 11 and some transfers from objective 6.

The updating of extrabudgetary resources to USD 1 564 000 has raised the additional USD 9.2 million. We note that 73 percent of this small increase is linked to the five Strategic Objectives. While the increase is welcome, further efforts are needed to raise the level of extrabudgetary resources, as advocated by the Chairpersons of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee. The Special Fund for Development Finance Activities would assist in this effort.

From Web Annex 6, one notes the sharp differences in the ratios of net appropriation to extrabudgetary resources by regions. We note the average ratio for all the five regions is 1 to 2.8 while the Africa region remains above this average, other regions fall below. In this connection, one would

have to say that the average ratio of 1 to 2.8 is much lower than the one that existed in the 1980s and 1990s.

From Table 1 of Information Note no. 1 on Human Resources Management (HRM), we have seen that 71 percent of the consultants employed by headquarters and 57 percent employed by decentralized offices came from developed regions: Europe, North America and South Pacific. These three regions counted for 90 percent of the consultants at headquarters with length of service more than ten years. For the developing regions combined, Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 40 percent of the consultants employed while the share of the Near East region was only 10 percent.

To enhance South-South Cooperation, the use of consultants from developing countries needs to increase significantly and on a priority basis. From Information Note 2 on HRM, we note that from January 2012 to November 2017, good progress has been achieved in the employment of females in D1 and above posts, professional posts and consultants. But progress in the use of female consultants in decentralized offices has been less satisfactory. From 30 percent in January 2012 to 34 percent in November 2017.

Chairperson, we thank you while we endorse the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19.

M. Boumedienne MAHI (Algérie) (langue originale arabe)

Je vous remercie Monsieur le Président au nom de l'Algérie ainsi qu'au nom du Groupe Afrique, que nous représentons à ce Conseil, et comme mes collègues nous remercions aussi le Directeur général. En effet, nous sommes sûrs que vous allez nous aider à atteindre nos objectifs.

Suite en français

Permettez-moi de dire que je m'associe à la délégation du Venezuela, qui a pris la parole au nom du Groupe des 77, et au distingué délégué du Cameroun, qui a pris la parole au nom du Groupe Afrique.

La délégation algérienne appuie les ajustements opérés sur le Programme de travail et budget visant à orienter les programmes vers des activités sur le terrain, et prend avec beaucoup d'intérêt l'intervention de la FAO dans les négociations sur le climat, suite à l'identification de l'agriculture comme sujet inclu dans ces négociations.

Notre délégation prend également bonne note des éléments d'information dans le document que nous sommes en train de discuter. Pour éviter de revenir sur des questions déjà soulevées par mes collègues, je me concentrerai sur une question importante, à savoir la réalisation des Objectifs de développement durable, notamment dans les pays en développement.

Je fais référence ici notamment aux paragraphes 6 et 7 et paragraphes de 16 à 18 du document CL 158/3. En effet, la FAO est très active sur cette question, sachant qu'elle est concernée par les 40 cibles de ces objectifs. De ce fait, nous demandons à l'Organisation de renforcer ses activités et son appui à la réalisation de ces objectifs au niveau des pays en développement, notamment des pays africains, et en particulier notamment pour ce qui concerne les paramètres de mesure des indicateurs.

Effectivement, en soulignant cette question, nous souhaitons que les activités de cette Organisation soient renforcées au niveau régional, mais aussi au niveau sous-régional, afin de permettre premièrement de renforcer les capacités de ces pays, mais aussi et surtout de leur permettre d'échanger leur expérience sur cette question et de réaliser ainsi ces objectifs. À ce niveau, nous proposons que les ajustements qui ont déjà été adoptés pour ce qui concerne les surplus du budget ou le budget non-utilisé pour l'année en cours ciblent essentiellement le renforcement des pays africains dans ce domaine.

Je voudrais aussi souligner que les pays en développement, notamment africains, rencontrent de grandes difficultés pour mesurer les progrès accomplis sur le terrain, d'où la nécessité pour l'Organisation d'engager toute son expérience pour les aider dans ce sens.

Je voudrais finir en faisant écho à ce qui a été dit par mon voisin et frère du Pakistan, mais aussi par l'Afghanistan, et également par la distinguée déléguée de la Chine, pour ce qui concerne la coopération Sud-Sud et le besoin de renforcer cette dimension dans les activités de la FAO.

Ms Doojduan SASANAVIN (Thailand)

Thailand associates itself with the Statement made by the G77 and the Asia Group.

Thailand takes note on the updated results framework and the Output target and indicators for the Strategic Objectives. We appreciate the adjustment of the Outcome indicator 4.1.B. We are glad to see clear Output indicators for 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

We believe that international standards for food safety and quality together with well-functioned international trade agreements largely contribute to improve processing, marketing and distribution of food and agricultural products, which is one of the key Functions of FAO specified in Constitution Article 1(d).

Mr Katsuyoshi MASUKAWA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Group statement delivered by Malaysia, and would like to add some comments and questions.

Firstly, Japan welcomes FAO's work on the Results Framework, especially a new formulations for outcome indicator 4.1.B.

Secondly, regarding the change of budgeted post, Japan would like to clarify following three points: What sort of improvements are expected by adding a programme officers to SP1 - SP5 teams? What is the grade of the Programme Officers? Are they publicly invited from now on?

Lastly, in regards to GIAHS, Japan aligns itself with China. Namely, Japan looks forward to further update on this issue.

Mr Ditya Agung NURDIANTO (Indonesia)

Indonesia highly appreciates the FAO's management performance for the hardwork in following up on the results of the Conference and Council decisions. This demonstrates the well-run process of internalizing the FAO programmes with FAO Secretariat and towards the direction agreed upon by FAO member countries.

Related to this document, Indonesia would like to highlight three issues: the appointment of Strategic Programme Leaders, target figures to be achieved in 2018-19, and voluntary contributions.

First, the appointment of the person in charge of each Strategic Objectives shows the great efforts by the FAO Secretariat in carrying out the mandate given by member countries. This appointment is also one of the right efforts to focus FAO resources, both human resources and budget, in achieving the target performance of each Strategic Objective so that it is expected at the end of the Director-General's leadership, the achievement of each Strategic Objective can be assessed.

In line with this, the assessment of the Strategic Objectives' achievement needs to be followed by transparency and accountability mechanisms to further enhance FAO's management performance. With the mechanism, the Strategic Programme leader has more responsibility in implementing the work programmes. Their hard work will also induce a domino effect for their subordinates, and subsequently the FAO service for member countries will be more increased and more focused.

Secondly, the target figures to be achieved in 2018 and 2019 in Web Annex 2, CL 158/3-WA2, shows FAO's optimism in implementing the work programme for the fiscal year of 2018-19. It boasts the FAO member states but also raises the question on where the numbers come from. Many of the Output targets will be more than doubled in 2019 (in comparison to 2018), such as Outputs 1.1.2, 1.3.1, 1.4.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and others. It is our hope that management could clarify on this point.

Finally, referring to the voluntary contribution, Indonesia highly supports this initiative and willingly joins the initiative. As of now, Indonesia is currently undertaking an internal legal process to formulate the modalities so as to be able to provide voluntary contributions in a focused, coordinated, and most importantly effective manner.

Sr. Porfirio PESTANA DE BARROS (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Por ser nuestra primera intervención como país, queremos felicitarlo por su designación como Presidente Independiente de Consejo y manifestarle toda nuestra colaboración y apoyo para su gestión. Adicionalmente, nos sumamos a las declaraciones hechas por el G77 y China sobre el Ajuste al Programa de Trabajo y Presupuesto para 2018-19.

Nuestra intervención la centraremos al objetivo estratégico 6, que se refiere a la calidad técnica, estadísticas y temas transversales (cambio climático, género, gobernanza y nutrición) en particular con el tema de las estadísticas.

Felicitamos al Director -General por la reorganización propuesta para fortalecer el área de estadística, y con ello incrementar el apoyo a los países para generar datos pertinentes de alta calidad; y reforzar los vínculos entre las estadísticas y la toma de decisiones, en el marco de la Agenda 2030.

A la fecha, la región de América Latina y el Caribe ha venido avanzando conjuntamente con la Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), en un Marco Regional de Indicadores para abordar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), el documento de CEPAL LC/CEA.9/4 de fecha de 10 de noviembre de 2017, recoge una propuesta inicial amplia y extensa, donde se abordan la mayoría de las metas desde una perspectiva flexible.

En ese marco flexible se identificaron primero aquellos indicadores que requieren información más fácil de recopilar y procesar a corto o mediano plazo y segundo aquellos que, por su significación para el seguimiento de las características sobresaliente de la región, no cuenta con un correlato en el marco mundial ni con indicadores sustitutos adecuados.

Esta propuesta de un Marco Regional deriva principalmente de las características diferenciales de cada región en el ámbito demográfico, social, económico y ambiental. De hecho en Naciones Unidas, cuando se presentó el Marco Mundial se mencionó la conveniencia de que cada región contara con su marco, así como que los países dispusieran de un marco nacional para monitorear su progreso, en función de sus prioridades y características.

Sabemos que la FAO participa activamente en esta iniciativa Regional con la CEPAL, y conoce perfectamente las fortalezas y limitaciones para avanzar en el seguimiento de los ODS, así como del pleno conocimiento de las asimetrías en el desarrollo estadístico regional. Quisiéramos que estos Marcos Regionales y Marcos Nacionales sean tomados en cuenta para evaluar los avances.

Por último, reafirmamos lo comprometido en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas del 2015, en la Cumbre de aprobación de la Agenda 2030 en el documento A/69/L.85, que afirma lo siguiente: "...Deberán utilizarse siempre que sea posible datos e información facilitados por los mecanismos de presentación de informes existentes", entendiéndose los órganos que conforman los Sistemas Estadísticos Nacionales, para no vernos en la penosa situación de tener que avalar cifras de encuestadoras privadas o grupos de expertos que no consultan ni coordinan con los órganos nacionales.

Mr Winston RUDDER (Trinidad and Tobago)

The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, representing the 15-member CARICOM sub-Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, commends FAO's continued engagement in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and its increased collaboration at national level with the UN System in supporting governments in integrating the SDGs in country and sectoral planning.

Indeed, I am pleased to advise that my country is currently finalizing a revised national agricultural development policy intended to inform the overarching framework and Strategic Objectives for a medium-term agriculture development plan. And you would be pleased to know further that the approach to formulating these instruments was modeled on the FAO template for developing its MTP and PWB.

We have reviewed the adjustments to the PWB 2018-2019, together with the comments of Programme and Finance Committees and agree that in overall content and direction, the proposals remain faithful to what we originally agreed at Conference.

I note in particular the observation in Section II - Work Planning and Monitoring under “*Work Planning*” and, particularly para 22 of CL 158/3 on the introduction of innovations to improve synergies between the bottom up and top down approaches, and fully support the need to focus the work at country level and the intelligent application and use of service level agreements and leveraging partnerships, guided by priorities in the regional initiatives and country programming levels.

I also draw attention to Section III of CL 158/3 – Measures to Strengthen Programme Delivery under FAO Country Office Network, paragraphs 50-52.

I note additionally the intention to open two new sub-regional offices. These areas are instanced because of their particular relevance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We, in the Caribbean sub-Region of Latin America and the Caribbean sincerely hope and expect that in adjusting the modalities and taking measures to increase flexibility and resource use and determining priorities, the formula ultimately deployed will emerge from dialogue with the countries involved. Because it is with regret, I must indicate that current circumstances present some significant difficulties both of substance and logistics for this to be accomplished in the Caribbean sub-Region.

I draw your attention particularly to some unnecessary uncertainties which cloud institutional arrangements relating to long standing vacancies of FAORs. So if we are going to deal and impose more responsibilities at country level by FAO systems, FAORs must be in place.

We note also freezing of posts which have served sub-regional interests and continue to be critically needed to compensate for inherent technical shortcomings associated with SIDS which themselves do not have capacity.

We instance also the question on unnecessary aggravation, if I may put it this way, of the imposition of the need for language skills not relevant in the sub-regional context in continuing appointments and recruitment of key personnel whose competencies and experience otherwise far exceed requirements for the assignments identified.

Additionally too, we would appreciate clarity in and early resolution of a little bit of dissonance created by modalities pursued in initiating relocation of the Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean and question the underlying rationale for such a process.

With these comments, on behalf of the sub region, I unhesitatingly support adjustments to the 2018-19 PWB and look forward to its successful implementation.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

The United Kingdom aligns itself with statement made by Estonia on behalf of EU and 28 Member States.

I would like to draw attention of the Council and Management to a further recommendation made by the FC for an update to the results framework.

This is the recommendation for an additional KPI under functional objective 10 that measures FAO’s implementation of Audit Recommendations I the way that KPI 10.2. B measures the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

So, the indicator will measure the percentage of recommendations of audit recommendations where the agreed management response has been completed by the due date.

You will recall that I mentioned this at the 156th Session of the Council and the Management signalled their agreement to this.

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

Queremos también agradecer al Señor Director General por sus palabras introductorias y a los Presidentes del Comité de Programa y al Comité de Finanzas por sus informes.

Damos la bienvenida al documento que se presenta. Constatamos que se han hecho los ajustes al Programa de Trabajo y de Presupuesto para el año 2018. También apoyamos las conclusiones del Comité del Programa y ,por último, deseamos manifestar nuestro apoyo a lo manifestado por el Grupo de los 77 más China y Uruguay, y en el sentido de que alentamos a la FAO a profundizar sus trabajos

en los temas de biotecnología y también a continuar los esfuerzos llevados a cabo hasta el presente para trabajar en el ámbito de la asociación en la temática de la Cooperación Sur-Sur y Triangular.

Mr Sangho PARK (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea would like to comment in line with the Asia Group a joint statement.

Korea welcomes the Secretariat's decision to progressively adjust the modalities of country coverage and take measures to increase flexibility in the use of the budgeted resource which will allow reallocation of resources to country specific and emerging needs and priorities in FAO Country Offices.

Korea would like to stress that joint partnership such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation can provide great advantages to developing countries and should be given priorities to investments.

On another point, we are not very clear on what this streamlined country office staffing model is which FAO plans to introduce in the next two years. So, Korea would like to seek more detailed information with regard to the matter from the Secretariat.

Second, Korea welcomes the provision of greater statistical support to Strategic Programmes with realignment of resources and activities from Objective 6 to the Strategic Programme. However, it is not quite clear on how extra resources can be used to strengthen statistical support and requests the Secretariat to provide more information on this issue.

With the comments above, Korea endorses the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 under item 3.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to welcome the Director-General's remarks this morning outlining the achievements of FAO since the Conference as well as outlining upcoming events which give us a broader view of what lies ahead in the next year. I think it is always welcome to note what FAO is planning so that we can prepare and have a more strategic view of the year.

We note that he mentioned that the Innovation Symposium is being postponed to the first half of 2019 rather than being planned in the second semester of 2018. This is something that we do regret given the importance that we allocate to this subject, and as well the fact that ahead of the Technical Committees that will take place between June and next autumn, those Technical Committees will not necessarily have the opportunity to benefit from some of the discussions that would happen as opposed to many other important events that will happen the first semester of 2018. We would like to see if the Secretariat of the FAO could still explore a date to hold this event in 2018.

We also note that the Director-General mentioned important RBA collaboration events next year without mentioning any specific ones. However, we would like to bring the attention to the Commission on the Status of Women, the meeting in New York that will take place in March, where the three RBAs are collaborating given the very relevant topic of empowerment of rural women. We hope that we can have the benefits of hearing the outcomes either through the formal Governing Bodies or through other events.

On the measures to strengthen programme delivery and the creation of the five new positions of the Programme Officer, we would be very interested to know how these would contribute to the integration of the cross-cutting issues under each Strategic Programme as well as how these will create the necessary synergies among the SOs rather than creating further silos that are based on each Strategic Objective. I think that there are some measures that have been outlined to see how the cross-cutting issues are integrated into the work plan, but when it comes to implementation and programme delivery, it is not clear how the follow-up is done so that the impact is measured as well in terms of how these are integrated.

I think in the context of a flat nominal budget and resource constraints, "how" is very important in terms of optimizing the investments that FAO is making, in particular in the context of the negative trend that has unfortunately been witnessed this year in terms of eradicating hunger and food insecurity.

But with this in mind, we can support the proposed adjustment to the Programme of Work and Budget.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia would also like to thank the Director-General for his comments at the start of today's meeting. Australia would also like to thank him personally. He hosted a meeting with Pacific leaders last month and it was the first time the Director-General had met directly with leaders from many of our Small Island Developing States here in Rome. It was an excellent opportunity for them to speak directly with him about what their priorities are for that region. So, I would like to extend my very warm thanks to the Director-General for that.

In regards to the proposed adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget as outlined by the Secretariat, we support them. We would like to note, though, that it is a challenge to balance the priorities of all the Members here, especially when there is a relatively small amount of money to reallocate to areas of emphasis. In that regard, we support the Secretariat in ensuring that all areas of emphasis are equitably supported. And within that framework, Australia is looking forward to increased attention to biotechnology.

Australia would also like to lend its voice of support to the proposal put forward by the UK in relation to an additional indicator in the Results Framework.

M. Jacob OUEDRAOGO (Observateur du Burkina Faso)

Je voudrais remercier le Groupe régional Afrique de permettre au Burkina Faso de prendre la parole pour appuyer et soutenir ses propositions.

Permettez-moi d'exprimer ma satisfaction d'être parmi vous pour renforcer notre partenariat avec la FAO, notre institution d'orientation et de gouvernance en matière d'agriculture et d'alimentation.

Je puis vous assurer, Monsieur le Président, que le Burkina Faso se fait un devoir d'apporter sa contribution aux échanges de ce jour au sein de cet organe directeur dont vous assurez la présidence.

A l'instar de certains pays africains, la campagne agricole au Burkina Faso a été ponctuée par des poches de sécheresse coïncidant avec les stades critiques de floraison, d'épiaison et maturation des cultures. Elle a également été marquée par des attaques de chenilles légionnaires d'automne à tous les stades de développement végétatif des céréales. Outre ces entraves que nous déplorons, des menaces d'oiseaux granivores ont été signalées dans la zone du Sahel. Malgré les mesures anticipatives et les solutions d'urgence apportées par notre Gouvernement, qui ont permis de circonscrire les fléaux, ces situations ont malheureusement porté préjudice à la production agricole nationale, occasionnant un déficit céréalier de près 75 000 tonnes.

L'appui de la FAO à notre pays cette année, que je salue à nouveau, pour la promotion des légumineuses nous permettra d'amoinrir les risques d'insécurité alimentaire.

Sans être exhaustif sur les risques d'une insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle profonde, nous saluons l'ajustement apporté au Programme de travail et budget (PTB) 2018-2019 de la FAO pour la région Afrique. À cet égard, nous exhortons la FAO à mettre tout en œuvre pour accélérer le suivi des résolutions de la 29^{ème} session de la Conférence régionale pour l'Afrique, tenue en 2016 à Abidjan.

S'agissant de l'Afrique de l'Ouest en particulier, cet ajustement dans la répartition des postes inscrits au PTB permettra de soutenir l'opérationnalisation du bureau sous-régional que nous attendons de tous nos vœux dans les plus brefs délais possibles. Cela permettra à la FAO de se rapprocher des nécessités des plus vulnérables, qui attendent que ses interventions dans les pays adviennent le plus rapidement possible.

Certes des problèmes de ressources pourraient survenir, mais au regard des différents défis et des cibles ambitieuses figurant dans l'annexe web 2, il serait mieux d'aller au-delà d'un redéploiement du personnel et du renforcement des capacités humaines. En effet, l'ouverture de ce bureau dans le cadre de la décentralisation de la FAO permettra de consolider la mise en œuvre de l'agenda 2063 de l'Union africaine en cohérence avec les Objectifs de développement durable.

Nous avons de nombreux défis à relever pour le bien-être de nos populations. C'est pourquoi je voudrais remercier et féliciter Monsieur José da Silva Graziano, Directeur général de la FAO, et tout le Conseil pour l'organisation et la tenue de la présente session qui nous invite tous à l'action.

Enfin, pour conclure mon intervention, je saisis l'opportunité que m'offre cette tribune pour féliciter les trois Chefs d'institutions des Nations Unies basées à Rome, qui, de par leur volonté commune, sont parvenus à imposer la nécessité et l'urgence d'une coordination et d'une mise en synergie de leurs interventions dans nos pays pour l'amélioration des conditions de vie des petits producteurs et des ménages, notamment les plus vulnérables.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

Perhaps, it would be good to give the floor first to Mr Boyd Haight for specific questions, so that then we can provide a better picture.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge and thank the overall support that has been provided by the Council to the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget, taking into account many useful comments that have been made.

I would like to address briefly three sets of comments, and then, if you agree, have Dan Gustafson elaborate on a few of the more specific comments.

Firstly, there have been several interventions concerning how we address the priorities that were set out in the Programme of Work and Budget itself, remembering that there were ten higher priority areas where we had reallocated resources from savings.

We address these areas both holistically and specifically as we prepare the work plans.

I can give the example of USD 3.1 million that were allocated for sustainable agricultural production, for which the 156th Session of the Council in April 2017 gave specific guidance that covers agroecology, biotechnology, biodiversity, as well as GIAHS. Those resources are used to fund six new professional posts, as shown in the Programme of Work and Budget Table 4; four of those posts are in decentralized offices, while two are based at headquarters. The intention is that they would work in all highlighted areas, particularly at country level, as we move forward with helping countries not only address these priorities, but also support the work that is being carried out on achieving SDGs.

In this regard, I can also speak briefly about our work on statistics, but I think Dan Gustafson may want to elaborate more. We are focusing our work on statistics, both under Objective 6 and through the support to the Strategic Objectives on assisting countries attain them, but also measure the achievement of SDGs.

You will recall that our Strategic Objectives for the next biennium address 40 out of 169 targets of SDGs and 53 of the SDGs indicators. In fact, these having been determined from where FAO should be able to make contributions to SDG targets, not simply looking at the SDGs at a higher level. Besides, our work on statistics will be very important to help you measure progress, in particular on 21 SDG indicators among 40, for which FAO is custodian for the methodology of measuring these indicators.

Furthermore, concerning the priorities, several delegations have mentioned the importance of taking account of country and regional priorities in the work of the Organization. You will continue to have the opportunity to provide such guidance in the Regional Conferences that will be taking place in the first half of 2018.

We will give a view of the results of the current biennium from a regional perspective, that is in achieving the regional priorities, but also contributing to the Strategic Objectives, as well as on how the targets that have been set for the 2018–2019 biennium. We will provide a view on how those targets relate to work in countries and at the regional level in each region. This is the mechanism that we can use to ensure that the bottom-up planning, which we have already undertaken with our Country Offices, is also reviewed by the respective regions.

I would like to turn briefly the FAO Results Frameworks. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, these will be updated and presented following the Regional Conferences through the next sessions of the Programme and Finance Committees and the Council as the final Results Frameworks for monitoring in the 2018-19 biennium. In that respect, we will take account of the guidance that has been provided by the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee that you have supported.

Specifically, concerning the request for how we will be measuring our work on antimicrobial resistance through the Strategic Framework, I can tell you that there are 30 results within our work plans that contribute to antimicrobial resistance under seven of our outputs. Each output has an indicator with methodological notes, as noted by the Programme Committee, and those indicators will be able to measure how we have contributed to addressing antimicrobial resistance during the course of the biennium.

We will have an opportunity to present this point to the Programme Committee in considering the results frameworks. Moreover, there was an observation about the fact that the output targets seemed to be skewed slightly to the second year of the biennium. I think this is quite a normal occurrence. Since we are measuring the work over two years, we tend to have a bit of backload on achievement of our outputs in the second year as we would apply the resources over the course of more than 12 months.

Finally, on the measures to improve programme delivery. I think, Mr Dan Gustafson would be best positioned to explain how the Strategic Programme teams work. I believe Laurent Thomas, who is now here, will be able to clarify the Country Offices network.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

I am delighted to speak on both of those topics.

Firstly, I would discuss on the Strategic Programme teams and the changes and what would be the implications of that. As many of you well know, currently the only post that is funded or let's say permanent on the Strategic Programme (SP) teams is the Strategic Programme Leader up until this change. All the other posts are rotational in the sense that they are loaned for, we hope, a period of two to three years from the technical divisions or other parts of the Organization and then they return to their divisions. In fact, at the end of the year now for next year's planning, about two members of each team will be going back to their divisions of origin and they will be replaced by other people coming in.

With the creation of the posts of the Programme Officer, this will be an extra funded post that each of the team has, so that now it does not need to come from the division on loan or funded by the division to work on the team. In fact, it will be, a permanent post, a Regular Programme of Work and Budget post that will provide, on the one hand, continuity for the work of the teams and so on as the other members rotate over their cycle of two to three years and on the other hand, it will also give resources to the team that at the moment are given by the division.

I think in both cases it will strengthen the team and reinforce or not detract from the divisions in a way that – at the moment, you could think of it as losing a member.

However, the divisions have generally been happy to see the benefits to that division of closer participation in the SP teams, including when it comes to distributing resources and the programing to represent the views of the division on the team.

They are all at the P4 level and each of them will have a process for selection as it is for a regular PWB post. This still will take some time to work out as in most of the teams, and in some of the teams, the individual who is in that analogous post now is doing very well, but had come in on a rotational basis.

Some of those may simply be placed on a lateral transfer to that post and then opening up a vacant post in their home division or they may opt instead to go back as originally planned to their original division. Each case is a little bit different. I would think it will be between now and the end of the year when we decide on each case on how we will do that.

Besides, the related question from Canada on the cross-cutting nature. It has not been a specific objective of adding this post to support cross-cutting themes, but I would say that there has been,

really quite good progress in working to avoid silos of the strategic programmes and to look for increasing opportunities, particularly at the country level, where multiple strategic programmes contribute to a programme within that country or the regional office.

I believe we have improved on that, and there are quite a few multiple SP initiatives. As you would imagine, I suppose this reflects, the demand side of what is coming from countries and regions. I think, though, it is also true that having continuity on the part of the Programme Officer with an awareness of this, it is an excellent recommendation of awareness of this issue, which will help in that regard –having everyone else being rotational –and to have them follow common objectives and practices and so on. It is a very interesting recommendation and I am sure we can take that on board.

With regard to the question on how the Office of Chief Statistician and that side of the work on statistics will support Country Offices or Country Programmes and development of statistics capacities in countries. Again, a very pertinent question. The core team of the Office of Chief Statistician deals primarily with work on SDG indicators and the development of methodologies and data. Particularly on those that require it, but also with regard to methodological consistency within the scope of the SDG indicators and other statistical work within the Organization, more in a centralized focus that, of course, applies to all of us but that is done here centrally.

In addition to that, that office is very active and has been very active in the past, in this Biennium, in the past two years, in supporting Country Offices, or the country work.

Not necessarily Country Offices, but the statistics work at the country level on capacity development, specifically with regard to national systems necessary to organize and report on SDG indicators. Most of that work has been done with either extra budgetary voluntary contributions or multi-disciplinary fund – a limited time funding from the PWB, within the PWB. Yet, that work will continue.

There is a significant amount of work also at the regional level, where each of the regions has a post for statistics and at the subregional level working with subregional statistics organizations and training at the county level of national systems on how to put into place the systems necessary to report on the SDGs. So that is ongoing work, quite important work, and we will continue in this coming biennium as well.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

Members of the Council have given me the opportunity to elaborate on what is proposed under paragraphs 49 to 52 of the adjusted Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) regarding the review of the scope and modalities of country coverage in each region in line with the guidance that was provided by the Council at its 154th Session in 2016 and the results cycle from regional conferences that took place in 2016.

We have a number of challenges that we are going to address progressively during the biennium. We start from the fact that the resources allocated to the Decentralized Office Network and particularly the FAO network are not necessarily allocated where they are most needed. That is the first point and I will come back to this.

The second point is that we are faced with a situation where due to, let us say, historic change in the management of the FAO network today, 95 percent of the resources allocated to the Decentralized Office Network and to the Country Office Network are allocated to staff. There is only 5 percent left for non-staff resources, which gives no flexibility for running the offices and makes the offices very inefficient. So, what do we have in mind? We have in mind first to review the allocation of resources according to the priorities in FAO to address the challenges of the Strategic Framework.

Just to give you an idea: today, with the changes in the world, we have approximately 36 percent of the countries with a FAO presence that are low income, food deficit countries. These are our priorities. We have 27 percent of all Small Island Developing States (SIDS); 36 percent of the countries that are low-middle income; 33 percent upper-middle income; and 8 percent high income countries. We want to be sure that the allocation of resources to these countries takes into account the different economic situations.

Some countries are more in need, so low income, food deficit countries or the SIDS, while some countries still require certain types of FAO assistance, but they are still in a position to provide technical assistance to other countries through South-South Cooperation, which is often the case of the low-middle income countries or the upper-middle income countries. Those are the types of concerns that we had during the process of reviewing the scope and modalities of coverage of the Country Office Network.

What we intend to do is to make sure – in line with Council guidance and the Regional Conference guidance – is that resources go in priority towards low income and food deficit countries. That is the top priority. We want to address the challenge of hunger where there is the biggest need. We believe that for middle income countries, below middle income or upper-middle income, there are some possibilities of cost-sharing with other countries. In fact, we have started discussion with a number of countries for cost-sharing in the country offices. And with regard to the high income countries, the modality is to make sure that the costs are covered fully by the country. As I mentioned, we have to continue to give special attention to SIDS, especially in light of the great threats of climate change vulnerabilities.

Lower middle income countries will receive higher priority over upper middle income countries. That is to say that if the country's economic level is lower, then it needs more support from FAO. We want to be sure, as I mentioned, that for middle income countries, a share of the resources allocated to the Country Office is used for the mobilization of South-South Cooperation. We believe that it is very important. It is something that should be done more and I think has been widely debated in this assembly.

What we want to make sure is that we reflect better the complexity and the size of the field programme in the country. For your information, we also have a wide variety of situations with field programme delivery. Fifty-six percent of the countries have been delivering less than USD 2 million per year of programmes. This is clearly insufficient. We have to factor this in our management setup. In some situations it is due to the performance of the office and in some situations it may be that there is less need for FAO support. We have to factor this in.

In fact, we only have 22 percent of the countries with a delivery of more than USD 5 million. That is the type of concern that we are also looking at when reviewing the setup of the Country Office.

This is the work that we intend to undertake progressively, taking into account factors such as vacancy rates in the country offices to ultimately arrive, if we proceed well, at the end of the next biennium, with a new setup of Country Office which would be more agile with a better share of resources within each office allocated to staff and non-staff resources. I would say a good balance probably would be 70-75 percent for the staff and 25 percent for non-staff resources. Finally, an overall better allocation of resources to countries more in need is also an aim of this exercise.

We want to undertake this with, of course, a budget neutral approach for the allocations given to each region. This means the mobilization of resources and priority areas will be defined within existing regional budgets for the FAO network.

I think I gave you an overview and I would be pleased to provide you with more clarification should it be necessary.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

Thanks to all of the members of the Council for their interventions. I think at the end of the day the results are the only thing that counts. So I think it is important for us to realize, and for us to know as we do so, that with the implementation of this Programme of Work and Budget, we realize that at the end of this biennium we have fewer people in severe hunger, we have strengthened our agriculture to adapt to climate change and to mitigate climate change and to see these results.

I think it is also very important that as members of the Council we realize the overall framework of Agenda 2030 and SDGs are our challenge for the next decade. The work of translating that agenda into the work of FAO, into the Strategic Objectives, and certainly into country-level results on the ground will be this challenge.

I think it is very important that much emphasis was given to the Results Framework and the indicators not only for measuring the work of FAO on the ground, not only to see what is going well, what should perhaps get more priority, and what should be done better, but it is also very important to strengthen the basis for further investment and further work of FAO to realize our challenges.

Therefore, it is so crucial to enhance the performance of FAO by way of strengthening transparency and accountability, and let us not forget, communication. Communication is a crucial tool for the work of FAO, not only in this room but certainly in the countries and parliaments and for people on the ground.

It is a tool for showcasing successes but also a tool for showing lessons learned. And for that, of course, we need the data and we need the timely availability of data, not only for programme delivery, not only for budget spend, but also for human resources because only then we can speak about adequate governance. It is not about the data itself. It is also about the analysis, how it relates to decisions made and decisions to be taken.

I would like to underscore the importance of the partnerships. Many of you have said it; the need for partnerships, public-private partnerships, South-South partnerships, and Triangular partnerships. We all know that we can only meet our challenges if we invest more in our role in agricultural economies. For that we need the partnerships, the South-South partners but certainly also partnerships with the private sector.

Last but not least, the special event in 2018 which was discussed and agreed by both Committees and especially in the Joint Committee, could play a crucial role in encouraging partnerships because we need not only the commitment at the highest level but we need to find a way to get more investments. I think that an event held around that World Food Day at the highest level is so important for this.

I would like to conclude by paraphrasing the sentence said by the United States: Words into action. Swords into ploughshares.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am delighted to be the last speaker in this round of interventions since the Management, Secretariat, and Programme Committee Chairperson have covered practically all of the comments and queries raised by members and I have nothing much to add.

But since we have not heard any particular concerns addressed to the Finance Committee, I would just like to thank and show my appreciation to the members for their substantive contributions and the endorsements for the adjustments to the PWB. This includes the recommendations by the Finance Committee such as the updates on the key performance indicators and the revised distribution of net appropriations by budgetary transfer or budgetary chapters.

There was a mention of the internal control issue and there could be further discussion on this when the presentation of the Finance Committee report will come in later. I look forward to further discussion on this and other Finance Committee related matters.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I would like to start off by thanking and welcoming the commitment from Mr Haight and Management to set out how FAO's progress with antimicrobial resistance will be monitored in the Results Framework and I very much look forward to seeing that in the next meeting of the Programme Committee.

I also wanted to check whether all of the other adjustments to the key performance indicators that have been proposed by the Finance Committee and by the Programme Committee will now be taken forward by Management? I would like to think so and would it be possible to record the Management's agreement to take those forward in a record of this discussion?

Mr Moungui MEDI (Cameroon)

First, let me thank the Secretariat and also the Chairpersonss of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee for following up on some of the queries of the Members of the Council. We are

happy that many of the questions have had some kind of response from the Secretariat and from the Chairperson of the Programme Committee.

But I would like to come back to one issue that we raised along with the Minister of Burkina Faso: we are very keen in seeing that the resolution of the Regional Conference that took place last year in Abidjan taken on board fully.

In the programmes, I think it is important that we are aware of any problems that are coming up and there probably are some problems that have arisen. I would like to seek Mr Thomas who could probably come back to the issue of this idea of evaluations of the decentralized offices. Mr Thomas mentioned an element of fact which is that the delivery by many countries is not up to a certain level and this warrants involvement from FAO at a certain level. Was it really studied case by case to understand what the problem for delivery was at that level?

We wish to find out if there were any case by case studies undertaken, especially for our region. I know that the support to SIDS is absolutely important and some of the decisions taken by the Ministers at the 29th Session of FAO Regional Conference for Africa last year had to do with the SIDS in the Indian Ocean.

We need to know if there are specific problems that have to be addressed and if some specific actions have to be taken by our ministers as we are preparing for the next Regional Conference.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General Operations)

Thank you, Cameroon. I will try to be precise in addressing your concern. First of all, I can confirm to you that the recommendation of the Regional Conference, particularly regarding the coverage of the decentralized office are taken fully on board. The Regional Conferences are part of the governance of FAO and we fully follow the guidance of the governance.

The 29th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa made it very clear that they wanted to see strengthening of FAO's representation network in the region and that it was particularly not supportive of the idea of merging offices through multiple accreditation models.

The Africa Region also encouraged FAO to use the food deficit criteria; give priority to middle income and low income food deficit countries; and maintain all country and subregional offices already in place in African countries. Those were the types of comments that were made.

So definitely we are going to follow and continue to seek the guidance of the Africa Group in the actions we'll be taking to strengthen the Decentralized Office Network.

Now, regarding the question of the delivery of the country offices which is a concern, what we did was to make a very simple analysis of the delivery over the past three years – which was updated to include the year 2017. We examined what, for each country office, the volume of business was. How many millions of dollars were delivered during the past three years and we took the average of that figure.

We found that indeed for a number of countries, the situation was not satisfactory. There may be several reasons for the unsatisfactory performance: it may be related to the performance of the office, and this we have to address; it may be linked to the capacity of the office; or it may be linked to the nature of the demands on FAO's programme. For each situation, we have to look and analyze on a case by case basis.

I take it that this will be part of the discussion that will take place at the 30th Session of the Regional Conference for Africa in Khartoum where there will be, as per standing practice, an item on the coverage of the Decentralized Office Network, and that will give us the occasion to continue the discussion to ensure that we indeed continue to strengthen the capacity of FAO Office in the region.

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me summarize on item 3, *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget*, as follows:

- 1 The Council endorsed the Reports of the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting in respect to the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19. The Council:
- a) took note that the guidance and decisions of the Conference have been implemented;
 - b) endorsed the updated results framework (Web Annex 1) including the adjustments to three Functional Objective key performance indicators as recommended by the Finance Committee;
 - c) noted that Strategic Objective Output targets (Web Annex 2) may be updated following review by the Regional Conferences in the first half of 2018, and looked forward to reviewing progress during 2018-19 in the mid-term and end-of-biennium assessment.
 - d) welcomed the recommendation of the Finance Committee to improve the KPIs on oversight, direction and administration.
 - e) encouraged Management to develop indicators in the results framework that would be used to report on progress with FAO work to implement its Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.
 - f) supported the measures introduced for strengthening of programme delivery, in particular of the organizational arrangements for the Strategic Programme teams;
 - g) endorsed the updated organizational structure (Web Annex 3) and the revised budgeted post establishment (Web Annex 4);
 - h) appreciated the efforts designed to seek efficiencies and savings, including in the area of administration and travel costs, and welcomed Management's commitment to continue to pursue such savings;
 - i) took note of the updated estimates for extra-budgetary resources (Table 3) and encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate achievement of the Strategic Objectives and implementation of the integrated Programme of Work; and
 - j) welcomed the proposal for a high-level event dedicated to FAO's role in food security matters, to be funded by extra-budgetary resources, to be held in conjunction with the 2018 World Food Day events, and agreed to review its modalities and funding at its next session.
2. The Council approved the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in Table 2.
3. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to pursue its support to GIAHS activities as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million to support sustainable agriculture production, in particular at the country level.
4. The Council welcomed the designation of a specific Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division (DPS) to coordinate South-South Cooperation activities and encouraged the Secretariat to draw in particular on the expertise of staff and consultants from developing countries in that regard.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

So just two points in paragraph 1 that I wanted to double check I heard fully. The first one was on the conclusions about the key performance indicators that the Finance Committee made. I think you referred to three specific recommendations for KPIs. Actually I think now four.

I know that there are three bullet points but there are two specific recommendations in the first bullet point. So I just wanted to check that and I was also going to ask you if you would read out the point on AMR again.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we will take it one at a time. You are right. In my conclusions, three functional objectives are mentioned in paragraph 1. The paragraph dealing with AMR reads "*encouraged Management to develop indicators in the Results Framework that could be used to report on the progress with FAO work to implement its Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance*".

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

So on AMR, I think that is exactly what we did at the 156th Session of the Council. At this Council meeting, I think what we have done is we have welcomed the agreement from Management to explain how progress with its AMR Action Plan is being already monitored in the Results Framework.

I think Mr Boyd Haight mentioned that it will be presented to the Programme Committee. So, I would suggest that we welcome Management's commitment to do that.

Just going back to my first point, you talk about three specific KPIs but actually, as I said before, there are four specific proposals that the Finance Committee has made and it would be good if your conclusion could relate to all four of those.

CHAIRPERSON

We have taken note of that and we will adjust it.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

The EU and its Member States would very much appreciate if you could kindly add just a couple of points from our intervention and those are: "*Highlight the need for FAO to meet its minimum standards for gender equality*"; and "*Welcome Management's assurance that the output and outcome indicators are underpinned by methodological notes accessible for Members*".

The United Kingdom has already kindly covered our concern about the AMR.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Could you kindly re-read paragraph 3?

CHAIRPERSON

"The Council encouraged the Secretariat to pursue its support to GIAHS activities as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million to support sustainable agriculture production, in particular at the country level".

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Could I just clarify? We also raised a similar point in relation to biotechnology as did some other colleagues in the room. So, is it possible to include reference to biotechnology there as well please?

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

My intervention was along the lines of our Australian colleague. Again, we do not have difficulties with GIAHS but we see it as part of a range of efforts and so we would encourage language that does not appear to favour GIAHS on other types of sustainable agricultural production methods. Therefore, we support what the Australians have raised.

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

En línea con las dos intervenciones anteriores, me parece que al hacer referencia a los 3.1 millones de dólares habría también que hacer referencia a todos los destinos a los que se había estipulado. En particular, varias delegaciones aquí han hecho mención a la biotecnología.

Por otra parte, en el curso de mi intervención, hacía mención de que además de tomar como referencia la orientación del 154º. periodo de sesiones del Consejo con relación a las Oficinas Descentralizadas, se tomara el de el 153º. periodo de sesiones del Consejo, que hacía ilusión a un enfoque adecuado a cada caso. Esto no puede ser un problema para nadie, simplemente complementa la orientación del Consejo a la cual se hace referencia.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

I go along with the suggestions made by Australia and Uruguay and also the United States to include in paragraph 3 a reference to the other areas that are covered in sustainable agricultural production.

I would just like to suggest that, instead of encouraging the Secretariat, we request the Secretariat to do so. Use the verb "*to request*".

With regard to the new Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division, I think it would be more appropriate to use the verb “to support” instead of “to coordinate” because most of these activities are not to be initiated by the Secretariat but by Member States. So the Secretariat will not coordinate them but support them.

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

En la misma línea de lo expresado por la Delegaciones de Australia, de Uruguay, Estados Unidos y Brasil, desearíamos ver incluida en la declaración el apoyo a los trabajos en el ámbito de la biotecnología y también respaldamos lo mencionado por Brasil en materia de cooperación.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would like to support the proposal made by the European Union to Members to highlight the need for FAO to meet its minimum standards as outlined by FAO for its very robust FAO Policy on Gender Equality. We would also like to support and echo others in supporting the proposal made by Australia for paragraph 3. And we would like to know if you could re-read the Paragraph. I believe it would be paragraph 1, point f) regarding the SP teams.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

First of all, I would like to express that we fully align ourselves with the statement delivered by Estonia on behalf of the EU but I would like to add that in paragraph 3 of your summary, we had GIAHS mentioned, we had biotechnology mentioned, but you have not so far mentioned agroecology as one major item that should also be part of the list that you just gave.

CHAIRPERSON

Canada, you wanted me to read again paragraph 3, point f)?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Paragraph 1, point f), if it is the one that relates to the SP teams.

CHAIRPERSON

Paragraph 1, point f) reads: “supported the measures introduced for strengthening of programme delivery, in particular of the organizational arrangements for the Strategic Programme teams”.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Is it possible to add at the end of that sentence “including how to better integrate crosscutting issues”?

Sra. Martha BARCENA COQUI (México)

México quisiera nada más hacer una breve mención en el párrafo tres, que entiende que a la par que se va a apoyar al SIPAM, a la biotecnología y a la agroecología, se apoyará también las cuestiones de biodiversidad. Tal como el Director General en su intervención primera hizo referencia a la reunión de multi-stakeholders de biodiversidad en mayo. Entendemos que en anteriores reuniones del Consejo y en la propia Conferencia, esto había quedado ya dicho, pero no quisiera que por no incluirlo aquí se dejara a un lado el tema de la biodiversidad.

Mr Boumedienne MAHI (Algeria)

I do respect all the interventions of my colleagues concerning the point that they would like to see reflected in the conclusions. But honestly, for my delegation it has become very difficult to follow your conclusions because after all of these amendments we do not know what is the final version.

I do not know if it is not also indicated to circulate them, so we will have also the opportunity to look at it and to give our point of view. We were trusting your conclusion as it was made but while recognizing and respecting the intervention of my colleagues, now I am a bit confused.

CHAIRPERSON

Since we have run out of interpretation time, my intention was that we would take these amendments on board and read out the conclusions to you after lunch, if that is fine with Members.

Before we close, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for an announcement.

Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members that there will be a side event during lunch time today, starting at 12.45 on *Climate Change – Outcomes of COP23*, taking place in the Sheikh Zayed Centre.

The meeting rose at 12:49 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 49

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.49

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session
Cent cinquante-huitième session
158.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2017
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017**

**SECOND PLENARY MEETING
DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
SEGUNDA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

4 December 2017

The Second Plenary Meeting was opened at 14.50 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La deuxième séance plénière est ouverte à 14 h 50
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la segunda sesión plenaria a las 14.50
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 3 Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 (continued)
Point 3 Ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019 (suite)
Tema 3 Ajustes al Programa de trabajo y presupuesto para 2018-19 (continuación)
(CL 158/3)

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, as agreed I will read out the conclusions again with the amendments suggested by members.

Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19:

1. The Council endorsed the Reports of the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting in respect to the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19. The Council:
 - a) took note that the guidance and decisions of the Conference have been implemented;
 - b) endorsed the updated results framework (Web Annex 1) including the adjustments to four Functional Objective key performance indicators as recommended by the Finance Committee relating to oversight, direction and administration;
 - c) noted that Strategic Objective Output targets (Web Annex 2) may be updated following review by the Regional Conferences in the first half of 2018, and looked forward to reviewing progress during 2018-19 in the mid-term and end-of-biennium assessment.
 - d) welcomed Management's agreement to report on FAO's work to implement its Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), to be submitted to the Programme Committee as part of its overall reporting against the results framework;
 - e) supported the measures introduced for strengthening of programme delivery, in particular of the organizational arrangements for the Strategic Programme teams, including how to better integrate cross-cutting issues;
 - f) endorsed the updated organizational structure (Web Annex 3) and the revised budgeted post establishment (Web Annex 4);
 - g) appreciated the efforts designed to seek efficiencies and savings, including in the area of administration and travel costs, and welcomed Management's commitment to continue to pursue such savings;
 - h) took note of the updated estimates for extra budgetary resources (Table 3) and encouraged Members to provide voluntary contributions to facilitate achievement of the Strategic Objectives and implementation of the integrated Programme of Work; and
 - i) welcomed the proposal for a high-level event dedicated to FAO's role in food security matters, to be funded by extra budgetary resources, to be held in conjunction with the 2018 World Food Day events, and agreed to review its modalities and funding at its next session.

Noted that the Output and Outcome indicators are underpinned by methodological notes and accessible to Members;

2. The Council approved the revised distribution of the net appropriation by budgetary chapter as reflected in Table 2.
3. The Council requested the Secretariat to pursue its support to sustainable agriculture production as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million, for technical capacity in the Programme of Work and Budget, including agroecology, biodiversity, GIAHS and biotechnologies, in particular at the country level.
4. The Council welcomed the designation of a specific Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division (DPS) to support South-South Cooperation activities and encouraged the Secretariat to draw in particular on the expertise of staff and consultants from developing countries in that regard.

Any reaction? We tried to incorporate all the suggestions made.

Mr Abdul Razak AYZI (Afghanistan)

Concerning paragraph 3 of your report on USD 3.1 million, can you do all those things listed within USD 3.1 million?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Could you please repeat the paragraph related to USD 3.1 million?

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

No complicaré su resumen insistiendo nuevamente sobre lo que habíamos solicitado, porque entiendo que está claro de que mencionar el 154.º período de sesiones del Consejo no inhibe lo que dice el 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo. Simplemente quería dejar planteado el asunto dado que me parece que la orientación sería más completa si se menciona la orientación del Consejo en el 153.º período de sesiones, como lo habíamos dicho, y en el 154, en el sentido de que hay un ajuste del enfoque más hacia los casos, que era lo que habíamos solicitado. Si se puede incluir, le agradezco. Si no, no complicaré su resumen porque ya está planteado en el *statement* de Uruguay y he insistido sobre eso.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Uruguay. We will have another look at it.

I see no other comments.

I will read again paragraph 3 as requested by China: *“The Council requested the Secretariat to pursue its support to sustainable agriculture production as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million for technical capacity in the Programme of Work and Budget, including agroecology, biodiversity, GIAHS, and biotechnologies, in particular at the country level”*.

Mr Boyd Haight, would you like to comment on what Afghanistan was saying?

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

As part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million for additional technical capacity, it is not intended to refer to all of FAO’s work on sustainable agricultural production, but, in particular, in relation to this one allocation. We do not see it as being only USD 3.1 million for this work. This wording is the same as used in the previous Council report.

CHAIRPERSON

Uruguay, could you let us know which paragraph do you want this reference to be included in?

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

La referencia que hacíamos es en la parte del documento sobre los ajustes del presupuesto relacionado con las Oficinas Descentralizadas de FAO, en particular en la sección 13. Y lo que se solicita es agregar, cuando menciona la orientación del 154º período de sesiones del Consejo, la del 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo, el párrafo 16(c). Esto en virtud de que el 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo habla de un enfoque adecuado a cada caso o se recalcula la necesidad de realizar todo posible ajuste de modo específico, según la región y con un enfoque adecuado a cada caso. Ese es el párrafo que es más amplio que lo que dice el 154, 16(c).

CHAIRPERSON

If all of this is recorded in a previous session of the Council, do we need to repeat it again?

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

La intención era agregar a la orientación que se da en el 154.º período de sesiones del Consejo, también la del 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo, que es más amplia que la del 154.º. Esa era la intención, pero si complica su resumen, lo podemos dejar porque creo que el tema ha quedado claro para quienes tienen que instrumentar este modelo al cual se hace referencia.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

Thank you very much, Uruguay.

Indeed, I think your concern regarding the tailor-made approach and the region-specific approach regarding the decentralized office coverage is covered in the text of the adjusted PWB in paragraph 49 when it mentions the Council recognized the need to update the coverage of the FAO decentralized offices, supported the principle and the criteria to be applied in a region-specific manner. The way, we intend to do it, is to adjust the proposals following the principles but adjusting in a region-specific manner. I think it will address your concern.

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

En realidad, no quiero continuar con el intercambio, pero en realidad no contempla lo que yo estoy diciendo, porque justamente como el 154.º período de sesiones del Consejo habla de la región, pero no dice con un enfoque adecuado a cada caso. O sea, lo que he dicho yo, y lo que han dicho otras delegaciones en el curso de este Consejo, es que además de la visión de la región, de cada región, incluso la visión subregional, hay que considerar la situación de cada país. O sea, la preocupación por la situación y la intención de trabajo de cada país en particular.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Uruguay. It seems to me you are suggesting that an additional paragraph or sentence be included because there is nothing of that in the present conclusions. So, you are suggesting an addition?

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

Al referirse a la sección 3(c) del documento CL 158/3, habría que hacer notar que el Consejo agregó la orientación dada por el 153.º período de sesiones del Consejo a la del 154.º período de sesiones del Consejo. Y me estoy refiriendo al 153.º período de sesiones, párrafo 16(c) del Informe del 153.º período del Consejo.

CHAIRPERSON

I think we need to move forward, so what we will do is we will consult with you and see how we can adjust the conclusion.

But there was one more comment by the European Union on gender. This will be included under item 5 on the Programme Committee, as it relates to Strategic Objective 5, Annex on Gender.

So, the issue of gender will be addressed in another section.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Thank you, Chairperson. What is your decision regarding paragraph 3? Is it still a shopping list?

CHAIRPERSON

As Mr Boyd Haight pointed out, it does not mean that the total of all these three or four items will be delivered with USD 3.1 million. He actually emphasized that, as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million, aspects of these four items will be delivered. We agreed USD 3.1 million will not take care of it all. I will give the floor to Mr Boyd Haight to explain further.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

If it would help in finalizing the draft report, this USD 3.1 million is for additional technical capacity. So, you could insert the word additional and that reflects what it is for in the PWB. I think that might make it a little bit clearer.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Boyd.

Afghanistan? Is that fine? Agreed.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I thank the Chairperson and other Members of the Council for their efforts. This issue has been discussed multiple times and we are perfectly clear about that. I think that the current conclusion is repeating what we have said in the past. Our proposals put forward at this session have not been reflected in our view. In particular, for GIAHS, there is no fixed post for GIAHS. It is a fact and we know about it.

The Secretariat explained that staff will spend a certain amount of time to ensure capacity building. We hope that this could be reflected in the conclusion. For priority areas, such as GIAHS, there should be appropriate time spent on GIAHS, so as to ensure capacity building. We believe that if we include this sentence, the idea could be clearer.

The previous sessions of the Council have already agreed that GIAHS is a priority and we all know that the amount of USD 3.1 million will not be enough. We just want to ensure that the idea, that GIAHS is important and there should be sufficient time spent by staff on it, could be reflected. If this idea is not considered, we feel that we are just repeating ourselves and there is no progress. We hope that there is progress and this progress can be made here.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resource Management)

The Secretariat's view is that we have received guidance. The additional capacity for sustainable agricultural production relates to these four areas that were mentioned previously by the Council, endorsed by the Conference on agroecology, biodiversity, GIAHS, and biotechnologies. So we need to move forward. Besides, having listened to the comments made by the Council today, all four of these areas have been mentioned, and we would utilize this capacity across those four topics.

CHAIRPERSON

Referring to the comment from China, the way it is drafted at the moment, the Council is giving guidance and making a request to the Secretariat to go forward with these areas.

Could we have your understanding and go forward rather than including every detail under each item because GIAHS is there? The Council is requesting and providing certain guidance to the Secretariat. Obviously, to implement GIAHS, they will have to have resources or devote resources to it.

Could we leave it like that and let the Secretariat work out the details? Then, when they come back to us with a progress report, if they have not been able to go into the detail, which you are requesting, then we can take the matter up. Could we go forward with this wording, which gives the Secretariat enough guidance, and not only guidance but the Council is requesting them to do certain things?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I understand fully what you are saying. What we would like to see is more details incorporated to be able to move forward. We have come to an agreement on the priorities and we have understood that there is a lack of information on the resources allocated, just as there is a lack of information on human resources.

Additional information has been provided in some areas, namely: two posts in the field and two in headquarters were mentioned. They have already been allocated in these areas but there have been no allocations to GIAHS, at least as far as we have understood.

Therefore, we would like to see specific measures taken. Moreover, I would like to add a small sentence. Could you refer to GIAHS, et cetera, to guarantee adequate time and resources dedicated to these initiatives? I call for some precise language in this area.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

We appreciate once more China raising the issue of GIAHS that we think is an important element of sustainable agricultural production. Yet, but I am not sure my delegation agrees that past Council sessions agreed that it is the primary forum of all sustainable agricultural productions and we are concerned that it would be portrayed that way. In that light, we believe your compromise language you started today's meeting with, would be an appropriate way to address this issue.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

We do not necessarily have to add priorities or even necessarily mention that it is a priority.

CHAIRPERSON

But, China, the way the sentence is worded at the moment, it firstly requests the Secretariat to pursue certain areas as part of the allocation of USD 3.1 million and it mentions the areas. The way I read it and I take it the way some Members, also because they are not requesting for specific allocation of resources to each individual item, it gives it that prioritized support, not only but also to the other three items mentioned there.

So, kindly leave it this way. This is because we requested the Secretariat, they will come back with a progress report and see what they have done. Can we proceed this way? We have confidence in the Secretariat to understand that these are priorities, not only GIAHS, but agroecology, biodiversity, biotechnologies, and they will give us a progress report on them.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I understand. But the issue is that these sources of USD 3.1 million are to be allocated. How will they be allocated? How many people will be seconded or affected? We have heard that some projects have received allocations of resources, others have not. Some programmes receive support in terms of part-time personnel and so on.

We comprehend that resources or working time will be allocated to the different projects. We want to have a guarantee in terms of the time allocated. We do not have to say specifically how much money will be allocated to which specific project. But if we do wish to implement these projects necessary, there has to be an adequate allocation of resources.

Now we have received explanations from the Secretariat. Are we to assume that this USD 3.1 million has not yet been allocated? Therefore, at this point, are we expecting a plan from the Secretariat concerning the allocation of these resources?

CHAIRPERSON

Before I go back to the Secretariat and a few other Members have requested the floor, I do not want the Council to turn into a Drafting Committee because we have a Drafting Committee. These are general conclusions.

When the Drafting Committee proceeds with its work, it has not only these general conclusions, it has the verbatim records which it frequently consults. I will ask the Secretariat to answer China's question about whether appropriate resources have been allocated or how they will be allocated.

Then, I will ask Afghanistan and Australia's comments. Afterwards, I would like to close this discussion, otherwise we will not have the need for a Drafting Committee. We are carrying on as if we are part of a Drafting Committee.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

In the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19, one of the ten areas of resource re-allocation is the USD 3.1 million for additional technical capacity in sustainable agricultural production, including agroecology, biodiversity, GIAHS, and biotechnologies.

This is for six professional positions in this area, as shown in Table 4 of the PWB document, four of them in the decentralized offices and two at headquarters. So, the additional resources in the next biennium are allocated for six posts and these six posts will be used for the purposes specified in the PWB. The request was very specific coming from the Council.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

We saw from the previous conclusions that these posts do exist. Conference gave its support to that. At this point, we want to insist on the GIAHS sector. Other projects can be added but we want to have a guarantee that there will be –

Continues in English

“...adequate time and the staff allocated to GIAHS and the biotechnology”

Continues in Chinese

– that is the addition we would like to have. Do you accept inserting the sentence that was read out in English? That is what we would like to say. Is that acceptable?

CHAIRPERSON

Can you repeat your sentence?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China)

“Requested the Secretariat further support, including adequate time and staffing allocated to GIAHS and to biotechnology”.

Mr Boyd HAIGHT (Director, Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management)

For the Secretariat, it would not be clear what is meant by “adequate time”. We read the four areas in this request as currently formulated, which reflects the PWB as having to allocate time to all four of these areas. Of course, it will never be enough but the idea would be that it would serve all four of the areas listed in the PWB.

CHAIRPERSON

China, in view of what we just heard, these are the priority areas. This is the programme. The Council is giving general guidance. The matter has to go to the Drafting Committee. So could we stay with this wording and the Drafting Committee will do its work consulting verbatim records?

Together with the general conclusions, the verbatim records speak of the interventions of the whole Council, because it is not possible to include individual requests all the time. It has to be the Council’s view. So could we leave it to the Drafting Committee to deal with this issue? Then, the Council is now agreeing to this general conclusion that as part of 3.1 million. Besides, the Council is requesting the Secretariat to do certain things in the area of GIAHS, biotechnology, agroecology, biodiversity.

This is the general guidance that the Council is giving. Then, the Drafting Committee will do its work consulting the verbatim records or the discussions in the Committee and it would be clear what the view of the Council is, because the report of the Council has to reflect the view of the Council. We have to see what the overall view of the Council is.

That said, I do not think we have time in the plenary to do that and this is why there is the Drafting Committee. Would you agree to go forward with this and see how the Drafting Committee handles this case or issue?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Chairperson, unfortunately I cannot accept that proposal. The Drafting Committee would be expecting a decision from the Council and we have not come to a decision. So, we cannot leave that responsibility to the Drafting Committee. I do not think that this approach is acceptable. We would request to add the sentence.

What I understood from Mr Boyd Haight is that we have the intelligence and the ability to come up with appropriate phrasing to meet this request.

CHAIRPERSON

I have two options now. One, to open the debate to the whole Council, which I do not want to do, because otherwise we are never going to finish. The other option is to take a break for five or ten minutes and talk informally to see if we can come to a conclusion.

So, I would pause and reconvene the Session in ten minutes. But before we do that, we can give the floor to Afghanistan and then Australia.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

I quite agree with my colleague from China. The Drafting Committee cannot solve a problem which is not solved by the Council so that is out. In fact, what China is trying to say is to allocate the staff time from this additional resource. The resources are supplementary and the Board made it quite clear the amount of USD 3.1 million is additional to four areas.

I would not use the word “*priority*”. Four areas are mentioned. All we have to do is to add at the end, “...and the additional staff time to be allocated to each of these areas”. That will solve the problem with China.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

I would agree with our colleagues from China and Afghanistan that it is best that we resolve this now rather than refer it to Drafting Committee. This is because we have been operating Drafting Committee for a while now as purely reflecting the decisions of Council as opposed to negotiating things that were not negotiated in Council.

Similar to the comment from the United States, we would not be comfortable supporting language that is solely referred to GIAHS, because that implies a priority that I do not believe Council gave it over and above the other elements. In fact those four elements are all important. Certainly in the interest of time, compromise and consensus we are happy to agree to something that is acceptable to all and I think Afghanistan’s proposal gives equal weight to all four areas.

CHAIRPERSON

China, is Afghanistan’s proposal acceptable?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Yes, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON

With that agreement, the conclusions are adopted.

Item 4. Report of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and 169th Session of the Finance Committee (November 2017)**Point 4. Rapport de la Réunion conjointe du Comité du Programme (cent vingt-deuxième session) et du Comité financier (cent soixante-neuvième session) (novembre 2017)****Tema 4. Informe de la reunión conjunta del Comité del Programa en su 122.º período de sesiones y el Comité de Finanzas en su 169.º período de sesiones (noviembre de 2017)**

(CL 158/8)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now continue with item 4, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee*, which took place on 6 and 9 November. Please ensure that you have document CL 158/8 before you.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as agreed this morning, we will not discuss “*Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*”, as this item has been considered this morning, and we will withhold comments on the “*Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration*” until we reach item 9, scheduled for tomorrow.

I now invite His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, who also chaired the Joint Meeting, to introduce the Report.

Excellency, you have the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I am pleased to present the outcomes of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee on the use of unspent balance

of the 2016-17 appropriations and an update on progress on partnerships with the private sector and with civil society organizations.

The Joint Meeting worked very hard in finding consensus on a proposal on the use of unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations which had been approved by the Conference in July 2017. I am pleased to report that all Members of the Programme and Finance Committees contributed in a very constructive manner to reaching this delicate consensus. It was done in a good atmosphere, listening not only to each others positions but also listening and finding compromises. The result was a real team work effort. In that way we could arrive at consensus which brings the work of FAO forward on both important issues for achieving our overall goals and targets.

The Joint Meeting recommends that Council approve:

- a) allocation of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations through replenishment of the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA);
- b) allocation, with agreement from resource partners, of 10 percent of the unspent balances of the MAFAP/FMM Trust Funds, up to a maximum of USD 0.5 million, for the Blind Trust Fund aimed at supporting a sustainable funding solution to the FAO's work and activities relating to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius; and
- c) allocation of 50 percent of unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations above a threshold of USD 5 million, up to a maximum of USD 1 million, towards the Blind Trust Fund designed to enhance contribution from state and non-state actors, aimed at supporting a sustainable funding solution to FAO's work and activities related to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius as indicated in the Open Ended Working Group of COAG.

The Joint Meeting also recommends that Council agree to review by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM) and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees, a proposal for procedures and decisions for a systematic use of unspent of biennial appropriations in future biennia.

Finally, the Joint Meeting was a very appreciative of a presentation made on progress on partnership work with the private sector and with civil society organizations and looked forward to further work and results. I would like to thank all the members of the PC and FC who contributed to these results.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We welcome the Report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

We support the balanced approach for the use of unspent balance as proposed by the Joint Meeting, which includes:

- firstly, the allocation to the special fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA) that could accelerate FAO's technical and programmatic support to Members;
- secondly, the allocation, with agreement from resource partners, of 10 percent of the unspent balances of the MAFAP/FMM Trust Funds, up to a maximum of USD 0.5 million, for the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund aimed at supporting a sustainable funding solution to the FAO's work and activities related to scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius.

Regarding the establishment of the Blind Trust Fund, we would like to recall the need to guarantee the neutrality, the independence and the integrity of scientific advice and to avoid any risk of conflict of interest.

Finally, we stress the need for a long-term sustainable solution for funding the scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius, including an increase in the FAO and WHO contributions.

Furthermore, we welcome the Joint Committee's assurance that the process followed for deciding on the use of the unspent balances of the last biennium does not constitute a precedent for future decisions on the use of unspent funds.

We support the recommendation of the Joint Committee regarding the need for a more systematic approach, in future biennia, on the use of any unspent balances of the biennial appropriations. We look forward to discussing a proposal in the appropriate FAO Governing Bodies prior to the Conference in 2019.

We welcome the Joint Meeting discussions on the FAO's strategies for partnering with the private sector and civil society organisations. We acknowledge the importance of partnerships and encourage FAO to further increase these strategic agreements. At the same time, we would like to see fuller transparency and more comprehensive reporting on those partnerships. We would in particular appreciate regular reporting on the assessment of impacts of these partnerships on the activities of the FAO and on their contribution to achieving SDGs.

We would like to conclude by endorsing the findings and recommendations in the report of the Joint Meeting.

Mr Badreldin MOHAMED (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

We would first like to thank the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting for his great efforts to reach a consensus regarding the unspent balance. Sudan was part of these deliberations that led to this consensus and this is a great pleasure for us.

We would like to sum up our deliberations as follows:

This is the first time we talk about the use of unspent balance and we believe that it is natural that this would require a lot of discussion. We do not encourage FAO to stop discussing this, but to use a more sustainable and systematic approach in order to deliberate with Members in the future sessions in order to discuss the use of unspent balance until 2019 in order to meet regional and national priorities.

We would like to encourage FAO to find the right ways in order to complement the SFDFA funds so that the ceiling would be met which is USD 10 million.

On the other hand, we believe that there is a pressing need to find sustainable funding mechanisms for the activities of FAO that are great priorities, particularly scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius. We need to urge WHO to increase its contributions to the Codex Alimentarius.

Sudan would like to welcome this document and would like to thank you all for your efforts.

Sra. Martha BARCENA COQUI (México)

México apoya las conclusiones y recomendaciones de la Reunión Conjunta como se presentan en el documento que estamos analizando.

La recomendación sobre el uso del saldo no utilizado de las consignaciones para 2016-17 fue una negociación delicada pero el resultado nos satisface. Queremos felicitar al Presidente del Comité del Programa y Presidente de la Reunión Conjunta Programa Finanzas, Emb. Hans Hoogeveen por su labor comprometida para alcanzar este resultado.

Para el futuro, esperamos que este tema se discuta con la debida anticipación. Asimismo, apoyamos el desarrollar criterios claros en el futuro sobre qué hacer con el saldo no utilizado, que equilibren actividades de desarrollo y normativas, sistematizando su discusión.

El otro tema importante que discutió la Reunión Conjunta, el informe sobre la marcha de las actividades de colaboración de los organismos con sede en Roma, entiendo que lo discutiremos con más detalle bajo el tema 9 y allí mi grupo regional presentará comentarios más detallados.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am making this comment concerning the use of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations on behalf of the Nordic Countries. The EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement given on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic Countries welcome the concerns raised by the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee on this issue. We understand that the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities

was established to support Member States to advance financing to provide technical assistance and investment programming for leverage of development financing.

These are large new kinds of projects and we would like to ask the Secretariat whether you have identified capacity building and risk management needs within FAO.

Ms Doojduan SASANAVIN (Thailand)

Thailand makes this Statement on behalf of the Asia Group. The statement will focus on the use of unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriation, since the PWB and the RBAs collaboration will be discussed in separated items.

First of all, we would like to thank the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting of the PC and FC, His Excellency Ambassador Johannes Petrus Hoogeveen, for his presentation of the Committee's deliberations.

We would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the leadership of the Chairperson, the hard work of the Secretary, and the effort of the Committees to find common ground. The text of paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 really shows that the matter of the use of unspent balance has been considered carefully, intensively, and with spirit of flexibility by the Committee members.

The Asia Group endorses the findings and recommendations of the Joint Meeting on those paragraphs, and would like to make the three following comments:

First, we recognize the importance of FAO's work related to climate change as well as food security and safety and we recognize the urgent need of their continued funding. The increasing threats posed by climate change on food security call for urgent implementation of projects and investments to mitigate the impact of climate change in the field. FAO, as a knowledge Organization, can also play a key role, as a broker, in providing technical assistance to Developing Countries to access the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Regional Development Banks.

The Asia Group, therefore, accepts allocation of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriations to one-time replenishment of the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA). The Asia Group also encourages interested donors to provide direct contribution to the SFDFA in order to reach its funding target level of USD 10 million.

Second, FAO's work on food safety is essential for the Asia Group. Lots of work needs to be supported in this area - ranging from awareness at a farm level to helping national authorities to implement regulations related to antimicrobial usages and to develop surveillance and monitoring of food chain traceability, just to name a few.

As for the funding of scientific advice for food safety and Codex Alimentarius, we understand that the proportion of contribution paid respectively by FAO: WHO is 80:20, and we encourage FAO to continue discussion with WHO to raise WHO's contribution and to find solutions for sustainable funding. Therefore, we support allocations to the Blind Trust Fund in the measure and from the sources indicated by the Joint Meeting, i.e. from MAFAP/FMM Trust Funds and from unspent balance of 2016-17 appropriations.

Third, the Asia Group agrees with the recommendation from the Joint Meeting to request the Secretariat to submit a proposal for systematic use of unspent balance of biennial appropriations, if and when they occur, and that the proposal be reviewed by the CCLM and the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee.

The Asia Group recommends the Secretariat to identify options to manage unspent balance in consultation with Members. The options should address both the decision making process, like who decides, as well as the destination of the unspent balance, for example, for what use. The Secretariat should also review the practices of other UN organizations as well as calculate the cost and the "break even" point for the eventual return of the unspent balance to FAO members.

The Asia Group is in favour of keeping unspent balance with the Organization and to use it on special funds - either for development or for emergency - or other appropriate activities rather than allocate it back to Member Nations as specified in FAO's financial regulation 6.1.b, at least as long as the

amount of unspent balances remains below a certain threshold, for example, below 10 percent of total net appropriations.

We would like to emphasize that the occurrence of unspent balance is unforeseen and unpredictable. If and when it occurs, it should be allocated to under-funded Funds and activities to benefit all Member Nations. And Member Nations should show flexibility in deciding on the best allocation of any unspent balance.

Finally, Asia Group also supports implementation and review of FAO Strategies for partnerships with private sector and civil society organizations.

With these comments, the Asia Group endorses the findings and recommendations of this report.

M. Georges GANONGO (Congo)

La République du Congo a l'honneur de prendre la parole au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Nous remercions les participants à la Réunion conjointe et nous accueillons favorablement les conclusions et recommandations formulées de façon consensuelle sur les différentes questions examinées.

Nous apprécions les ajustements apportés au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019, qui sont conformes aux décisions de la 40ème session de la Conférence de la FAO. Nous appuyons la recommandation du paragraphe 3g) qui invite les Membres à verser des contributions volontaires pour faciliter la réalisation des objectifs stratégiques et l'exécution du Programme de travail intégré.

Nous félicitons le Directeur général pour sa proposition d'utilisation du solde non dépensé sur les crédits ouverts pour 2016-2017 dans le cadre du Fonds spécial pour les activités de financement du développement (FSAFD). Nous approuvons le compromis et la recommandation de la Réunion conjointe sur l'utilisation du solde tel que détaillé au paragraphe 5.

Enfin, compte tenu de l'importance du Fonds spécial pour les activités de financement du développement, dans le cadre d'un préfinancement de l'assistance technique et de la programmation des investissements en lien avec le Fonds vert pour le climat et les banques régionales de développement, nous demandons à la FAO d'aider les pays à mieux intégrer ce processus en vue de leur permettre d'honorer les engagements correspondant à leurs contributions déterminées au niveau national.

Avec ces commentaires spécifiques, le Groupe Afrique approuve le rapport de la Réunion conjointe.

Mr Abdul Razak AYZI (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan also limits its intervention to the use of the unspent balance for the 2016–17 appropriation. We wish to make four points.

First, we appreciate the reaffirmation by the Joint Meeting on the importance of the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities (SFDFA).

Second, we are grateful to His Excellency Ambassador Hoogeveen for his hard work in reaching the consensus in the Joint Meeting on the use of the 2016–17 unspent balance. We also thank the Members of the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee in their openness in reaching a common ground.

Third, our understanding of paragraph 5 of the Report of the Joint Meeting is that, if the unspent balance is USD 5 million, all the amount goes to the SFDFA and none to the Blind Trust Fund yet to be established. Any amount above USD 5 million will be split into two; half going to the Blind Trust Fund but up to the maximum of USD 1 million for scientific advice on food safety and Codex Alimentarius, and the other half will go to SFDFA. So the Blind Trust Fund will get USD 1 million maximum if the unspent balance is USD 7 million.

Fourth, we support paragraph 6 of the Report of the Joint Meeting by systematizing the use of the unspent balance in future biennia.

With these observations, Afghanistan endorses the report of the Joint Meeting.

Sr. Mateo Nsogo NGUERE MICUE (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La República de Guinea Ecuatorial suscribe y apoya la declaración pronunciada por la Delegación de la República de Congo en nombre del Grupo de los Países Africanos. La Delegación de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial quiere sumarse en felicitar efusivamente al Presidente de la Reunión Conjunta por la brillante y eficaz presentación del Informe de la reunión, teniendo en cuenta que las discusiones que tuvieron allí fueron muy extensas y amplias.

Guinea Ecuatorial agradece al Señor Hooegeven por la forma que dirigió los debates y las negociaciones para llegar a un consenso sobre el tema del uso del saldo no utilizado en el ejercicio 2016-2017. En este sentido, manifestamos nuestra gratitud por su capacidad de aguante y poder persuasivo para llegar al entendimiento de los Miembros, si se tiene en cuenta que para llegar a ese consenso los Miembros tuvieron que deliberar durante cuatro días. Valoramos muy alto su paciencia durante el tiempo de las negociaciones. En efecto, extendemos nuestro agradecimiento y felicitaciones a todos los Miembros del Comité de Programa y del Comité de Finanzas por las muestras de acercamiento y voluntad que tuvieron en llegar a un acuerdo sobre el uso del saldo no utilizado en el ejercicio 2016-2017, señal de que todos tenemos el mismo interés sobre la buena marcha de la Organización.

Por tanto, no quiero entrar más en los detalles. La República de Guinea Ecuatorial aprueba el Informe de la Reunión Conjunta.

Mr Hinrich THOLKEN (Germany)

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union. I would like to encourage the Secretariat to expeditiously set up the Blind Trust Fund for the Codex Alimentarius food safety scientific advice activities, so as to make sure that any unspent balance from the 2016–17 appropriation and the MFAP Trust Fund can be made immediately available to Codex Alimentarius.

In this context, I would like to ask the Secretariat a question: which timeline does it foresee for setting up this Blind Trust Fund?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We would also like to focus our comments on the use of the unspent balance. On this issue, we would like to commend the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Hooegeven, for having steered the discussions and garnered consensus on agreement that seems to gather the most support. In this area, we would think that given the discussions as well that happened in the Joint Meeting on this issue, it shows the importance of submitting these to the consideration of the Governing Bodies through the usual process as part of the Programme of Work and Budget and the budget proposal, usually in May ahead of the FAO Conference like it has been done in the past.

This time it was the first time that there was a one-time proposed use for programmatic areas which is often of great interest to delegations. It shows that there was a cross-regional support for both issues that underpin the Special Fund as well as food safety. Given that these two areas need voluntary contributions, a better explanation ahead of time and with proper consideration by the Governing Bodies are also a good way to leverage the additional voluntary contributions that are required.

On the food safety issue, I think that this discussion also highlighted the cross-regional importance of ensuring sustainable long-term funding and we very much support the recommendation to establish a Blind Trust Fund. Along with the statement made by Germany, we would like to actually request the Secretariat to report on the progress to establish this Trust Fund at the next Session of the Council so that it can be established as soon as possible. If by that time they are already ready to announce that it is established, even better, and find ways as well to see how Membership can be consulted.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

We thank His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hooegeven for chairing the first Joint Meeting of the newly constituted Finance and Programme Committees. In particular, we join colleagues in expressing our gratitude for his energetic and effective efforts to reach a compromise on the allocation of the 2016–17 unspent balances, which in the end supported two important priorities for FAO Members. We

emphasize the need to identify sustainable funding solutions for high priority areas of work for the Organization, such as scientific advice for food safety and Codex Alimentarius.

At the Joint Meeting in May 2018, we look forward to receiving an update on the final figures for the unspent balances and, as colleagues such as Germany and Canada have requested, information on progress to launch both the Special Fund for Development Finance Activities as well as the Codex Blind Trust Fund. We hope future reporting will also include information on the activities supported by these funds and their impact.

Mr Katsuyoshi MASUKAWA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Group statement delivered by Thailand and would like to make some more comments on the use of the unspent balance.

Firstly, considering the importance and the serious financial difficulties of the programme, Japan accepts the outcome of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees. Based on the outcome, Japan strongly hopes that the expected USD 500 000 from the MAFAP/FMM Trust Funds and additional funding from the unspent balance of 2016–17 will surely be allocated for the activities of the Codex Alimentarius scientific advisory programme. Japan also strongly requests that the unspent balance distributed to the SFDA should be used while maintaining its transparency and certainty.

Secondly, regarding the Codex Alimentarius scientific advisory programme, we express our concern on this area of normative work. Japan expects the Secretariat to continue its efforts to consolidate funding for this programme as soon as possible.

Lastly, regarding the proposal for procedures and decisions for systematic use of unspent biennial appropriations in the future biennia, Japan would like to stress that the proposal should be beneficial for all Member Nations and balanced ones.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Like others this afternoon, we would like to extend our thanks to the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting for his leadership in bringing Members to a consensus on the use of under-spends. Like others, we welcome that consensus and support both areas of work. Again, as others have requested this afternoon, we are particularly keen to see the establishment of the Blind Trust as swiftly as possible.

And, to that end, we would welcome a report back from the Secretariat either to the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee early next year and/or the Council. I will take the Secretariat's advice on which is the best place to report so that we can see its establishment and move forward.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Congo on behalf of the African Group. Egypt welcomes agreement reached in the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee regarding the allocation of the unspent balance and we commend the efforts of the Chairperson of the Joint Meeting to reach this agreement. We call on developing clear, transparent, and systematic rules to deal with any unspent balances in the future to avoid repetition of such a complicated situation where unfortunately developed and developing countries were artificially and unnecessarily divided on two issues of importance to both developing and developed countries alike.

We are glad to see that the summary resources will be allocated to the Special Fund for Development which will enable the Organization to embark on its mission of accelerating the FAO technical and programmatic support to Member States. We are conscious that the unspent balance will not be enough for the Special Fund to carry its objectives in a sustainable way and we call on major donors to provide voluntary contributions to this objective considering that the fund could be an important tool in helping developing countries achieve SDGs and deal with the impacts of climate change.

In the meantime, we support the calls to establish sustainable funding solutions for high priority areas of work of the Organization, including the scientific advice for food safety and the Codex Alimentarius which should be financially supported also by WHO.

With these comments, Egypt endorses the report of the Joint Meeting on this particular item.

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

Quisiera unirme a las delegaciones precedentes y expresar las felicitaciones al Presidente del Comité del Programa, que gracias a su liderazgo logró encontrar alternativas que permitirán satisfacer los intereses de todas las partes interesadas. También resaltar el espíritu constructivo de todas las delegaciones que participaron en los Comités del Programa y de Finanzas y el compromiso con la Organización que mostraron en todo momento.

M. Boumedienne MAHI (Algérie)

La délégation algérienne se joint à la déclaration faite par le distingué délégué du Congo au nom du Groupe Afrique et voudrait aussi féliciter le Président pour les conclusions consensuelles qui ont été faites à la satisfaction de toutes les délégations, notamment pour ce qui concerne l'utilisation de soldes non-dépensés sur les crédits ouverts pour 2016-2017.

La délégation souhaiterait aussi exprimer sa satisfaction sur la façon dont la question a été traitée et indique qu'elle approuve ce rapport.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

Just to respond on the expectation on the difficulty of setting up a Blind Trust Fund, and how soon we would report and where. We are, of course, waiting for the approval, but we have had internal discussions on this, of course, and also the discussion in COAG on receiving funds from private sector for this reason. So, there have been preliminary discussions. It does not look to be all that difficult to do. And we would anticipate that we would be able to report – and this is only a personal view – but I think we would report to the Joint Meeting on it next time we meet.

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Maria Helena Semedo, do you have anything to add?

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

I think the question was more that we all agree in establishing this Blind Fund in order to support some of the work of the Codex. As Mr Dan Gustafson said, we will be able to report on the establishment of that fund in the next Joint Meeting. I think this is the question addressed to the Secretariat.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

First of all, I would like to thank all the Members of the Council for supporting the carefully drafted solution for the unspent balance. I think with that as a Council, and as a Membership, we are giving a clear signal, not only to the Members of the Council but also outside of Rome, on how important fighting climate change is and how important food safety is. As I said before, if we want to find solutions for the people living in hunger, we have to invest in rural and agricultural economies. That is needed, but certainly, we have to fight climate change. We have the Green Climate Fund and it is crucial that many partners, especially many Developing Countries, could access that fund for work on agriculture, especially when you look to adaptation and mitigation. So, the support of FAO to those developing countries in accessing those funds is crucial.

At the same time, the Director-General said there is no food security without food safety. Therefore, it is so important that we also work on finding sustainable solutions for the funding of the work of FAO on the Codex Alimentarius. I think the work only starts now. I think many of you have said we support the consensus to compromise but now we have to implement it. We have to implement as soon as possible the support to the Developing Countries in accessing these funds and we have to establish as soon as possible the Blind Trust Fund.

I am very positive, also from the remarks made by Mr Dan Gustafson and Ms Maria Helena Semedo, that it will be quite easy to set up the Blind Trust Fund. I think both tracks can be implemented in parallel.

Last but not least, I would like to thank you for your compliments. But as a Dutchman, I will say you have elected me for that job and I am just doing my job.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

I would like just to strengthen further the intervention of my colleagues in DDP and DDN. Just to say that from the operations side, opening a trust fund for us is a question of minutes. It is a box. What we need is money to put in it. We will be ready to open it immediately as soon as a concept of the fund has been defined by the Deputy Director-General in charge of the programme and looking forward to see the flow of money going into the box.

CHAIRPERSON

I think with that the debate is over, so I could summarize my conclusions on item 4, *Report of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee*.

1. The Council endorsed the report of the Joint Meeting, and:
 - a) approved the modalities recommended by the Joint Meeting for use of the unspent balance of the 2016–17 appropriation as reflected in paragraphs 5(a), (b) and (c) of the Report of the Joint Meeting (document CL 158/8);
 - b) welcomed the balanced approach that prevailed in the Joint Meeting for the use of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriation and looked forward to the early implementation of these modalities;
 - c) looked forward to reviewing a proposal on systematic use of unspent balances of biennial appropriations in future biennia at a future session prior review by the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters and the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees; and
 - d) commended the Secretariat on the progress made in implementation of the strategies for partnerships with civil society organizations and with the private sector.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Could you please repeat point b) which talked about early implementation on modalities? I did not quite catch that.

CHAIRPERSON

Point b) reads: “*welcomed the balanced approach that prevailed in the Joint Meeting for the use of the unspent balance of the 2016-17 appropriation and looked forward to the early implementation of these modalities*”. The modalities being referred to paragraphs 5 (a), (b) and (c) of the Report of the Joint Meeting.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Is it possible just to add to the end of that “*and look forward to report to the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committee*” – I believe it is May 2018?

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Australia, we can add that.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

The EU and its Member States would very much appreciate, if you could possibly add two points of our intervention. First, requests the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund for Scientific Advice for Food Safety and Codex Alimentarius Activities in accordance with the respective recommendations of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees.

And second under paragraph 1, point c) might be a little bit changed as you have it right now and we suggest it could be: “*supports the recommendation for the Secretariat to submit prior to the Conference in 2019 a proposal on procedures and decisions for systematic use of unspent balances in future biennia*”.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Australia's suggestion is very good. It could be accommodated. But I think the suggestion from our colleague from EU is already included in your statement.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

We can live with the summary, but I actually raised the flag just to say that we did not feel that we got a response to the question raised by the Nordic Countries regarding the possible capacity building needs in terms of establishing the fund. But we can live with your summary as it stands.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

In fact, I apologize. I had that and then it slipped. There are two or three main aspects to it. The formulation of the projects is one that we are well acquainted with through the work of the Investment Center and others. We have evidence of that in the presentation of our first project proposal to the Board of Green Climate Fund. The difficult part is in the implementation arrangements and in particular, with regard to modalities that have significant portions, most likely the majority of the funds going for what for us would be indirect implementation and direct implementation by governments with new roles and responsibilities on both sides.

We have the legal aspects of that in place, with regard to the so-called new implementation modalities. However we do not yet have an appropriate manual section for dealing with direct grants to beneficiaries. This is work in progress. It will come out as manual section 703 over the course of the next several months.

But it is an example of the kinds of things that we will need to have in place in order to implement with countries and other partners - civil society, governments, in some cases private sector. These are the kinds of projects that are envisaged by the Green Climate Fund. So, there are capacity development elements that are also sort of procedural elements on how we are doing it. But we are aware of it.

We are in close contact with the Regional Offices and Country Offices and the relevant headquarters Units, also on things like the distribution of the fees to make sure that it follows where the work takes place; the distribution of monitoring and technical support to the projects at the most appropriate level. It depends on the project either it would be a team within the country, or it would be done in a sort of a pooled team at the Regional or Sub-Regional level and so on.

We are aware of that and working quite closely with the Technical Cooperation Department and the Climate Change and Biodiversity Department.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I have a small addition to suggest to what I think was your last point on partnerships. Could you repeat that last point, then I will make my suggestion?

CHAIRPERSON

It says: "*commended the Secretariat on the progress made in the implementation of the strategies for partnerships, the civil society organizations, and with the private sector*".

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I would like to propose the following short addition which would be: "*encouraged transparency in the reporting on these partnerships*".

CHAIRPERSON

The remarks by Australia and the UK will be taken into account.

Estonia, I just wanted to say that the points you mentioned are covered in the Joint Meeting Report, paragraphs 5 a), b), and c). And that is what I am referring to in point a) of my conclusions, that the unspent balance as reflected in paragraphs 5 a), b), and c) of the Joint Report.

So I do not know, either one can lift these paragraphs and instead of saying paragraph 5 a), b), c) and reproduce the Joint Meeting as those paragraphs are important. Because they were the ones where the Members reached a consensus on and that is the language they agreed on. So, either we reproduce that or the way it is, making reference to the appropriate paragraph.

So I do not know whether you would agree.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

The thing is that we are actually referring to the paragraph 4 point g) and, if you would like me, I will repeat what we wanted it to be:

“Requests the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for the establishment of a Blind Trust Fund for Scientific Advice for Food Safety and Codex Alimentarius activities in accordance with the respective recommendations of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees”.

CHAIRPERSON

You see, if you look at the amendment proposed by Australia, we are talking about the Joint Meeting and Australia has suggested: “... looked forward to a report to the next session of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees”. Don’t you think this would be taken care of in that report to the Joint Meeting?

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

Yes. It is. We can live with that, of course. However, we still think that we have a point and we kindly ask you to consider that.

CHAIRPERSON

So your suggestion is that we should request the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for the establishment of the blind trust? We will take that into account.

Mr Khaled EL Taweel (Egypt)

Actually my comment was on the same point. We supported your previous conclusion with the amendment from the UK and Australia but now, if we will take one bullet from the Joint Meeting, this would complicate the summary a little bit because we would also ask to add point d) on the special funds.

So, we would prefer just to make reference to the agreement reached in the Joint Meeting of the Finance and Programme Committees and we understand this includes applying trust fund and the special fund.

CHAIRPERSON

Estonia, although I do not have a problem with your proposal but I would like other points like Egypt has mentioned to be opened up. Could you leave it, this report which would be submitted to the Joint Session would be a report on the implementation of the Joint Session?

Mr Antonio Otávio Sá Ricarte (Brazil)

On this point, I just think that there is a misunderstanding here. The Estonian proposal on behalf of the EU would assume that the establishment of such a blind trust fund would require approval of the Joint Meetings. It seems we have already taken that decision and it is within the capacity of the Secretariat to do so.

So my point is that the proposal made by Estonia is actually making things more cumbersome by adding, let us say, a step that was not necessary. So, perhaps with this clarification, Estonia would be more comfortable with withdrawing its proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for that excellent comment, Brazil. Estonia, do you have any reaction to Brazil’s comment?

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I think we can live with that.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Estonia, and thank you, Brazil.

Item 5. Reports of the 122nd (6-10 November 2017) and 123rd (21 November 2017) Sessions of the Programme Committee**Point 5. Rapport des cent vingt-deuxième (6-10 novembre 2017) et cent vingt-troisième (21 novembre 2017) sessions du Comité du Programme****Tema 5. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 122.º (6-10 de noviembre de 2017) y 123.º (21 de noviembre de 2017) del Comité del Programa**

(CL 158/5; CL 158/12)

CHAIRPERSON

We will now take up item 5, *Reports of the 122nd and 123rd Sessions of the Programme Committee*. The documents before the Council are the following: CL 158/5 and CL 158/12.

As I mentioned before, “*Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*” was already considered this morning so it will not form part of this discussion. I now invite the Chairperson of the Programme Committee to introduce the Report.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I am pleased to present the outcome of the discussions of the 122nd and 123rd Sessions of the Programme Committee.

At the outset, let me highlight the very positive environment in which the two sessions of the Programme Committee took place. This was my first session as Chairperson of this Committee, and let me say that it was a real privilege for me to work with colleagues so dedicated to their work.

Thanks to their substantive contribution we have managed to make a lot of progress. Throughout our deliberations, we had very substantive discussions on different areas of work of the Organization. I would also like to mention that the Committee unanimously elected Mr Marc Mankoussou as Vice Chairperson of the Programme Committee for the term July 2017 – June 2019. I am pleased that I can count on Marc not only because of his passionate commitment and experience but also as an experienced member of the Programme Committee.

Prior to the formal session, the Committee held an informal meeting where Mr Boyd Haight and Mr Masahiro Igarashi presented an outline of the programmatic and evaluation work to be reviewed by the Committee during its term. Members found this informal preparatory meeting very useful.

At its 122nd Session, aside from the discussion on the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19, which we considered, the Committee reviewed the evaluation of FAO's contributions to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO 4). Members appreciated both the evaluations and the Management response, including the actions proposed by Management to address two the recommendations and findings of the evaluation, and agreed on the importance of increasing outreach and raising awareness on programmatic areas under SO4.

The Committee also reviewed the follow-up report of the Organization's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation and the Reviewed Action Plan Results Framework for the FAO Strategy on Climate Change. It endorsed the Reviewed Action Plan Results Framework and looked forward to its implementation during 2018-2019. The Committee also encouraged further partnering engagement in the area of climate change with international organizations, including other UN organizations, particularly with Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), and non-state actors, as well as scientific community and research organizations.

The Committee received the follow-up report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution on knowledge on food and agriculture and was very pleased with the important progress made by the Secretariat in

this area and encouraged to continue improving the dissemination and quality assurance systems of FAO's knowledge products.

Finally, the Committee reviewed the Annex on Gender of the Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 5. In this regard, the Committee appreciated the in-depth analysis provided in the document and welcomed the progress made by SP5 and the ESP Division in implementing the minimum standards set in the FAO policy on Gender Equality.

At the 123rd Special Session, the Committee discussed the renewal of the Term of Office of the Director of the Office of Evaluation which was received late for review at the regular session. The Committee received relevant information to give a merit based advice on this issue, and recommended endorsement of the Director-General's proposal to reappoint Mr Masahiro Igarashi as Director of Evaluation for a further and final term of four years. The Committee also looked forward to reviewing at a future session a follow-up report to the Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function. With that I present to you the recommendations of the Programme Committee. And again, I would like to thank all the members of the Programme Committee for the hard work. It was a real team work effort.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I also thank the Chairperson of the Programme Committee for his presentation. First of all, China will deliver a statement on behalf of the Asian Group and then we will make our national statement.

Continues in English

China has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

First, and foremost, we would like to thank His Excellency Hans Hoogeveen for the comprehensive presentation of the report. We would also like to congratulate him, as the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, and its members for the fruitful outcomes. The Asia Group supports the recommendations in the report, and would like to make the following comments:

On the Reviewed Action Plan Results Framework of FAO's Strategy on Climate Change, we welcomed the alignment with the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 output indicator and targets. Climate change adaptation and mitigation requires involvement from a wide-range of stakeholders and players, including those outside of the agriculture sector. As such, we support the emphasis on partnerships and engagement with other organizations within the UN system as well as non-traditional actors in this area.

On the Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems, the recommendations made by the Programme Committee stressed the importance of changing the way we do things in order to contribute to inclusive and efficient agriculture systems more effectively. We are particularly drawn to the recommendation for FAO to support broadening understanding and application on agriculture and food systems to increase stakeholder's awareness on the important roles they play in the system. We believe that understanding this concept would guide stakeholders to strengthen their contribution to the system and assist in identifying gaps across the chain, to achieve food security and nutrition.

On the follow-up report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution on knowledge on food and agriculture, we welcomed the implementation of feedback mechanisms for continuous quality improvement. We would like to echo the recommendation by the Programme Committee for FAO to develop targeted dissemination strategies for various users of its knowledge products, including extending the reach of its products to the grass root level. This would help FAO to communicate its work to a wider group that plays an equally important role in the overall agriculture and food systems.

On the follow-up report to the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation, we would like to congratulate FAO for strengthening its presence in relevant global for a on climate change, and for developing new partnerships in this area.

Finally, on the Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 5 – Annex on gender, the Asia Group echoed the Committee's emphasis on the importance of inclusion of gender dimension in FAO's evaluations and support for such evaluation at regional and country levels.

Continues in Chinese

Now I will speak in my national capacity for China.

China would like to thank the Chairperson of the Programme Committee for his presentation. In principle, we endorse the two reports of the Programme Committee and we have the following comments.

First, on strengthening communication. As a Member of the Finance Committee, China feels that it is very necessary to step up the exchanges in communication between the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee. Although we have Joint Sessions of the two Committees, the items discussed at Joint Sessions are however limited.

Meanwhile, the Finance Committee and the Programme Committee should also strengthen their communication with Technical Committees such as the Committees on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (COAG, COFO, COFI). For example, South-South Cooperation and the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) enjoy wide support from both COAG and the Finance Committee. However, this support is not reflected at all in the report of the Programme Committee. This illustrates the risk of a siloed approach in our work.

From a technical perspective, COAG stated how these activities can contribute to world food security and the Finance Committee also echoes this. However, the Programme Committee does not list them as priorities. For example, GIAHS has been identified as a priority for 2018-19. We would like to know how the Programme Committee intends to advance this work. What is their plan?

South-South Cooperation is becoming increasingly prominent in the UN system, not the least in New York. Here in Rome, both IFAD and WFP highly value them. The International South-South and Triangular Cooperation Conference held in Brazil on 20 and 21 November illustrated IFAD's leadership role in South-South and Triangular Cooperation agriculture which was recognized by the participants.

China would like to seek clarification from the Programme Committee and Secretariat. What is the respective roles and responsibilities of each of the three RBAs in South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation in agriculture? China would like to say that our work in this area is like sailing a boat against the current. Either you keep forging ahead or you will fall behind. If FAO is perceived as not doing enough, other agencies might step in and fill the gap and this is a broad partnership in which everyone has the right to choose its partners.

Second on accountability, as members of the Programme Committee, Finance Committee, or the Council, as we are working in FAO's Governing Body, we are duty bound to make FAO more effective and more practical.

We all have a shared objective. To put it more broadly, it is to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To put it more concretely, it is to feed the world population as a whole.

We feel that in our daily work, due to bureaucracy, some good ideas are struggling to be implemented. Some proposals tabled at earlier sessions of the Council are progressing very slowly and are not being effectively implemented.

For example, at the 156th Session of the Council, we proposed an evaluation on whether moving South-South Cooperation from TCS to DPS strengthens or weakens South-South Cooperation. If it strengthens South-South Cooperation, what is the concrete evidence for that? We would like to hear more from FAO.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We welcome the Report of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee.

In addition to those mentioned under agenda item 3, we would like to highlight two further points of particular importance.

Firstly, we support the conclusion of the Programme Committee to strongly encourage the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change, especially in the field of agriculture, in line with SDGs related to climate change, and encourage work in support of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) approaches in countries that have included agriculture in their Intended National Determined Contributions (INDCs). In this context, we highlight agroecology as a sustainable approach.

Secondly, we support the conclusion of the Programme Committee to welcome the assurance from Management that FAO's support to countries seeking to access climate financing would focus on food security and nutrition and other areas within FAO's mandate and on the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

With these comments, we endorse the findings and the recommendations of the Report of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee.

M. Georges GANONGO (Congo)

La République du Congo prend la parole à nouveau au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Nous remercions les membres du Comité du Programme pour les conclusions et recommandations constructives formulées lors des travaux de la 122^{ème} session de ce Comité. Nous accueillons favorablement ses conclusions et recommandations.

Nous saluons les ajustements à apporter au Programme de travail et budget 2018-2019 (PTB). Nous appuyons la recommandation du Comité pour que les cibles associées aux produits soient mises à jour après les Conférences régionales au cours du premier semestre 2018. Ce processus permettra d'intégrer certaines considérations relatives aux priorités régionales dans le PTB 2018-2019 afin de prendre en compte l'action de l'Organisation à tous les niveaux.

Nous appuyons l'approbation du Cadre de résultats révisé du Plan d'action de la Stratégie de la FAO relative au changement climatique. Nous demandons au Secrétariat de la mettre en œuvre, principalement dans le domaine de l'agriculture, en cohérence avec les objectifs de développement durable.

Compte tenu des capacités techniques très limitées dans les pays en développement, nous encourageons la FAO à les renforcer, ainsi que les travaux à l'appui des approches de l'agriculture intelligente face au climat dans les pays, tout en prenant en compte les priorités nationales, et particulièrement les actions entreprises en la matière.

Nous saluons les progrès accomplis dans la mise en œuvre des recommandations du rapport sur le suivi de l'évaluation de la contribution de la FAO à l'atténuation du changement climatique et à l'adaptation à ses effets. Nous encourageons la FAO à continuer dans cette voie.

Nous appuyons les recommandations visant à intégrer de manière systématique le changement climatique dans le cycle de projet, les considérations relatives à la parité hommes-femmes, le renforcement des capacités au sein des bureaux décentralisés en ce qui concerne la résilience face au changement climatique et l'atténuation de ses effets.

Enfin, nous saluons les recommandations sur les résultats de l'évaluation du Programme stratégique 4 et les mesures proposées par la Direction générale pour donner suite à cette évaluation. Nous demandons à la FAO de mettre en œuvre les différentes mesures proposées en vue d'accélérer le processus visant à rendre les systèmes agricoles et alimentaires inclusifs et efficaces.

Avec ces commentaires, nous approuvons le rapport de la 122^{ème} session du Comité du Programme.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I make this statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries. The EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement given on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic Countries endorse the recommendations by the Programme Committee but would like to draw attention to the following issues.

The FAO Strategy on Climate Change and its Action Plan Results Framework, we want to emphasize their timeliness, related to the recognition of agriculture during the COP 23 in November. After

several years of slow progress, the so called Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture now sets the agriculture and food security agenda for the UNFCCC process.

As we know from the UNFCCC process, both mitigation and adaptation in agriculture are at the forefront of concern. We consider that FAO with its technical expertise should play an important role in supporting developing countries to better connect climate and agriculture at the country level. Furthermore, FAO's role should include supporting the negotiation process in advancing the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture. To do this, FAO should ensure that the elements included in the Koronivia document are well reflected in its climate change work.

A major concern of ours is that the outcomes and outputs in the Action Plan Results Framework, as well as the indicators and targets, are gender-blind. FAO's engagement should improve our understanding of how female and male farmers face different challenges in making their production resilient and adapting to the changing climate. We need a variety of specific actions to be developed. Therefore, gender needs to be fully mainstreamed in FAO's climate change work.

Additionally, only a limited reference is made to nutrition in the Action Plan Results Framework.

When it comes to putting climate actions into effect, we support the use of comprehensive approaches that respond to multiple needs of countries and farmers. Our understanding is that these goals can be achieved through site-specific practices and technologies.

Developing countries often have limited resources for implementing and monitoring development efforts. For this reason, the Programme Committee's recommended that the implementation of FAO's strategy on climate change, especially in the field of agriculture, should be in line with SDGs. We would like to support this proposal by the Programme Committee, which would simplify the monitoring and reporting pressure at the country level.

M. Herman Constant DAZAN (Bénin)

Tout en m'alignant pleinement sur la déclaration du Groupe régional Afrique, je suis heureux de soutenir, au nom du Gouvernement du Bénin, les conclusions et recommandations ici présentées par le Comité du Programme. Cependant, je voudrais faire une remarque générale dans laquelle vont peut-être se retrouver également d'autres pays qui ne sont pas membres du Comité du Programme.

Le rapport ici présenté couvre de nombreux documents substantiels, tels que des rapports d'évaluation ou encore la Stratégie de la FAO relative au changement climatique. Afin de pouvoir faire des commentaires autres qu'une seule validation de ce que nous y lisons, il aurait peut-être été utile que le Comité du Programme nous cite dans les documents quelques exemples de points saillants ou extraits de documents qui ont porté le Comité du Programme à poser ces recommandations.

En dehors de ces remarques générales, le Bénin soutient pleinement les recommandations contenues dans ce rapport.

Sr. Junior ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Queremos agradecer a la Secretaría por la preparación y presentación de este documento. A la Dra. Semedo también por la presentación.

Estas son consideraciones generales, así que no entraremos mucho en el documento, sino solo sobre un tema que para mi representación, y creo para muchos países, reviste una particular importancia.

En el caso de la estrategia de la FAO sobre cambio climático, queremos en primer lugar observar con interés la incorporación del tema transversal cambio climático en el Objetivo Estratégico adicional número seis del Marco de Resultados de la FAO, lo cual demuestra la atención que este tema deberá asumir cada vez más dentro del trabajo de la Organización.

En cuanto a la estrategia de la FAO, acogemos con satisfacción y armonización entre las relaciones, indicadores revisados de la estrategia de la FAO sobre cambio climático con los indicadores y metas previstos en los ajustes del Programa de trabajo 2018-2019.

Sin duda alguna, el cambio climático, y lo hemos visto este año sobre todo, representa uno de los retos reales que no conoce frontera y es la mayor amenaza para el desarrollo humano. Sin embargo, existen

zonas mayormente expuestas a estos fenómenos, dada su vulnerabilidad, y al nivel global, las interrogantes siguen siendo más que las respuestas concretas.

Sin cooperación internacional, la sumatoria de las iniciativas de los países por separado se verán severamente comprometidas. Lo que se requiere es una gobernanza global y regional, así como el fomento de nuevas coaliciones entre los estados, los gobiernos, la ciudadanía y los diferentes sectores.

En el ejemplo de mi país, a pesar de su dimensión geográfica, no está alejada del mundo. Sabemos que los desafíos nacionales son y seguirán siendo retos globales y que cada desafío global requiere de una estrategia nacional.

En este sentido, la estrategia de FAO debe ser dirigida a prestar mayor apoyo a los Estados Miembros que sufren las mayores consecuencias, aunque incidan marginalmente en el problema, aplicando políticas y planes sobre cambio climático de conformidad y en línea con los países con los planes regionales y nacionales. Consideramos que la Organización se encuentra en una posición privilegiada para promover ámbitos que atañen a la seguridad alimentaria y a la nutrición, con particular énfasis en la aplicación de instrumentos como el Fondo Verde para el Clima, la Convención Marco de Naciones Unidas sobre Cambio Climático y la Agenda 2030.

En este sentido, seguimos con mucha atención a la realización del logro número dos del Marco de Resultados y sus respectivos indicadores. Como está reconocido, el cambio climático es un fenómeno transversal. Por este motivo va enfrentado de una óptica integral. La asociación y colaboración proactiva con los actores involucrados, en particular la colaboración con los otros Organismos con sede en Roma y otras Agencias de Naciones Unidas, reviste un significado más que estratégico, imperante.

Para concluir, es también necesario que todas estas tareas y esfuerzos contenidos en la estrategia de la FAO sobre cambio climático y su marco de resultados encuentren un punto de síntesis y que sus progresos puedan ser medidos en cuanto a su aplicación, para ser oportunamente incorporado en el Informe de aplicación sobre la estrategia de la FAO cada bienio.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

First of all, I would like to align my statement with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

I would like to start off by echoing the thanks of others to His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen for his leadership of the Programme Committee. I would also like to make a couple of points.

In addition to highlighting the importance of focusing FAO's support to countries that are seeking climate finance on their food security and nutrition, I would also like to highlight the request that the Programme Committee made to FAO Management to meet FAO's minimum standards for gender equality as soon as possible. This is something that my colleagues mentioned when we discussed agenda item 3.

I hope that we can reflect this request in the report of this discussion as well.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I join the others in expressing again our appreciation for the leadership of His Excellency Ambassador Hoogeveen for his able leadership and management of the Programme Committee.

On the follow-up report of the evaluation of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation, Canada very much supports the recommendations that were formulated by the Programme Committee and think that they are even more relevant after the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference – COP 23 in Bonn and the Koronivia Decision.

We would like to highlight that there was also a Gender Action Plan in that regard. FAO's work, including the launch of the revised edition of the Climate-Smart Agriculture Source Book, is well aligned and positioned to contribute to the spirit of this decision which is action-oriented and focused on implementation and looking at how to maximize and bring synergies and co-benefits between adaptation, resilience, mitigation, and sustainable agricultural production.

We would also like to highlight that some chapters of this Source Book do relate to a gender responsive approach and we would like to support other delegations who also mentioned the fact that it is important to mainstream gender and foster the synergies among the cross-cutting issues, so it is relevant to the climate change. We feel, though, that this is an area where FAO is making good progress and would encourage FAO to further disseminate its work in this area.

On the evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems, we believe this is an area where FAO can contribute and add a lot of value. We note that there were some areas for improvement. But, in general, we very much value this work, including, how to mainstream nutrition and gender.

Finally, to say that for the evaluation of Strategic Programme 5, we welcome the fact that the Annex on Gender was now provided and recall that all evaluations should have this annex. We would have appreciated if the Strategic Programme 4 evaluation had this annex more at the forefront and especially had it been mentioned in the Executive Summary. We look forward as well to see how we can distill from these annexes some approaches on our gender transformative approaches and see how they can be scaled up further across the work of the Organization.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General Climate and Natural Resources)

Thank you for all the support and comments regarding the FAO work on climate change as has already been presented and approved by the Programme Committee. I think the discussion today was more about the way of supporting the outcomes of the Programme Committee and providing some guidance, especially after COP 23.

We had a very important side event during lunchtime on COP 23 where the Ambassador of Fiji presented the outcomes of COP 23, and at the same time the Director of Agriculture of Uruguay, as the leader of the discussion on agriculture in the Working Group on Agriculture in negotiation, presented the outcomes and what is next. I think more than what has been agreed is how we can speed up action and how we can come up with transformative actions regarding agriculture and COP 23 decisions. But I will begin with the Climate Change Strategy.

I believe that the indicators and the outcome of the strategy have been aligned with the 2018 FAO Results Chain and they will be reported at the same time as we will be reporting on the outcomes and the indicators regarding FAO's Strategic Framework. They are now fully embedded in the FAO Results Framework.

For sure, we can all the time have a particular report on the Climate Change Strategy. I believe this is really an achievement because we have climate change embedded in FAO's work and climate change is not only looked at as a sector but underpinning all the work FAO does. And at the same time, the work we do on climate is linked to the Sustainable Development Agenda where climate change is not only seen as one Sustainable Development Goals but fully part of the agenda because we cannot eradicate poverty without addressing climate change, we cannot improve food security without addressing climate change, we cannot have sustainable production and consumption without addressing climate change – only to mention a few. This is really the approach FAO is giving to the support we provide to the countries.

Now moving to the country and regional strategies, I believe FAO's support to the countries has helped them to implement their Climate Action Plan through their Nationally Determined Contributions. Those are the commitments of the countries made in Paris about how they can contribute to achieve the Paris Agreement and how FAO will support them in the issues related to agriculture, agricultur sectors, food security and nutrition. This is how we see FAO's support. How we support the countries with policies, data, information, and how they can have a holistic approach.

The support we give to the countries to prepare projects and programmes to be submitted to the financial entities is in the Framework of our global support to the countries. And as it has been decided or endorsed by the Programme Committee, FAO will be supporting countries to present projects related to food security and the sectors linked to FAO mandate and especially for the countries more vulnerable to climate change, which are SIDS, which are the developing countries, and more specific countries.

Now moving to what has been the outcome of the COP 23 and where we have the Koronivia Decision. It was decided that we need to consider agricultural vulnerability to climate change and approaches to address food security. They are fully on FAO's mandate, methods and approaches to assess adaptation core benefits and resilience. During COP 23 we just launched the Source Book on Climate-Smart Agriculture, but also indicators to measure adaptation. This is very welcomed and was missing because we could not measure adaptation at the country level and the global level. This publication will help us to measure the contribution to the Paris Agreement.

The next point is on improved soil carbon, soil health, and soil fertility. Tomorrow we will be launching the first map on soil carbon and will be working through the Global Soil Partnership, the partnership with France, on how we can better sequester carbon and how we can improve soil fertility while making the link to the Improved Livestock Management System. What FAO brought to COP 23, that was new, was a new narrative on livestock where we shared some practices whereby we can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions coming from livestock through sustainable practices.

It will be followed by the Green Week in Berlin and we will be sharing with the countries what are the approaches.

And, also, the Source Economic Dimension. It has been referred here as the Gender Dimension. The COP 23 approved agenda plan and how we will be contributing integrating gender in food security, nutrition, and climate change. We need to speed up, because by 31 March 2018, all of the partners will have to present their contribution. You can see that FAO is mentioned in all the sectors in the decision and will be working with all of you to see what could be FAO contribution and how we will be presenting our contribution. We need to be ambitious, we need to be transformative, and we need to speed up how we move forward.

I think I have responded to the questions regarding climate change. We will not be working alone. We cannot achieve all this alone. We need to work in partnerships, in South-South Cooperation, through the collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies, and the partnerships and collaboration with the other United Nations agencies. The collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment (UNEP), and World Health Organization (WHO) is important because climate change is impacting health, and this is what will be doing for the work in partnerships. We cannot work alone. We will be strengthening our partnerships.

One question regarding the report on the knowledge evaluation. It is true that we need to have a tailored approach. All of the products FAO producing regarding knowledge have been adapted to the different levels of the constituencies of our members. They could be tailored for the countries and they have to be for the farmers, both the ones who can read as well as the ones who cannot read. We need to tailor our approach to the different languages also as was advised during the discussion of the FAO knowledge evaluation. As it has been requested, we will be reporting every two years to you on the indicators. And, also, we will be reporting on how we are going to implement the Climate Change Strategy and the results we will be achieving. I think I responded to all the queries and all the questions. If I did not, I will come back again.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

We will address first the matter of gender in the evaluations, and what is coming next. The gender aspects in the three Strategic Objectives that have been evaluated so far have been particularly interesting. I think that in looking at the gender issues within the context of the Strategic Programmes, has been more fruitful in a number of ways than when in the past we had looked at it within a department.

Also of interest is that the combination of the SO work, the strategic progress, what FAO's role is in these larger objectives, and looking in that context at gender issues has been really very interesting. So far, we have done the first evaluation looking in-depth at SO5 which was not included originally. And then in the session in spring 2017, we looked at SO3, and now SO4 at this time. In the next session in the spring of 2018, it will be SO1. And then in the fall session of 2018 SO2 will be done to finalize the evaluations of five Strategic Objectives. And then in the following session in the spring of 2019, we will present the synthesis discussion of the five of those together with some additional elements. It is planned to come out in the session after the final SO evaluation, which is the SO2.

Then with regard to the questions from China, in particular on South-South Cooperation. South-South Cooperation, South-South and Triangular Cooperation was not a topic of the Programme Committee session this time, but it is a very high priority for us, of course, in particular with regard to Rome-based Agency collaboration. This year, as you all know, we have moved the South-South work out of the Technical Cooperation Department into Department of Partnerships which we think has been very positive. If you agree, Chairperson, I will pass the floor to Marcela Villarreal, the Division Director, to highlight those two aspects.

Ms Marcela Villarreal (Director, Partnership and South-South Cooperation)

In terms of what we are achieving by the move of the unit of South-South Cooperation towards the new division called Partnerships and South-South Cooperation, the first point that I can report on is that we are enhancing the scope and the impact of South-South Cooperation through partnerships.

By integrating the units, we are putting much more emphasis on the kinds of partnerships that can be developed and therefore how other actors can be engaged and also benefit from South-South Cooperation. For example, how can farmers' organizations be more mobilized and benefit more from inputs that we already have, for example, through the FAO–China programme? Just to provide an example, we are trying to enhance South-South Cooperation among the non-state actors. An example can be provided from an activity that is ongoing right now. Women from Niger who have benefitted from a very long FAO programme, supported by Belgium, for women's empowerment are now today sharing their experiences with women of Senegal and Mali. This means that the road to empowerment from a rural women's perspective is going to be shortened and more effective. That is one example of the kinds of impact that we are already having. As this is ongoing, it is happening right now. By integrating the two units, we are enhancing the partnership aspect and also the impacts through the non-state actors.

Regarding the collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies (RBA), I am very happy to report that just last week in a meeting in Antalya, Turkey, with the Expo on South-South Cooperation, we proposed a joint road map between the three RBAs that was called *Strengthening Collaboration among Rome-based Agencies on South-South and Triangular Cooperation*. Here we have a road map on exactly how we are going to be joining forces using each agency's comparative advantage to ensure better and more impactful South-South Cooperation. This is a plan that we have agreed on.

We also agreed in Brasília, two weeks ago at the IFAD Conference on South-South Cooperation where FAO was a main partner, and we choose a couple of countries where we go to the ground-level to show how very concretely we can demonstrate that by the three RBAs working together we can have much more impact. And indeed, one of the proposals for 2018 is to have the RBA seminar to discuss South-South and Triangular Cooperation. As you know, 12 September has been identified by the United Nations as the Day of South-South Cooperation and we have agreed with the RBAs to do something like we do on the gender, on the International Women's Day. We will rotate duties among the three of us. Each year, one of us will take the lead in organizing this seminar that will be a RBA event. I will be happy to share the plan with the Members who would like to.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

Just to add one detail on that to follow up with Ms Villarreal. This year we had the gender event, the RBA event, here in the Red Room, and we had an event on South-South Cooperation at IFAD.

Next year, I think those roles switch. I think we have an event on South-South Cooperation here and rolling. Together with WFP.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I would like to thank the Members of the Council for the support of the conclusions and recommendations of the Programme Committee. I think that with your remarks you highlighted the importance of the work of FAO on climate change. I think there was also an intensive discussion, a substantive discussion we had within the Programme Committee. It was not only about climate change.

I think we had also a lengthy discussion about, for example, how we can improve the understanding of the report and the guidelines FAO is providing to people, not only to us here in Rome but especially people working on the ground. Sometimes we say the work is of high quality, but can the farmers and the smallholders also understand what we are saying and discussing? I think that is also something we have to realize when we are discussing our reports and our guidelines.

As already mentioned, the task of mainstreaming FAO's work in the field of the Climate Change Convention is important and we should also look at the examples of other United Nations organizations and conventions. For example, when it comes to drought we refer to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, when we speak about sustainable forest management and agriculture, the work being done under the framework of the United Nations Forum on Forests, and certainly, last but not least, the work done by FAO in mainstreaming food security and fisheries within the framework of oceans and sustaining our oceans.

I think also it was highlighted the importance of mainstreaming gender in the work of FAO. I think it was highlighted by several of you. We have to do it. We have to make sure that it is in our reports and that we are reporting on the results. Certainly, I think it was an important note and recommendation of the Programme Committee to bring forward the Standards on gender equality.

I think we certainly will look into the suggestions made by China and Benin in improving the work of the Programme Committee and how we can share more information between the Programme Committee and the Finance Committee to avoid silos within the work of the Committees. I also think a very useful suggestion for the Programme Committee would be that, if we discuss the reports and we come to conclusions, then we try to highlight which paragraphs of the reports led to the conclusions. With that, I would like to thank you for your support.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings us to the conclusions on discussions of this item. Let me summarize as follows.

Item 5 "Report on the Reports of the 122nd and 123rd Sessions of the Programme Committee"

1. The Council endorsed the Reports of the 122nd and 123rd Sessions of the Programme Committee, and:

On the Report of the 122nd Session:

- a) welcomed the Reviewed Action Plan Results Framework for FAO Strategy on Climate Change, supported the Committee's comment to enhance work in partnership with other actors, especially with Rome-based Agencies and other UN agencies, and looked forward to its implementation in the coming biennium;
- b) welcomed the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO4) and endorsed action proposed by Management to address them;
- c) commended the Secretariat on progress achieved in implementing approved recommendations of the follow-up reports on the Evaluations of FAO's contribution on knowledge on food and agriculture and of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation; and
- d) appreciated the in-depth analysis provided in the Annex on gender of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Strategic Objective and welcomed the progress made by the Secretariat in implementing the minimum standards set in the Policy on Gender Equality.

On the Report of the 123rd (Special) Session:

- a) endorsed the reappointment of Mr Masahiro Igarashi as Director of Evaluation for a further and final term of four years;
- b) looked forward to a follow-up report at a future session on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Independent Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

On the last point on gender. Would you re-read that if you wouldn't mind and I would like to make a suggestion.

CHAIRPERSON

"Appreciated the in-depth analysis provided in the Annex on gender of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Strategic Objective and welcomed the progress made by the Secretariat in implementing the minimum standards set in the Policy on Gender Equality."

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I would like to make two small changes. I think firstly, we had this discussion in the Programme Committee and I think the Programme Committee actually noted the progress made rather than welcomed the progress made. So, if we could change that from "welcomed" to "noted".

And in particular, we also asked FAO Management if they could bring forward the date by which they will meet FAO's minimum standards for gender equality. So it was that request to bring forward that date that we would like to see recorded in a record of this discussion.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

Again, the EU and its Member States would be very grateful if you could consider two main points of our intervention and those will be strongly encouraged the implementation of FAO's strategy on climate change and encouraged work in support of climate-smart agriculture approaches in countries that included them in their intended nationally determined contributions.

The second one will be welcomed the assurance from management that FAO's support to countries seeking to access climate financing would focus on food security and nutrition and other areas within FAO's mandate and on the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

Two comments from the Nordic side. One concerning the gender point because we would like to see some language there in terms for strengthening the Action Plan Results Framework. As we said in our statement, the outcomes – outputs, indicators, and targets are still gender blind, so some language to that effect, that the Council is looking forward to developing those further.

The second point is that we would like to take note of the Koronivia process because we think that it has important implications on FAO's work as well.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Could you please repeat the paragraph on the proposal on gender issues including the amendments proposed by the United Kingdom?

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

I have misgivings about the interventions that would say could you please include a new sentence altogether coming from my intervention because I think it is very important. The conclusion of our debate is finding common ground and certainly the introduction at a late hour of new ideas might incur and reopen the whole debate.

One particular sentence that steers my concerns is the idea that in accessing the Green Climate Fund, we would assign priorities to this or that which is something that is out of place in this forum. It is more up to the UNFCCC to do. It would preempt the whole negotiation at another forum, so I would certainly advise to refrain from that, our colleagues from the EU.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I thank the Ambassador from the Netherlands as Chairperson of the Programme Committee for his intervention.

We would like to see reference in the conclusions to the fact that delegates said, and Ms Maria Helena Semedo and Ms Marcela Villarreal already said, that South-South Cooperation needs to be

strengthened. I think that in the conclusions we could call for the participation of stakeholders, including the participation of the three Rome-based Agencies, including in relation to South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation. Could we please add these elements to the conclusions after the cooperation between the Rome-based Agencies?

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

La delegación Argentina quería apoyar lo señalado recientemente por Brasil en el sentido de que hay temas que han llevado una larga discusión y que no sería conveniente ahora incorporarlos. Y específicamente me refiero a lo manifestado por la delegación de Estonia. Nosotros preferiríamos no hacer ninguna mención porque tendríamos que abrir un debate que llevaría horas a alcanzar un consenso sobre esta temática. Me refiero a lo planteado sobre la agricultura inteligente.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I just wanted to come back on the point that my colleague from Brazil made about the EU statements. I think the point on which countries FAO should support to access Green Climate Financing is not new. It is something, as my colleague from Argentina said, that we debated at some length in the Programme Committee.

So it is not a new point at all. It is something that we have discussed. Indeed, Ms Semedo reflected that in her response just now.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am very much surprised by the intervention of our colleagues from Brazil and Argentina because I have the Report of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee in front of me which I am willing to show to my colleagues. If we look at paragraph 5, point d), we will find that our intervention does not have any new ideas. We would like to have what is written in the report also included on the Council level.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, there have been quite a few suggestions made.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

I just do not want to be misinterpreted. Of course, I would not be at all against any member country accessing the Green Climate Fund for agricultural projects. On the contrary, that is something that we support very much. What I do not agree with is the formulation that the EU has read which says that, in accessing the Green Climate Fund, priority should be given to agricultural projects. That is another thing altogether because that sets a condition for countries to access the fund itself.

So it is a twist that is not convenient.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, as I was saying, there are quite a few suggestions which have been made to amend the conclusions. If you give us five minutes, we will incorporate and read them out to you again.

The meeting was suspended from 17.37 to 17.58 hours

La séance est suspendue de 17 h 37 à 17 h 58

Se suspende la sesión de las 17.37 a las 17.58 horas

CHAIRPERSON

I will read out the conclusions again. We tried to incorporate the various suggestions made.

Item 5, *Report of the 122nd and 123rd Sessions of the Programme Committee.*

1. The Council endorsed the Reports of the 122nd and 123rd Session of the Programme Committee, and:

On the Report of the 122nd Session:

- a) welcomed the Reviewed Action Plan Results Framework for FAO Strategy on Climate Change, supported the Committee's comment to enhance work in partnership with other actors, especially with Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other UN agencies, including through South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation, as well as public-private partnerships, and looked forward to its implementation in the coming biennium;
- b) noted the recognition of agriculture and food security during the COP23, and further noted that the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture sets the agriculture and food security agenda for the UNFCCC process and encouraged FAO's efforts in that regard;
- c) encouraged work in support of climate-smart agriculture approaches in countries that included them in their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs);
- d) welcomed the recommendations of the Evaluation of FAO's contribution to inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO4) and endorsed action proposed by Management to address them;
- e) commended the Secretariat on progress achieved in implementing approved recommendations of the follow-up reports on the Evaluations of FAO's contribution on knowledge on food and agriculture and of FAO's contribution to climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- f) appreciated the in-depth analysis provided in the Annex on gender of the Evaluation of FAO's Contribution to Strategic Objective 5, welcomed the progress made and requested Management to bring forward targets for meeting the minimum standards set in the Policy on Gender Equality; and
- g) welcomed the assurance from Management that FAO's support to countries seeking to access climate financing would focus on food security and nutrition and other areas within FAO's mandate and on the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

On the Report of the 123rd (Special) Session:

- a) endorsed the reappointment of Mr Masahiro Igarashi as Director of Evaluation for a further and final term of four years; and
- b) looked forward to a follow-up report at a future session on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Independent Evaluation of FAO's evaluation function.

I think we tried to incorporate the suggestions made. I hope you recognize them.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

I would like to comment specifically on point g). The reason that you have just given is acceptable to my delegation. Somehow I had misinterpreted the initial proposal from the EU and I apologize for that.

I read the word "*priority*" being given to access funding from the Green Climate Fund and that is not what I see in your text. So I do present my apologies. The Ambassador had given me this text and it is okay. Just go ahead with it.

Mr Khaled EL Taweel (Egypt)

My comment is on point g). I know that this is the same wording of the report of the Programme Committee but just some clarification here. When we say focus on countries most vulnerable to climate change, does this limit FAO in assessing developing countries that might request FAO's assistance in accessing climate-change financing according to this classification?

Does this not limit the work to a certain extent?

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

The meaning is that priority will be given to the countries most vulnerable to climate change. It is not limited but saying that there will be priority for the Organization.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Change the language a little bit to ensure that there is an explanation from the Deputy Director-General as taken into consideration. Because in my reading now, I believe that FAO's work will be more focused on the countries most vulnerable to climate change, which we support, but we do not want it to be limited to this, but to include also other developing countries that might request FAO's support in this regard.

CHAIRPERSON

Egypt, we are changing the word to it will now read "*welcome the assurance from Management that FAO's support to countries seeking access to climate financing would focus on food security and nutrition and other areas within FAO's mandate, and primarily on the countries most vulnerable to climate change*".

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We would like to make a brief comment. On point f), we would like to propose to delete the word "*appreciate*" and include "*take note*" for the following reasons.

The 156th Session of the FAO Council called for no references to be made to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) which took place in Istanbul. It cautioned against references to the WHS. At the same time, the proposal for gender issues which we are talking about here is contained in a whole chapter included in FAO's obligations in relation to the WHS in relation to gender issues and gender commitments of FAO.

In this connection, we would propose that we keep to the previously agreed upon wording from the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

Russian Federation, could you kindly repeat your proposal?

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

We would like to replace in point f):

Continues in English

"Appreciate the in-depth analysis" with *"took note of the in-depth analysis"*.

CHAIRPERSON

Here I would request the views of Members because the Russian Federation is an observer and my understanding is that the amendments to the report is the prerogative of Members of the Council.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

As a Member of the Programme Committee, I can vouch for the fact that the Programme Committee did appreciate the analysis in the annex and we had a very good discussion on it. But for the sake of reaching consensus, I am happy to have that word, "*appreciate*" replaced with "*take note*" if that is the only change that means.

I can see that is a way forward.

I think later on in that paragraph, and I was going to make this point but did not want to prolong our discussion, the Programme Committee noted the progress that was made. In particular it noted that there was not quite as much progress made as we would have liked. But we had this discussion in the Programme Committee that we did not welcome the progress made. We had that very specific discussion when we were talking about the Report of the Programme Committee.

We noted that progress had been made.

So if we were going to change the beginning of that sub-paragraph, then I would also like to make that other change to the paragraph as well.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

As Canada is a member of the Programme Committee, we had a very rich discussion on this subject. We would also add that ‘appreciate’ would be in line with something that we had requested. We had requested that these evaluations have a more in-depth analysis and have a separate annex. We feel it is quite consistent in terms of governance to the fact that we appreciate the results of what we requested. So, for this reason, we would support your proposed language and could go along with the United Kingdom’s proposal to have “*noting the progress*”. That would be more in line with the discussions we had at the Programme Committee.

Mr Abdul Razak AYZI (Afghanistan)

If the analysis was in-depth, as per the Programme Committee, then the word “*appreciate*” would be appropriate.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

We are not a member of the Programme Committee, but this issue is quite sensitive. In the past, if I am not mistaken, during the Conference or Council meetings we used terms which are quite neutral. So, we would prefer that the proposal from the Russian Federation be used: “*took note of*”.

CHAIRPERSON

I have thought of a compromised wording to propose. Instead of “*appreciated*” and instead of “*noted*”, it could be “*noted the appreciation of the in-depth analysis provided*”. Can we go along with this compromised wording? Thank you.

Item 6. Reports of the 167th (29-31 May 2017), the 168th (2-3 November 2017) and the 169th (6-10 November 2017) Sessions of the Finance Committee**Point 6. Rapports des cent soixante-septième (29-31 mai 2017), cent soixante-huitième (2-3 novembre 2017) et cent soixante-neuvième (6-10 novembre 2017) sessions du Comité financier****Tema 6. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 167.º (29-31 de mayo de 2017), 168.º (2 y 3 de noviembre de 2017) y 169.º (6-10 de noviembre de 2017) del Comité de Finanzas (CL 158/4; CL 158/6; CL 158/7)****Item 6.1 Audited Accounts - FAO 2016****Point 6.1 Comptes vérifiés – FAO 2016****Tema 6.1 Cuentas comprobadas de la FAO correspondientes a 2016**

(C 2019/5 A; C 2019/5 B)

Item 6.2 Status of Contributions and Arrears**Point 6.2 État des contributions et des arriérés****Tema 6.2 Estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos**

(CL 158/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to item 6, *Reports of the 167th, 168th and 169th Sessions of the Finance Committee*. This item has two sub-items namely: 6.1 *Audited Accounts – FAO 2016*, and 6.2 *Status of Contributions and Arrears*.

The documents before Council are CL 158/4, CL 158/6, CL 158/7, C 2019/5 Part A and Part B, and CL 158/LIM/2. I draw your attention to document CL 158/LIM/2 which sets out the Status of Assessments and Arrears as at 27 November 2017. Member Nations currently owe to FAO over USD 232 million for 2017 and prior years, which complicates FAO’s liquidity management.

As of 27 November 2017, 38 percent of the 2017 assessed contributions still needed to be settled. Fifty-five Member Nations still had arrears outstanding from 2017 and previous years, and 15 owed arrears in such amounts as would prejudice their right to vote at the next Session of the Conference, in accordance with Article III.4 of the Constitution.

I now give the floor to Mr Lupiño Lazaro, Chairperson of the Finance Committee, to introduce the item.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I am pleased to present the Reports of the 167th, 168th and 169th Sessions of the Finance Committee. These Reports are submitted to the Council in documents that were just enumerated by the Independent Chairperson of the Council.

In addition, we draw your attention to the recently circulated documents CL 158/Information Note 1 and Information Note 2 prepared to provide the Council with additional data on human resources management to complement the analysis presented in document FC 169/9, *Human Resources Management*.

While the 169th Session dealt with FAO issues, the 167th and 168th sessions were special sessions convened to deal with WFP matters. Our reports on WFP matters have been submitted to the WFP Executive Board for its consideration.

As agreed with the Independent Chairperson of the Council, I shall now present to you salient highlights of the report of the 169th Meeting of the Finance Committee except for those matters referring to *Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19*, which were covered separately under item 3 of the agenda of this session of the Council.

May I now walk you through, starting with Monitoring Financial Position.

In reviewing the Financial Position of the Organization, the Committee welcomed the information provided that the Organization's liquidity was expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs through the end of 2017. Recognizing that the ongoing cash flow health was dependent on the timely payment of assessed contributions, the Committee urged all Member Nations to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions and requested the Secretariat to continue exploring how to encourage timely payment of assessed contributions.

The Committee welcomed the improvement in the expenditure and approval rate of the Technical Cooperation Programme and emphasized the importance of continuing to maintain the TCP expenditure rate at a level that ensured full implementation of the TCP appropriation as approved by the Conference.

The Committee welcomed the overall performance reported on the short- and long-term investment portfolios and appreciated the prudent resource management practices and investment policies being applied by the Organization.

The Committee examined the FAO Audited Accounts for 2016 and noted that the External Auditor had completed the audit in accordance with the International Standards of Auditing and had issued an unmodified audit opinion.

The Committee commended the External Auditor for the quality of the Long Form Report and endorsed the recommendations contained therein. The Committee noted that the Long Form Report of the External Auditor continued to identify a significant number of observations relating to the weaknesses and gaps in internal control systems and fraud risk issues at headquarters and decentralized offices. The Committee noted the information provided by the Secretariat on its ongoing activities in preparation for the issuance of a Statement of Internal Control, including on its efforts to address the observations and recommendations of the External Auditor in this regard and welcomed the assurance provided by the Secretariat that a Statement of Internal Control would be attached to the FAO Audited Accounts for 2017.

Noting the comments and clarifications provided by the External Auditor and the Secretariat, the Committee recommended that the Council submit to the Conference for adoption, the Audited Accounts for 2016 and accordingly agreed to submit to the Council the draft resolution presented in paragraph 11 of CL 158/7 for forwarding to the Conference.

The Committee considered an update on the latest UN system discussion on the funding gap for After Service Medical Coverage (ASMC) liabilities and on efforts being made by the Secretariat to contain the costs of the scheme. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to continue to review options to address the funding gap in the context of the considerations of this matter by the United

Nations General Assembly and urged it to continue its efforts to contain costs of the current medical insurance plan.

The second area referred to Budgetary Matters.

The Committee reviewed the report on Programme and Budgetary Transfers in the 2016-17 Biennium, which provided an update on the forecasted budgetary performance against the 2016-17 net appropriation and the use of the 2014-15 unspent balance. The Committee noted the previously approved forecasted budgetary chapter transfers to Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 arising from implementation of the Programme of Work and that the transfer to Chapter 2 was no longer required. The Committee took note of the use of the 2014-15 unspent balance in 2016-17 and looked forward to receiving the final 2016-17 budgetary performance report at its May 2018 session.

The Committee reviewed the Annual Report on Support Costs Expenditures and Recoveries covering the period from 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2017 and noted that all trust fund projects opened during the period under review had been charged at rates which fell within the approved legacy policy on support costs. The Committee noted that, during 2017, the Secretariat applied the new FAO policy on cost recovery to selected projects under formulation in close collaboration with the resource partners involved and that the new policy would be fully implemented during the 2018-19 biennium.

The third area is Human Resources.

The Committee reviewed the major achievements made on human resources management in the Organization over the reporting period. The Committee regretted the lack of human resources data and information to substantiate the analysis of annual progress and achievements mentioned in the report. I welcome CL 158/Information Note 1 and Information Note 2, which have been prepared following my consultations with the Director-General, to provide additional data to complement the analysis on human resources management presented in document FC 169/9, *Human Resources Management*.

The Finance Committee welcomed the improvements in the processes for recruitment and evaluation of consultants, emphasizing the need for a flexible approach.

The Committee noted that the decision to not proceed with the implementation of the new mandatory age of separation retroactively for staff recruited prior to 1 January 2014 did not present a legal risk to the Organization.

The Committee took note of the recent developments in the International Civil Service Commission and, in particular, decisions taken and recommendations to the United Nations General Assembly and noted the main decisions taken by the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board.

The last area is on Oversight.

The Committee reviewed an updated Progress Report on Implementation of the External Auditor and commended the Secretariat on the progress made in successfully closing a large number of recommendations, urging it to continue ongoing efforts to close the remaining outstanding recommendations. The Committee welcomed the further information provided by the Secretariat on the status of implementation of the recommendations listed in the 2016 Long Form Report and noted that the External Auditor would be in a position to validate Management progress and achievements on these recommendations during the audit review scheduled for end-2017.

The Committee endorsed the Director-General's recommendation to appoint Mr Gianfranco Cariola as a member of the FAO Audit Committee for an initial period of three years, and that this be renewable thereafter up to a maximum of six years in total and agreed to submit to the Council its endorsement of the appointment, to be effective from the date of approval by the Council.

The Committee reviewed proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee. The Committee requested that the revised draft Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee be presented as an agenda item for decision at its next regular Session in May 2018 preceded by a review of the proposed amendments, through informal consultations with members of the Finance Committee.

In conclusion, overall, the sessions of the Committee were very productive and, in particular, I believe that it was possible to address a number of important issues facing the Organization. On behalf of the members of the Committee, I would like to extend our appreciation to the Secretariat for its assistance in our deliberations and our gratitude to the Member Nations of FAO for providing us this opportunity to further the important work of the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor to Members, but I would highlight one aspect, and that is sub-items 6.1 *Audited Accounts for 2016* and 6.2 *Status of Contributions and Arrears*. These two sub-items can be discussed under this because there will not be a separate discussion on the Audited Accounts. They form part of this particular item. So, in commenting on item 6, you can also comment on 6.1 and 6.2 if you have any remarks or comments.

Mr Toru HISAZOME (Japan)

Japan has the honour to deliver this joint statement on behalf of the Asia Group.

First of all, we would like to congratulate Mr Lupiño Lazaro for being elected as Chairperson of the Finance Committee. Thank you for presenting us with the Committee's deliberations. Our gratitude also goes to the Independent Chairperson of the Council, Mr Khalid Mehboob, the former Chairperson of the Finance Committee, for your excellent work and contribution to the Committee.

We welcome the conclusion and advice from the reports to the Council. We note that the views and recommendations reflected in the reports of 167th and 168th Sessions regarding WFP matters. We have some comments regarding the report of 169th Session.

Regarding the Organization's financial position, we note that the sufficiency of liquidity to cover the operational needs is based on the timely payment of assessed contributions. Also, we stress our concern on the underfunding of the staff-related liabilities. We appreciate the proactive efforts made by the Secretariat and encourage future effective actions, including active involvement in the Working Group on ASHI (After Service Health Insurance) as well as adopting a common approach amongst members of the UN Common System.

We welcome the improvement in the expenditure and approval rate of the Technical Cooperation Programme. We reiterate the importance of continuing to maintain the TCP expenditure rate at a level that ensured full implementation of the TCP appropriation as approved by the Conference.

We note with appreciation that there are improvements in geographic representation and representation of female staff in human resources management. We support the call to encourage the Secretariat to ensure that the technical expertise provided by consultants was not weakened by requiring additional languages for all positions. We also note the Director-General's decision to not proceed with the implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for staff recruited prior to 1 January 2014 and took note of the view provided by the Legal Counsel that the decision did not present a significant legal risk. We thank the Secretariat for providing the information some human resources data just before the Council Session. We express our concerns on the lack of adequate human resources data and information which substantiate the analysis of these achievements.

We note close collaboration between FAO and the External Auditor. We would like to highlight the importance to the implementation of the recommendations of the External Auditor, in particular, those long outstanding high-risk recommendations. With respect to internal control, we are pleased to see the updated progress made by the Organization on its Accountability Policy and Internal Control Framework. We are looking forward to receiving the Statement on Internal Control attached to the FAO Audited Accounts for 2017.

Acknowledging the importance of the FAO Audit Committee, we note that there will be further amendments on the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee. We encourage the Secretariat to continue to explore with the RBAs the possibility of having a common Ombudsman and a common Ethics Office and look forward to the said issues' update in the 2018 May Session of the Finance Committee.

Last but not least, regarding the FAO Commissary issue, we look forward to the results of the review on the past situation and the indication of a new business model in the future. With these comments, the Asia Group endorses the reports.

My colleague from the capital will deliver a national statement at a later stage.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We generally endorse the report of the Finance Committee and would like to highlight the following:

Regarding the Financial Position we note with satisfaction that FAO's liquidity is expected to be sufficient to cover operational needs until the end of 2017. However, we also note a drop in the collection rate of assessed contributions compared with last year. Considering that the recurrent call upon Member Nations to make timely and full payment of assessed contribution has become a long-standing routine without producing the desired effects, we would invite the Secretariat to consider more concrete actions to improve this situation.

We endorse the Committee's recommendation that the Council should submit the FAO Audited Accounts for 2016 to the Conference for adoption.

We welcome the Long Form Report of the External Auditor and we wish to express our concern about the significant number of observations related to weaknesses and gaps in internal control systems and fraud risk issues at headquarters and decentralized offices. According to the External Auditor "much work still needs to be done in this area". We urge the Secretariat to continue in its efforts to address the observations and recommendations of the External Auditor. In this regard, we have high expectations, in particular in view of the issuance of the first Statement of Internal Control, to be enclosed as an annex to the Audited Accounts for 2017.

On the human resources management topic we would like to make the following remarks:

We would like to underscore the necessity of transparency in human resources management policies, decisions and data. Regrettably, the document prepared by the Secretariat for the Committee's deliberations once again did not meet the expectations of the Finance Committee. For most of the reported achievements presented in the document, limited evidence was produced. We are concerned that the information provided on the target vacancy rate did not reflect the 156th (April 2017) Council's decision that the target should be 15 percent, rather than 15 to 20 percent.

It is critically important that the Secretariat respond promptly to the repeated requests of FAO's Governing Bodies to provide relevant statistical data on staff and non-staff resources in order to increase transparency. The delay in obtaining these data is problematic, especially considering that even the monthly information on geographical distribution is no longer available. The timely availability of HR data is a crucial element of good governance, which we expect the Secretariat to follow. We welcome the fact that last Friday in the late afternoon and on Saturday morning, information notes containing HR data were circulated. This is a welcome first step in the right direction, although at first sight we consider that the information provided does not fully respond to the requests made by the Governing Bodies. Therefore, we urge the Secretariat to swiftly provide the Members with a comprehensive human resource data package, covering both staff and non-staff human resources, broken down in PWB budgeted posts and non-PWB budgeted posts, as in the HR Management Information Data Pack which was regularly made available to the Finance Committee until its 160th Session. In addition, further information should include detailed data on: vacancy rates as previously provided in document FC 164/7 Add.1; distribution of posts broken down per geographical region, as was provided on the Members Gateway until the end of last year; outpostings and secondments.

We propose that the Finance Committee examine these data, together with the information notes circulated by the Secretariat, at its next session with a view to making recommendations for the next Council session.

Furthermore, while generally welcoming improvements in the selection and recruitment of consultants, we are still worried about the risk of a disruptive effect of the new guidelines on

programme delivery. We see such a risk especially in the decentralized structure. For instance, we do not see the need for the indiscriminate requirement of proficiency in more than one official language. Moreover, excessively complicated and cumbersome recruitment procedures put at risk programme and project implementation in the field. Therefore, we fully support the Committee's recommendation to adjust the new guidelines.

The last topic that we would like to raise in the context of human resources management is the outstanding implementation of the UNGA Resolution 244/70 on raising the mandatory age of separation. We have urged the Secretariat several times to proceed with the implementation of this resolution through the raising of the mandatory age of separation to 65 years from 1 January 2018. Now is the time to act, as have other UN agencies such as WHO and UNESCO, earlier this year. Therefore, we request the Secretariat to submit a proposal to the Finance Committee at its next regular session in May 2018 and suggest that the Council endorses this in the record of this discussion.

Raising the mandatory age of separation will also help to contain the increase of unfunded liabilities for staff-related schemes, especially for the After Service Medical Care.

Finally, we fully support the Committee's request that the revised Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee, proposed and discussed at its 169th Session, be presented as an agenda item for decision at its next regular session in May 2018.

Mr Khaled EL Taweel (Egypt)

Egypt welcomes the report of the Finance Committee and thanks Mr Lazaro, Chairperson of the Committee for his leadership.

We appreciate the stability in the liquidity position of the Organization and urge all Members to ensure timely payment of the assessed contributions considering that 38 percent of the assessed contributions have not been paid as of today.

We express satisfaction at the improved expenditure and approval rate of the Technical Cooperation Programme which we believe is very vital at this stage in the context of the overall work of the Organization and we encourage Management to continue work in this direction.

We urge Management to continue to address any weakness and gaps in internal control systems and headquarters and decentralized offices as highlighted in the External Auditor Report.

We are glad to note the active engagement within the UN system, in particular in the Working Group of the Finance and Budget Network on After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI), to find a sustainable solution to this major risk and we would appreciate more updates on the future sessions of the Finance Committee.

On human resources management, we appreciate the recent information notes on HR issues and we encourage Management to ensure that this information is regularly provided to the FAO Finance Committee before the Committee sessions.

We welcome the new systematic improvements in the recruitment of consultants in FAO to ensure a transparent and merit-based process of recruitment in line with the Independent Technical Assessment.

Nevertheless, we were surprised by what was mentioned this morning by the Director-General on the geographical distribution of the consultants both at headquarters and in decentralized offices which indicated unbalanced distribution of consultants between different regions not in the favour of developing countries.

In particular, from the Near East region only 2.5 percent of the consultants come from the Near East compared to 56 percent from Europe.

We stress that the process should continue to be merit-based but while ensuring an equitable regional distribution that gives equal chances to nationals of developing countries. We call on Management to take measures to this effect and report to the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

We stress the importance of ensuring a vacancy rate that is less than 15 percent both at headquarters and in each of the regional offices.

Finally, we look forward for updates on the review of the Commissary and funding of the Staff Welfare Fund.

Mr Jyri OLLILA (Finland)

I make this statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries, that is Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland. Amongst them the EU Member States Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement given on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic Countries endorse the recommendations by the Finance Committee and would like to make the following additional remarks.

As mentioned by the EU and others, we too are concerned by the reluctance of FAO Management to implement the General Assembly Resolution on the mandatory age of separation.

We take note of the information provided during the meeting of the Finance Committee that statistical data on human resources will be disaggregated on gender in the future. We welcome this increased transparency and trust that other information on staff and non-staff human resources will be subject to an increased openness and shared with the Membership in the future.

The data provided by the Secretariat over the weekend seems to be a step in this direction.

We strongly support the United Nations Secretary-General's management reform agenda. Increased delegation of authority, faster and transparent recruitment processes and improved diversity, including gender equality are parts of that agenda. All of them are relevant to reflect and to act upon, also for the specialized agencies.

Regarding gender equality we are particularly interested to hear how the Secretariat in FAO intends to work to include the goals outlined in the Secretary-General's recently published "*System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*" in its work on human resources management.

Sr. Luis Geronimo REYES VERDE (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

En primer lugar, queremos agradecer el Señor Lupiño Lázaro, Presidente del Comité de Finanzas, por la presentación de este Informe, del cual hemos tomado nota debida.

Respaldamos plenamente la nueva política sobre contratación y evaluación de consultores, especialmente el uso de anuncios de vacantes y el procedimiento de contratación basado en los méritos. Nos gustaría comentar sobre la distribución geográfica altamente desequilibrada de los consultores. Como se mencionó esta mañana en el debate, en relación con el tema tres, es fundamental que la Organización tenga un mayor equilibrio en la nacionalidad de los consultores, a fin de ejecutar sus programas y actividades de manera eficaz. Por lo tanto, alentamos a la administración a buscar una distribución geográfica más equilibrada de los consultores, al igual que los miembros del personal.

Referente al punto 6.2, *Estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos*, para la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, la seguridad alimentaria es de carácter estratégico. Por ello forma parte de las prioridades establecidas en la política de gobierno, cumplir con los compromisos financieros adquiridos con la FAO. Sin embargo, subrayamos que actualmente el país está atravesando por un severo asedio económico y financiero internacional, que conjuntamente con los estragos de la guerra económica, causado por los factores internos, dificultan que el resultado de los esfuerzos realizados por el país para cumplir a cabalidad con sus compromisos internacionales sea positivo.

Por último, acogemos la recomendación del Comité de Finanzas para que los Estados Miembros cumplan con el pago puntual de las cuotas asignadas, a fin de asegurar que la FAO pueda ejecutar eficazmente el Programa de Trabajo y presupuesto aprobado por la Conferencia. En ese sentido, nos comprometemos a realizar todos los esfuerzos encaminados a cumplir con el pago de la cuota que nos corresponde.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

In your introduction, you pointed out the worryingly high level of arrears owed by Members amounting to USD 232 million for the present year. I would like to put another figure into

perspective and that is the figure for unfunded After Service Medical Care which amounts to almost USD 800 million, which is quite a high number.

One way to at least partially reduce this high outstanding liability would be to raise the mandatory age of separation as recommended, as prescribed by the UN General Assembly Resolution on that very subject, because this would automatically reduce the bills that FAO would have to pay for staff members who are going into retirement after their service at FAO.

Therefore, we fully endorse the request that the Secretariat submit a proposal for the raising of the mandatory age of separation at the next regular session of the Finance Committee in May 2018 which has been voiced by Estonia speaking on behalf of the European Union.

On another topic, it was mentioned that there is an uneven geographical distribution of consultants working for FAO. We know of no rule that would prescribe an equitable regional distribution of consultants working for FAO and we are wondering if such inequitable distribution would be feasible given the somewhat short-term nature of many of these contracts offered by FAO to consultants.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

First of all, I would like to state that the United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. I would also, like many others, like to thank Mr Lupiño for his leadership of the Finance Committee.

I would now like to remind colleagues that the ICC mentioned under agenda item 1 that the United Kingdom had asked for a specific document to be put on the agenda for Council. That document is CL 158/INF/7 and it is a document that was made available to Council for information about two weeks ago.

The document is the United Nations Chief Executive Board's response to the 2016 Joint Inspection Unit Report on Fraud Prevention, Detection and Response in the UN System. This document was presented to Council for information and, on the front page of the document, there is a note from the Director-General that says that FAO is in the process or has implemented all but two of the recommendations that the Joint Inspection Unit made.

On the front page of the document, the Director-General notes that FAO is in the process of implementing two outstanding recommendations. These are recommendation six on developing a specific anti-fraud strategy and action plan and recommendation fourteen on setting out the protocols and procedures for referring fraud cases to national enforcement agencies.

The document says that FAO is in the process of implementing these recommendations. So my question to Management is can they tell us when these recommendations will be completed and can they confirm that they will make that anti-fraud strategy and action plan and the fraud reporting protocols available to the Finance Committee and other Members when they are complete?

I would very much welcome a response to those points and, indeed, for that response to be recorded in the report of this meeting.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports what Japan said on behalf of the Asia Group. We would like to thank Mr Lazaro as Chairperson of the Finance Committee. We thank you for your contribution.

You chaired the recent meeting of the Finance Committee brilliantly. China supports the report of the Committee but we do have the following comments:

Firstly, on the assessed contributions, China supports the view of the Finance Committee that Members should ensure the full and timely payment of their contributions.

In the next biennium, the assessment base has changed. This has led to an increase in the assessment contribution rates for developing countries and a reduction for developed countries. So China would like to call on developed countries to increase their support to the FAO budget through voluntary contributions. We also call on the Secretariat to fully take into account the needs of the developing

countries in terms of modern agriculture and rural recovery. This would allow us to incentivize developing countries to participate in these processes.

Secondly on human resources, we welcome the data provided by the Secretariat. According to this information, we support the intervention of Egypt. According to our analysis, there is a problem of balance in representation in the recruitment of consultants.

We have seen that, in Asia, we only represent 7.3 percent of consultants. Thus, we believe that FAO, to promote nutrition and food security, provides a lot of assistance to developing countries in relation to human resources. We believe that we need to improve the situation of geographic representation.

These are consultants from developing countries that best know their national situation. So it would be better to recruit consultants from these countries to promote policy convergence. We believe we need to improve the work in relation to geographic representation.

As regards the assessment rate which has changed, we believe that geographic representation needs to be better reflected in this.

Finally, on the staff Commissary, we take note of the fact that the staff Commissary has closed. We believe that the staff Commissary is an important service of well being for FAO staff. We think it is a good thing, the staff Commissary. We think it should be reopened.

At the creation of the Commissary, the idea was to sell products which were difficult for delegates to access. We think that good products of agriculture from countries can be sold in the Commissary and made available to FAO staff.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

The United States applauds FAO for managing within its means and taking a prudent, responsible approach to ensuring proper financial and governance oversight. We think forward to continued cooperation with the FAO management team as well as the new Finance Committee Members under the exemplary leadership of our new Chairperson, Lupiño Lazaro.

We commend the Organization's efforts to reduce geographical under-representation and note the increasing number of equitably represented countries. We hope the Secretariat will continue this focus while prioritizing the selection of candidates based on merit and competence.

We do however support Germany's observation that there is no UN requirement for geographical distribution for consultants and take this opportunity to encourage all Member States to encourage their voluntary contributions to this worthy Organization.

We also welcome the Secretariat's increased focus on internal control issues, an area that has been highlighted in previous external audit recommendations. We look forward to reviewing the Director-General's statement of internal control and we are encouraged to hear that FAO is looking at best practices of other organizations such as the World Food Programme.

We think this sends a positive signal towards Rome-based Agency collaboration.

As noted during Finance Committee deliberations, we would like to finally see concrete actions to reform the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee to align them with best practices of other UN organizations and appreciate other colleagues' requests for the same result.

We look forward to working with the Secretariat and other Finance Committee members to address questions on this issue and we believe that informal sessions with documents translated into the FAO working languages will facilitate our decision making at the May 2018 Finance Committee Session.

We share the EU's concerns about UN requirements for consultants.

Turning to retirement, we would like to see the Secretariat include the issue of increasing the mandatory age of separation to 65 for staff recruited before 1 January 2014 on the agenda of the next Finance Committee and we echo the points made by Germany, the Nordic States and the European Union in this regard.

We have one correction from the report from our worthy Finance Committee Chairman's summary of the Finance Committee's discussions about the legal risk of FAO's failure to move to the UN standard. The Committee did not decide there was no legal risk. Rather, we took note of the FAO Legal Counsel's opinion.

My delegation is committed to UN System-wide implementation of the complete package of UNGA adopted ICSC recommendations. We believe this ensures consistency in staff compensation and benefits across UN Organizations.

As our colleagues from Germany reminded us, implementation of the new mandatory age of separation would also make significant contributions to the expected staff-related liabilities involved in After Service Medical Care. We therefore strongly support the calls by the EU and Germany for a proposal for the next Finance Committee on ensuring FAO joins the rest of the UN regarding retirement age.

We thank the Secretariat for its commitment to the value of accountability to ensure the effectiveness of the Food and Agriculture Organization and we applaud the Organization's efforts in implementing reforms.

CHAIRPERSON

We adjourn the meeting now and will carry on tomorrow morning. We have a long list of speakers still on this item.

Before we close, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for an announcement. Mr Gagnon, you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members that a side event on *Migration and Food Security* will take place immediately after the close of this plenary meeting, from 19.00 to 20.30 in the Sheikh Zayed Centre.

CHAIRPERSON

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 18:58 hours

La séance est levée à 18 h 58

Se levanta la sesión a las 18.58

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session
Cent cinquante-huitième session
158.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2017
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017**

**THIRD PLENARY MEETING
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
TERCERA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 December 2017

The Third Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.41 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La troisième séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 41
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la tercera sesión plenaria a las 9.41
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

- Item 6. Reports of the 167th (29-31 May 2017), the 168th (2-3 November 2017) and the 169th (6-10 November 2017) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)**
- Point 6. Rapports des cent soixante-septième (29-31 mai 2017), cent soixante-huitième (2-3 novembre 2017) et cent soixante-neuvième (6-10 novembre 2017) sessions du Comité financier (suite)**
- Tema 6. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 167.º (29-31 de mayo de 2017), 168.º (2 y 3 de noviembre de 2017) y 169.º (6-10 de noviembre de 2017) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)**
- (CL 158/4; CL 158/6; CL 158/7)

Item 6.1 Audited Accounts - FAO 2016

Point 6.1 Comptes vérifiés – FAO 2016

Tema 6.1 Cuentas comprobadas de la FAO correspondientes a 2016

(C 2019/5 A; C 2019/5 B)

Item 6.2 Status of Contributions and Arrears

Point 6.2 État des contributions et des arriérés

Tema 6.2 Estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos

(CL 158/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen, I call the Third Meeting of 158th Session of the FAO Council to order.

Before we start, I would like to inform Council that we will close this morning's plenary at 12.10 in view of the Opening Ceremony of the 65th Anniversary of the FAO Library Exhibit taking place at 12.15.

We now continue with item 6, *Reports of the 167th, 168th and 169th Sessions of the Finance Committee*. I will open the list of speakers in the order in which it appeared on the screen yesterday evening at 19.00 when we adjourned.

Mr Joseph NGETICH (Kenya)

I thank the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Mr Lupiño Lazaro, for ably presenting this report which was indeed very comprehensive.

Chairperson, my delegation notes that the Committee reviewed a number of issues during its deliberations.

In this regard, I wish to make a few comments.

Kenya supports the new policy on recruitment and evaluation of consultants, including the use of announcements and merit-based process of recruitment. My delegation also considers equitable geographical representation to be of utmost importance in the implementation of this policy.

We welcome the advice of the Finance Committee to Management on the need to apply flexibility in this process. Kenya believes that this would be in the best interests of the Organization.

Chairperson, we support the Director-General's approach in the execution of this policy in the transition period in a manner that ensures no programme, project or activity of FAO suffers.

With these comments, Kenya endorses the Committee Report.

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

La Delegación de Chile agradece el completo Informe de la actividad del Comité de Finanzas, así como la información adicional provista por la Secretaría. Quisiera hacer algunos comentarios.

Nuestro país apoya la nueva política en contratación y evaluación de consultores, especialmente el uso de los anuncios de vacantes y de la contratación basada en méritos. Esto está en línea tanto con las recomendaciones de la evaluación independiente de la capacidad técnica de FAO, como de la Oficina del Inspector General.

En concreto, destacamos la necesidad de que los consultores de FAO cumplan los mismos requisitos mínimos que se piden para los funcionarios, en términos de requisitos académicos y de conocimiento de idiomas. Rescatamos la importancia de implementar esta nueva política de forma gradual y con flexibilidad, a fin de proteger los programas, proyectos y actividades que emprende la Organización, otorgando al mismo tiempo mayor transparencia y cumplimiento de los altos estándares de la FAO.

Reconocemos la importancia de lograr una representación de género y geográfica equilibrada, no solo en el *staff* permanente, sino también en el plantel de consultores, y como ya han destacado varias delegaciones, vemos por los informes entregados por la Secretaría aquí esto no es así, presentándose un importante desbalance entre los países desarrollados y aquellos en desarrollo. Por ende, alentamos a la Organización a buscar equilibrar a la distribución geográfica entre los consultores.

Finalmente, hacemos un llamado a los Países Miembros al pago oportuno de las contribuciones regulares, alentando a que ellos que están en condiciones de hacerlo, a hacer contribuciones voluntarias. Con estos comentarios, nuestra delegación acoge los documentos vinculados al tema 6 de la Agenda del Consejo.

Mme. Evelyne TOGBE-OLORY (Bénin)

Le Bénin s'exprime au nom du Groupe Afrique sur le point 6.1, qui couvre les Comptes vérifiés de la FAO 2016, ainsi que le Rapport du Commissaire aux comptes.

Sans être des experts financiers, nous voulons présenter des commentaires globaux sur ces deux documents.

Pour ce qui est du document A – les Comptes vérifiés de la FAO 2016, nous sommes heureux de lire en introduction que la Commission de vérification considère que les états financiers donnent une image fidèle de la situation financière de la FAO au 31 décembre 2016, et ce conformément aux normes comptables internationales pour le secteur public, mieux connues sous le sigle anglais IPSAS. Nous sommes également heureux de lire sur la page suivante, que les opérations comptables de la FAO ont été conformes au Règlement financier de la FAO. Nous sommes enfin satisfaits de lire la déclaration du Directeur général, par laquelle il souligne les progrès accomplis en matière de transparence et de bon usage des fonds confiés à l'Organisation.

En faisant le lien avec le document B, - le Rapport du Commissaire aux comptes, nous notons que c'est la troisième année consécutive que les comptes de la FAO sont présentés selon les normes IPSAS.

Nous avons lu en détail les 19 recommandations présentées au paragraphe 11, dont trois concernent les questions financières, tandis que toutes les autres recommandations relèvent des questions de gouvernance. Ces recommandations appellent de notre part trois observations majeures.

La première est notre sérieuse inquiétude, tout comme les membres du Comité financier et d'autres pays qui se sont exprimés hier, de lire comme recommandation no.1, par ailleurs soulignée par le Commissaire aux comptes comme étant une priorité «Fondamentale», le problème du déficit récurrent de financement des obligations contractées au titre des plans en faveur du personnel.

Notre deuxième observation, toujours soulignée par le Commissaire aux comptes comme étant une priorité «Fondamentale», est la recommandation no.18 de mise en place de mécanismes qui viendraient à l'appui de plans de lutte contre la fraude.

Notre troisième observation, soulignée cette fois-ci par le Commissaire aux comptes comme étant une priorité «Importante», est la recommandation no.14 pour veiller à ce que les projets financés par des contributions volontaires, donc extrabudgétaires, soient menés dans le cadre de contrôle des activités. Lorsque l'on constate que les contributions extrabudgétaires se rapprochent maintenant de presque 70 pour cent du budget total du Programme de travail de la FAO, il est bien important de veiller également au contrôle de l'usage de ces contributions.

Considérant donc les 19 recommandations du Commissaire aux comptes, et plus particulièrement les trois que nous venons de souligner, le Groupe Afrique lit dans le rapport du Commissaire aux comptes, que le calendrier de mise en œuvre de ces recommandations était prévu sur l'année 2017. C'est donc tout légitimement que le Groupe Afrique voudrait demander à la FAO de nous présenter le

point de la mise en œuvre réelle de ces recommandations, que nous considérons primordiales, et en priorité celles qui sont soulignées par le Commissaire aux comptes comme étant «Fondamentales», telle que la question de la lutte contre la fraude, et en ceci nous rejoignons la déclaration faite hier par le Royaume-Uni.

Nous voudrions également savoir si certaines recommandations, telle la recommandation no.2, qui concerne les frais de gestion des placements financiers, pourraient être élargies aux trois organisations sises à Rome, dans le cadre tout simplement d'un partage des meilleures pratiques.

Enfin, et faisant le lien avec les Rapports du Comité financier, puisque le cadre financier détaillé de la FAO prévoit désormais une répartition des coûts en trois catégories, à savoir coûts opérationnels, coûts de support direct et coûts de support indirects, dans un souci de cohérence, le Groupe Afrique souhaiterait que les futures présentations des Comptes vérifiés de la FAO soient présentées selon cette même nouvelle structure des coûts, et puissent également refléter la mise en œuvre du principe nouvellement adopté de recouvrement proportionnel.

Avec ces commentaires, le Groupe Afrique est heureux de recommander la présentation des «Comptes vérifiés FAO 2016» à la 41^{ème} session de la Conférence de la FAO qui se tiendra en juin 2019.

Ms Hara AYUMI (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Group's statement and would like to especially highlight the following three points:

First, we urge all member countries to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions. Japan has been doing so despite its strained financial situation to show its strong support for FAO's work and we encourage other member countries to follow suit.

The second point is on human resources management. Japan welcomes the Secretariat's efforts towards equitable geographic representation as well as their providing an updated human resources data package. However, Japan would like to echo concerns already expressed by several countries yesterday. We expect the FAO Secretariat to provide comprehensive statistical data reflecting the geographic distribution of PWB and non-PWB posts.

We hope that FAO, being a specialized agency, continues to place high value on ensuring the technical competency of the staff in its recruitment process while also taking account of equitable geographic representation. Also, in this regard, we request that FAO keeps decreasing the vacancy rate for Professional positions for the effective implementation of projects and programmes.

Third, as expressed by several speakers, we would also like to express our concern about the new guidelines for the recruitment of consultants which was revised in August 2017. The revised guidelines seem to have been implemented without enough information sharing within the Organization and it has caused confusion and a negative influence on the implementation of the projects funded by Japan.

In addition, a requirement for more than one United Nations official language would be an impediment to effective implementation of projects and programmes. Japan believes that flexible implementation of the guidelines should be considered.

Mr Sangho PARK (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea aligns itself with the statement made by Japan on behalf of the Asia Group.

On human resources matters, Korea urges the Secretariat to provide statistical data on staff and non-staff human resources in a standardized format, and as requested by the Committee at its 166th Session, as such data would be essential in assessing the performance of human resources management.

While we note with appreciation the improvements in the selection, recruitment and evaluation processes for consultants, we stress the importance of the technical expertise provided by the consultants and encourage the Secretariat to consider adjustments on additional language criteria to enhance the overall performance of the Organization.

We also welcome improvements in geographic representation. Korea is one of the countries that has just escaped from the under-represented status. However, for the majority of the posts, candidates have been hired only at the lower level and there is minimal presence at the senior level. We believe this can be further improved and encourage the Secretariat to consider geographical representation, particularly when recruiting senior-level positions.

Mr Badreldin MOHAMED (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

We would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing this important document. We welcome this document and we would like to discuss the following.

We welcome with appreciation the fact that FAO is delivering its activities in this biennium.

We welcome the new policies relating to the appointment of consultants and experts so that they can be equal to staff members, taking into account the capacities needed. The expertise of consultants should be taken into account while also examining the geographical representation.

We support also the current trend in FAO as this will add new blood to the staff base of the Organization, particularly when it comes to environment, biotechnologies and environmental fields. These appointments should take into account the geographical representation as shown in the tables in this document. Sudan supports this report and would like to thank you for your efforts.

Sr. Mario ARRIOLA WOOG (México)

En primer lugar, quiero felicitar al Sr. Lupiño Lázaro por su excelente conducción del Comité de Finanzas.

En segundo lugar, México, como Miembro del Comité, no desea duplicar las intervenciones realizadas en los debates al interior de ese Comité, per sin embargo por lo que me referiré a dos temas puntuales que han surgido en la discusión aquí en el Consejo de la FAO.

El primero es sobre la cuestión de la edad de retiro a los 65 años.

Tenemos entendido que las Naciones Unidas, los Organismos especializados vinculados a las Naciones Unidas, el Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica y varias otras organizaciones internacionales forman parte del régimen común de las Naciones Unidas, lo que implica un sistema común de sueldos, prestaciones y beneficios. Este régimen se aplica a más de 52.000 funcionarios que prestan servicio en más de 600 lugares de destino.

Adicionalmente la resolución de la Asamblea General A/RES/70/244 adoptada el 23 de diciembre de 2015 en su párrafo 1 es muy claro sobre la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio, cuando dice lo siguiente:

“Decide que las organizaciones del régimen común de las Naciones Unidas deberán aumentar a 65 años, a más tardar el 1 de enero de 2018, la edad de separación obligatoria del servicio para el personal contratado antes del 1 de enero de 2014, teniendo en cuenta los derechos adquiridos de los funcionarios”. Aquí termina la cita.

Tomado en cuenta que ha habido un par de años para la transición hacia ese mandato y dada la inminencia de esa fecha planteada en la resolución de la Asamblea General, me gustaría saber qué está haciendo la Administración para cumplir este mandato.

La propuesta planteada por algunos colegas para que el Comité de Finanzas reciba esta información en su próxima sesión nos parece adecuada.

El otro tema quisiera abordar es relativo a la cuestión de recursos humanos.

Agradecemos las Notas Informativas sobre gestión de recursos humanos distribuidas durante el fin de semana. Esperamos que se actualicen con cierta periodicidad y se circulen a la Membresía, en aras de la transparencia.

Adicionalmente, creemos que la nueva política de reclutamiento y evaluación de consultores debe tener como base los méritos del aspirante y que tome en cuenta la universalidad de la Organización, como fue recomendado por la Evaluación Técnica Independiente de la FAO, por lo que esa nueva política va en el camino correcto.

Estamos de acuerdo en que los consultores de FAO, si bien son de naturaleza temporal, deben tener los requerimientos mínimos que se espera del personal de base de la ONU, particularmente en materia de idiomas y de grados académicos. Alentamos a la administración a proporcionar apoyo para entrenamiento para que los consultores tengan mayor pericia en materia de idiomas y, al mismo tiempo, a solventar los claros desequilibrios geográficos en materia de consultores, en aras de la universalidad de las Naciones Unidas.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

Australia also welcomes the report of the Finance Committee, but we are concerned about the future financial viability of FAO in light of the large and growing After Service Medical Care liability. As eloquently put yesterday by the German Ambassador, increasing the mandatory age of separation would help curb this liability. Given this, and the broader United Nations reforms, we echo the calls made by others for the Secretariat to report to the Finance Committee early next year on plans to implement the increased mandatory age of separation as soon as possible.

M. MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroun)

Le Bénin et le Kenya ont déjà porté la voix de notre groupe régional sur cette question. Nous adhérons totalement à ce qui a été dit par ces deux pays. Mais permettez-moi au préalable de féliciter Monsieur le Président Lazaro, Président du Comité financier pour la clarté de son rapport au Conseil.

En qualité de Président du Groupe Afrique, mandat nous a été donné de porter à l'attention du Conseil deux questions essentielles qui ne sont pas nécessairement supportées par un document précis. D'abord, la question relative à la gestion des ressources humaines, notamment à celle des consultants, et ensuite la question du Groupement d'achats du personnel de la FAO.

Sur la question relative aux ressources humaines et au recrutement des consultants, le Groupe Afrique, hier, après l'annonce du Directeur général et les chiffres qu'il a donnés sur l'existence de ces consultants, était sidéré de constater que la part des consultants africains était dite marginale. Nous savons très bien qu'il y a une nouvelle politique et des directives pour le recrutement des consultants. C'est un fait. Nous n'avons rien contre ces directives et ces consultants, mais les chiffres sont parfois têtus. Et parce que les chiffres sont têtus, ceux que le Directeur général nous a donnés hier nous ont laissés un peu sur notre faim. Aussi voulons-nous voir quel est l'équilibre envisagé dans le cadre du recrutement des consultants. Je pense qu'il faut que nous engagions un débat là-dessus parce que nous savons que les compétences se trouvent dans toutes les parties du globe et qu'elles peuvent être d'autant plus valables qu'elles se trouvent dans une région spécifique où les ressortissants sont censés mieux connaître leur zone d'intervention.

Il est aussi vrai que le travail des consultants consiste très souvent à rédiger, que ce n'est pas là une panacée et que ce n'est pas toujours évident pour tout le monde. Mais dans ce contexte précis, nous sollicitons qu'un système soit mis en place pour que le travail des consultants, quelle que soit leur région de provenance, soit validé parce qu'ils savent pouvoir rédiger ce qui est attendu d'eux.

La deuxième question traite du Groupement d'achats du personnel de la FAO. Le rapport du Comité financier dit bien que, selon les prérogatives du Comité, celui-ci a approuvé les comptes vérifiés du Groupement d'achats du personnel de la FAO pour 2016. Nous nous en réjouissons. Mais nous savons que l'on ne voit quelque chose réellement que lorsqu'on est face à cette chose. Nous avons tous vu la fermeture du Groupement d'achats et de manière empirique nous avons essayé d'évaluer l'impact que cela pourrait avoir sur le personnel. Nous pensons qu'avoir fermé le Groupement sans une solution de rechange connue de tous ne facilite pas la tâche. Nous aimerions donc savoir s'il existe une solution de rechange pour ce Groupement d'achats. Et si oui, quand cette solution de rechange pourra-t-elle être mise en œuvre?

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je tiens à élever la voix du Congo ce matin suite au rapport du Comité financier, dont les conclusions et les recommandations constructives sont grandement appréciées et ce, grâce à son Président et à ses membres.

Le Congo prend la parole, d'abord pour appuyer — vous savez que c'est une question que le Bénin, le Kenya et le Cameroun viennent de soulever ce matin — les interventions, notamment de l'Égypte.

Je voudrais souligner seulement deux points puisqu'il n'y a pas à revenir sur tous les points importants que les délégations africaines qui sont intervenues avec éloquence ont relevés.

Le premier point est d'exhorter les Membres à verser leurs cotisations, car ce n'est qu'avec ces contributions que nous pourrions faire avancer les programmes.

Le deuxième point concerne l'appui de la délégation du Congo, comme l'ont souligné plusieurs délégations ce matin, à la nouvelle politique et aux nouvelles procédures de recrutement des consultants, étant donné qu'elles vont dans le droit fil de la transparence que nous avons demandée.

Quand j'ai lu le rapport, notamment les tableaux 1 et 2 sur la note d'information relative aux données supplémentaires, j'ai été scandalisé de constater—comme il a été mis en évidence ce matin—le déséquilibre qui existe. Et, sans aller loin, dans le domaine de la transparence, nous recommandons d'ajuster ce déséquilibre parce que les compétences dans les domaines du travail de la FAO se trouvent dans toutes les régions du monde.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

I would like to focus the comments of Canada on two issues that have been discussed under this agenda item. The first one is the issue of mandatory age of separation. We would very much like to join others' calls for swift implementation of the United Nations General Assembly resolution in this regard. This is a United Nations systemwide issue and, as such, we support the International Civil Service Commission as well as the United Nations Common System and we strongly urge all United Nations entities to align with the recommendations for mandatory age of separation by 1 January 2018.

We are very pleased that most of the United Nations bodies have decided to do so and have plans to do so, including many specialized agencies. We strongly encourage FAO to join that effort. Like others have asked, we would request a report by the Secretariat on their plans to implement this recommendation for the next Finance Committee and for consideration and decision by the Council in the spring.

The second issue is regarding gender parity that was also raised by another delegation. We would very much welcome the Secretariat's plans to achieve gender parity, in particular in senior management positions. This is, of course, a top priority of the United Nations Secretary-General Guterres who has expressed that the meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making processes across the United Nations system is a moral duty and an operational necessity, and that it will increase effectiveness and productivity, bring new perspectives and solutions to the table, unlock greater resources and strengthen efforts across all three pillars of the United Nations work. We would very much appreciate knowing what FAO intends to do to align with this vision in trying to achieve greater gender parity within the Organization.

Ms Maria Esperanca DOS SANTOS (Observer for Angola)

Angola would like to congratulate the former Chairperson of the Finance Committee, Mr Khalid Mehboob, for the excellent work done and wish the new Chairperson, Mr Lupiño Lazaro from the Philippines, much success in his new function.

We took note of the review and the recommendations made by the Finance Committee in respect of matters related to the World Food Programme. Considering the FAO matters discussed, Angola supports the conclusion and the recommendations made by the Finance Committee. However, we would like to make a few points related mainly to human resources management.

Regarding human resources management, we welcome the improvement in geographical representation with a reduction in the number of non-, under-, and over-represented countries. However, as highlighted in the working document, 13 percent of Members are not represented, and 10 percent are under-represented. In order to ensure a fair participation of human resources in the Organization, we strongly support the position of giving priority to recruit personnel on as wide a geographical basis as possible, making particular efforts to recruit candidates from non- and under-represented countries. This will enable developing countries to place their best experts as staff

members in the Organization. We also welcome the improvements in the representation of female staff as reported since 2007 and encourage the Secretariat to pursue its efforts towards gender parity of the workforce, particularly female staff in senior positions.

We encourage the Secretariat to undertake the review that must be carried out following closure of the Commissary and hope that the result of the review will inform the basis of an eventual business model for the Commissary in the future. We would also like to reiterate that the Secretariat should overcome the weaknesses and gaps in the internal control system and other risk issues at headquarters and decentralized offices.

With these few remarks, Angola endorses the reports and would like to thank you for your attention.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Observer for Zimbabwe)

I am taking the floor to comment on the observation made by my very good friend, the Ambassador of Germany, yesterday, that there are no rules requiring geographical balance in the recruitment of consultants and that achieving geographical balance will be impossible given the short duration of the consultants' contracts. This suggests that the natural thing is to hire from the ten countries mentioned by the Director-General yesterday. Of course, there is nothing wrong with Germany expressing this view. It is their view and they are entitled to it. My worry is that the Secretariat seems to share this view.

That is why we have a situation where the majority of consultants at FAO are recruited from ten countries only. I know the Secretariat will deny this. Perhaps they can explain how they achieved this unique situation. Were the vacancies widely publicized and only nationals of these ten countries applied? Or did applicants from the ten countries consistently outperform applicants from other countries, including other European countries?

What was the composition of the interview panels? What is it about the panels that makes them seem to always come to conclusions that favour nationals of the ten countries?

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

Thank you to the Members of the Council for giving me this opportunity to bring some clarifications on some items that called your attention when reviewing the Report of the 169th Session of the Finance Committee.

I am here with my colleague, the Assistant Director-General of the Corporate Services Department and the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Human Resources, who may complement my intervention.

Conscious of time constraints, I will limit my intervention to two important items that came regularly in the interventions of Members since yesterday. The question of internal control and the question of fraud prevention, prevention of corrupt practices. I will also comment briefly on the queries regarding statutes of implementation of audit recommendations and speak very concisely on the Commissary.

Let me start with the major item of the internal control and the commitment of the Secretariat to the Director-General to deliver a statement of internal control together with the 2017 Audited Accounts.

This was an item that generated much discussion in the Finance Committee – the views, the role of the Finance Committee to look at the internal control – and we value the advice and guidance of the Committee on this occasion.

It was a valuable discussion also because it is the first time that the Director-General will deliver, in 2017, a statement of internal control, the first time in the history of FAO. So let me highlight two important points.

Firstly, I want to reassure Council Members that FAO has a solid foundation for internal control in the Organization. In fact, from a regulation - rules, procedures - point of view, all of the elements are here.

We have policy documents that have been endorsed by the Finance Committee, issued as Administrative Circulars over the past few years such as the Policy on Risk Management that was issued in 2013, an Internal Control Framework, an Accountability Framework, an Administrative

Circular on Prevention Against Fraud and Other Corrupt Practices, which in fact states that there is a zero tolerance policy on fraud and corrupt practices in the Organization.

We have a Corporate Risk Log that was updated in 2016, which identifies key risks to the Organization in delivering its mandate and with a clear designation on individual managers accountable for the different risks, for the coordination of the risk response, for the overall formulation of relevant policies and for the measures to be taken for mitigation, detection, and escalation.

So the rules are there. Now we have to link the rules with the accountability, with the people, how the staff of this Organization, how the managers are complying with the rules and holding themselves accountable for this compliance with these rules, regulations and policies.

For the first time in FAO history, the Director-General will issue a statement of internal control. It is a best practice recommended for all well-managed organizations. In fact, the reference in this domain is the so-called Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) that is composed of the lead professional associations of audit and financial management organizations in the United States. It recommends that all well-managed organizations, be they private or public, should issue a statement of internal control.

So we intend to do it this year and this statement is about connecting the rules, the regulations, with the practice in the Organization.

In this statement, the Director-General will indicate in a public document that is based on the report received from the managers at all levels in the Organization, at all locations, and to the best of his knowledge. So he can provide a reasonable insurance that the risk identified in the management of the Organization and the resources for which he is accountable to the Membership are appropriately managed and controlled.

He will further report on the status of internal control in the Organization, the efficiency and the effectiveness of FAO operations, the reliability of our financial reporting, and the compliance of staff with policies, rules and regulations highlighting any weakness that could have been identified, which may need to be addressed.

It is a big process. It involves bottom-up management of this accountability policy starting with internal control questionnaires that are filled in by the managers in all locations. More than 200 questionnaires are being filled in, then reviewed by the line management up to the level of the ADGs, the DDGs, and ultimately coming to the level of the Director-General who then will deliver the statement.

We are confident that the process towards the production of a credible statement of internal control by the Director-General is well on the way. We trust that the Director-General will be able to deliver a statement highlighting that there are impeccable financial controls in place and that our reporting is reliable.

We believe also that the Director-General will be in a position to report that there is a good level of compliance with applicable rules and regulations for delivering our programmes and that it will report and highlight areas of improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of our operation. This is what we define as a credible statement of internal control as a process, as a means to an end, knowing that internal control is never good enough and we need to always improve on this.

This will be the first time and we will assert that it will serve as a baseline to improve for 2018.

Besides I want to underscore that, in the process where we are, the statement of internal control has also helped us immensely to progress on the question of accountability. For the first time, managers at all levels are declaring that they can report on adequate internal control for the resources for which they are responsible.

It is also something that is very useful for us, because it allows us to identify where the problems with capacities are. So it is a good management practice and something that we see as a strengthening of the internal control in the Organization.

The question of corruption and fraudulent practices, raised by several Members and particularly by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, is very important. In fact, for you with access to the FAO intranet, we issued an article today, one hour ago. It is an article with two voices. One voice is from the Inspector General of FAO and the other voice is from the Deputy Director-General, Operations where we speak about why it is important to combat corruption and fraudulent practices in the Organization; why it is the responsibility of all staff.

This article was issued in anticipation of the World Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December 2017, celebrated by the UN following the adoption in 2003 of the UN Convention Against Corruption.

So we take this very seriously and believe that it is important that all staff be regularly reminded of the importance of this question.

Moreover, the Deputy Director-General, Operations has been entrusted by the Director-General with the function of custodian of the fraud policy. We have a very clear fraud prevention policy that probably is five or ten pages long, but could be summarized in two words: zero tolerance.

The Organization has a zero tolerance against fraud and corrupt practices and we want to be sure that we put in place all the measures required to implement this policy.

I want to say that the Organization is reporting traditionally, regularly to the Finance Committee all the cases of fraud and corrupt practices through the Annual Report of the Inspector General.

We also raise awareness of unsatisfactory conduct regularly through Administrative Circulars. The last one was issued in March 2017, where we listed the types of cases identified through the prior years 2015-16 such as: theft, misappropriation, misrepresentation, false certification, gross negligence and so forth. This was to inform staff and remind everybody of the disciplinary consequences attached to such cases as per relevant staff rules and regulations.

The Ambassador of the United Kingdom referred to a specific recommendation made in a recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit. This report was issued in 2016 and allowed the whole UN to take stock of the state of the situation and it was a good occasion for us to also benchmark ourselves against different UN agencies.

The report expressed concern that, when benchmarking the UN against the rest of the world's private or public entities, there may be an under-reporting on fraud and corrupt practices in terms of the volume reported against the overall volume of business.

So we are taking this very seriously. I can confirm that all of the recommendations except two have not been implemented. I would like to give you an update on the recommendations and what we are going to do with these two unimplemented recommendations.

The first recommendation is about developing a specific comprehensive anti-fraud strategy and action plan. I can say that the elements are there, but have not been put together – some of them I highlighted beforehand – under a comprehensive plan.

So this plan is under formulation. Under my leadership, I am accountable for the formulation of this plan, and we are using the type of risks as a baseline that should be looked at with more attention. The report was issued on this subject by the Office of the Inspector General in 2016 and we believe that we will be in a position to deliver this plan by the end of the first semester 2018.

Of course, the internal control process that I mentioned earlier will also be a very important input to this plan of action for an anti-fraud strategy.

We will be in a position to present it at the forthcoming Finance Committee, after the first semester 2018.

As regards Recommendation 14 of the Joint Inspection Unit, this recommendation is about the formulation of protocols and procedures for referral of fraud cases to national authorities. On this recommendation, I can confirm that the FAO Legal Office will continue to coordinate its positions with those of the other UN System organizations to ensure a coherent and harmonized approach.

It is a matter that has to be handled at the level of the UN system. In fact, we are already referring cases to some national authorities in some specific situations via the UN. We will be working on this together with the UN.

So that is what I can say on this second recommendation.

Concerning the progress on closure of outstanding recommendations of External Audit, this is an important point that reflects the performance of Management at different levels. For this reason, we welcome the endorsement by the Council of an additional Key Performance Indicator in the adjusted Programme of Work and Budget on this matter and particularly regarding the closure of long outstanding audit recommendations.

It will help us to continue to focus and use the Inspector General and the External Audit Report as Management instruments. They are to reach the highest level of efficiency in the Organization.

We had a rich dialogue on this in the Finance Committee. In fact, you have to keep in mind that the Report of the External Auditor was related to the 2016 audit recommendations. That is to say, the report was issued early in 2017. Since then, a lot of work has been done on the implementation of the recommendations.

Indeed, the Finance Committee noted with satisfaction that the Secretariat had made good progress in successfully closing a large number of these recommendations, particularly regarding the 2016 report and urged us to continue ongoing efforts to close the remaining outstanding recommendations.

On this important one point, I want to emphasize that we have put in place at the very beginning of the year a new window in FAO Management Dashboard that allows all managers to access audit recommendations, internal and external audit, with the status of implementation. It is very user friendly. Nobody anymore can say I did not know.

It is very easy for us to monitor the progress made and for the second line of defense in terms of oversight to monitor and to hold accountable the managers in the closing and implementation of the recommendations. A very important tool for us to progress on this relevant matter.

As for the question of the Commissary, we discussed also this matter extensively in the Finance Committee on the occasion of the review of the 2016 Audited Accounts of the Commissary. There was no unqualified opinion from the External Auditor on this subject. We updated the Finance Committee on this matter, basically reminding that a special review of the Commissary was undertaken by the Office of the Inspector General in 2016 that the Management had to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the functioning of the Commissary in 2017. In the course of this analysis, it became very clear that the business model needed to be fundamentally revised to both guarantee the financial viability of the facility on a long-term basis and to also return to the initial purpose for which the Commissary was meant.

I can tell you that in a few words, in the course of the review of the Commissary, that we identified many serious management issues. These issues were identified by the Inspector General and, as Management, we confirmed them; serious management issues that led us to the conclusion that it was in the interest of the Organization to close the Commissary.

These issues represented risk of image, fiduciary risk and others for the Organization and we felt that it was our duty to ensure that it was closed. Now we are at the final stage of the closure of the Commissary after an independent review was undertaken and we will draw the lessons from what we learned from the review of the Commissary. Based on the lessons, we will make some proposals for eventual new arrangements in line with the spirit of the rationale for which the Commissary was established in the past.

It is something that we will do once we have drawn all the good lessons from the closure of the Commissary and when we are comfortable that whatever we propose is in the interests of the staff of the Organization and of the Organization as a whole.

Ms Fernanda GUERRIERI (Assistant Director-General, Corporate Services Department)

Thank you to all of the Members. I would like to reply to two questions that have not been answered. First, Estonia on behalf of the European Union asked what the Organization does in order to try to recuperate, or to ask the Members to pay, the assessed contribution. The question was are we just writing a letter or are we more dynamic? Actually we are more dynamic. I would like to remind you that 85 percent of the arrears are over USD 1 million of assessed contribution from six countries.

What we do is we write the letters but we also contact the Permanent Representatives of these countries. When the Director-General travels to these countries, we prepare an analysis of the debt that the country has. We try also to provide some recommendation for instalments and to facilitate the payment for the countries that have longer-standing arrears.

My appeal to all of you is that it is very important to pay the contribution, particularly if you want to ensure that the Organization fulfils its mandate.

The second issue that was asked by Benin is about what we do for the management of the investment together with the other two Rome-based Agencies. Actually, when we manage the funds for investment, we always work with the other two organizations and we analyze the data together.

We participate in the committees of each organization. We benefit from external committees of investment experts. We go to the market together and we benefit very much also from other sister agencies like the World Bank, which has a lot to offer because they are more specialized than us.

So in this field, we are also quite dynamic and we try to benefit from the knowledge and expertise where available.

Sr. Fernando SERVÁN (Oficial en Cargo, Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Para comenzar quiero agradecer el interés y los comentarios recibidos respecto a la documentación presentada sobre recursos humanos, lo que demuestra el interés de los Miembros hacia este importante aspecto del trabajo de la Organización, que es la base para poder efectivamente hacer nuestro trabajo.

Quiero referirme primeramente a las conclusiones del último Informe del Comité de Finanzas, donde entre otras cosas se pidió a la Secretaría que presentara mayores datos en formato estandarizado y se pidió que la Secretaría tuviera atención en la aplicación de las nuevas normas para la contratación de consultores. Al mismo tiempo, y quiero subrayar esto porque los países han demostrado su respaldo al trabajo de la Secretaría, el Comité de Finanzas notó los progresos de la Organización respecto a la representación geográfica y al balance por género y a los esfuerzos sobre la tasa de vacantes.

Quiero agradecer los comentarios positivos sobre las Notas Informativas que fueron publicadas el viernes y sábado, donde se ha tratado en ellas de tocar muchos de los temas que surgieron durante el debate en el Comité de Finanzas. Entre ellos, se ha presentado mayor información sobre la base de consultores con que cuenta la Organización, haciendo un desglose por región de origen y región donde se ejecuta el trabajo, y al mismo tiempo presentando los 20 primeros países que contribuyen con consultores a la Organización.

Las Notas Informativas también dieron información respecto al número de personas que se presentan a los puestos profesionales de la Organización, los datos sobre la tasa de vacantes y la lista de países y proporción respecto a la representación geográfica. Sobre todo, la Nota Informativa número 2 presenta detalles sobre la plantilla total de la Organización, tanto en números o ubicación, como género y edad, comparando datos del 2012, 2014 y 2017. Creo que estos datos dan una demostración del tipo de información estandarizada que fue pedido por el Comité de Finanzas, y espero y he notado a través de los comentarios la satisfacción de los Miembros con esta información.

Al mismo tiempo, notamos que en particular los datos respecto a consultores han generado mayores preguntas por parte de los Miembros, que quisiera ahora tocar. Pero antes, quisiera mencionar que el proceso en que se han introducido los cambios para la selección de consultores ha sido un proceso que ha comenzado en agosto; ha tenido un proceso de transición entre agosto y noviembre, recién acabado a fines de noviembre, y prevé seis meses donde todavía no estamos aplicando procesos de selección completos. Es el tiempo que nos hemos dado para implementar los nuevos anuncios de vacantes, la creación de los *rosters*, las entrevistas y los nuevos procesos de selección.

En particular, respecto a la pregunta de Zimbabue, es importante notar que, hasta hoy, los números que hemos presentado de consultores no han contado con procesos de selección estándar. Son procesos de selección hechos a nivel de la división contratante. Por esa razón, los procesos no son comparables y al mismo tiempo es donde Ustedes encuentran un desbalance geográfico.

Con los nuevos procedimientos se ha estandarizado a nivel corporativo el proceso. Es la primera vez que la Organización está publicando de manera obligatoria todos los anuncios de vacantes de consultores. Hasta el momento es una cosa opcional, y en la mayor parte de los casos no era un requerimiento, porque en particular Ustedes los ven en los cuadros que muestran consultores con más de ocho, nueve, diez años. Se tiende a contratar siempre las mismas personas. No ha habido procesos de selección competitivos. Eso es una innovación; es un gran cambio, y como todos los cambios grandes, requiere un proceso muy pausado y reflexionado de introducción, que es el que estamos llevando a cabo.

Quiero, en particular, tranquilizar a Japón y Corea, entre otros, que la introducción de estos cambios no está produciendo y no va a producir, según nuestro enfoque, ningún retraso en los programas. Hemos previsto excepciones y estamos trabajando en modo anticipado con todas las oficinas de países y oficinas regionales, de manera de evitar que haya problemas en el que un programa o un proyecto se encuentre sin los consultores que necesita para poder efectivamente hacer su programa.

Reconocemos que es un proceso largo e innovativo, y por lo tanto estamos tomando el tiempo necesario para lograr los objetivos. Quiero por tanto subrayar que la baja proporción de ciertas regiones y ciertos países en el total de consultores, como ha sido mencionado en particular por Egipto, Venezuela, China, Chile, Benín, Sudan, México, Camerún, Congo y Zimbabue, es debido a justamente la falta de un proceso homogéneo. Las nuevas reglas nos están permitiendo y nos permitirán que, a través de un proceso más competitivo, con un mayor esfuerzo de la Organización, en la discusión de vacantes y la apertura, de candidaturas, que es lo que faltaba, estamos convencidos de que se ampliará la base de candidatos al nivel geográfico y al nivel mundial.

Como Ustedes han visto en las notas, y yo creo que más de un país ha hecho ya las cuentas, en este momento más del 50 por ciento de los consultores provienen de nueve países, que representa menos del 5 por ciento de los Estados Miembros. En particular en la sede, el 42 por ciento de los consultores es de un solo país. Estas son cosas que se han dado por falta de un proceso corporativo, que es el que estamos iniciando.

Mientras que es correcto, como ha mencionado Alemania en su intervención, de que no existen reglas para la distribución geográfica de consultores, al mismo tiempo la Organización solo puede que enriquecerse con una mayor participación de experiencias y conocimientos de consultores de todos los Países Miembros. Es nuestra tarea, desde la Secretaría y en particular desde las oficinas de recursos humanos, trabajar en una mayor difusión y a través de redes académicas, a través de organizaciones de los miembros, para lograr que los anuncios de vacantes logren atraer personal calificado de todas las regiones.

En ese sentido, vamos a no solo seguir trabajando en ampliar la base, como hemos mencionado, pero lo que creemos también que resolverá de por sí el problema de los idiomas, porque uno de los temas que salen hoy en día es que, sobre la base actual de consultores, podemos encontrar problemas que algunos de ellos no cuentan necesariamente con los idiomas para ser oficial de la Organización.

Repito, “consultor” significa “Oficial de la Organización”. Pero eso es porque tenemos una base muy limitada. Es impensable que, en el mundo de hoy, no existe en el mundo personal calificado que hable más de un idioma de Naciones Unidas. Estamos seguros de que existen y estamos seguros de que podemos llegar a ellos y estamos seguros de ser un empleador atractivo, y vamos a invertir en ello.

Dado el interés de los Miembros en el tema, consideramos proponer para la próxima Sesión del Comité de Finanzas que en el documento de gestión de recursos humanos un acápite especial con una propuesta para mejorar el balance geográfico de consultores en la Organización.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I have two or three very brief observations; one lengthier on this famous Recommendation 14.

I am not prejudging your decision, Mr Chairperson. But as regards this question of the mandatory age of separation, we seem to be heading towards a decision to have the matter considered at the forthcoming session of the Finance Committee in May. I would prefer that this topic be addressed at that time. I do not consider that this broad forum is a proper forum to discuss some of the detailed issues that were addressed. This item will be on the agenda of the Finance Committee next May.

The same applies in respect of the question of the revised Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee. We look forward to discussing this topic with the Members of the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee and we shall make a proposal reflecting best practice.

Now I wish to turn to Recommendation 14 of the JIU report. The Council will note that it is a recommendation that is the outcome of some ten pages of a very long report.

As regards Recommendation 14, there could be some confusion on this matter. FAO agrees and accepts entirely the observations of the other agencies within the Chief Executives Board for Coordination. It is noted that the JIU recommendation conveys a sense that nothing is being done on this matter of the referrals and this is not accurate. There are procedures that we have been following and such procedures do exist.

Now what is this all about? This concerns situations where in cases of fraud and misappropriation of assets, the organizations refer matters to national authorities and seek their support in taking action against the individuals in question. This is, in general, a serious step because the organizations enjoy immunity from jurisdiction and have their own internal systems. But in these cases, they refer matters to national authorities for prosecution under national laws, in addition to their own internal disciplinary proceedings.

It is a waiver of the immunity. FAO, to a lesser extent than United Nations, but far more than other agencies, makes referrals to national authorities. It does not do that on a regular basis, but FAO has made referrals to national authorities. FAO, together with the United Nations, tends to make those referrals in a rather systematic manner in respect of WFP.

Now what happens is that the effectiveness of the referrals is open to question. There are many factors that come into play and which limit the effectiveness of referrals as mentioned in the report. This includes national standards of justice that may sometimes be open to question, national capabilities, procedural delays, the need to carry out supplementary measures of investigation by various authorities in the countries, the difficulty in carrying out such measures of investigations, costs which can be very high in some countries and can very easily get out of control, and in most cases, typically, they can be much higher than the misappropriated funds.

As a matter of fact, this is not so much a matter for the organizations as an issue for the Members.

Indeed, in paragraph 325 of the JIU report, we learned that between 2008 and 2014 the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations made 61 referrals in respect of the United Nations Secretariat but also in respect of programmes and funds, and a few were done jointly with FAO regarding WFP. We learned from the report that there were no convictions on the basis of those referrals. In fact, this is indeed the critical issue. Referrals are made and not much happens in the countries.

That said, we continue to liaise very closely with the other legal offices and, of course, with the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations. Whenever we are in a clear situation where facts are properly established or in the presence of credible allegations and we believe that a referral stands a chance of success, we generally make these referrals and are prepared to deal with them. We could even elaborate this matter further in a forthcoming session of the Finance Committee. Maybe this was not properly explained in our note. But we, in fact, subscribe entirely to the comments and to the views of the Chief Executives Board on Recommendation 14.

Mr Lupiño LAZARO (Chairperson, Finance Committee)

I also would like to express my appreciation for the contributions by Members and their general support and endorsement of the Finance Committee reports. It generated a lot of interest based on the number and the extent of interventions we received. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Members for their very kind words and best wishes for my chairmanship and join you in also thanking and highly appreciating Mr Mehboob for his past stewardship of the Committee.

I would just like to give you a recap of the recurring themes that have been raised by Members and that we would like to further pursue in the discussions of the Finance Committee and its future work.

Concerning our financial position, there is emphasis on the timely and full payment of Members' assessed contributions as well as encouragement for Members to increase their voluntary contributions. This is in recognition of the importance of such aspects in maintaining a sound financial position of the Organization. In this regard, we also appreciate the information provided by the Secretariat on what initiatives they are implementing in order to increase collection. We also appreciate the comments on the long form report of the External Auditor and the support given to the recommendations therein.

One of the major issues, as highlighted in the Deputy Director-General's comments, was internal control and the issuance of the internal control statement. Another issue that was raised is on the status of the Commissary. I guess this also becomes important since the holiday season is upon us and we are probably now seeking alternatives on where to source our gifts, wines and spirits.

On budgetary matters, we have received a number of suggestions on the content and structure of the reporting of the annual cost of expenditures. We take note of this and we would like to also discuss this further in the purview of the Committee.

On oversight, there is also emphasis on the implementation of closing of External Auditor recommendations, including those long-standing issues. Also, the Secretariat and Management have given us information on their initiatives on these.

The proposed amendments to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference will be on the agenda of the next Finance Committee session to be preceded by informal consultations among the Committee members.

Finally, on the topic of human resources, we would like to thank of course Mr Serván, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Human Resources, for the responses to the Members' concerns. There were views expressed on the new recruitment policies and guidelines with some saying that this is a step in the right direction; however, there were also a number of concerns raised, notably on seeking balance in geographic representation as well as on gender parity. So those are some of the issues that the Finance Committee will be addressing.

The provision of adequate human resources information also figured prominently. Some welcomed the recent information notes that were circulated, and some requested more details and that this submission be regularized to the Finance Committee and the Members. We welcome suggestions from the Office of Human Resources to make additional information available at the next Finance Committee meeting, for example proposals on how to achieve or improve geographic representation.

In the next Finance Committee meeting, we will also discuss the mandatory separation age, its implementation and the requested report. We will be anticipating this. In this regard, we would like to thank the United States of America for clarifying that for accuracy in my summary report. The Committee took note of the Legal Counsel's view that the decision to implement the new mandatory age of separation did not present significant legal risk and we could adopt this as stated in the report.

So, briefly, Members, as Chairman of the Finance Committee and also on behalf of the Committee members, we would like to take note of this and we will be pursuing it and hopefully look forward to our robust discussion of these items at our next Committee meeting in May 2018.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

First of all, I wanted to thank the Deputy Director-General, Operations for his very helpful explanation of the work underway to put in place the statement of internal control. I would also like to thank him in particular for addressing my query about the timing for the implementation of the JIU report's Recommendation 6. I wanted to just have a very quick point of clarification. My understanding is that the Anti-fraud Action Plan will be complete by the first half of next year and that it will be made available to the Finance Committee. I assume that must, therefore, be the November Finance Committee next year. It would be great to have confirmation of that and in the record of this meeting.

Then I just wanted to turn to JIU Recommendation 14. My understanding of the note provided for Council is that FAO is in the process of implementing this recommendation. I had understood from the intervention from the Legal Counsel that perhaps you were recommending against implementing it or that implementing it would be difficult or pointless in some way. It would just be good to have confirmation that FAO will be implementing that recommendation.

LEGAL COUNSEL

It would be more accurate not to single out Recommendation 14. In fact, this particular recommendation should not have been singled out. Let us state things as they are. We are subscribing entirely to the position of the various agencies which made recommendations in the context of the Chief Executives Board. So we implement this recommendation.

We have some procedures in place to report to national authorities. We do that whenever we believe it is possible and there are no risks for the Organization. So, we are adhering entirely to the collective views of the various agencies on this matter. We feel that in some situations it is difficult to implement this recommendation, but we adhere entirely to the collective views of the Chief Executives Board on this matter. We do not disassociate ourselves from that. Whenever it is possible, we look into making a referral to national authorities. I would say that the important document on this issue is not so much our cover page as the collective views of the CEB on this matter.

Mr Laurent THOMAS (Deputy Director-General, Operations)

We intend to have a full plan which is Organization-specific and comprehensive, an antifraud strategy and action plan ready by the end of the first semester 2018.

We would be pleased to discuss it and present it to the Finance Committee should the Finance Committee members wish to put it in their agenda for the November meeting.

CHAIRPERSON

I can now read out the summary of my conclusions.

Item 6, *Reports of the 167th, 168th and 169th Sessions of the Finance Committee*.

1. The Council approved the reports of the 167th, 168th and 169th Sessions of the Finance Committee, and in particular on the financial position:

- a) urged all Members to make timely and full payment of assessed contributions and requested the Secretariat to continue to explore measures to encourage Members in this regard;
- b) recommended the draft resolution for adoption by the Conference of the FAO Audited Accounts 2016 as presented in Paragraph 11 of document CL 158/7;
- c) stressed the importance of strengthening internal control systems at headquarters and decentralized offices highlighted in the long form report of the External Auditor;
- d) encouraged the Secretariat in its ongoing preparatory activities for the issuance of a statement of internal control with the FAO Audited Accounts for 2017;
- e) looked forward to the Secretariat reporting on the outstanding recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report on fraud prevention, detection and response in the United Nations systems organizations and noted that this matter will be addressed at the next November session of the Finance Committee.

Human Resources matters:

- f) welcomed the reported improvements in human resources processes and procedures of the Organization;
- g) appreciated the additional information notes provided to the Council by the Secretariat and requested that future reports on human resources contain the provision and presentation of such information in line with the guidance of the Finance Committee;
- h) looked forward to the issuance of implementation of the new mandatory age of separation for staff recruited before 1 January 2014 being placed on the agenda of the May 2018 session of the Finance Committee;
- i) welcomed the new policy on recruitment and evaluation of consultants consistent with the processes applied for staff members in line with the recommendations of the Report of the Independent Assessment of Technical Capacity and of the Office of Inspector General;
- j) noted the need for flexibility in the introduction of the new policy and procedures on consultants, particularly with regard to language requirements, so as to ensure undiminished delivery of programmes, projects and activities;
- k) encouraged Management to seek balance of consultants by nationality consistent with geographic distribution for staff members for more effective delivery of programmes and activities while retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment and requested the Secretariat to submit a proposal for balance of consultants by nationality to the next session of the Finance Committee.

On oversight matters:

- l) endorsed the appointment of Mr Gianfranco Cariola as a member of the FAO Audit Committee for an initial period of three years;
- m) noted that the Finance Committee would review proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee at its next session in May 2018;
- n) noted the progress in implementing recommendations of the External Auditor and encouraged Management to address outstanding such recommendations.

That is the end of my summary. Any comments or remarks?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am not sure that I want to challenge your summary. I think it goes to the point of some of the discussions that we had here.

I am referring to point g). I think there are procedures for balanced regional representation in the recruitment. I think there are procedures that were adopted some years back. This is a question that I am putting to the Office of Human Resources. Is it possible to work on the basis of those balance aspects of the requirement of the Council? I do not know whether it was 2005. I am not sure. At least there is a formula for balance in the normal budget, not extrabudgetary resources. Is it possible to work on that basis? That may help me to suggest something to add to g).

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

As regards point g), if you can kindly repeat again point g) under the human resources matters.

Since I have the floor, on g), I remember that Egypt and other Members requested Management to present concrete measures on how to ensure equitable distribution or geographical distribution in the consultancy posts. This was requested yesterday by Egypt and others. I know that your summary captures this, but it does not capture it completely.

We may need to add language on g) as follows: “*requests Management to take measures to ensure equitable geographical distribution in consultants and report on this to the next Finance Committee meeting*”. We know that it is a long-term process but maybe some reporting will ensure that we are on the right track.

CHAIRPERSON

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, if I could refer you to what I read out under point k), I will do so a little later after we have heard the other speakers and then you can intervene and say whether it meets your requirements.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

Could you repeat the text for point k) and point m)?

CHAIRPERSON

Egypt, you could pay attention to this one. Point k) reads: “*encouraged Management to seek balance of consultants by nationality consistent with geographic distribution for staff members for more effective delivery of programmes and activities whilst retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment and requested the Secretariat to submit a proposal for balance of consultants by nationality to the next session of the Finance Committee*”.

Point m) reads: “*noted that the Finance Committee would review proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the FAO Audit Committee at its next session in May 2018*”.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

Thank you very much for your comprehensive summary.

Just a really minor issue under point g). Could you kindly change the wording to have: “*to swiftly provide the Members with a comprehensive HR data package as requested several times by the Council*”?

Regarding the consultancies, we think that there might be some confusion because there are no rules on equitable representation of consultants. With regard to the budget, it is important to differentiate between different modes of financing, taking into account that many consultants are hired with the use of extrabudgetary resources. In this regard, we encourage the Secretariat to use the core budget of FAO to fill the vacancies of the permanent positions rather than to use these scarce resources for hiring extra consultants, taking into account the equitable representation in this case for permanent positions.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Thank you for your summary. Germany fully aligns itself with the statement just made by Estonia.

Basically, the points have been made. I would just like to stress that we really need to make this clear distinction between the two different kinds of consultants. Perhaps the Office of Human Resources can give us some enlightenment on what share of consultants are financed out of the Regular Programme and which share of consultants is financed out of voluntary contributions.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

First, in line with Germany’s recent intervention, it would be useful to differentiate between consultants from the Regular Programme and those from voluntary contributions. We urge caution; 60 percent of FAO’s budget comes from voluntary contributions right now. Introducing a rigid geographical distribution could have unintended consequences for FAO’s continued financing in that area.

On point m), in reviewing the write-up from the Finance Committee, the language actually speaks with a view towards decision and the discussion in the Finance Committee was with a view towards decision on the Audit Committee’s Terms of Reference.

I would like to propose the following language fix. As point m) reads: “*noted that the Finance Committee would review the proposed Audit Committee Terms of Reference*”. We would recommend that “*the Finance Committee would review, with a view towards decision, the proposed Audit Committee...*”, and the rest of the sentence as read out.

Mr Pierfrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of Estonia on behalf of the European Union.

As a point of clarification, we think that it could be interesting for the Membership when it comes to consultant positions at the FAO headquarters here in Rome if the Secretariat could enlighten the Membership on any cost implication of the choice between resident and non-resident specialist experts as consultants. Maybe this could be useful.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Thanks again for reading k). We would request a small change. Instead of saying to present the “*proposal for balance of consultants by nationality*”, we would request you to change it to be “*request to present the proposal for ensuring an equitable geographical distribution of consultants*”.

When it comes to consultants, we are fully aware that there are no rules in the Basic Texts that determine that there should be some geographical balance. Nevertheless, we believe this is a natural rule for the Organization if the merit-based approach is implemented to go in the direction of having equitable geographical distribution.

As was mentioned by many, this is important to developing countries. China mentioned yesterday how important it is to hire consultants from developing countries who understand the needs and priorities of developing countries.

We stress that this should be merit-based but while giving some window of opportunity for developing countries to have more consultants in the Organization which is applied by many United Nations organizations outside of Rome, in Vienna and Addis Ababa and any other organization.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I am sorry to come back on this but I still want to find out if there is no possibility of addressing the issue of the consultants recruited under the Regular Programme with the existing rules pertaining to geographic representation. I think that this is something that we are aiming at.

For those who are financed by extrabudgetary resources, it could be different. We have rules for geographic representation and I remember how tough it was here to agree on those rules based on the population. It was tough to agree on those rules but they exist.

So I think we should have some wording asking the Office of Human Resources to refer, when consultants are recruited on the Regular Programme, to the existing rule of geographic representation and gender. I think it is important.

CHAIRPERSON

I was going to come back to your question and ask the Office of Human Resources whether you have the information available to comment on what Cameroon is saying about the rules in existence?

Sr. Fernando SERVÁN (Oficial encargado de la Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

[audio starts mid-sentence] ...contribuyen a la creación de la definición de lo representado equitativamente. Creo que algo similar podría aplicarse, y entiendo lo que manifiesta Estados Unidos y también Alemania sobre las diferencias entre consultores financiados por el programa regular y por fondos extra fiduciarios. De todas maneras, considero que el texto propuesto por el Presidente en el acápite K, en que se menciona que la propuesta debería ser coherente con la distribución geográfica para funcionarios, creo que sea suficientemente clave para que la Secretaría pueda elaborar una propuesta. En este momento no puedo rápidamente proveer datos sobre la división de los consultores por fondos fiduciarios o el programa regular, pero seguramente son datos que van a contribuir a la elaboración de la propuesta.

Como me preguntó también el Representante de Italia, hay una diferencia entre el reclutamiento local y el reclutamiento fuera de la zona cercana al lugar de trabajo. En el caso que definimos como 40 kilómetros lejanos de la sede, es decir, consultores que al momento de la contratación residían 40 kilómetros más allá de Roma vienen considerados como no locales. Y eso implica gastos adicionales de instalación, lo que podría tener una implicación presupuestaria.

Creo que los factores que los Miembros están manifestando son muy importantes para tener en cuenta, y creo que van a ser elementos de la propuesta que la Secretaría preparará para la próxima Reunión del Comité de Finanzas. La complejidad del tema es amplia. El hecho de tratar de balancear o mejorar la distribución geográfica de consultores mientras manteniendo al mismo tiempo el criterio principal en la calidad del trabajo técnico, sin crear problemas a la ejecución de programas y proyectos, es un gran reto. Para evitar entrar en detalles sobre esto en este foro, sugeriríamos a los Miembros de considerar el texto propuesto por el Presidente, en cuanto la frase coherente con la distribución geográfica para funcionarios incluye los criterios que Camerún está mencionando, y también su aplicación diferente para consultores financiados por el programa regular o por fondos extra fiduciarios.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

I apologize for taking the microphone again on k).

We can support the proposal made by the Officer-in-Charge of Human Resources. Therefore, to keep the language in point k) as you originally discussed.

If we decide to modify that language along the lines of the language proposed by our Egyptian colleague, we would then add the language to the effect of ensuring equitable distribution of consultants, we would ask the following clause to be added to that, "*depending on funding sources*".

So again, we can support your original language. If we do go with the proposed wording of our colleague from Egypt, we would like to expand it to have "*depending on funding sources*" along the lines of the rationale described by the Officer-in-Charge of Human Resources.

Sr. Porfirio PESTANA DE BARROS (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Simplemente queríamos apoyar plenamente lo expresado por la Delegación de Egipto.

Sr. Mateo Nsogo NGUERE MICUE (Guinea Ecuatorial)

La delegación de la República de Guinea Ecuatorial también apoya la propuesta planteada por el delegado de Egipto.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

As it appears to be quite a sensitive issue, we would very much appreciate if, before we go further with any proposal, we could have an analysis of cost effectiveness, which would also take into account the different modes of financing.

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

Si bien sabemos que no existen normas respecto al equilibrio geográfico de la contratación de consultores, estamos de acuerdo con lo expuesto por Egipto respecto a que existen beneficios claros derivados del uso de consultores con conocimiento de la realidad local, lo que tendría un impacto positivo en la efectividad y la efectiva implementación de los programas, proyectos y actividades de la Organización. Por eso creemos que debería al menos evaluarse en el análisis en que se tienda hacia un mayor equilibrio geográfico en la contratación de consultores y hacer esto con fondos de presupuesto regular o fondos aportados voluntariamente por los Estados Miembros.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je pense que les interventions du Cameroun et de l'Égypte sont dans le droit fil d'une représentation géographique et je les appuie pleinement.

Mr Lijun ZHAO (China) (Orginal language Chinese)

Thank you for your conclusions and as regards point k), we would like to express our support for Egypt's proposal and the statements by other delegates of developing countries. We believe that when it comes to the recruitment of consultants, we need to definitely respect geographic representation.

I believe that this is beneficial to the implementation of the Organization's programmes and projects. As we discussed both yesterday and today, developing countries have consultants that are more likely to have an understanding of their own needs and the situation in the field.

Thus, we do need to respect the principle of geographic representation because it is beneficial to the implementation of programmes.

M. Boumedienne MAHI (Algérie)

Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi de rappeler que la question d'une représentation géographique équilibrée est un principe retenu par toutes les organisations internationales, quelle que soit la source de financement de cette expertise (budget ordinaire de l'Organisation ou extrabudgétaire). Par conséquent, au-delà du fait qu'actuellement les différents pays disposent d'experts répondant à ce qui est demandé pour une consultation ou une autre, je pense que ce qui a été mentionné par mes collègues de l'Égypte et du Cameroun, au nom du Groupe Afrique, témoigne de l'importance que revêt la question des consultations à être prises en considération au niveau local. J'appuie donc ce qui a été recommandé par l'Égypte et le Cameroun.

Mr Hinrich THÖLKEN (Germany)

Please allow me to make a very short comment on the desired equitable distribution of consultants as mentioned by a couple of countries.

If we were to apply, let us say, the same equitable distribution as we have for the Professional staff out of the Regular Programme, we would just like to point out that countries like the United States of America, Germany, China and Japan would be grossly under-represented in terms of consultants.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I fully support my German colleague. We would really like to have cost effectiveness and differentiation of budgetary resources mentioned explicitly under k).

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

I am wondering if we have actually gone outside the territory of agreeing on the report and now we are coming back to discussing the issue again and the nature of the analysis that we would like the Officer-in-Charge of Human Resources to do for the Finance Committee.

Assuming that that is where we are, I have another suggestion to make on that front, which reflects a sort of practice in the Government of the United Kingdom and many UK organizations where we are very keen to ensure that we have a diversity of recruitment that reflects our society. One of the ways that we do that is by tracking the backgrounds of everybody who applies for jobs and then seeing if the eventual selection of candidates reflects the right proportions of those who applied.

So I would suggest that, in an analysis, it would be very useful to see what the nationalities and gender and other backgrounds of all of the candidates applying for consultancy positions are and then compare that to which candidates actually succeed.

I think that would be an important part of this analysis as well if we are going to go down that road because it certainly sounds like a substantial undertaking.

Sr. Piefrancesco Sacco (Italy)

En línea con la intervención de la Embajadora de Reino Unido, yo quisiera expresar una preocupación de la Delegación italiana para el derrotero que está tomando la conversación en este Consejo sobre un tema tan delicado, tan importante, y que tanto interés despierte en la membresía. Estamos discutiendo un asunto relativamente mal preparado, con una base de conocimiento inadecuada. Desde el punto de vista jurídico, no hemos oído ningún tipo de profundización sobre *background* jurídico-legal de la cuestión.

Desde el punto de vista financiero, no hemos tenido informaciones en términos de *cost-effectiveness*, de implicaciones financieras, al no ser el criterio de los 40 kilómetros. En términos de *merit-based*, es decir, elegir las personas que más sirvan al éxito de los proyectos, de los programas y de las actividades de la Organización, en términos estadísticos cuantitativos, entonces quería solo expresar una nota de preocupación por un debate que está faltando de bases de conocimiento.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Italy. I agree. We have almost taken over the role of the Drafting Committee here because there are so many suggestions on the same issue, even when the conclusion says that the matter will be submitted to the Finance Committee. When it goes to the Finance Committee, I am sure it will have all of these analyses there and that is the time to make the interventions you are all making now.

So wherever we are saying it will go to the next session of the Finance Committee or the November Session of the Finance Committee. Then it comes to the Council again if you find that the Finance Committee has been inadequate. But the Finance Committees meet in their regional meetings of the ICC with the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups. Members of the Finance Committee represent their regions.

Interventions can be made in the Finance Committee, so would it not be better to wait to see what happens in the next Finance Committee? If Management is going to submit a proposal, I am sure, it is in their interests to submit a comprehensive proposal which addresses all issues. In fact, I hope they are listening to you because they tell me we listen to the Member States. So, they have heard you.

Let them make a proposal to the next Finance Committee and then raise these issues because we are almost doing the work of the next Finance Committee without having a proposal before us.

May I know what your thoughts are here because there are amendments proposed in the same paragraph by so many different delegations and the paragraph ends that a proposal should go to the next Session of the Finance Committee.

So why do you not wait until the Finance Committee discusses Management's proposal? There are two or three Members per region in the Finance Committee but they are supposed to be representing the region. They should represent the views of the region in the Finance Committee.

Could I have your reaction to this? Otherwise we will be on this particular report for quite some time because there is not only one but several amendments to the same paragraph.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Other comments, just to respond quickly to some of the points that were mentioned concerning the proposal from Egypt.

First of all, we confirm and we would like the report to reflect that the process of hiring consultants should be primarily merit-based. If we ensure that the process is merit-based, I think we address most of the concerns that were mentioned.

We are not in favour of hiring someone from a less represented country just to ensure equitable geographical distribution. It should be merit-based. We want to provide direction to Management now, in conducting the process of hiring consultants, to give preference to developing countries in case of two equal candidates. That is why we do not prefer to wait until the Finance Committee as you were suggesting because there is a process going on now.

Regarding the second point, mentioned by the United States of America on the funding sources, I believe this is a very dangerous proposal to link the hiring process to the availability of funding sources. It implicitly means that the Office of Human Resources would appoint a less competent consultant because it would be less costly.

We are not talking now about the developed versus developing countries. We are comparing two proposed consultants. We believe it is very dangerous to link this to the availability of funding sources.

I think the proposal from Egypt was supported by many countries. We want it to be merit-based but also to ensure equitable geographical distribution.

M. Marc MANKOUSSOU (Congo)

Je prends la parole tout simplement pour appuyer ce que vous avez dit, parce que j'ai l'impression que l'on commence à débattre de la question à la place du Comité financier. De toute façon, je pense que votre proposition de résumé reflète exactement les débats qui se sont déroulés. Pour cela, le Congo

soutient votre première proposition. Comme l'a dit Fernando tout à l'heure, une proposition sera soumise à la prochaine réunion du Comité financier et c'est à ce moment-là que toutes les délégations qui y sont représentées pourront examiner dans le détail les documents qui nous seront soumis et débattre de la représentation géographique. J'aimerais donc demander à nos collègues du Conseil d'accepter votre première proposition, cela nous permettra de gagner du temps et d'avancer. Je réitère l'appui du Congo au résumé que vous avez présenté.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

On behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States, we would like to stress that it is important to have adequate data and, at the Council, we are listing what we would like to see in such a proposal for the Finance Committee and it is important to have a comprehensive analysis at the table for them in May.

Therefore, we would like to come back to the issue of the need of having cost effectiveness and differentiation of budgetary resources reflected.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

Again, we support your points as originally drafted. We concur with your rationale that this is a document in consideration that is better reflected in the Finance Committee. We think the verbatim report of this discussion will clearly indicate that there is a wide range of views here, that this is probably not the best forum in which to discuss it.

If there is an insistence on including the language proposed by the Egyptian colleague, I will return to our suggested additional language to the additional language proposed by Egypt. Because I think there is a misapprehension about where it stems from. It does not seek to talk about cost availability or hiring the cheapest person, but rather ensuring we do not introduce an idea of geographical rigidity with regard to voluntary contributions.

But again, we support your original language and the rationale which you have reintroduced here.

Ms Cathrine STEPHENSON (Australia)

We have resisted the urge to intervene until now but we agree with your original proposal and the rationale that this is a very important issue to all Members. But it is dangerous for the Council to try and make recommendations without having all the adequate information in front of us. It is important that we give it due consideration.

So we would like to support your conclusion as originally drafted without any amendments and that this matter be returned to the Finance Committee in May next year.

Sr. Mateo Nsogo NGUERE MICUE (Guinea Ecuatorial)

Al igual que el Delegado de Congo, creo que tal como Estados Unidos y Australia, la Delegación de Guinea Ecuatorial también apoya la propuesta original que Usted leyó, y con esto, con la revisión de que el Sr. Fernando Serván nos ha prometido que en el próximo Comité de Finanzas nos iba a presentar una propuesta formal.

Para evitar quedar con este tema, dado que lo llevamos desde ayer y hay otros temas en la agenda del Consejo, yo creo que podemos quedarnos aquí, con la indulgencia del colega de Egipto.

Mr Abdul Razak AYZI (Afghanistan)

It is a bit confusing listening to all of the colleagues but one thing should remain clear. We want one quality for consultants. We do not want two qualities, one for Regular Programme, one for extrabudgetary. Not two tiers. Quality should be one. Your proposal should make that clear.

Now the question arises as to whether you can have consultants with the same geographical distribution as Professional and above staff. That is an issue which is not clear. So far FAO has not followed that.

Consultants are hired without any geographical distribution so far. Now if you want to introduce geographical distribution, you have to find a different set of criteria that will apply and the elements of what Egypt has proposed should be taken into consideration.

Sr. Porfirio PESTANA DE BARROS (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Simplemente queremos expresar el apoyo a la propuesta original que Usted presentó.

Mr Siim TIIDEMANN (Estonia)

I would then have a compromise solution perhaps, that we can drop the list of what should be done. Let us not do the work of the Finance Committee.

But in order for the Finance Committee to know what it should do exactly, we have given some references and what we feel strongly about is that we should have a thorough analysis first that could be followed by proposals.

So therefore, I would ask the Secretariat to prepare an analysis for the next Finance Committee and then it might be followed by a further proposal when the Finance Committee has had the possibility to discuss the analysis, taking into account all different possible solutions to the issue. Then the proposal can be discussed further at the following Finance Committee.

So that would be my proposal, first to go for the analysis and then after this analysis has been done and we clearly see that there is some room for making a proposal on the more equitable representation concerning the consultants, then the Finance Committee can ask the Secretariat to prepare such a proposal.

So instead of “*proposal*”, I would right now say “*analysis*”, a thorough analysis. Then we would not list exactly what is needed. That would be my proposal for compromise.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I want to react to what I have just heard from Estonia. I think it is like we did not listen to this Council. We received the information notes over the weekend and the Director-General came here and gave us the figures. So what else do we want to guide the work of the Finance Committee? Because this is the work of this body. We want to tell the Finance Committee: okay, go ahead, do this.

It is for me a little bit disturbing to once again go into analysis and we have all the figures. That is what prompted this discussion. If we did not have the figures, it would not have prompted the discussion.

Our suggestion is if you can please read again your proposal and see if we can adhere to it as it is now, or if there are some amendments that we can bring in.

But let us forget about the idea of having an assessment. We must give direct guidance to the Finance Committee on the work they have to do and how to report back to the Council.

Mr Piefrancesco SACCO (Italy)

Just to support the intervention made by the Estonian delegate on behalf of the European Union. An analysis at this stage is what really is needed.

Because we would fill the knowledge gaps that I referred to in my previous intervention. You have to know things, to know their implications, before you are able to deliberate.

Mr Gerhard STIENS (Germany)

Germany would like to support what Italy and Estonia have been saying.

I think it is a very wise compromise that we first ask the FAO Secretariat to give us some more information before there will be a possible proposal or not.

I think we already have shown that additional information was definitely needed to have a good debate on those important issues.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We were given two notes on human resources yesterday. There may be more information, of course, it is possible to refine this information. As to analysis, that is a very difficult area to go to.

What do they mean by analysis? Do you want cost-benefit analysis of a consultant hired on the Regular Programme or a cost-benefit analysis of consultants under the extrabudgetary resources?

I do not think the Secretariat can do this and it is not necessary. What is necessary is if the information provided is more precise. The analysis will be done by the Finance Committee if they want. So if we take the suggestion by the European Union supported by Germany and Italy, it is going to take you months to do that analysis. It will not be ready by May or by November.

We have to be very careful what we say.

CHAIRPERSON

As I indicated at the beginning of our session, we would need to adjourn because there is the opening ceremony of the FAO Library Exhibit. So before adjourning, I would ask the Officer-in-Charge of Human Resources to address some of the points raised and then I have a list of speakers. We will have to carry on after lunch.

If I could also ask you to bear in mind that when the Finance Committee will consider this issue based on a proposal or a document which may be a mixture of various aspects, the document which is to be prepared by Management, they will know your views exactly because they have the verbatim records.

I can say from my past experience on the other side of the fence that, when we had to prepare documents, we always paid attention to what Members said in the Council by looking at their interventions in the verbatim records.

Members of all regions have spoken. Let FAO prepare that document for the Finance Committee and then pass judgement as to whether it was adequate or not because they will be looking at the verbatim of the European Union, the Africa Region, the Asia Region to see what Members consider important in this whole issue. Then they will prepare the document. So please bear that in mind.

I will give the floor to Fernando and then we will adjourn the meeting.

Sr. Fernando SERVÁN (Oficial en Cargo, Oficina de Recursos Humanos)

Primero, quiero manifestar que todos los comentarios que se han recibido luego de la propuesta del texto original demuestran la complejidad del tema. Reitero que, desde el comienzo, el texto propuesto originalmente, desde el momento que decía que la propuesta tenía que ser coherente con la distribución geográfica para funcionarios, incluía de por sí, al menos desde nuestro entendimiento, muchos de los factores que han salido; entre ellos: factores legales, factores económicos, de costes, de conocimientos de la región. Recuerdo que en muchos momentos los Miembros del Comité de Finanzas han manifestado, y aquí también durante el Consejo, la conveniencia de usar consultores de procedencia cercana al lugar donde se ejecute el trabajo, no solo por razones económicas, sino por conocimiento de la región.

Quiero definir lo que entendemos como propuesta para el Comité de Finanzas. Como propuesta entendemos un documento que presente un análisis de datos que analice diferentes opciones y que tome en cuenta todas las consideraciones que han manifestado Ustedes el día de hoy y que presente un plan de acción para la implementación. Esta propuesta que estamos proponiendo va a ser coherente con la distribución geográfica de los países de los funcionarios, lo que significa que no necesariamente es idéntica. Hay que tomar en cuenta, como lo hemos dicho, los diferentes factores y la fuente de financiamiento, etcétera, sin alterar ni la calidad ni los honorarios de los consultores. No tiene que haber dependencia entre proveniencia geográfica financiado por programa regular o extra presupuestal.

Para concluir, reitero que la Secretaría toma muy en cuenta todos los comentarios recibidos. Disponemos del *verbatim*, y vamos a analizarlo al momento de elaborar la propuesta, y reitero que el texto original, desde nuestro punto de vista, reflejaba exactamente lo que luego los países han ayudado a clarificar.

CHAIRPERSON

I have two more speakers, Canada and Finland, which we will take up in the afternoon after lunch.

I would like to inform the Council that Venezuela will replace Cuba as member of the Drafting Committee and the nomination of Estonia as additional member of the Drafting Committee has been received. May I take that the Council is in agreement with these nominations.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind delegates that there will be two side events taking place during lunch time today in the Sheikh Zayed Centre: the first one from 12.30 to 13.45 is a Side Event on *World Soil Day 2017*; and immediately after from 13.45 to 15.00, the Side Event on *FAO Technical Committees and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

As mentioned by the Chairperson, the Opening Ceremony of the 65th Anniversary of the FAO Library Exhibit will take place shortly at 12.15 in the David Lubin Memorial Library on the ground floor.

Finally, I wish to confirm that the starting time for this afternoon's plenary meeting is 15.00.

119 CHAIRPERSON

The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12:09 hours

La séance est levée à 12 h 09

Se levanta la sesión a las 12.09

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session
Cent cinquante-huitième session
158.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2017
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017**

**FOURTH PLENARY MEETING
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
CUARTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

5 December 2017

The Fourth Plenary Meeting was opened at 15.26 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La quatrième séance plénière est ouverte à 15 h 26
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la cuarta sesión plenaria a las 15.26
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

- Item 6. Reports of the 167th (29-31 May 2017), the 168th (2-3 November 2017) and the 169th (6-10 November 2017) Sessions of the Finance Committee (continued)**
- Point 6. Rapports des cent soixante-septième (29-31 mai 2017), cent soixante-huitième (2-3 novembre 2017) et cent soixante-neuvième (6-10 novembre 2017) sessions du Comité financier (suite)**
- Tema 6. Informes de los períodos de sesiones 167.º (29-31 de mayo de 2017), 168.º (2 y 3 de noviembre de 2017) y 169.º (6-10 de noviembre de 2017) del Comité de Finanzas (continuación)**
- (CL 158/4; CL 158/6; CL 158/7)

Item 6.1 Audited Accounts - FAO 2016

Point 6.1 Comptes vérifiés – FAO 2016

Tema 6.1 Cuentas comprobadas de la FAO correspondientes a 2016

(C 2019/5 A; C 2019/5 B)

Item 6.2 Status of Contributions and Arrears

Point 6.2 État des contributions et des arriérés

Tema 6.2 Estado de las contribuciones y los atrasos

(CL 158/LIM/2)

CHAIRPERSON

There are two speakers left and I will give the floor to them and then I will make a suggestion.

I give the floor to Canada.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

We also had attempted to refrain from intervening in this debate but just wanted to say that we are not a member of the Finance Committee and we do feel that we would benefit from further information.

I think it was already asked and requested by the Finance Committee to have more comprehensive data on human resources, which we got very last minute, and today there is still some information that could not be provided.

We feel that we would like to have an analysis or recommendation from the Finance Committee before the Council can give further guidance than what you had originally proposed. We very much support your proposal as a good way forward.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am making this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and my own country, Finland. The three European Union countries align themselves with the EU statement.

We were wondering whether we should raise our flag at this time but then we thought that we would like to give our remarks as well because we feel that the issue of hiring consultants is more complex than only about geographical distribution. We would like to consider employment of consultants also in a wider context of the United Nations Staff Rules and Regulations. Therefore, we believe that adequate and transparent information as well as time is needed to analyse the situation further.

We would also like to refer the broad discussion on this issue to the Finance Committee before the Council takes its decision.

Mr Yousef JHAIL (Kuwait)

I hate to say that this sounds like somewhat of a social services event that we are providing through the Organization. I understand some of the European countries and their thinking. But, let us say, if I am from Kuwait and I provide money to the Organization and then I ask you to employ someone who does not know any languages other than Arabic and then you take him somewhere to South America and have him be a consultant over there. That just does not make sense.

My colleague from Egypt is really making a point here; that it has to be on merit and we understand that. This is the principle of not just this agency but the United Nations as a whole. No matter what kind of position, through the Regular Programme or extrabudgetary, there have to be some principles that we look at.

I do not blame countries, because if you give them something, they will take it. If you give me something, I will take it. Management, you have an important role to play. You have to fill in the positions that are vacant so that we can avoid this problem. You have to give the opportunity for employees to improve themselves, to get better education, to catch up with the private sector. So, I do not have to go and hire a consultant based on the idea that he or she is updated on the latest technology and information. That does not make sense to me, really.

With that, I agree with the proposal of my colleague from Egypt.

Sr. Junior ESCOBAR FONSECA (Nicaragua)

Esta es la primera ocasión que nos referimos a este tema. Consideramos que hemos tenido a lo largo de esta mañana una discusión constructiva, con criterios muy legítimos y acertados de parte de todos los Miembros. Sin embargo, a estas alturas consideramos que la misma puede volverse ya casi muy estéril. Creemos que las Notas Informativas no están brindando actualizaciones necesarias y suficientes para que puedan servir de base para que la Secretaría pudiera ojalá preparar un documento complementario. En esta sesión es lógico que no podemos contar con más de los documentos preparados.

Nicaragua entiende que las informaciones suplementarias a raíz de las discusiones que hemos tenido hoy pueden ser útiles para ser presentadas, por ejemplo, en el próximo Comité de Finanzas, para su análisis, para su discusión y orientación al siguiente periodo de sesiones del Consejo. Si el Consejo se convierte en comité de la FAO, será muy difícil que logremos avanzar.

En este sentido, la propuesta que queremos someter a Usted es la consideración de que la Secretaría, tomando en cuenta todas las recomendaciones y criterios expresados por los Miembros, pudiera preparar un documento informativo suplementario y someterlo al próximo Comité de Finanzas. Así tal vez podemos avanzar y seguir en otros temas de particular importancia.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I make a suggestion, I would like to inform Members that a request has been received from the FAO Staff Bodies to address the Council. If there is no objection from the Council, I suggest that the statement be delivered under Item 15, “*Any Other Matters*”. So, if that is acceptable, we will proceed.

Coming back to this item, in the morning, there were quite a few Members who suggested that the way forward could be, and they were supportive, that we go to the Finance Committee with my original summary and the Finance Committee would consider a document prepared by the Secretariat which would take into account the views of the Council as expressed today and yesterday because they are reflected in the verbatim records. Let the Finance Committee go into the details which we seem to have been going into today because the Finance Committee is a Committee of the Council and is responsible for doing such analysis and coming up with proposals or recommendations for the Council to consider. I would recommend and suggest that we follow the advice of those Members who agreed with me.

During lunchtime, I had some discussions with different Members informally. Based on that, I was going to read a paragraph which could be a substitute for k) because the main discussions have been on k) where there has not been agreement. Based on my discussions, I tried to draft a wording which I hope will be agreeable to you. It starts: “*encouraged Management to take into account the need for balance of consultants by nationality in the ongoing recruitment exercise consistent with geographic distribution for staff members for more effective delivery of programme and activities whilst retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment and requested that the Secretariat submit a comprehensive document for balance of consultants by nationality to the next session of the Finance Committee, taking into account the points raised by the Council at this Session*”.

Here there is the main change. We are not calling it “*proposal*”, the Secretariat submitting a proposal. I am suggesting we call it “*a comprehensive document*” for consideration by the Finance Committee. And making a point that the views expressed by the Council here should be taken into account. Those views are reflected in the verbatim records.

May I have your reaction to this paragraph?

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

With that conclusion, I think we are perfectly in accordance with what you said. I think we can move that on.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Your summary is okay, but I think it is too long and very difficult to digest. I have a much shorter, more direct version and I will read it slowly. My version reads as follows: “*Based on the Information Notes received, the Council noted the imbalance in the employment of FAO consultants by geographic regions. Based on the views expressed, it requested the FAO Management to submit options for the consideration of the Finance Committee in its May 2018 Session with a view to making the employment of FAO consultants by regions more equitable*”.

I will read it again. “*Based on the information notes received, the Council noted the imbalance in the employment of FAO consultants by geographic regions. Based on the views expressed, it requested the FAO Management to submit options for the consideration of the Finance Committee in its May 2018 Session with a view to making the employment of FAO consultants by regions more equitable*”.

Mr Siim TIIDEMANN (Estonia)

I think we are moving in the right direction with both the proposals from the Independent Chairperson of the Council and Afghanistan. I would like to also hear the other Members express their opinion. But before taking any final decision, I would also ask for a break of ten minutes for the European Union to internally consult on your proposal as well as the Afghanistan proposal.

CHAIRPERSON

We will go through the speaker list first.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

Chairperson, would you repeat your proposed wording just to make sure I have noted it down correctly?

CHAIRPERSON

So, I will repeat and try and read it slowly: “*Encouraged Management to take into account the need for balance of consultants by nationality in the ongoing recruitment exercise consistent with geographic distribution for staff members for more effective delivery of programme and activities whilst retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment and requested the Secretariat submit a comprehensive document for balance of consultants by nationality to the next session of the Finance Committee, taking into account the points raised by the Council at this Session*”.

Mr Fazal Abbas MAKEN (Pakistan)

We think that the formulation which has been suggested by the Chairperson does take into account the various points of views. Nevertheless, one is apprehensive that the way that this is going, the Council is turning into a Drafting Committee. Should an agreement be reached in the next few minutes, okay; otherwise, our suggestion is that if the house can agree upon a set of principles and having agreed upon the principles, the framing of the exact language can be left to the Drafting Committee.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

I hesitate to take the floor on this issue, as some may have noticed. I do not see the purpose of having such a long discussion. It seems that we are more or less on the same page here. I just have an issue with the expression balance by nationality, which is something of a novelty.

In the United Nations, we normally talk about geographical balance but not national balance. Perhaps whatever outcome of this exercise is, the notion of nationality could be replaced by geographical balance. I think that would be more in line with the UN practice.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Your proposal is quite an improvement compared to the previous one. The only thing that is lacking here is it does not give us clear action regarding this issue. For the proposal from Afghanistan, I think it could be a compromise. It is important that we conclude on this issue of imbalances and also we request Management to submit options for consideration.

Having said this, we can live with the language of Afghanistan.

Sr. Oscar PIÑEYRO (Uruguay)

Al igual que algún otro colega, he estado evitando participar en la discusión de este tema porque me parece que se manejaban en cada vez más argumentos, de los cuales es difícil lograr un entendimiento y un consenso. No se puede, en mi opinión, decir que no se puede proceder de determinado modo porque no está previsto en una regla. Más bien el razonamiento sería al contrario, o sea uno puede proceder de determinado modo salvo que esté prohibido por una regla.

Por otra parte, es difícil decir que se puede garantizar la distribución geográfica. Sí se puede garantizar posibilidades suficientes como para que los puestos se provean de acuerdo a determinados criterios. Entonces, cada vez que se avanzan las discusiones y distintas delegaciones participan, se complejizan.

Yo estaba de acuerdo con mi colega de Afganistán cuando decía que su nueva propuesta está muy bien orientada, pero era un poco extensa. Sin embargo, la propuesta de Afganistán me ha resultado aún más extensa que la suya, porque en realidad el problema para mí está detrás de estas distintas situaciones, que tienen que ver con la representación de los países, que era a lo que primeramente se hacía referencia. En su última propuesta se habla de una distribución coherente con la distribución geográfica de la plantilla. ¿Eso qué significa bien? ¿Que si la plantilla de FAO tiene determinada representación los consultores van a tener esa representación, o se van a tener en cuenta aquellos países que no están suficientemente representados para que tengan más posibilidades en los consultores? Es decir, se incorporan nuevos problemas.

Lo mismo cuando Afganistán habla de regiones geográficas, una cosa es hablar de países y otra cosa es hablar de regiones geográficas. ¿A qué estamos haciendo referencia? ¿A los grupos regionales informales a partir de los cuales se trabaja muchas veces en FAO? Quiero decir, cada vez que avanzamos en la discusión, cada vez se vuelve más compleja. Con lo cual, yo tendería a, sino es apoyar a su primera propuesta, apoyar una propuesta más reducida de la que ha presentado a efectos de que se siga discutiendo en el Comité de Finanzas con una orientación clara, en el sentido que tiene que haber una mejor distribución en cuanto a la contratación de consultores, no como el criterio a aplicar, porque hablamos de una calidad de los recursos humanos, sino como un criterio a considerar los efectos de mejorar la representatividad en términos de contrato a los consultores. Y no le quisiera quitar más tiempo, porque hay otras series de puntos que me parece que son para discutir en el marco del Comité de Finanzas.

Mr Boumediene MAHI (Algeria)

I agree with the colleagues who have said we are going in the right direction with the two proposals that we had on the table. I think the language that you proposed captures the most important idea that has been expressed this morning, mainly the importance of considering improving the representation as to the consulting experts.

Regarding two proposals, I think that the one proposed by Afghanistan goes straight to the issue and, as to the language proposed, it looks more oriented towards the Finance Committee. It is important to transfer this subject to the Finance Committee but the Committee needs clear direction so that we will have a clear answer of the question that we are posing.

Having said that, I think that my delegation can leave as it has been said by the Representative of the Africa Group, Cameroon and Egypt, by your proposal. We prefer the wording of the proposal by Afghanistan but if the consensus will be on your proposal, we can live with that and we support it.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Mr Chairperson and Mr Ayazi, I think have come up with excellent formulations that perfectly reflect their wisdom and we admire you for the effort of guiding us in the right direction to solve the issue. We thank you for that.

We support the comments made by the delegate from Egypt, namely the proposal by Afghanistan. We feel it was made with a view to solving the problem.

Why are we grappling with this issue? Of course, financing and funding is part of it but the main reason is that we have some issues with achieving the SDGs and the Agenda 2030. It is mostly an issue to do with developing countries.

For example in China, we are facing very difficult problems in terms of poverty reduction and most of the poverty reduction activities are taking part in the rural areas. So, in order to settle these problems, maybe the consultants from developing countries will have a better idea as to the conditions characterizing those nations.

Today the geographic distribution of consultants as we have seen is fairly unbalanced so we definitely have to step up the number of consultants from developing countries, from the Near East, Asia and Latin America.

I think that this might help us to better solve problems and grapple with the challenges ahead. So pragmatically speaking, we would express our support for the proposal made by Mr Ayazi from Afghanistan.

Mr Hakeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I agree with the proposal that was made by Afghanistan. However, if we go back to the proposal that was made by the Independent Chairperson of the Council, then we note that he started out by saying: “*encourage Management...*” and in my view, we have to go further than that and say “*demand*”, not encourage, but demand that Management does this.

Sr. Porfirio PESTANA DE BARROS (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Tomando en cuenta la proposición suya y de Afganistán, seguimos orientados en apoyar la que Usted acaba de someter a nuestra consideración.

Mr Bandar SHALHOOB (Saudi Arabia) (Original language Arabic)

As previous speakers have said, I would like to support the proposal made by Afghanistan. However, it would be important to ask the Drafting Committee or the Finance Committee to draft that proposal so that the Council does not necessary have to become a Drafting Committee.

The geographic balance of consultants is a very important term. I believe no delegate said that they were in disagreement with the use of such term. So this is a core issue. We should not engage in drafting here, but we do demand that there be an equitable geographic distribution of the consultants engaged by the Organization.

CHAIRPERSON

I have no more requests for the floor, but we have spent quite some time on this issue, I think if my memory goes back over the years, I do not think the Finance Committee Report has had so much time devoted to it by the Council as today.

So what I would suggest, I would take up the suggestion made by Estonia and we break for ten minutes to see whether we can come to a wording with which we can go forward and move on.

However, I would just like to remind the Council that you have the Finance Committee to do this work for you. So make your decisions based on the analysis of the Finance Committee, its recommendations and its findings on the comprehensive document, and not the proposal by the Secretariat but a comprehensive document.

The Finance Committee will consider, analyse and make recommendations to you. Let the Finance Committee carry out its mandate because it is your Committee. It is the Committee of the Council to

do the work for the Council instead of the Council getting involved in the work of the Finance Committee which today is apparent.

In fact, I do not think the Drafting Committee spent so much time on an issue as the Council has done. But it should be the Finance Committee doing this work for you before you give guidance which the Drafting Committee takes on.

So I would suggest we break for ten minutes and see if we can come to an agreement at the end because even Members have mentioned that the Council should not operate like a Drafting Committee. So they are being conscious.

Mr Moungui MÉDI (Cameroon)

I think I am trying to raise a motion here. I am a little bit puzzled by the way things are moving and we, Council Members, are forcing you to take some decisions. I know that some supported your proposal, while others supported the proposal of Afghanistan.

So instead of going for a break, why do we not put both proposals to the Drafting Committee for a final decision because this is not drafting. We have two proposals well written and we put them before the Drafting Committee because – I am skeptical about this – this is not such a major issue. I think, there is just some misunderstanding on the terms and so on.

So my humble suggestion at this point in time is that instead of going for a break because this Council will be for two days and that is now jeopardized. So, if we can continue with that, sending the two proposals to the Drafting Committee.

Mr Siim TIIDEMANN (Estonia)

I just wanted to mention that we will meet in the Nordic Lounge immediately with the EU colleagues.

However, I do not think it is a very great idea to leave it up to the Drafting Committee to take that decision. It should not be that difficult because I think that the proposals, both of them, are pretty similar. So there is not so much difference between them.

Mr Hakeel HATOOR (Qatar) (Original language Arabic)

I disagree because I believe that the Drafting Committee drafts only what is given by the Council. The Drafting Committee cannot replace the Council. What happens within the Council is then sent to the Drafting Committee and not vice versa.

CHAIRPERSON

Without spending more time, we will break for ten minutes and then we will come back and see.

The meeting was suspended from 16.01 to 16.24 hours

La séance est suspendue de 16 h 01 à 16 h 24

Se suspende la sesión de las 16.01 a las 16.24 horas

CHAIRPERSON

We will proceed with our discussions. I will read out slowly a revised version and then ask Estonia to take the floor because they asked for a ten-minute break and see where we move from there. So, I will read the paragraph again: “*encouraged Management to take into account the need for geographical balance of consultants in the recruitment exercise, consistent with geographic distribution for staff members, for more effective delivery of programme and activities, whilst retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment and requested the Secretariat submit a comprehensive document for geographical balance of consultants to the next session of the Finance Committee, taking into account the points raised by the Council at this Session*”.

Mr Siim TIIDEMANN (Estonia)

After having consulted the EU members, this is the text we can live with. We can support this.

CHAIRPERSON

Now, Afghanistan, you had proposed an alternative text. Can you live with this revised text which I just read out? Thank you, Afghanistan.

So, it seems we have a consensus and we can move forward to the next item.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Item 7. Report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (23-25 October 2017)

Point 7. Rapport de la cent cinquième session du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques (23-25 octobre 2017)

Tema 7. Informe del 105.º período de sesiones del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos (23-25 de octubre de 2017)

(CL 158/2)

CHAIRPERSON

We now take up Item 7 of the agenda, *Report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters*. Please ensure you have document CL 158/2 before you.

I would like to invite His Excellency Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, Chairperson of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, to present this report.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

It is my pleasure to present the Report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM), which was held from 23 to 25 October 2017.

The CCLM Agenda included three items.

First, the CCLM examined a document entitled “*Terms of office of Council Members*” and it acknowledged its comprehensive nature. It noted indeed that the subject matter raised broader issues of a policy nature. While the matter was essentially one of governance and thus an issue for the Membership of the Organization, the CCLM noted that seat-sharing arrangements were not foreseen at the time of adoption of the provisions of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) on the composition of the Council. The matter was under consideration by the CCLM because it generated discussions at the two last sessions of the Conference and there were doubts as to whether the arrangements were in line with the letter and the spirit of the provisions.

The CCLM observed, from a legal perspective, that seat-sharing arrangements were not provided for in the GRO and that Members of the Council were elected for a three-year term of office. However, the CCLM also noted that some regions had established internal arrangements for determining their representation in the Council, some of which resulted in seat-sharing arrangements of the kind that had been accepted by the last two sessions of the Conference.

The CCLM recommended that the Independent Chairperson of the Council hold consultations with the Members, under such format as determined by the Council, with a view to clarifying the legal framework for such arrangements, as appropriate. The CCLM noted that document CCLM 105/2 provided useful background information for the consultations.

The Council is invited to:

- a) note the deliberations of the CCLM on the issue of the terms of office of Council Members;
- b) request the Independent Chairperson of the Council to hold consultations with the Members with a view to clarifying the legal framework for seat-sharing arrangements accepted by the Conference in 2015 and 2017, and
- c) recommend that, as appropriate, the CCLM examine the matter again in light of the outcome of the consultations, including any draft amendments to the Basic Texts, as may be required.

The second item on the Agenda of the CCLM related to the attendance by candidates or scrutineers appointed by candidates at the count of votes.

The CCLM noted that in a number of secret ballots, scrutineers appointed by candidates had, through modern communication technology, informed their delegations or third parties of the outcome of the count of votes. This resulted in a large number of delegates being informally aware of the outcome of ballots before the formal announcement of results by the Chairperson. The CCLM was of the view that such informal disclosure should not occur as this fact could potentially lead to disputes or call into question formally announced results.

The CCLM concurred with the view of the Secretariat that there was no need for an amendment of the Rules to address the issue.

The Council is invited to mandate the Secretariat to take such steps as may be required to ensure that the results of secret ballots remain undisclosed until the formal announcement of the outcome of the ballot.

Finally, the CCLM considered the amendments proposed to the Statutes of Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC). It noted that the proposal entailed a change to the official name of the Commission and an extension of its mandate to marine fisheries, in view of the growing importance of marine artisanal fisheries for the region and the need for a regional forum for political discussion on this topic. The CCLM endorsed the proposal as set out in Appendix 1 to its Report.

The CCLM recommended to the Council that it approve the Council Resolution entitled “*Statutes of the Commission for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC)*” set out in Appendix 1 to the CCLM Report.

I understand that discussions have taken place within GRULAC and there is a proposal that discussions should still take place among COPESCAALC Members given their primary interest in this initiative.

So what we are recommending here is that we strike out this item to facilitate further discussions within GRULAC on the matter.

Mr Miroslav SCEPANOVIC (Montenegro)

We will be delivering a statement on behalf of the European Regional Group.

We generally endorse the report of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters and would like to make the following comments:

First, we take note of the recommendation that the Independent Chairperson of the Council should hold consultations with the Members with the aim of clarifying the legal framework for internal seat-sharing arrangements by some regions. In our view, there is no legal necessity to consider changing the Basic Texts on this issue.

Second, we would underline that any conclusions to be drawn from the possible consultations should adequately take account of existing practice and should be acceptable to all Members.

Third, we would also like to recall that all arrangements currently in place have been carefully negotiated by the concerned parties; therefore, we do not see that there is any scope for change.

Mr Hansel DIDULO (Philippines)

The Philippines has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We would like to thank the Chairperson of the CCLM, His Excellency Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, for presenting the 105th Session of the CCLM that took place on 23-25 October 2017. We also commend the Secretariat for their work in preparing the document for this meeting.

The Asia Regional Group highly appreciates the work and efforts carried out by the Committee in addressing legal and constitutional issues within the Organization. The work done by the Committee

shows the strong legal commitment and legal capability of each and every person involved, to set and progress the standards practised for a better environment.

Member States are showing more and more interest to be involved in the work of the Organization and of its Governing Bodies. This results in the active participation, including of keener awareness of the Members in addressing urgent global problems, food insecurity and malnutrition, in accordance with the mandate and framework of the Organization.

More and more Member States within their regional groups are conveying their respective capital's requests, to be given more opportunity to be able to participate and contribute in the global policy-making process to address various problems, either as donors or as recipients. This active engagement is very important in relation to the achievement of the 17 SDGs, in particular, to achieve Zero Hunger and responsible consumption and production, where Member States have committed and pledged themselves to achieve this noble goal.

Taking into consideration the history of the establishment of the Executive Committee (now the Council) during the establishment of the Organization in 1945, governments of the Members of the Organization clearly wanted representatives of their governments to be more involved in the oversight process of the affairs of the Organization. The clear message that should be underlined behind this historical perspective is the needs and interests of the governments, as well as the aspect of representation. In fact, Rule XXII of the GRO provides one of the criteria as a balanced geographical representation in the Council Membership.

As pointed out in paragraph six of the document, and I quote, “... *seat sharing arrangements were not foreseen at the time of adoption of the provisions of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) on the composition of the Council*”. This should be able to be understood, under any legal interpretation, as not prohibiting any kind of current practice arranged by Member States nor infringing the provisions within the GRO. However, we are also of the view that provisions on seat sharing may be required in order to avoid any other misinterpretation in the future.

We see seat sharing, an arrangement that has had historical precedence across FAO regional groups, as a positive practice that allows for a more balanced geographical representation and manifests from the need of Members to be more active and represented in the FAO Council. Seat sharing is an inclusive and not potentially divisive practice.

Legal interpretation should be made crystal clear taking into consideration the philosophical, historical, sociological, judicial and practical factors to avoid any ambiguous interpretation. It is a common understanding that should the question of interpretation occur; the Constitution itself has clearly provided a mechanism to settle disputes of the interpretation of the Constitution and of any legal questions.

While welcoming the Independent Chairperson of the Council to hold consultations with Member States, the Asia Regional Group supports the Organization to be able to pursue the current global situation and to take into consideration the practical interests of Member States which will indeed, at the end, support the work carried out by the Organization as a whole.

We are also of the view that decisions by the Member States of the Organization and within the highest Governing Body decision-making process should be respected and consistent with the Constitution and its operative provisions of the Organization. The Asia Regional Group supports formalizing this practice within the Constitution and/or the GRO of the Organization to allow for more predictability in the future. With regard to the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC), the Asia Regional Group is of the view that food security and nutrition within a particular region should be a priority of the work of the Organization, in particular given the importance of artisanal fisheries for the region.

It is therefore vital that the Commission would be able to promote the management and sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture, and further able to foster development of fisheries and aquaculture as an instrument of support to food security within the region. In relation to this, the Asia Regional Group supports expanding the mandate and amending the Statute of the Commission for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPESCAALC).

With this note, the Asia Regional Group welcomes the report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

Ms Lineo Irene MOLISE MABUSELA (Lesotho)

Lesotho is taking the floor on behalf of the Africa Regional Group (ARG) on this agenda item and wishes to thank the Chairperson of CCLM, His Excellency Ambassador Magwenzi, for his concise and very articulate presentation which is indeed a true and genuine reflection of the deliberations of the 105th Session CCLM.

The ARG notes with appreciation the fact that the issue of representation in the Council is complex and divisive, and it has at times seen some regions resorting to extra-legal measures to give all countries an opportunity to serve in the Council. The ARG therefore commends CCLM for recognizing that while the law is clear, there is nonetheless a need to address the problem through rapid consultation by the Independent Chairperson of the Council with the entire Membership. We therefore endorse CCLM's proposal to request the ICC to hold consultations with Members on this important issue, and we further propose that this be done through informal meetings of chairpersons or vice-chairpersons of groups accompanied by at least a member or two of each regional group.

The ARG wishes to assure you of its unwavering support and commitment in finding a genuine and lasting solution to this matter of great importance.

On the issue of the presence of candidates or their representatives at the counting of votes, the ARG recognises that, while their presence may ensure the credibility of elections, a premature disclosure of the results of the ballot by people not authorized to do so can also undermine the integrity and confidence of the electoral processes. In that context, the ARG endorses the CCLM's recommendation that the Secretariat should take necessary measures to prevent the leaking of results until their formal announcement.

In conclusion, the ARG endorses the proposal that the amendments to the Statute of the Commission for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean should be referred back to the GRULAC for consultations and consensus.

Mr Fazal Abbas MAKEN (Pakistan)

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia region and takes this opportunity to stress the importance of maximum participation in the FAO governing body, while maintaining a balanced geographical representation.

We begin by thanking the Chairperson of the CCLM, His Excellency Ambassador Godfrey Magwenzi, for presenting the report of the 105th Session of the CCLM and commend the Committee for understanding this critical issue.

Pakistan recognizes that Member States increasingly have the desire and will to contribute more towards the global policy-making process; however, despite this will for enhanced participation, any expansion in Council representation cannot be foreseen in the near future. Given this situation, the present system of seat sharing that has developed with historical and practical significance remains the most amicable, transparent and judicial means of ensuring that the greatest number of Member States have the greatest opportunity to participate, contribute and engage in the work of the Council.

Therefore, Pakistan supports the recommendation of the CCLM report that the Independent Chairperson of the Council hold consultations with Member States to find a final solution on this issue. We strongly recommend that the informal system of seat sharing be formalized through a change in the GRO.

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

Realizamos esta intervención en nombre del Grupo de América Latina y el Caribe (GRULAC)

En relación con la duración del mandato de los Miembros del Consejo, quisiéramos destacar que las dinámicas propias de los procesos globales ineludiblemente implican una mayor inclusión y participación de todos los actores. Por este motivo, creemos que el involucramiento de una mayor

cantidad de países en los procesos de toma de decisión va en directo beneficio de la legitimidad que pueda tener la Organización en su conjunto.

Si bien el hecho de compartir puestos en el Consejo no se encuentra explícitamente mencionado en el Reglamento, tampoco se encuentra prohibido.

Esta práctica responde a la necesidad de dar espacio a un mayor número de representantes dentro de cada Grupo. En efecto, durante el 39.º y el 40.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia, una serie de países del grupo asiático, europeo y latinoamericano han venido utilizando esta práctica, bajo el principio de una interpretación amplia del párrafo 9 del artículo XXII del Reglamento General de la Organización.

A nuestro juicio se debe considerar esta práctica desde la perspectiva de una concepción amplia y evolutiva que calce con una visión moderna y flexible, lo cual permitirá promover una mayor participación, respetando a su vez la continuidad de los procesos y la adecuada gobernanza dentro de la FAO.

El principio de una representación amplia dentro del Consejo de la FAO está bien establecido en el párrafo 3 del artículo XXII.

En virtud de lo anterior, es que se permitió, durante el 39.º y el 40.º período de sesiones de la Conferencia, la práctica de compartir puestos en un periodo.

Asimismo, esta práctica ha sido ampliamente utilizada en los Consejos o Juntas Ejecutivas de otras entidades del sistema de Naciones Unidas, sin ningún tipo de menoscabo en su eficiencia, tales como el UNICEF, el PNUD, el UNFPA, la UNOPS, ONUSIDA y el PMA.

El GRULAC considera que los asuntos de gobernanza de la FAO deben recaer en la decisión de los Miembros de la Organización, concibiendo el sistema internacional como esencialmente cambiante y, por lo tanto, con instituciones flexibles.

A través del exitoso trabajo de implementación de la reforma, la FAO ha demostrado su capacidad de adaptarse a los diferentes requerimientos de los Estados Miembros.

Un exceso de celo normativo podría ir en desmedro de una amplia representación en el Consejo. En ese sentido, reiteramos que una interpretación amplia del párrafo 9 del artículo XXII del Reglamento General, es en opinión de nuestro Grupo Regional, la opción más adecuada en un contexto internacional cambiante, que además ya ha probado ser eficiente, inclusiva y legítima.

Respecto al punto IV del Informe del Comité de Asuntos Constitucionales y Jurídicos, relativo a la asistencia de los candidatos o los interventores por ellos designados en el recuento de los votos, nos parece pertinente la búsqueda de medidas para evitar la divulgación de la información antes de los anuncios formales de los resultados de la votación.

Finalmente, en relación con la enmienda de los estatutos de la Comisión de Pesca Continental y Acuicultura para América Latina y el Caribe (COPESCAALC), el GRULAC desea resaltar la importancia de ampliar el mandato de esa Comisión para incluir la pesca artesanal marina en su ámbito de acción.

Para tal efecto, en la próxima reunión ordinaria de la COPESCAALC, los Estados Miembros de la Comisión deberían revisar las enmiendas necesarias para alcanzar tal fin.

En este sentido, proponemos que la decisión del Consejo sobre este tema sea la siguiente:

“Se solicita a la Secretaría remitir a la COPESCAALC para examen y aprobación en su próxima sesión ordinaria, que tendrá lugar en enero de 2018 en Panamá, el proyecto de enmienda a sus estatutos contenido en el documento CL 158/2, para extender su mandato a la pesca artesanal marina”.

CHAIRPERSON

Before I give the floor to the other speakers, may I remind Members that if there is a regional statement, please do not repeat the arguments of the regional statement. If you have something additional to add, then make the statement.

Ms Dewi Kartika DAMAYANTI (Indonesia)

At the outset, we would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

On this agenda item, Indonesia would like to raise two points. First, Indonesia fully supports the Council seat-sharing arrangement as voiced by the representative of the Asia Regional Group at the 40th Session of the FAO Conference in July 2017. The region has agreed to practice the sharing of seats for the FAO Council. We are of the opinion that seat sharing in the FAO Council is a right of FAO member countries and not a violation of the Basic Texts of FAO. More importantly, the arrangement made by FAO Member States to share seats at the Council should be viewed positively. The fact that many Members would like to actively engage and contribute to the operation of this Organization reflects the importance and relevance that FAO holds. As such, this arrangement should be supported if not encouraged.

Secondly, Indonesia reiterates its previous position in agreeing to the name change to COPESCAALC. Understandably, the name change is the result of an increase in the mandate of COPESCAALC. This is, of course, in line with the mandate to achieve food security and nutrition in the region. Nevertheless, we should ensure that the additional mandate does not become too burdensome and carry additional budgetary implication for FAO as we have been assured.

M. Boumedienne MAHI (Algérie)

Permettez-moi de dire que je m'associe à la déclaration du Groupe Afrique faite par la distinguée déléguée du Lesotho et de remercier aussi le Président du Comité des questions constitutionnelles et juridiques pour la présentation du rapport de ce Comité. Notre délégation soutient le travail et les conclusions de ce Comité.

S'agissant maintenant des arrangements entre les États pour le partage de la durée de représentation au sein du Conseil, nous rappelons que la représentation au sein de ce Conseil est une représentation régionale et que les arrangements à ce sujet sont devenus une pratique acceptée par la Conférence. De ce fait, tout en appuyant la proposition faite pour permettre au Président indépendant du Conseil de mener des consultations en vue d'arriver à une solution de consensus, nous considérons que des amendements permettant la mise en conformité de ces arrangements sont nécessaires. Nous estimons que la décision devrait rester au niveau des groupes régionaux pour reconnaître cette option en laissant le soin aux groupes régionaux d'examiner l'opportunité de son application, et qu'il faudrait aussi mentionner que cette option, c'est-à-dire le partage du mandat, devrait rester une option exceptionnelle.

Sur les autres questions de ce document et en réponse à votre observation, nous appuyons ce qui a été dit et présenté par la délégation du Lesotho au nom du Groupe Afrique.

Ms Doojduan SASANAVIN (Thailand)

Thailand associates itself with the statement made by the Philippines on behalf of the Asia Group. We concur with the recommendation of the CCLM that the Independent Chairperson of the Council (ICC) hold consultation with the Members.

In clarifying the legal framework for an internal seat-sharing arrangement, we would suggest that the ICC also take this opportunity to explore how to meet the needs of increasing numbers of Members who are interested in Council seats.

Primarily, Thailand prefers options that do not risk to increase the costs of the Organization. Seat sharing on reduced term would be a good solution. We look forward to participate in the consultation.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Russia is taking part in this session of the Council as an Observer. None the less, allow us to make a short remark on this current item of the agenda.

We support the statement of the European Regional Group on the so-called “*seat-sharing arrangements*” [in English].

We have carefully looked at the recommendations of the CCLM and also the document prepared by the Secretariat in FAO's CCLM 158/2 on the terms of the Members.

This practice is not contained in FAO documents, the practice of seat sharing. However, there were different situations when the General Rules of the Organization were first drafted, and this is quite obvious if you look at the European Regional Group, the number of Members of which has increased by more than 20.

Though the practice has become more complex recently, this does not mean that in any way it is a real breach of the FAO documents.

The mechanism developed by the European Regional Group is based on an understanding of the documents and it has full right to exist.

We do not see the need to reconsider the agreement which is to be considered, we believe, an internal decision of our regional groups.

We do not see the need to review this agreement which is an internal matter for our regional groups. As regards the changes, amendments to the other documents, we do not feel the need for this work to be carried out.

We believe that any amendments to the Basic Texts are to be considered an extreme measure and unnecessary. There is no advantage in resorting to such an approach because it may also lead to very complicated negotiations on a broad range of issues.

CHAIRPERSON

That brings us to the end of our list of speakers on this item. I now give the floor to the Legal Counsel of FAO for his comments and, following that, I will pass the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Magwenzi for any further comments he may have.

LEGAL COUNSEL

I will make a short intervention, first to address very briefly the proposal that GRULAC has made on COPESCAALC and a second, slightly lengthier intervention, on the question of seat-sharing arrangements.

Regarding the issue of the mandate of COPESCAALC, we note the view of GRULAC that the proposed amendments be first referred to the Commission. That was in fact our initial inclination in the Secretariat and we feel that this is quite appropriate. So we can see that GRULAC being the region which is concerned by this proposal has made a suggestion with which we are entirely in agreement and we feel that it is quite appropriate that the matter first reviewed by COPESCAALC.

Now on the other topic, that of the term of office of Council Members, I wish to submit our views in a very transparent manner since there seems to be still some residual issues of communication.

There should be no ambiguity that this is a governance issue for the Members and in this context, I wish to make two observations.

The first observation is that there is no legal basis for the arrangements that are being implemented and it is our duty to flag this. We do not consider that the arrangements being implemented are in line with the Basic Texts.

First, the General Rules of the Organization provide only for terms of three years. They do not provide for a system of voluntary resignations. The conditions under which a country may resign or lose its seat are very strictly defined. There is no provision for a systematic pre-organized, pre-determined scheme of scheduled resignations.

The Conference is legally required to elect a Member for a term of three years, not to elect a Member for a term of one year and a half and another Member for a period of one year and a half. Again, our Basic Texts are extremely clear and there is no legal basis for this.

We are aware that some practices take place in some programmes and funds but they are of limited value because we are in a very different institutional context which is not highly regulated such as the context of FAO.

We also know that there are some exceptions at the United Nations and this has been reflected in the paper to the CCLM. This is not done in other specialized agencies. So to briefly explain the reason why we refer the matter to you, one Member of the CCLM said with much common sense: if the rules say that the term of office is for three years and a very large number of Members do not observe that, there is obviously an issue.

This takes me to my second observation. Again, this is a matter for the Members and this is essentially a governance issue. It is in this spirit, because we consider this a governance issue, that in 2015 we in the Secretariat stayed away from these arrangements. We turned a blind eye to this emerging practice.

However, at that time, much discussion surrounded the admissibility of nominations for elections at the General Committee of the Conference. The matter was raised again this year at the General Committee.

This year, in fact, the General Committee did not address the topic which used to attract its attention, that of the restoration of voting rights of countries in areas. This year in essence, the General Committee only discussed admissibility of nominations for the Council.

More broadly, this was done through continuous involvement of the Secretariat both formally and informally. The Secretariat has been drawn into an issue that was supposed to be an internal issue.

This year the Conference accepted seat-sharing arrangements. This was done on the understanding expressed in its plenary session that the question of seat sharing would be reviewed during the inter-sessional period and that, possibly, rules regarding tenure in the Council would be reconsidered.

In fact, we in the Secretariat in a very transparent manner are raising an issue of conformity of a number of recent practices with the institutional framework of the Organization. It is our duty to do so also in view of the fact that we have been drawn into discussions and we need to know what is the rule. It is up to the Members to regularize this in a way or another. We are not entering into the substance of any option. Nor are we asking that any internal arrangements be called into question.

Ideally, we believe that for all of us, there should be some coverage to this emerging practice either through new rules or through a new interpretation or through a resolution of the Conference. The various options are open.

It is also in this spirit that the Secretariat has prepared a comprehensive document for the CCLM and we see this matter very positively as the Members do.

Mr Godfrey MAGWENZI (Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters)

It is quite obvious to me that there is great interest to increase participation of Members in the work of Council and FAO at large and this is as it should be because FAO is our Organization.

Now the fact that the issue has been raised at two Conferences does indicate that it is in fact an issue. Conference raised issues of legality and this is why it ended up with CCLM. So this is why we recognize that this is what the law says. We have a problem here. What do we do about that problem because there is a genuine problem in at least one of the regions which Russia alluded to, for example. This has now spread to other regions.

We felt that there is need to have a political discussion about that problem and see what we can do about it. This is why we are recommending that this matter be subjected to a consultation of the Membership. If you decide that you want the Basic Texts to be amended to accommodate this, that is okay. If you want to deal with it in terms of a resolution or any other option that you may decide as Members, CCLM is at your disposal. We would be very happy to carry out your instructions.

But we cannot pretend that it is not a problem. It is a legal issue that is there and this is why Conference raised it twice.

I am sure if we do not resolve it, Conference might again raise it and then you might have one delegate raising their flag to say we are concerned about the erosion of the rule of law within FAO which can then create serious problems. So let us put our minds to this and work on the consultation in a constructive manner as we have recommended.

We are not recommending something very significant. In fact, two of the regions, North America and Europe, clearly indicated that they would not want to see any discussion on the expansion of the seats of the Council. So we are specifically looking at the problem that is: what do we do about this problem? How do we solve it? How do we help the regions that have this problem?

CHAIRPERSON

This brings us to the end of our discussion on item 7. So I can read out my conclusions.

Item 7, Report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

1. The Council approved the report of the 105th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters.

2. in particular, the Council,

a) noted the deliberations of the CCLM on the issue of the terms of office of Council Members;

b) requested the Independent Chairperson of the Council to hold consultations with Members with a view to clarifying the legal framework for seat sharing accepted by the Conference in 2015 and 2017 through informal meetings of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the regional groups, open to certain observers, to be convened by the ICC as necessary;

c) recommended that as appropriate, the CCLM examine the matter again in light of the outcome of the consultations, including any draft amendments to the Basic Texts as may be required;

d) mandated the Secretariat to take such steps as may be required to ensure that the results of secret ballots remain undisclosed until the formal announcement of the outcome of the ballot; and

e) requested the Secretariat to transmit to the Commission for Fisheries and Aquaculture of Latin America and the Caribbean, for review and approval at its forthcoming regular session to be held in January 2018 in Panama, the draft amendments to the statutes of COPESCAL as proposed by the CCLM and set out in the Appendix to this report, extending the Commission's mandate to artisanal marine fisheries.

Those are the conclusions. Are there any remarks?

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, for your comprehensive summary and of course the European Union fully supports the statement which was delivered by Montenegro on behalf of the European Regional Group.

There is only one point that we are missing from the intervention of Montenegro and we would like to have it reflected in the summary, so just let me repeat it: *“stressed that any conclusions to be drawn from the possible consultations should adequately take account of existing practice and should be acceptable to all Members”*.

CHAIRPERSON

Estonia, we are trying to amend the report and we will try and take on board your point.

Mr Boumedienne MAHI (Algeria)

I am taking the floor a bit late just to react to what has been said by my colleague from Estonia. Actually we do not know what the conclusions after the consultations of the Chairperson will be and it cannot be the practice to say that these conclusions, which we do not yet know, are going to be accepted.

Of course we trust the consultations made by the Chairperson and of course he is going to deliver with full transparency and will somehow deal with the different representatives. But at times, the

Chairperson will present the conclusions to the Organization, or maybe to the Council, and at that time we are going to provide our feedback on them.

We cannot just say now that we are going to accept whatever will be the conclusions of the independent presentation.

CHAIRPERSON

Are there any Members because an Observer has asked for the floor? If there are no Members, I will give the floor to the Russian Federation.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

As an Observer, allow me to support the proposal made by Estonia. We think that it is an important addition to our conclusions for the session of the Council. I would also like to make another remark connected to the possible consultations that the Independent Chairperson of the Council may lead. We would like to say from the outset that the Russian Federation is ready to take part in these consultations.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact, I am strongly reflecting on your intervention.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We quite agree with my colleague from Algeria. I do not think you can put conditions on a conclusion that we do not know.

CHAIRPERSON

In fact Estonia, I was going to say something similar, that we cannot predetermine what is going to happen, what the conclusions will be. Following the ICC's consultation, as I summarized, the issue will still be considered by the CCLM.

I think putting conditions or trying to predetermine the proceedings of the consultations may not be appropriate. So I would request you to agree to my summary without your condition.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

No, unfortunately we are not happy with this suggestion because what we are asking for is a plea for consensus, nothing more.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

Maybe you could adjust the formulation proposed by the European Union to say "*in order to find a solution acceptable to all parties*".

Mr Ali ALBSOUL (Observer for Jordan) (Original language Arabic)

The issue here requires a solution that needs to be found after a process of consultation and the solution has to be in keeping with the Basic Texts of the Organization and must also maintain the principle agreed on by all countries, that has been contested by no Member States; the principle namely of broadening participation in the Council to the extent possible and strengthening the geographical representation of this representation.

So the real issue here is not whether there is any opposition to broadening the participation. There is an agreement on the need for enlarged participation and equitable geographical representation in the Council. That was not the issue.

The issue that was laid before the CCLM is the following; is the seat-sharing arrangement in conformity with the Basic Texts from a legal standpoint or not? We do not need to understand whether this will be a positive exercise or not because we all agree on the need for broader participation.

The question simply is, is this approach in conformity with the Basic Texts from a legal point of view or not?

We know that we all wish for this conformity with the Basic Texts.

CHAIRPERSON

Estonia, since you mentioned that your main purpose was to see that decisions are made by consensus, I propose a wording trying to capture that “noted that any conclusions to be drawn from these consultations should take account of existing practice and be supported by consensus within the Membership”.

Thank you Estonia. I see no other requests for the floor so we can consider this item adopted and we go to the next one.

Item 9. Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration**Point 9. Rapport de situation sur la collaboration entre les organismes des Nations Unies ayant leur siège à Rome****Tema 9. Informe sobre la marcha de las actividades de colaboración de los organismos con sede en Roma**

(CL 158/9)

CHAIRPERSON

The next item on the agenda is item 9, *Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration*. The document before Council is CL 158/9.

I would like to remind Members that, as agreed at the outset, the comments on Rome-based Agencies' collaboration contained in the Reports of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee will be taken into consideration under this item.

I now invite Mr Mario Lubetkin, Directeur de Cabinet, to introduce this item.

DIRECTEUR DE CABINET

Distinguished delegates, dear friends, I have the pleasure to introduce this item on the collaboration among the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs). But before doing so, allow me to welcome our colleagues from IFAD and WFP, who are present on the podium with me today like the representatives of FAO were in the IFAD and WFP meeting last year.

Ladies and gentlemen, at the Council session of December 2016, we presented a paper on RBA collaboration, which built on the last joint paper produced in 2009. At the December session, the Council welcomed the positive development and requested two action items.

Firstly, the holding of a joint meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies. This was done on 15 September of this year when the First Informal Joint Meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies was held.

Secondly, to provide regular updates on the RBAs collaboration. This is what the document before you aims to do. The document shows a short analysis of the current state of RBA collaboration and presents concrete examples of the joint work at country, regional and global levels. The paper also highlights RBA collaboration on specific thematic areas and our efforts to harmonize the provision of joint corporate service at headquarters and in the field. This paper was already discussed at the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees last month and also at the WFP Executive Board. We are thankful for all the comments that we received so far and we listen carefully to your intervention today.

Distinguished delegates, as you know, this year was a very good one for RBA collaboration. We had the first joint field visit of the RBA principals in history, the first joint informal Board and a number of other positive developments. This document intends to give solid evidence of these positive developments happening as well as a brief outlook of future steps the three entities plan to take together.

CHAIRPERSON

I now invite His Excellency Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Chairperson of the Programme Committee, who also chaired the Joint Meeting, to take the floor.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I am pleased to present the outcome of the discussion of the Joint Meeting of the 122nd Session of the Programme Committee and the 169th Session of the Finance Committee and of the Programme Committee on the Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies Collaboration.

I think we had a very good discussion about the important Rome-based Agencies' collaboration for which we are striving and we were very pleased with what is happening now and what will be happening hopefully in the near future.

The Joint Meeting was very pleased with the report on Rome-based Agencies' collaboration and appreciated the full commitment of FAO, WFP and IFAD to strengthening partnerships and collaboration focusing on the synergies and complementarity of the Agencies and encouraged to continue this strong collaboration in support of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

The Joint Meeting looked forward to further reporting on updates of ongoing initiatives and suggested a more analytical approach to the information presented, also through the joint website which will be launched shortly.

Of course, dear colleagues, at the end of today, the results of the joint collaboration on the ground are the most crucial.

The Joint Meeting appreciated efforts to improve annual progress reports, and to report on lessons learned, challenges faced and possible financial benefits. It welcomed the informal meeting and also encouraged improvement of annual joint informal meetings of Governing Bodies of Rome-based Agencies, within existing resources, and their timely preparation, with the involvement of the membership of the organizations, as well as cooperation in the field of cross-cutting issues, such as climate change, governance and gender.

Mr Fazal Abbas MAKEN (Pakistan)

Pakistan welcomes the comprehensive and informative document prepared jointly by FAO, IFAD and WFP. The document presents the status of collaboration between the three organizations and highlights the strengthened coordination at country, regional and global levels, both in thematic areas as well as the joint implementation of programmes in various regions and countries.

The objectives of the three organizations are quite interlinked and so are the issues that they respectively aim to address at the ground level. As such, the recent emphasis on collaboration between the RBAs and other humanitarian actors is a very constructive development. In fact it is critical to the achievement of the SDGs.

The informal Joint Meeting of the FAO Council and WFP and IFAD Executive Boards, held in September this year, is a very practical step in this direction. We are given to understand that this will be an annual event to be hosted in rotation by each of the three Agencies. This will be an excellent mechanism for Members to discuss and provide input for future RBA collaboration.

We would like to congratulate the joint session for deciding to adopt a more concerted and coordinated approach to achieve the primary objective of ending world hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. This would certainly help in precluding the possibility of overlap in the programmes that are supporting and also create an encouraging environment for enhancing coordination amongst the relevant stakeholders in the recipient countries.

One of the pillars of RBA collaboration is the provision of Joint Corporate Services and Annex IV of the document provides a list of activities carried out under this heading. Whilst this is commendable, we believe there may be opportunities for the three organizations to carry out more activities jointly in the areas of administration, finance, human resources management, IT, etc., with a view to synergizing their development agenda.

We understand that a major constraint faced by the RBAs in this respect is that all three organizations have different ERP Systems which are not compatible. We would appreciate information as to whether there is a possibility of carrying out a joint review on how these systems could be made compatible to each other and the benefits and savings that might accrue from such an exercise.

Pakistan welcomes the collaboration between the RBAs to plan and execute the next Country Strategic Programme, keeping in view the strengths and comparative advantages of each organization.

On behalf of Pakistan, I assure all three agencies of our full support in the pursuit to create synergies in the delivery of their development agenda.

Sra. María Cristina BOLDORINI (Argentina)

Hago la siguiente declaración en representación de los países del GRULAC. Quisiera agradecerle a las Secretarías de la FAO, el FIDA y el PMA por la elaboración del documento que responde a una solicitud planteada por la membresía desde hace más de un año. Tomamos nota con satisfacción de la presentación clara de las acciones de colaboración al nivel mundial, regional y nacional entre las tres agencias.

En este contexto, nos permitimos recordar que la Agenda 2030 y la implementación de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible número dos, erradicar el hambre, lograr la seguridad alimentaria y la mejora de la nutrición, representan uno de los mayores desafíos para la colaboración de los tres Organismos de la ONU con sede en Roma: colaboración basada en sus respectivos mandatos y fortalezas distintivas. La complejidad de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible requiere una coordinación operativa efectiva entre los tres Organismos, evitando la superposición o fragmentación de esfuerzos y aprovechando al máximo las lecciones aprendidas en la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio.

También nos permitimos hacer hincapié en el papel clave desempeñado por los tres Organismos para ayudar a los Estados Miembros a alcanzar los objetivos como el punto central de convergencia. Nos congratulamos del viaje conjunto que efectuaron a Etiopía los titulares de las tres agencias de la ONU en septiembre pasado, el cual evidenció el serio compromiso a favor de esta colaboración conjunta, no solo por parte de las agencias en Roma, sino por el sistema de las Naciones Unidas en su conjunto. Estamos seguros de que con el tiempo esta colaboración continuará mejorando para el beneficio de cada uno de nuestros países.

Esperamos que los futuros Informes sobre la colaboración de los Organismos con sede en Roma dispongan de mayores elementos de análisis y que incluyan lecciones aprendidas, así como los retos y desafíos a vencer. Es nuestro convencimiento que el identificar los escollos para un trabajo conjunto alentará a los países a refinar sus lineamientos hacia las agencias. Sería deseable que en el futuro las agencias, junto con los Estados Miembros, identificáramos temáticas particulares transversales, como cambio climático, biodiversidad, género y gobernanza, en las cuales trabajar de manera conjunta, involucrando a los Órganos Rectores en la definición de prioridades. En este sentido, se podría considerar que en sesiones futuras las discusiones se pudieran centrar en torno a un tema específico.

A este respecto, y con relación a la Primera Reunión Conjunta oficiosa de los Órganos Rectores de la FAO, del FIDA y del PMA, celebrado el pasado 15 de septiembre, consideramos que, aunque permitió iniciar una interacción interesante, hay varios temas que se pueden mejorar, como, por ejemplo, involucrar en mayor medida a los Estados Miembros en su preparación y dar tiempo suficiente para permitir que todas las delegaciones puedan tomar la palabra.

Por último, deseamos destacar también que hace unas semanas, el titular de la oficina regional de la FAO para América Latina y el Caribe nos informó que firmó con sus contrapartes del FIDA y del PMA dos memorandos de entendimiento para reforzar la colaboración al nivel regional. A partir de estos acuerdos, las tres agencias están recopilando experiencias pasadas que hayan resultado en una colaboración exitosa, así como escollos surgidos en su momento, con el propósito de aprender de este proceso de colaboración y construir sobre él.

Asimismo, hemos sido informados que las tres agencias tienen la intención de desarrollar programas conjuntos en Haití, Guatemala y Colombia durante el año 2018. Estas son iniciativas que apoyamos plenamente y esperamos sus resultados y alentamos a que esta colaboración continúe y se fortalezca.

Señor Presidente, el Día Mundial de la Alimentación coincidió con un escenario en que el hambre a nivel mundial está aumentando por primera vez en más de una década, afectando a 815 millones de personas, el equivalente al 11% de la población mundial. Con una colaboración conjunta y solidaria de los tres Organismos con sede en Roma, con los gobiernos nacionales y otros organismos de

cooperación internacional, podríamos llegar a la meta del Hambre Cero en 2030. Cuenta con nuestro apoyo para este fin.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We welcome the Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) collaboration and express our strong appreciation for the strengthened coordination efforts between RBAs. Agenda 2030 constitutes, indeed, the greatest opportunity ever presented for RBA collaboration.

The joint document on RBA collaboration presented one year ago has the potential to represent a turning point for the UN's food, nutrition and agriculture hub in Rome. Stronger collaboration among the RBAs with clear, measurable commitments is indispensable not only in order to avoid unnecessary and burdensome duplications and overlaps, but also with a view to developing a shared, comprehensive long-term strategic orientation for the UN Rome hub. In light of the momentous challenges ahead of us – the world is indeed facing the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II and hunger and malnutrition are on the rise – this is absolutely necessary for an enhanced and more focused impact at global and local levels in order to reach zero hunger in 2030.

We welcome the identification of the four pillars of RBA collaboration and appreciate the examples of strengthened coordination efforts showcased in the document, which testify to the strong commitment of the RBAs' management. Nonetheless, to enhance the collaborative efforts, we would like to make the following suggestions.

While appreciating the indication of concrete steps forward at headquarters and in several thematic areas, countries and regions, we would appreciate a more analytical report with a clear identification of outputs on thematic areas in order to make it easier to measure progress. This would, in our view, allow both the Membership and the RBAs to see a comprehensive assessment and monitoring of the work done thus far and the end result to be achieved. We also appreciate the organisation of the first ever joint informal meeting in September of this year. We look forward to working together with the other RBA Governing Bodies to improve the agenda and format of the next meeting in 2018.

At headquarters and, where possible at a country level, collaboration with regard to administrative services and institutional communication can be strengthened. In addition, setting goals and timeframes will be essential to measuring progress. We also consider that CFS provides an excellent opportunity for enhanced RBA collaboration, as a unique platform to which FAO, IFAD and WFP are already actively and synergistically committed.

The FAO Membership also has a role to play in this regard, and we would welcome voluntary contributions towards projects with added value and efficiency if carried out together by the RBAs.

As a strong supporter of RBA collaboration, we would like once again to commend FAO for the achievements thus far and look forward to further results. The EU strongly encourages FAO to advance along this promising path.

With these remarks, we endorse the conclusion on this issue as set out in the report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme Committee and Finance Committee.

Sr. Elías Rafael ELJURI ABRAHAM (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Hago esta declaración en nombre del grupo del grupo de los G77 más China. El grupo G77 más China agradece la actualización de la colaboración de los Organismos con sede en Roma y aprecia el nivel significativamente mejorado de cooperación y asociación entre las tres organizaciones a lo largo de los cuatro pilares de la colaboración, así como el enfoque en la sinergia y la complementariedad.

Creemos que estamos en una experiencia de aprendizaje, y que los tres Organismos con sede en Roma continuarán fortaleciendo su colaboración sobre la base de lecciones aprendidas, en beneficio de todos los Estados Miembros, y en particular a los esfuerzos nacionales para implementar la Agenda 2030.

Enaltecemos la reciente visita de los directores de los tres Organismos a Etiopía y la reunión informal conjunta que fue una confirmación al más alto nivel del compromiso de una mejor coordinación y sinergia entre las tres organizaciones. Creemos que es muy necesaria una estrecha colaboración y

coordinación en el contexto de la Agenda 2030, y también en el contexto de la reforma de las Naciones Unidas iniciada por el Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas, que exige una colaboración sólida entre las agencias de la ONU y la eliminación de aislamiento de todo el sistema de las Naciones Unidas.

Consideramos que el grupo consultivo principal es un mecanismo importante para una mejor coordinación en materia temática. Sugerimos mantener a los Miembros informados sobre los principales resultados de estas reuniones.

Hacemos un llamamiento a las tres organizaciones para que sigan dando prioridad a la colaboración a nivel de país, garantizando sinergia y evitando la duplicación y alineándose con prioridades y necesidades nacionales.

Cuando se trata de cuestiones temáticas, apoyamos a los Organismos con sede en Roma seguir respondiendo tanto a áreas temáticas emergentes como a solicitudes específicas de los Estados Miembros.

Creemos que las prioridades, como la nutrición, el cambio climático, la gobernanza, la creación de resiliencia y la promoción de la Cooperación Sur-Sur, deben estar como prioridad en las áreas temáticas de cooperación conjunta entre los Organismos con sede en Roma. La eficacia de las actividades operativas sobre el terreno se evaluará de conformidad con los resultados y la capacidad de asistencia del sistema de las Naciones Unidas para erradicar el hambre, impulsar el crecimiento económico y el desarrollo sostenible en los países receptores.

Como se indica en la resolución 71-243 de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, afirmamos la necesidad de avanzar hacia una acción integrada en respuesta a la naturaleza integrada indivisible de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible, al mismo tiempo que enfatizamos la importancia de fortalecer la apropiación nacional y el liderazgo para poder operar como un sistema dentro de los países y también entre ellos a nivel regional y mundial para mejorar la coordinación, coherencia, eficacia y eficiencia de las actividades operacionales para el desarrollo, atender las necesidades y prioridades de los países del programa y en consonancia con sus respectivos planes y estrategias nacionales.

Mientras tanto, y entendiendo que cada uno de los Organismos con sede en Roma (OSR) tiene su propio conjunto de asociaciones con otras organizaciones de las Naciones Unidas, apoyamos a los OSR a considerar la posibilidad de mejorar el compromiso con otros socios en áreas temáticas relevantes para lograr los objetivos de las tres organizaciones. Esto puede incluir, por ejemplo, la cooperación con OMS, la UNICEF, UNSCN, el CFS, en apoyo del esfuerzo nacional en el contexto del Decenio de Acción sobre la Nutrición.

Creemos que aún hay espacio para una mejor colaboración en el área de los servicios corporativos conjuntos, tanto en las sedes principales de las agencias como en el campo. Apreciamos las iniciativas para la colaboración en el campo de la tecnología de la información y las comunicaciones, incluida la creación de la página web del grupo. También sugerimos considerar la colaboración en trabajo administrativo como el de contabilidad y recursos humanos.

Finalmente, esperamos con interés la próxima reunión conjunta de los OSR, las actualizaciones futuras y el seguimiento efectivo de las decisiones conjuntas tomadas por los directores.

Mr Badreldin MOHAMED (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

We would like to express our appreciation to the collaboration between the RBAs and the work you have done so far. Perhaps it would be interesting here to recall the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(continues in English)

He said: “*the lives of millions of people depend on our collective ability to act. There is no excuse for inaction or indifference*”.

(continues in Arabic)

This is what makes us truly believe that the collaboration between the RBAs is of paramount importance. We have seen that the United Nations at large are working together and together now is the time for us to do the same.

The Rome-based Agencies have so far come up with a number of reports. This is the second one. We believe that the work of CFS has been extremely important. It has been an example to be given in terms of collaboration. I believe that we need to continue on this path and we need to have Member States more involved in joint RBAs activities. We look forward to seeing your work and we expect to see joint activities. We request the RBAs they further collaborate, because this is the essential component if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

China supports the statement delivered by the G77 and China made by Venezuela. We also would like to thank the Secretariat for producing the report.

Concerning the collaboration between the RBAs, China approves the contents of the report. Reinforcing the collaboration of the three RBAs is something that goes in our interest and we all do hope that these three Rome-based Agencies will be able to leverage on their comparative advantage and reinforce coordination, make savings, and improve effectiveness. This in order to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In that regard, we have three points that we would like to raise.

Firstly, concerning the collaboration of the three bodies and the allocation of tasks. Of course, the three agencies were created in three totally different contexts, so they are endowed with different legal instruments and they have different mandates, different remits. So, the three RBAs have to leverage on their comparative advantages according to their mandate.

For example, we believe that, FAO should focus more on agricultural production and the production of food commodities, including, sustainable production and the capacity development, whereas WFP would place emphasis on humanitarian aid through the delivery of food commodities. As for capacity development, WFP focuses more on resilience, whereas IFAD places emphasis on financial loans in rural areas. Therefore, IFAD, has the comparative advantage in poverty reduction.

Now, in this collaboration effort, it is important to try to avoid duplication of efforts and set priorities. Thus, it is important not only to have joint projects, but also provide for specific and special projects and actions. We should be looking not only at collaboration and cooperation, but also we should focus on the breakdown and the allocation of tasks.

Secondly, the scope of collaboration of the three Agencies should not be too extensive. It should focus on food security and nutrition. In this respect, I do have the impression that the document of the Secretariat focuses on too many aspects, namely: collaboration at the national, regional, and global levels; it focuses on thematic issues as well as the joint delivery of institutional services.

There are sixty-nine points of collaboration and we believe that this is too dispersed. On the contrary, we believe that we need to concentrate efforts to achieve more. Therefore, we should focus more on food security and malnutrition. Collaboration should realign on increasing agricultural productivity and address rural areas and it should converge on the specific characteristics of each agency, while trying to underscore the different value chains and the different areas and measures.

Thirdly, we believe that the three agencies should consider South-South Cooperation as a point of support, while confirming, of course, the leading role of FAO in South-South Cooperation when it comes to agriculture.

The Triangular Cooperation is also of high importance. We would like to have further and additional information on this point. We do hope that the three agencies can perhaps involve more Member States in the South-South cooperation efforts and work to produce further communication on that front.

In this regard, we propose that in the future documents more references should be made on the best practices in South-South Cooperation.

Recently we had a report concerning South-South Cooperation in Turkey and we do hope that next year at the appropriate time, the RBAs might be able to think about organizing a forum on South-South Cooperation or a special event dedicated to South-South Cooperation.

So broadly speaking, we believe that definitely there has been an improvement in the collaboration between RBAs and we should continue along this path.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan supports the statement made by G77 and China on the Update of the RBA Collaboration. We also welcome the progress report and look forward to reading future similar project reports with special focus on results achieved, preferably by regions.

Afghanistan also supports points a)-f) of paragraph 7 of the Report of the Joint Meeting on this subject.

To supplement the statement by G77 and China, Afghanistan wishes to make the following four observations.

Firstly, collaboration is embedded in the fundamentals of the three Rome-based Agencies. There is high degree of complementarity between the regions which is a world free of hunger and malnutrition, inclusive rural transformation, and raising the standard of living for all.

While each agency has its own Strategic Objectives, there is a common purpose. To be precise, the essence of Strategic Objective 1 of FAO and Strategic Objective 1, 2, and 3 of WFP is more or less the same. That is to end hunger, and to improve food security and nutrition for all.

FAO's Strategic Objective 3 and IFAD's Strategic Objective 1 share the same salient features. That is tackle rural poverty in all of its forms. Similarly, Strategic Objective 2 of IFAD and Strategic Objective 4 of FAO are the two sides of the same coin, namely to make the food system efficient and sustainable to enhance livelihood of the rural people.

Likewise, the building blocks of FAO's Strategic Objective 2 and 5 and IFAD's Strategic Objective 3 have common features, namely to strengthen the synergy between sustainable agriculture and economic resilience of the rural communities to meet climate shocks and other threats.

Secondly, contribution to SDGs is another channel of collaboration among the RBAs. For example, SDG 2 which is end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture can receive contribution from all the five Strategic Objectives of FAO, the first three Strategic Objectives of WFP, and the thematic focus areas one, two, three, four and ten of IFAD.

Similarly, as for contribution to SDG 7, to strengthen the means of implementation and utilize the global partnership, we can receive contribution from Strategic Objective 4 of FAO, Strategic Objective 4 and 5 of WFP, and the thematic area 2 and 6 of IFAD.

Thirdly, the initiation of joint activities at the country level should receive the highest priority, with South-South and Triangular Cooperation as the major ways for the programming and implementation and monitoring of such activities.

Such a step will be in line with the recent policy reform initiated by the UN Secretary General.

Fourthly, the informal Joint Meeting of the RBAs Governing Bodies is highly appreciated and should continue. However, such informal meetings should have a special theme for a more focused dialogue among members.

With these observations, Afghanistan endorses the Progress Report on the RBAs.

Mr Christopher MBEWE (Zambia)

Zambia speaks on behalf of the Africa Group, and would like to join the others that have spoken before us to thank the FAO Secretariat for the progress report on the RBA Collaboration.

Africa appreciates the collaboration of the three RBAs in developing best practices for a range of contexts. This collaboration has greatly contributed to the effective implementation of various programmes. However, we note that further collaboration is needed in important priorities such as nutrition, climate change, resilience building and the promotion of the South-South Cooperation.

The collaboration of important priorities outlined should be in line with the African policies and strategies in order to address current challenges that threaten nationals' food security such as prevalence of pests like Fall Armyworm, and diseases like banana bunchy top virus and peste des petits ruminants, inadequate irrigation infrastructure and adapting to impacts of climate change.

I would like also to add that challenges of financing and intra Africa commodity trading and logistics could be enhanced through promotion of the South-South Cooperation. The learned lessons from the South-South Cooperation experiences would benefit Member States and help them to contribute to the national efforts of implementing Agenda 2030.

The Africa Group welcomes the update on the Rome-based Agencies Collaboration and appreciates the significantly enhanced level of cooperation and partnerships between the three Organizations, WFP, IFAD and FAO along the pillars of cooperation as well as the focus on synergies and complementarity.

Ms Anna GEBREMEDHIN (Finland)

I am making this comment on behalf of the Nordic countries. The EU countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden align themselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its 28 Member States.

The Nordic Countries welcome the commitment of the three RBAs to strengthen their cooperation. We believe that dedicated resources in all three agencies to support the management in bringing the joint agenda forward could be highly useful and would like to ask the Secretariat how FAO is managing RBA collaboration internally. And if possible we would like to have brief comments from WFP, IFAD in this respect.

Ms Hara AYUMI (Japan)

Japan appreciates the efforts of Secretariat for advancing RBA collaboration.

The RBAs collaboration is of great importance for Japan. We believe efficient and effective joint work based on respective technical knowledge and comparative advantages within their mandates, while avoiding duplication, is a key for its success.

In order to show Japan's strong support for the activities of RBAs and their collaboration, Japan decided and already distributed food assistance and hunger relief, as well as Grant Aid this year in response to the severe famine condition in two regions: the Middle East and Africa.

Having said that, let me reiterate Japan's high expectation that the RBAs would take a lead in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the field of food security, nutrition and agriculture.

This underlines the need for RBAs to continuously collaborate with all stakeholders, including other international organizations, government, civil society and the private sector. We request the RBAs to regularly report on the progress made to the Member States and beyond. I close my statement with Japan's strong commitment in advocating RBA collaboration.

Ms Dewi Kartika DAMAYANTI (Indonesia)

Indonesia would like to align itself with the statement made by our Venezuelan colleague on behalf of the G77 and China.

Indonesia welcomes the progress reports of RBA activities and expects this report to continue, including reports from all Member States of FAO.

Indonesia is pleased and encouraged by the demonstration of good relation and strengthened cooperation by the three Heads of Roman Agencies, through the first informal joint meeting of the FAO Council, IFAD Executive Board and WFP Executive Board, as well as the joint trip of three RBAs to Ethiopia which took place in September this year.

Indonesia wishes this positive trend in collaboration to serve as a platform and foundation for an increase and systematic future cooperation by the RBAs, with the objective to reduce duplications, as well as to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

We would like, in particular to commend the joint trip of the Heads of Rome-based Agencies to Ethiopia, which also involved the participation of several Permanent Representatives to RBAs. We are hopeful that this framework of joint RBA field visit could be pursued in the future.

Indonesia views that the RBA collaboration exists, but not yet evident, especially at the country level. Indonesia urges the three RBAs to emphasize on their comparative advantages not to work in silos, but rather to mutually support each other's work to end hunger, poverty, and achieve sustainable rural development. Indonesia truly believes that the increased collaboration will increase impact.

Indonesia also commend that the RBAs have spoken as one voice in many international fora, such as in the High-level Political Forum. We would also like to urge RBAs to promote a more systematic and strengthened cooperation in the field of the South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

In this occasion, Indonesia would also like to highlight the manifestation of collaborative RBA activities with the Government and multi-stakeholder partners in Indonesia. The Government of Indonesia in cooperation with FAO and WFP has published joint products in the form of Food Security Monitoring Bulletin regularly every three months. The Indonesian Government involved in the issuance of this bulletin is led by BMKG with members from the Ministry of Agriculture, BNPB, the Indonesian National Institute of Aviation and Space (LAPAN), and Statistics Indonesia.

This product contains data on the development of rainfall and potential disaster that can result in reduced food security of the community. The bulletin also presents the results of an analysis of early warning of food security in Indonesia by describing the hazard risk and policy recommendations to be taken.

Lastly, Indonesia would like to suggest the integration or harmonization within RBAs as it is practiced by UN agencies in Geneva, where there is one coordinator for all UN agencies. The coordinator could combine and harmonize the programmes of the three RBAs. We believe that this practice could benefit the programme implementation both at headquarters and in the field, as all agencies will be aware of each others' programmes. Thus, this will lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the three agencies.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Canada welcomes the unprecedented level of RBAs collaboration at global, regional, and country levels. We encourage the Secretariat to continue exploring possible collaboration in joint corporate services for greater cost effectiveness.

We would also like to know what kind of advances is FAO making on resilience programming that would help reverse the negative trend of hunger with the two main drivers being conflict and climate change?

Do you feel that it links to the comment made about more analysis or lessons learned given that RBA collaboration is still quite young. Do you feel that it has a clear area of focus for RBA collaboration at country level in particular?

Besides, on the subject of how we can do better, is there something that can be done to foster synergies among the various crosscutting issues at country level?

For example, if FAO is doing a project on climate change in a given country, IFAD on gender, and WFP on nutrition, is there a way that you can team up and have mutually reinforcing interventions that produce multiple outcomes or multiple benefits?

I appreciate that thematic analysis is used in the report, but is there a way to go further in exploring what collaboration could mean in practice?

DIRECTEUR DE CABINET

I would like to answer or comment on some of your pieces of advice or requests. It is clear that we are in the process of creating more synergies and complementarities. I think that we are progressing in it. If we remember our discussions last year and where we are now. We are in the process of an increase of our joint work in new areas, like some requests from Members, for example, the Fall Armyworm that was highlighted today, climate change and so on.

Most of you requested more joint activities in the area of administration, human resources, IT, and we are working on it. Like you have said, it is not easy but we are working on it.

We increase and try to rationalize better our collaboration at headquarters, regional and country levels. I believe that a good example could be Ethiopia. To prepare together the visit to Ethiopia was not easy. It was the first time when three Principles visited one country looking at different areas of the country in a very successful visit that some Permanent Representatives could testify.

We have logically tried to highlight our work in South-South and Triangular Cooperation and I consider that the agreement reached among the three RBAs a few days ago shows that we are working on that. As for the joint work with other institutions, I think we can give here two clear examples on the collaborative efforts we are working on.

You know that the Chairperson of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN) just left IFAD. One of the decisions, taken at the last meeting of the three RBAs that was held at FAO headquarters a few days ago, is to invite again the Chairperson as a Vice-President who will arrive in a few months here to maintain the Chairmanship of the UNSCN. At the same time we decided to work together with other partners like WHO and UNICEF to try to reinforce this position of the RBAs.

As another example, we are supporting the former Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and how we are working together with the new CFS Chairperson. We take note on your request to produce more analytical reports or to prepare better for the next RBA informal meeting in 2018 and I think that we are in the position to do that.

To conclude, allow me to reiterate once again that we are working diligently to push RBA collaboration further and to make sure that the vision of our principles is translated into action at headquarters and in the field. I want to highlight something like one representative says in the framework of this very close relationship between the three Principles that are going today.

And I think that in the framework of this period, I take great pleasure in announcing that the RBA website that you requested last year, is online from this morning. I do not know if it is possible to show. I believe you can check on your cellular phones and on your laptops. That is a very concrete example about facts, how we are working together. Then, at the same time, we can talk about other few examples of the area of collaboration, in which we will work in the near future.

We are coordinating the next joint visit of the RBA Principles in 2018 and we are working between the three RBAs to try to organize two visits, one to Africa in the first half of the year, and the second to Asia in the second half of the year.

We are working hard to finalize the three RBAs Memorandum of Understanding to be signed by the three Principles at the beginning of 2018. And we are exploring the matter of having RBAs room here in FAO where the Chairpersons can work together whenever needed.

These are our few examples about our joint work like you requested us, and you can be sure that we will further follow up on this collaboration in the near future.

Ms Stefania LENUCCI (Special Advisor to the Vice-President of IFAD)

So many of you highlighted the importance of collaboration at a country level and this is something that we certainly very much agree with. The visit of the principals to Ethiopia has been a very good opportunity to highlight the importance and the potential of RBA collaboration on the ground, especially when it comes to strengthening the nexus between humanitarian development and assistance.

We believe that strengthening this collaboration on the ground is very important to maximize our contribution to Agenda 2030 and achieve more impact. This is why we are particularly happy that, following the RBA Principals visit, our teams on the ground are working on an action plan with concrete actions to maximize our synergies.

Also the visits of the RBAs Principals that we are planning in the future will be an opportunity to stimulate more action on the ground and, through these results, really show our strong commitment to the Secretary-General's agenda of reform.

Sra. Stephanie HOCHSTETTER SKINNER-KLÉE (WFP)

Primero que nada, quería agradecer a la FAO por la invitación a participar en la discusión junto con ustedes del documento sobre la colaboración. En general yo creo que las tres agencias hemos tomado nota de los distintos comentarios que se han hecho, primero en el Comité del Programa, luego en la junta en el PMA, próximo hoy acá, luego tendremos la junta de FIDA. Y sin duda hace falta mucho trabajo.

Voy a comenzar por lo que dijo Canadá, que es el más análisis. Sabemos que es nuevo. *El RBA Collaboration* es nuevo para informarles a ustedes como membresía, pero la colaboración se da y se ha dado de distintas maneras en distintas regiones, pero existe. Lo que sí hace falta es la sistematización de esa colaboración para llegar a un alineamiento de objetivos estratégicos que Afganistán bien puntualizó que hay mucha complementariedad entre lo que se puede hacer entre los tres organismos con sede en Roma. Yo creo que hay esfuerzos para buscar mayores oportunidades, tanto en el terreno como en la sede.

Finlandia preguntó específicamente cómo maneja el PMA la colaboración. Puesto que la principal área de colaboración es en el terreno, existe ahora la intención, y esto se va a hacer en conjunto o compartiendo nuestra visión con el FIDA y con la FAO, primero buscar la información a través de nuestras oficinas regionales, porque es muy difícil ir a cada una de las oficinas de país, porque el contexto en el cual se arman los programas varía muchísimo. La manera cómo el PMA formula sus programas en los países, como ustedes saben, a través de los *CSPs*, implica también una consulta con gobiernos. Entonces, es necesaria una discusión al nivel del país que en el proceso de la revisión estratégica del PMA incluido el sistema de Naciones Unidas, y por ende a la FAO y el FIDA cuando están presentes en ese país, justamente para explorar posibles áreas de colaboración.

Cada programa y país va a variar. En el PMA esto también es un nuevo proceso, así que habrá campo para mejorar, pero esa es la fuente de información de la colaboración. Poco a poco iremos profundizándola y viendo cómo más se pueden ir ajustando esas estrategias. La Cooperación Sur-Sur ha sido siempre en PMA un complemento a cualquier tipo de colaboración. Incluso el PMA tiene una política de Colaboración Sur-Sur y Triangular, así que es cuestión, ahora que lo están mencionando más, de ver cómo ese tipo de abordaje se puede casar con una colaboración *RBA*, incluso con otras alianzas.

Con esto quiero terminar para no prolongar la discusión. Es un proceso en curso. Creo que ustedes están viendo con nosotros cómo se pueden mejorar, y los comentarios para cualquier avance en la materia son bienvenidos. Esperamos poder presentarles el año próximo un documento que contenga un poco más de carne de lo que han pedido hasta ahora. Gracias, Presidente.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Chairperson, Programme Committee)

I think when we looked at this agenda item, there was a strong common view and appreciation for the RBA collaboration. I think it was clearly highlighted that although we are seeing good progress, there is also a need for strengthening and reaffirming the cooperation at all levels, not only at headquarters but certainly also at regional and especially at country levels. Let us have a clear focus on results. I think it is important to look at synergies, lessons learned. Cooperation does not go on by itself; it has to have added value for results on the ground and take good notice of the comparative advantages of each of the organizations.

It is clear that, certainly when we also look at the website, we have to step up our efforts at country level and I think more joint field visits would be very much appreciated. I think that should be a focus on themes, especially cross-cutting themes such as climate change, gender, resilience, governance and

all forms of partnerships, South-South, Triangular, but also I think partnerships with other United Nations organizations, and let us not forget the private sector.

I think it is clearly reflected that we have to avoid duplication in work. For that, we need strong collaboration. It is also clear that we can benefit from deepening our analysis of not only the cooperation but also the themes for cooperation.

Last but not least, of course, we have to improve, although we are very positive about the first meeting, but basically a way for strengthening and improving the informal meetings with the involvement of the Governing Bodies, but also, I think, focusing on certain themes.

CHAIRPERSON

This brings us to the end of the discussion on item 9 so let me summarize as follows.

Item 9, Progress Report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration

The Council:

- a) commended the report on Rome-based Agencies collaboration and appreciated the full commitment of FAO, WFP and IFAD to strengthening partnerships and collaboration focusing on the synergies and complementarity of RBA;
- b) welcomed the identification of the four pillars of RBA collaboration and appreciated the examples of strengthened coordination efforts showcased in the document, which testified to the strong commitment of the RBAs management;
- c) encouraged continuation of this strong collaboration in support of the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, particularly at the country level and including South-South and Triangular Cooperation;
- d) encouraged the three Agencies to pursue joint activities in the areas of administration, finance, human resources management and information technology;
- e) noted that the transversality of the SDGs required effective operational coordination among the three organizations, avoiding the overlap or fragmentation of efforts;
- f) appreciated the ongoing efforts to improve the format of annual joint informal meetings of Governing Bodies of Rome-based Agencies, including by ensuring sufficient time for all Members to speak; and
- g) looked forward to further reporting on updates of ongoing initiatives.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Perhaps in your last point, if you could integrate the idea of further than just an update but with lessons learned and analytical information?

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

We also support what was said by the previous speaker. For example, in our statement, it was said that we would appreciate a more analytical report with a clear identification of outputs on thematic areas in order to make it easier to measure progress. So, maybe you find it is possible to take that into consideration.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

In relation to South-South Cooperation, you said encourage cooperation at the national level, including national cooperation. We are not sure about the meaning of this sentence. Is South-South Cooperation only at the national level or is it also at headquarters level? We believe that South-South Cooperation is not limited to the national level, so we need to promote South-South Cooperation, for example, through South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation. We believe that, generally speaking, we need to promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, China. If you could bear with us for a few minutes, we are trying to take your comments on board.

I can now read the incorporation of the comments which Members made. If you agree, I will not read the whole statement. I will just read the paragraphs which have been amended.

So, point c) has been amended, which reads: *“encouraged continuation of the strong collaboration in support of the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, particularly at the country level. Such collaboration should include South-South and Triangular Cooperation as well as other forms of partnerships”*.

And then there was the amendment to point g), which says: *“looked forward to further reporting on updates of ongoing initiatives, including lessons learned and analytical information”*.

And point h): *“encouraged future reports to include outputs on thematic areas in order to make it easier to measure progress”*.

Would you like me to read it again? I see there is an agreement.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I do not know if, after the amendment, South-South Cooperation is limited to the national level or to the four levels.

Continues in English

There should be a focus not only on the country pillar. It should be included in the four pillars. That is my understanding. But I do not think that your language expresses this.

CHAIRPERSON

In proposing this wording, we were assuming that it would give a message not only at the country level but full South-South Cooperation. But if you feel it does not come out, we can have another look.

China, I will read it out again and that will make it easier to understand.

It would read *“encouraged continuation of the strong collaboration in support of the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda, particularly at the country level”*.

And then we make a new paragraph which says *“such collaboration should encompass South-South and Triangular Cooperation as well as other forms of partnerships”*.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China)

I think the point is focused on the South-South and Triangular Cooperation in four pillars, not only at the country level. That is the key point. I think maybe we move such kinds of cooperation to before in particular at the country level. That would cover four pillars.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

To address the issue which is discussed with China. Could you please read it again?

CHAIRPERSON

Point g) reads: *“looked forward to further reporting on updates of ongoing initiatives, including lessons learned and analytical information”*.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

That last part of the sentence, I am not really comfortable because it is too vague. What is analytical information? I think when you are already discussing initiatives, their implementation, and the lessons learned, it is on the lesson learned that you do the analysis. And then you describe the next steps probably. This is how I look at it.

When you mentioned that it is something relating to analytical information, it is too vague. We should give correct guidance and probably this may also help the Secretariat to have the plan of the report, how we should represent it.

CHAIRPERSON

China, we will read out an amended paragraph and shift it to another section of the conclusions to take on board the point you raised. But first I will read the point b) which referred to the pillars of RBA Collaboration.

So point b) reads: *“welcomed the identification of the four pillars of RBA collaboration and appreciated the examples of strengthened coordination efforts showcased in the document which testified to the strong commitment of the RBAs Management”*.

Now here is the amended paragraph.

Encouraged the three agencies to include South-South and Triangular Cooperation as well as other forms of partnership within the four pillars of RBA collaboration.

Good. Thank you, China.

To the point raised by Cameroon about the wording of point g), specifically the words analytical information being too vague, we made this amendment following the intervention of Canada.

Canada, would you be able to specify something specific under this analytical information?

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Well perhaps analysis means that it is more than just giving examples or giving an activity going on, so perhaps if we would say looking forward to further analytical updates, including lessons learned. But an analysis is more than lessons learned. Sometimes it is lessons learned, it is too soon to have a lesson learned but you can still make an analysis of perhaps some initial findings and some gaps or something a bit more qualitative than just a completion of activities and examples.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We are talking about future progress reports to be more analytical in Cameroon’s point of view. It would be better just to say future progress reports should allow for indicators of outputs and outcomes achieved. Everyone knows that.

CHAIRPERSON

Cameroon and Canada, let me read out a revised version and let me see.

So point g) would read: looked forward to further reporting on analytical updates of ongoing initiatives and lessons learned. Of – looked forward to further reporting containing analytical updates of ongoing initiatives and lessons learned.

Do you have a suggestion?

Mr Mougui MÉDI (Cameroon)

For me it is clear enough. There is a process for presenting that kind of report. If you want analytical information that is okay with me but we should be precise. Probably, we shall be describing the ongoing and joint initiatives wherever they are going, how they were implemented, what were the lessons learned, and what could be the next steps. For me, that is the process where I think we could put flesh on the analytical information. I have no problem if we can add analytical information at the beginning. But at least let’s put some flesh inside. Otherwise it would be very vague and it will be like a computer. Garbage in, garbage out.

CHAIRPERSON

So I will read it out again. *“Looked forward to further reporting containing analytical updates of ongoing initiatives and lessons learned as well as proposals for the next steps”*.

I think now we have agreement.

At this point, I would like to first of all suggest that we have been sitting for nearly four hours and I think we should break for ten minutes to stretch our legs. We have interpretation up until 9:00 to finish our agenda. So with your agreement, I would adjourn the meeting for ten minutes and get back here after the short interim.

The meeting was suspended from 18.55 to 19.18 hours

La séance est suspendue de 18 h 55 à 19 h 18

Se suspende la sesión de las 18.55 a las 19.18 horas

Item 8. Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (9-13 October 2017)

Point 8. Rapport de la quarante-quatrième session du Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (9-13 octobre 2017)

Tema 8. Informe del 44.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (9-13 de octubre de 2017)

(C 2019/19)

CHAIRPERSON

We now continue with item 8 of the agenda, *Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security*, which was held in Rome from 9 to 13 October 2017. Please ensure you have document C 2019/19 before you.

I now invite His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security, to introduce this item.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial)

Es un gran honor dirigirme a este Consejo para presentar el informe del 44.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial (CSA), el cual se reunió en esta casa los días 9 al 13 de octubre.

Como bien sabemos, el CSA es la plataforma más abierta e inclusiva del sistema internacional, dedicada a la coordinación global y a la convergencia de políticas en materia de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional.

El CSA, como único Órgano Rector donde se escuchan las voces de los Estados Miembros y de todos los demás actores en condiciones de igualdad, volvió a mostrar su poder de convocatoria: el Secretariado expidió 1573 acreditaciones a delegados de 123 Estados Miembros y más de 200 organizaciones, incluyendo 112 de la sociedad civil, 62 del sector privado y 12 de agencias especializadas de Naciones Unidas, además de numerosas instituciones financieras, filantrópicas y de investigación.

A lo largo de la semana del CSA, los participantes debatieron cuestiones de fondo en las asambleas plenarias y en 56 actividades paralelas, las cuales contaron con asistencia masiva para el intercambio de conocimientos y experiencias sobre una amplia variedad de temas relacionados con la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional.

Una encuesta levantada por el Secretariado muestra que el 80% de quienes participaron en las actividades paralelas afirman que las mismas les permitieron acceder a un número de actores relevantes con quienes no habrían tenido la oportunidad de interactuar, de no haber sido por estos encuentros.

Continues in English

The first day of CFS 44 was dedicated to the most ambitious endeavor of the international community in our time, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We heard clear messages on the strategic priorities from Secretary General Mr António Guterres (by video link), from the Director-General of FAO, Mr Graziano da Silva, the President of IFAD Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo and the Executive Director of WFP, Mr David Beasley, as well as from Chairperson Caron of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), and my predecessor Her Excellency Ambassador of Sudan Amira Gornass.

In light of the alarming increase in the number of chronically undernourished people, all of them spoke on the urgent need to redouble efforts in the fight against food insecurity.

In mid-September, as the CFS delegates were getting ready to gather in Rome, one of the FAO flagship publications – the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world – revealed that for the first time in 14 years, the number of people suffering from chronic hunger and severe malnutrition had increased by 38 million. This number equals the entire population of countries such as Poland or Canada, and represents more individuals than the entire population of 55 Member States.

The total number of people that cannot reliably produce or buy food for themselves and their children, and who are not sure on where their next meal is coming from – or if they are going to find anything to eat at all – is estimated at 815 million: as many as the citizens of 141 Member States.

According to the SOFI report, prepared in collaboration with IFAD, WFP, UNICEF and WHO, the already weakening trend towards a world free from hunger and malnutrition before 2030 is now in danger of not being met. To learn of the magnitude of this reversal was frustrating, because the commitment we all made to match with actions the political will to eradicate hunger is now a lot more difficult to achieve.

At the same time, no one who has been paying attention can say that the terrible news that SOFI report delivered was surprising, because we can all see what is going on in the world. According to the report, across the so-called global South the ravages of man-made conflicts, climate change, and the lingering crises that result from them are casting a shadow on the human condition.

Consequently, men, women and children either submit to the suffering and the indignity of hunger and accept an early death or they escape their communities and their home countries in a desperate bid to survive somewhere else. The findings conveyed by the SOFI report expose a situation that is morally unacceptable and politically unsustainable.

CFS 44 called all stakeholders to action, urging them to use and apply CFS policy products, in particular the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises. On the opening day we also heard a keynote address on sustainable food systems by former President John Kufuor of Ghana, followed by a debate led by the Minister of Agriculture of Yemen, one of the four Ministers attending. CFS discussed selected experiences toward achieving SDG 2, based on the Voluntary National Reviews submitted in July to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

This discussion highlighted some early progress and identified challenges, including how to simultaneously address all forms of malnutrition, how to support small-scale food producers in adopting more productive and sustainable practices, and how to improve the sustainability of food systems while addressing regional inequalities and the rural-urban divide.

The Committee provided guidance for finalizing the CFS contribution to the upcoming HLPF meeting next July under the theme “*Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies*”, and asking for work on 2019 contribution to commence. CFS 44 endorsed a set of policy recommendations that recognize the importance of strengthening the role of forests and trees; these policy recommendations were informed by the HLPE report on sustainable forestry.

The Plenary encouraged all stakeholders to disseminate, make use of, and support the application of these policy recommendations, which will be forwarded to relevant bodies such as the Committees on Agriculture and on Forestry, HLPF, the UN Forum on Forests, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

CFS 44 dedicated ample time to discussions on nutrition; on good practices and challenges in investments for healthy food systems; on progress follow up on the second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2); and on the launch of the HLPE report on nutrition and food systems. This HLPE report and ongoing discussions provide a solid base for developing terms of reference, due by CFS 45, for a voluntary instrument for policy coherence and convergence on nutrition and food systems.

The plenary endorsed the Consultation Report on the CFS Evaluation, instructing the Bureau to report to CFS 45 on finalizing and implementing the response to the recommendations; this comprehensive review, when completed, will ensure CFS performs its roles with efficiency and effectiveness.

We are already embarking on work, resulting from the evaluation, to make CFS more strategic and results-oriented within its existing resources; this process needs and – I dare say – demands the commitment of all Member States and other stakeholders to ensure the CFS of the future reflects what we need and want it to be. I encourage all Council members to bring this call to action to your constituents in all the regional groups, to shape this renewed CFS through the intersessional work scheduled over the coming months.

Further on this point, I am happy to report that the CFS Chairperson is meeting individually with all 24 CFS Bureau members and alternates to establish a channel for direct and permanent consultation; a similar connection has been established with the Secretariat. I also wish to report that the relationship between the Chairperson and each individual member of the CFS Secretariat, as well as with the team as a whole, is excellent.

In this context, it is also appropriate to report that the Chairperson has met with the leaders of the three Rome-based agencies, and has received assurances from Director-General Graziano, President Hounbou and Executive Director Beasley that they will continue to support CFS both in fulfilling its mandate and in the spirit of RBA collaboration that is central to their work at the helm of FAO, IFAD and WFP.

The Council had time to discuss this earlier this afternoon. The plenary also agreed that, continuing work commenced last year next, it will hold two inter-sessional events on Urbanization and Rural Transformation in 2018 to determine the feasibility of policy convergence in the context of changing rural-urban dynamics. CFS 44 endorsed the first periodic update of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, the GSF; welcomed the creation of the online GSF; and encouraged all stakeholders to promote and facilitate the dissemination of this tool.

The Plenary also agreed to hold three Global Thematic Events: the first one, in 2018, on the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security; the second event, in 2020, on the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises; and the third one, in 2022, on the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.

CFS 44 adopted the Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2018-19 (MYPOW), which provides an overview of the objectives, expected outcomes, process and budget of future workstreams, including the HLPE reports; the Committee noted that the current level of financial resources is insufficient, and invited all stakeholders to contribute to closing the funding gap.

The Plenary also found that certain elements of the reformed CFS require profound corrections if they are going to be useful and effective; this is especially true for the Advisory Group, a device that was created eight years ago in a period of extremely complex negotiations, and whose structure and procedures have become a political battleground and, consequently, a distraction to CFS.

Lastly, I would like to point out that the latest session continued to be papersmart; we further reduced our global footprint by offsetting the emissions from the air travel and local commuting produced during CFS 44.

Continúa en español

Estos son algunos de los puntos destacados del reporte del CSA 44.

Deseo aprovechar la ocasión para hacer un llamado a todos los Estados Miembros y observadores de este órgano a que den un nuevo paso hacia delante y profundicen su involucramiento en los trabajos del CSA para que el Comité pueda alcanzar su potencial y cumplir su mandato.

El Presidente y la Mesa del CSA requieren de orientaciones claras y de apoyo firme para enfrentar cuestiones cuya solución exige voluntad política y coraje moral.

Una y otra vez escuchamos a los líderes de las tres agencias —y nos escuchamos unos a otros, de todas las formas posibles— decir que para lograr las metas y objetivos que nos hemos impuesto en materia de seguridad alimentaria y nutricional debemos hacer las cosas de modo distinto.

El Reporte SOFI 2017 ha sonado la alarma; en poco más de doce años —en diciembre de 2029— el mundo habrá erradicado el hambre... o no. En cualquiera de los dos casos, el mundo examinará las palabras que pronunciamos en el CSA 44 y en el Consejo 158, y juzgará lo que hicimos en la realidad concreta a partir de dichas palabras.

Ms Galina JEVGRAFOVA (Estonia)

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States.

We highly value the proceedings of the 44th Session of the CFS and welcome the remarkable attendance - around 1500 representatives of the various CFS stakeholder groups. This shows the relevance of CFS on the global scene in food security and nutrition matters, and the high-level of expectations we all have regarding CFS. At the same time we note that the participation at ministerial level was disappointing.

During this session, CFS members had a constructive debate on the way to improve CFS impacts as a follow-up to CFS evaluation. It has been recognised that there is a need for CFS to improve its core functions as a multi-stakeholder platform for discussing global food security and nutrition issues, including policy convergence, through a more attractive and appropriate format for the plenary sessions. This should aim to increase participation of key persons engaged in food security and nutrition issues, including ministers and high-level representatives from civil society and the private sector, in order to enhance the impact of CFS and its products on domestic processes.

There is also a need to improve its visibility outside Rome and the implementation of its products at all levels. All stakeholders have a responsibility in this regard. We therefore call for a stronger involvement of all, including RBAs, in supporting efforts to disseminate and implement CFS policy products, including through their partnership agreements - thus making CFS more effective. We particularly encourage the RBAs to scale up their efforts to make CFS better known. We appreciated the commitment manifested by the Director-General along these lines during the last CFS session.

In this context, we support the work plan for the Evaluation Workstream for the coming year, and are ready to fully engage in this work. We also welcome the organisation of the global thematic events to monitor the implementation of the major CFS products and we encourage all members to hold events aiming to monitor also other CFS policy recommendations.

We encourage members to financially support CFS and recall the need for all Regional Groups to share the financial burden in a balanced way. The budgets of CFS and the HLPE continue to be an issue of serious concern. The EU, as a strong supporter of CFS, has decided to again play its part and will provide EUR 3 million over four years, allowing CFS to follow up the evaluation findings, and HLPE to continue producing its reports that underpin CFS' policy work. In order to ensure continued quality and added value, we also strongly encourage CFS not to overload its agenda. We recall that translation is critical for ensuring the inclusiveness of CFS work.

All constituencies have reaffirmed the important role that CFS can play in advancing nutrition, which appears as a priority in the CFS programme of work. In line with ICN 2 outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and based on the HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems presented at the plenary, we are ready to engage in a concrete follow-up with the aim of achieving policy recommendations for a major CFS product on this key issue.

We welcome the policy recommendations on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition, and we would like to know how FAO plans to use them in the Committee on Forestry (COFO) discussions and - most importantly - encourage countries to use them.

Looking ahead to next year's CFS session, we welcome the announcement by the Director-General that a high-level event will be held on the occasion of the World Food Day in 2018. We encourage FAO Management to organise this event in close cooperation with CFS.

Lastly, we welcome the election of His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo of the Dominican Republic as Chairperson of CFS, and of the new Bureau members and their alternates. We trust in their continuous commitment. We reaffirm our full support to CFS and we look forward to further engaging actively with CFS members in the future.

Sr. Elías Rafael ELJURI ABRAHAM (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Hago esta declaración en nombre del grupo de G77 más China.

En ocasión de conocer el Informe del 44.º período de sesiones del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial, el Grupo de los 77 más China desea aprovechar la oportunidad para reconocer la labor desarrollada por la embajadora de la República del Sudán, Amira Gornass, durante el bienio en el que desempeñó la presidencia del CSA, con carácter y sabiduría. La Embajadora Gornass resultó elegida por aclamación para presidir el CSA en octubre de 2015 como candidata de la región del Cercano Oriente. Durante su mandato, la Embajadora Gornass desplegó sus cualidades de liderazgo en defensa de los hambrientos de todo el mundo, poniendo especial énfasis en dar visibilidad a la alimentación adecuada como derecho humano fundamental.

En su declaración inaugural del CSA 44 realizada el pasado 9 de octubre, la Embajadora Gornass afirmó que los derechos humanos, y en particular el derecho a la alimentación adecuada, debe ser el compás que oriente a nuestras acciones. La ex presidenta del CSA dio voz a las mujeres y a las niñas que padecen inseguridad alimentaria en el mundo en desarrollo, así como a comunidades vulnerables de las diferentes regiones. Al concluir la responsabilidad de conducir los pasos de un comité de relevancia crucial para la consecución de objetivos globales contra el hambre, la Embajadora Gornass subrayó que el primer papel del CSA debería ser mantener el derecho a la alimentación en un lugar preeminente de la agenda global hasta que todas las personas tengan acceso a alimentos adecuados, saludables y nutritivos.

Ahora se somete al Consejo el Informe del CSA 44, hacemos este reconocimiento a la Embajadora Gornass ante el honorable plenario y solicitamos que se haga mención de esta intervención en el lugar del informe que sea apropiado.

Aprovechamos la ocasión para dar la bienvenida al Embajador de la República Dominicana, Mario Arvelo, quien fue electo por aclamación como 22.º Presidente del CSA el pasado 13 de octubre. Antes de desempeñar tareas de gobernanza global desde la presidencia del Comité de Agricultura, el embajador Arvelo laboró en la sociedad civil y en el sector privado. De su discurso de investidura recogemos dos ámbitos cruciales de acción conjunta, que el logro del ODS dos esté en el centro de la atención global y que el Consejo de Seguridad Alimentaria pueda fortalecerse como plataforma única, abierta e inclusiva para debatir y proponer soluciones concretas para erradicar el hambre y la malnutrición.

Confiamos que, como su predecesora, su gestión al frente del Consejo de Seguridad Alimentaria resultará exitosa. Les quiero señalar que el documento ‘El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición’ del G77 más China vamos a pasarlo para que forme parte de los documentos del Consejo. Sin embargo, quisiera señalar solamente un punto en concreto. El grupo desea felicitar a la FAO, al FIDA, al PMA, al UNICEF y a la OMS por la calidad del Informe, ‘El estado de la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición en el mundo 2017’. Creemos que el nuevo Informe representa una mejora en el seguimiento de los progresos hacia el logro de un mundo libre de hambre y malnutrición en el contexto de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Lamentablemente, el Informe nos ha mostrado que estamos lejos de alcanzar los objetivos que establecimos en la Agenda 2030, ya que el número de personas subnutridas aumentó a 815 millones en 2016, 38 millones más que en el 2015. El Informe completo va a estar para su disposición dentro de los documentos de este Consejo.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

We welcome the report of CFS 44 and we express our appreciation for the intensive work achieved by the CFS in the last year under the leadership of the previous Chairperson, Her Excellency Ambassador Amira Gornass.

We take this opportunity to once again congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo and express our support for his leadership.

The CFS is currently undergoing an intensive process to formulate its response to the Evaluation Report and implement its recommendations. Egypt believes that this process co-facilitated by China

and Germany is key to the future of the Committee and its effectiveness, in particular at the country level. We call for a meaningful participation of Member States in this process with the support of the Rome-based Agencies (RBA) to agree on decisions of critical importance to the CFS, such as the development of a strategic content, development of a new MYPOW as well as a resource mobilization strategy, and improving the effectiveness of the CFS Advisory Group.

One key challenge to the CFS is sustainable financing. We call on all stakeholders, and in particular donors, to provide unearmarked funding to permit the implementation of the Multi-Year Programme of Work in an integral way. We also call on FAO and the RBAs to enhance their support to the CFS. This could also include supporting the CFS in the formulation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy in accordance with Recommendation 3 of the Evaluation Report.

In CFS 44, we welcomed the adoption of different policy recommendations that are very relevant to the implementation of Agenda 2030, in particular with relevance to the workstreams on SDGs, nutrition, forestry, and urbanization. We call upon all stakeholders to consider the implementation of these policy recommendations within their national plans to achieve SDGs.

We encourage FAO and other RBAs to actively disseminate information about relevant CFS products and their use. When it comes to the current workstreams, we would like to thank Switzerland, FAO, WHO, and other donors who contributed to the cost of the translation of the HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems which will allow the start of the process of developing terms of reference for the Voluntary Guidelines.

We also support the active engagement of the CFS in HLPF in New York, which again confirms the added value of CFS as a multi-stakeholder platform.

Finally, we would like to again thank Ambassador Arvelo for his leadership and thank the CFS Secretariat for the excellent and high-level support to the CFS work and its exceptional multiple workstreams.

Mr Mitiku Tesso JEBESSA (Ethiopia)

Ethiopia is making this statement on the Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security on behalf of the Africa Regional Group.

The Africa Regional Group believes that the 44th Session of CFS was well organized and held its meeting and different important side events in which different scientific thoughts were well deliberated. Several policy recommendations on such topics as sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition, the consultation report for the preparation of the response to the CFS evaluation to be finalized, the document presented as the basis for the contribution of CFS to the 2018 HLPE review were endorsed.

The Africa Regional Group very well recognizes the recommendation by the Council of the Open-Ended Working Group on nutrition to develop terms of reference for submission to plenary in CFS 45 in 2018 to guide future policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems.

All the recommendations forwarded by the Council including all the stakeholders to contribute to closing the existing financial gap in CFS, the endorsement of the first periodic update of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition and the welcoming of the Forum on Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition, as an opportunity to discuss the challenges that remain in realizing women's empowerment which will lead to achieve gender equality are all appreciated by Africa Regional Group.

Urbanization, rural transformation and implications for food security and nutrition was also a very relevant topic discussed in the Council where we all appreciated the development taking place in changing rural-urban dynamics possibly laying the basis for the informed CFS policy convergence.

The Africa Regional Group very well understands the work done by CFS in the past and it continues to believe and support activities to be carried out in the future. The Group would like to raise an important issue of what other mechanisms should be implemented by CFS to reach to the goal of maintaining food security globally, so that there will be no hunger, SDG is achieved fully by 2030 and no one is left behind.

Finally, the Africa Regional Group fully endorses the report. We have already recognized the work of His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security and look forward to working with him.

Mr Keun Hyung HONG (Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea is honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Regional Group.

We would like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño, Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security for presenting the Report on the 44th Session of the CFS that took place on 9 to 13 October 2017.

We take this opportunity to once again convey our highest appreciation to Her Excellency Ambassador Amira Gornass, the previous Chairperson of the Committee on World Food Security, for her able leadership during her tenure as a Chairperson in 2015-2017.

We also reiterate our support to the work done by His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño as the new Chairperson of CFS as well as the members of the Bureau for 2017 to 2019 and commend the work by the Secretariat.

As an intergovernmental committee in FAO and as the central component of the global partnership for agriculture, food security, and nutrition, the Committee on World Food Security constitutes the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for broad range of stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings.

Its role includes, among others, to provide a platform for discussion and coordination, to strengthen collaborative action among governments, regional organizations, international organizations and agencies, NGOs, food producer organizations, private sector organizations, philanthropic organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to promote greater policy convergence and coordination and to facilitate support and development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the nationally and regionally owned plans of action for the elimination of hunger, the achievement of food security, and the practical application of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Right to Food.

At a later stage, this shall serve as a platform to promote greater coordination and alignment of actions in the field, encourage more efficient use of resources and identified resource gaps, promote accountability and ensure best practices at all levels, and develop a robust strategic framework for food security and nutrition in order to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders.

The Asia Regional Group is of the view that CFS is an important figure to address and provide solutions to various food security and nutrition issues within the national, regional, and global level and to further encourage the role of CFS to be deeply involved in assisting members and monitoring the implementation as well as to encourage the utilization of various tools, policy products, and recommendations, including the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security, the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Assistance.

We still remember that in September 2015, the world leaders adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that came into force on 4 January 2016.

This course shall universally apply to all and mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fighting inequalities, and tackle climate change while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The SDGs build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The call for action by all countries for reaching middle income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They also recognize that ending poverty must go hand in hand with strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social risks, including education, social protection, and job opportunities while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

The UN has clearly provided the message that sustainable development has been defined as development to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It calls for concerted efforts towards building on inclusive, sustainable, and resilient futures for people on the planet. In addition, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements, economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and are crucial for the developing of individuals and societies.

We are delighted to learn that during the 44th Session of the CFS, the interconnected relations between the CFS and the SDGs as a global follow-up and review through its contribution to the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development were discussed.

This is a crucial achievement, taking into account that the successful attainment of the SDGs, in particular related to food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture should also depend on countries' perspectives and experience in putting in place government priorities as well as private sector and civil society efforts.

The Asia Regional Group welcomes further and increased coordinated engagement of Member Countries at different levels in the food security and nutrition policy making processes within the framework of CFS and other governing bodies in the context of the SDGs and to further encourage the Organization to continue the participation of Member States as a strong support and positive contribution towards the successful focus of the CFS in the Organization.

While commending the work relating to policy convergence on the issue of sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition, the outcomes of the forum on women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition and urbanization, rural transformation, and implications for food security and nutrition, the Asia Regional Group highly appreciates the work and commitment taken during the ICN 2 and in the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

We are also of the view that consultative reports should be performed in line with the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work for 2018-2019, in particular to invite all stakeholders to further contribute to closing the existing financial gap.

Last but not least, the Asia Regional Group puts great consideration of the significance of the CFS policy recommendation as a response to evaluation that has been provided and concurs to further discussions and actions to improve the functioning of CFS, in particular encouraging Member States to take active part in the presentation of the work of the CFS to achieve its mandate.

With this note, the Asia Regional Group endorses the Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

Mr Sid Ahmed M. Alamain Hamid ALAMAIN (Sudan) (Original language Arabic)

At the outset, we would like to align ourselves with the statement of Venezuela on behalf of the G77 and China. We would like to thank Venezuela and Egypt for their statement, appreciating Her Excellency Ambassador Amira Gornass, the former CFS Chairperson, for her efforts during the last two years. We congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño, the new CFS Chairperson, and we would like to confirm our support to CFS.

We appreciate the Report of the CFS 44 and we welcome in particular the discussion of the outcomes of the Report that was issued on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in 2017.

The Plenary was considered as the first international forum for various stakeholders to discuss the main findings of the SOFI Report for 2017. This prompted us to organize a side event on the sidelines of CFS 44 and this was a great opportunity to ensure how important is to organize such events.

We appreciate the report of the HLPE on food systems and nutrition. This will allow us to overcome the obstacles towards improving nutrition in order to ensure the right food, to avoid conflicts of interest.

We also approve the recommendations of this report that aim to achieve conversions of policies.

As regards to the response of the independent evaluation, we believe that the report highlighted many issues like a lack of awareness of CFS policies and its major reports. We believe that it is very important to take into account the thin line between the visibility of CFS and its effectiveness. The report is very important and it tackled the necessity to mobilize resources and this should prompt us to identify the activities of the CFS.

The report tackled the importance of the managing the works of CFS. The Chairperson and the Bureau have a very important role to play in this regard. In the end, we would like to confirm the importance of developing policies and to implement them at the national level and to find innovative ways for mobilizing resources.

This is a priority for CFS and it requires action from all stakeholders and all parties. With these remarks, Sudan welcomes the Report of CFS 44 and would like to pay tribute to the role played by the CFS in promoting food security and nutrition.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

China aligns itself with the statements by the Asian Group and by G77 and China. We would like to focus on the following two points. First, we would suggest that CFS should further focus its efforts on food security itself, in particular, on increasing developing countries' food production capacity and seek innovative ways to find practical policy recommendations and advice.

Second, China as a Member of the CFS Bureau, would like to thank Her Excellency Amira Gornass, the Ambassador of Sudan for her excellent contribution to CFS work. We welcome and congratulate the Ambassador of Dominica Republic as the new Chairperson of CFS.

China will continue to highly value and take an active part in CFS activities as we have always done in the past. In particular, we are willing to work with the CFS to advance South-South Cooperation, triangular cooperation, as well as other forms of cooperation so as to achieve the SDGs.

Mr Katsuyoshi MASUKAWA (Japan)

Japan aligns itself with the Asia Group statements delivered by Korea, and would like to particularly highlight the following point.

Firstly, one of the strengths of CFS is its function to provide a multi-stakeholder platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned. A cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including local governments, NGOs/NPOs, and the private sector is decisively important. To widely share good practices and lessons and to tackle various challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we must utilize this CFS function and disseminate its outcomes.

Secondly, for the successful attainment of the SDGs, to encourage all Member Nations and other stakeholders to use of CFS policy recommendations and voluntary guidelines including the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.

Mr Gustaf Daud SIRAIT (Indonesia)

Indonesia aligns her statement made by Venezuela on behalf of G77 and China and also the statement made by the Republic of Korea on behalf of the Asia Group.

To begin, Indonesia would like to applaud the Chairperson of the 44th Session of CFS and also the Chairperson of CFS for the biennium 2015-2017, Her Excellency Ambassador Amira Gornass, for her excellent stewardship. We would like also to commend all participating delegations for the successful convening of the 44th Session.

We also convey appreciation to the active participation and contribution of PSM and CSM and other stakeholders. A special thanks goes to the Secretariat.

At the last Committee meeting, Indonesia began introducing a concept note that emphasized on the need to improve small scale farmers' welfare. In line with the discussion in the UN on the Decade of Family Farming, we would like FAO to begin the discussion on improving small scale farmers' welfare, bearing in mind how this issue is important to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 2 and SDG1 which is well within the mandate of FAO.

We would also like to underline the need to further promote the existing products of CFS in the form of voluntary guidelines and policy recommendations. We believe that these products will benefit all of the members. These products should be implemented with adjustments to their national circumstances.

Finally, we would like to welcome the election of His Excellency Ambassador Mario Arvelo and as Member of the Bureau, we would like to assure him our support to the future activities of CFS.

Sra. María Fernanda SILVA (Argentina)

Muy brevemente porque los colegas que me han precedido ya han dicho mucho de lo que pensábamos y, en aras del tiempo pero no podíamos dejar de saludar la elección de un latinoamericano y caribeño al frente del CSA. Le deseamos lo mejor. Confiamos en su experiencia, su responsabilidad y en su sensibilidad para estar al frente de esta plataforma tan importante. Creemos que es un lugar privilegiado para que pueda darse la colaboración de los tres Organismos de Roma. Creemos que puede salir de allí una colaboración que sea puntual, focalizada y que no signifique de ninguna manera aumentar la Agenda del CSA, sino constituir la en una plataforma que nos permita obtener productos de beneficio para todas las partes interesadas.

Y, por supuesto, para garantizar que sea una plataforma inclusiva, vamos a hacer una mención al tema de la necesidad de contar con las traducciones y con los idiomas necesarios para garantizar la participación y la inclusión de todas las partes, y nuevamente ponernos como país a su disposición y felicitarlo una vez más y mostrar nuestra satisfacción de que un compatriota de la patria grande latinoamericana y caribeña esté al frente de esta importante plataforma. Nada más.

Sra. Fabiola Alejandra MENDOZA YAMAUI (República Bolivariana de Venezuela)

Reconocemos el importante papel del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria en la construcción de la coherencia de las políticas y el diálogo inclusivo en la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición a nivel mundial. Es por ello que la República Bolivariana de Venezuela respalda sus labores.

Queremos resaltar que en 2016 Venezuela realizó la primera presentación voluntaria sobre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) en el seno de las Naciones Unidas y actualmente estamos preparando la segunda presentación voluntaria. Esto se desarrolla en el marco de la apropiación colectiva de los ODS para la implementación de la agenda 2030 de Desarrollo, conjuntamente con el Plan de Desarrollo Nacional 2013-2019.

Venezuela reafirma la importancia de adoptar medidas urgentes y oportunas para fortalecer la paz universal sostenible y el cumplimiento a la promoción y la protección de todos los derechos humanos. Incluido el derecho al desarrollo y el derecho a la alimentación. Por ello, instamos a aquellos países que están fomentando la desestabilización en el país a tomar la senda de la paz y del diálogo sincero y constructivo entre las naciones.

Igualmente insistimos una vez más en la necesidad de citar fuentes oficiales y objetivas para referirse a la situación de Venezuela en materia de seguridad alimentaria. Nuestro país fue uno de los primeros en recibir un reconocimiento por parte de la FAO por haber cumplido antes de 2015 el ODS número uno, así como el compromiso establecido en la Cumbre Mundial de la Alimentación de reducir a la mitad, en términos absolutos, el volumen de personas con malnutrición en el país.

Por último, destacamos la importancia de la Cooperación Sur-Sur y en este contexto resaltamos la labor de la FAO en las diversas actividades de cooperación tales como el Plan de Seguridad Alimentaria Hugo Chávez Frías de Petrocaribe y el Programa de Cooperación Triangular Seguridad y Soberanía Alimentaria y Nutricional para América Latina y el Caribe, SANA. Ambos enmarcados en la Iniciativa para América Latina y Caribe sin Hambre.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

I would like to provide some comments to the question raised by the European Union, whether the Forestry Report discussed at the last CFS would be discussed by COFO. Indeed, first of all, I would like to thank the CFS for considering forestry as one of the priorities for the quality of the report and more than that, for the important discussion and policy recommendations coming from the report and debate during CFS.

In this regard, considering the quality and the discussion of the report, it will be one of the items in the next COFO in July 2018. We hope that we will be able to also have a technical discussion and share the outcomes of the report with the members of COFO, and integrating them at the country level and also in FAO's work.

Sr. Mario ARVELO CAAMAÑO (Presidente del Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial)

Consiente de lo avanzado de la hora y de sus continuas solicitudes de que seamos breves, solo voy a tocar tres puntos muy rápido.

Primero, agradecer el apoyo del Consejo al trabajo que desarrollamos en el Comité de Seguridad Alimentaria Mundial.

Segundo, solicitar a las delegaciones que hicieron uso de la palabra, a que puedan, hacernos llegar sus intervenciones por escrito, dado que cubrieron toda una serie de temas y de puntos muy importantes y muy interesantes. La Secretaria, la Sra. Fulton, ha estado tomando nota, pero sería muy útil que pudiésemos contar con el texto íntegro de las intervenciones.

Sobre el tercer punto, en particular, estaba escuchando la intervención que hizo Egipto y Etiopia y otros países sobre la importancia de tener financiación sostenible que no sea tampoco *earmarked*, es decir, orientada a temas específicos. Quisiera subrayar la importancia de esto para el trabajo del CSA en los próximos dos años y en el futuro.

Aprovechar también que estoy hablando de financiación para llamar la atención de que también el Principado de Mónaco hizo una contribución al reporte sobre nutrición del panel de alto nivel de expertos y también agradecer y felicitar la contribución de 3 millones de euros por la parte de la Unión Europea para los próximos cuatro años y subrayando la importancia también que dichos fondos puedan ser utilizados según las prioridades que determine el comité a través de la mesa.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests for the floor, so I can go ahead and summarize our conclusions.

Item 8, Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security.

1. The Council endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report of the 44th Session of the Committee on World Food Security and in particular,

- a) welcomed the policy recommendations on sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition, encouraged all stakeholders to use them, and asked that they be discussed in the Committee on Forestry and forwarded to other relevant bodies;
- b) noted the importance of the work of the CFS Open-Ended Working Group on Nutrition that had been asked to develop terms of reference for submission to plenary during the 45th session of CFS in 2018 to guide future policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems;
- c) recognized the important contributions FAO would make to the planned intersessional events on urbanization and rural transformation in 2018 in order to determine the feasibility of working towards policy convergence in support of food security and nutrition within the context of changing rural urban dynamics at its 45th session;
- d) welcomed the progress made by the committee in responding to the independent evaluation of CFS evaluation, recognized the importance of this work for CFS to improve its core function as a multi-stakeholder platform for food security and nutrition, called on all stakeholders, including the RBAs, to participate in the work and look forward to the response at its 45th session;
- e) noted the progress made in developing the CFS contribution to the 2018 High-level Political Forum;
- f) adopted the CFS Multiyear Programme of Work for 2018-2019 and recognized that the elements and guiding principles for the preparation of future Programmes of Work depended on the outcomes of the follow-up to the CFS evaluation;

- g) encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to closing the existing financial gap in CFS with unearmarked resources considering that the implementation of the MYPOW would be contingent on sufficient resourcing;
- h) welcomed the decision of CFS to hold a global thematic event on the use of the voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security in 2018 and at its 45th session;
- i) welcomed the outcomes of women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition; and
- j) encouraged the CFS to promote cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders as well as South-South and Triangular Cooperation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

I think on point b) when you referred to the workstream on nutrition, you referred to the development of terms of reference. According to the CFS decision, it was a terms of reference leading to voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition. So if we can add “...leading to voluntary guidelines” in your summary.

CHAIRPERSON

We will incorporate that.

Mr Willem OLTHOF (European Union)

With respect to point f), I heard that you started the sentence with “adopted the CFS MYPOW”. I just wanted to ask the question whether this Council is adopting the MYPOW. I thought the CFS Plenary did that.

CHAIRPERSON

Who will answer this?

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

Could you read point g) again, please?

CHAIRPERSON

Point g): “*encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to closing the existing financial gap in CFS with unearmarked resources considering that the implementation of the MYPOW would be contingent on sufficient resourcing*”.

Mr Thomas DUFFY (United States of America)

We are wondering again, not in this context but in other CFS contexts, we have been urging the use of existing resources, we note long meetings such as this, and other points. We would encourage consideration of the following point to send a signal about using existing resources. So, after “*to contribute to closing the existing financial gap using unearmarked funds*”, and the new clause would be “*and encouraged effective use of existing resources*”, and then the rest of the sentence goes on as you read.

Mr Ilya ANDREEV (Observer for Russian Federation)

I would like to kindly encourage all the Members of the Council to make the decisions and recommendations of the Council in line with the outcomes of the 44th Session of CFS. In this regard, point i), in our opinion, should read as follows: “*welcomed the Forum on Women's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition and took note of its outcomes*”. It will be fully in line with the report of the 44th session of CFS.

Mr MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroon)

I think this is a good time to come up with the observation that I am now going to make.

I appreciate very much the interest Russia is showing. I think that is important for the work of the Council. But I think we know perfectly that we have a verbatim in this Council and a valid document.

So, when we are finalizing the discussion, I am not sure that unless a Member of the Council asks you to give the floor to an observer, it is not very convenient for an observer to take the floor on his own because now we are deciding.

It is only left to the Members of the Council. So, I would really appreciate very much the interests of Russia, but it is also important that he can liaise with anybody in the Council, request that a Member of the Council should request to give him the floor. At that time, then the record of the verbatim should be consistent with the procedures.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you for reminding of this. I think your point is well taken about observers participating when the draft conclusions are being decided.

If I could just read those paragraphs where we are making an amendment. One is paragraph b) which now reads *“noted the importance of the work of the CFS Open-Ended Working Group on Nutrition that had been asked to develop terms of reference leading to Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition and Food Systems for submission to Plenary during the 45th Session of CFS in 2018 to guide future policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems”*. So that is the revised point b).

The revised point f), instead of saying *“adopted the CFS Multi-Year Programme...”*, the amendment is *“noted the CFS Multi-Year Programme”*, and the rest of the paragraph reads as before.

Point g), the new revised version is: *“Encouraged all stakeholders to contribute to closing the existing financial gap in CFS with unearmarked resources and encouraged effective use of existing resources considering that the implementation of the MYPOW would be contingent on sufficient resourcing”*. There is an amendment *“encouraging the effective use of existing resources”*.

Ms Fernanda MANSUR TANSINI (Brazil)

We would only like to ask for a clarification on why there was a change on point f). There was a change on the verb used, so we would like to ask the delegation that proposed this change to clarify the reason why.

CHAIRPERSON

European Union, could you clarify?

Mr Willem OLTHOF (European Union)

What I have heard, and I think you confirmed it by changing the wording, is that the sentence started with *“the Council adopted...”* and then *“the CFS MYPOW”*.

If I misheard you, then please correct it. The point that I raised is that the Council does not adopt the CFS MYPOW. It is the CFS Plenary that adopts the CFS MYPOW.

CHAIRPERSON

Brazil, does that clarify for you? Okay.

It has been pointed out to me that we start paragraph 1 with *“the Council endorsed...”*, so that refers to the whole report. *“Noted”* or *“adopted”* becomes not so significant.

Mr Willem OLTHOF (European Union)

Just make it *“noted the adoption”*, then it is fully correct.

CHAIRPERSON

So, I think we will change the word *“adopted”* to *“noted”* and proceed. I do not think arguing on one word considering that the opening sentence is *“the Council endorsed”* serves any purpose. So, we will change it to *“noted”*.

Item 10. World Food Programme
Point 10. Programme alimentaire mondial
Tema 10. Programa Mundial de Alimentos

Item 10.1 Election of Six Members of the WFP Executive Board:
Point 10.1 Élection de six membres du Conseil d'administration du PAM
Tema 10.1 Elección de seis miembros de la Junta Ejecutiva del PMA
 (CL 158/10 Rev.1; CL 158/LIM/4)

CHAIRPERSON

We now take up item 10, which concerns World Food Programme matters. Under subitem 10.1 the Council is requested to elect six Members to the WFP Executive Board. The documents before the Council are CL 158/10 Rev.1 and CL 158/LIM/4.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the World Food Programme Secretariat members who have joined us today: Ms Harriet Spanos, Secretary of the WFP Executive Board and Ms Jane Pearce, Director of the WFP Performance Management and Monitoring Division.

The Secretary-General will now give us an update on the candidates listed in document CL 158/LIM/4.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

For List A there are two candidates for two seats: Algeria and Equatorial Guinea.

For List C, there is one candidate for one seat: Brazil.

For List D, there are two candidates for two seats: Belgium and Ireland.

For List E there is one candidate for one seat: Poland.

CHAIRPERSON

Given that we have the same number of nominations as seats to be filled for Lists A, C, D and E, I propose that the Council appoint these countries by clear general consent.

Applause
Applaudissements
Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

I wish to congratulate all the newly elected WFP Executive Board Members and wish them well for the work that lies ahead of them.

Item 10.2 Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2016
Point 10.2 Rapport annuel du Conseil d'administration du PAM sur ses activités en 2016
Tema 10.2 Informe anual de la Junta Ejecutiva del PMA sobre sus actividades en 2016
 (CL 158/11)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move onto sub-item 10.2, *Annual Report of the WFP Executive Board on its activities in 2016*. Please ensure that you have document CL 158/11 before you.

I will now pass the floor to Ms Jane Pearce, Director of the WFP Performance Management and Monitoring Division, to introduce this item.

Ms Jane PEARCE (Director, WFP Performance Management and Monitoring Division)

I am pleased to present to you this evening some highlights from the WFP Annual Performance Report for the year 2016 which was discussed and endorsed by WFP's Executive Board during this year's annual session in June.

This report is WFP's key accountability tool to demonstrate its results against the objective set in the Strategic Plan and communicate its performance to all stakeholders. I would like to highlight that this was the last report based on the Strategic Plan of 2014–2017 and we have therefore been able to look

at some interesting trends during this period and draw conclusions to close the cycle of the Strategic Plan.

Looking forward, future corporate reporting will be based on the new Corporate Results Framework which reflects the 2030 Agenda commitments and brings together the programmatic results and the performance management aspects so that we can use a single framework to plan, monitor, and report both what we do to achieve the Strategic Plan, programme performance, and how we do it, the management performance.

Going back to 2016, it was yet another challenging year for the world and for our Organization. Never in history were there so many complex emergencies requiring such a significant humanitarian response. At one point, WFP was responding to six Level 3 and seven Level 2 emergencies. WFP had 82 million direct beneficiaries in 2016, the highest number since 2013. The expansion in numbers was due to El Nino and the Nigeria Crisis. These 82 million people received 13 billion daily rations of food or cash. The expansion of cash-based transfer programmes continued, making WFP the leading distributor in the humanitarian community. 14 million people in 60 countries benefitted from CBT assistance valued at USD 880 million.

But many more benefited from WFP's work beyond those receiving direct transfers. There are those that receive nutrition-related communications, farmers are connected to markets, government counterparts are trained. There is more evidence than last year given that we rolled out new IT tools and that there is a methodology for estimating, for example, how many people can indirectly benefit from assets we create or restore.

WFP was able to pursue its Strategic Objectives thanks to the generous contributions of its resource partners. The USD 5.8 billion in contributions were the highest in WFP's history. 80 percent of all resources were spent on saving lives in 2016.

In terms of performance management, we made notable improvements in monitoring which allows us to build the evidence base for our programme results. These improvements were not a feature of 2016 but rather are a result in investments made over a number of years, the Monitoring and Evaluation Learning Programme, the minimum monitoring requirements, the setup of regional M&E advisors, and rollout of IT tools such as our COMET, WFP's Country Office tool for managing programme operations. All programmatic results achieved during the year are reported in the 202 standard project reports. These tell the performance story of each of our projects which is then aggregated to assess corporate performance.

In terms of outcome targets, WFP performed well towards Strategic Objectives 1, 2, and 4. These refer to our work in emergencies, post-emergency settings, as well as in addressing more chronic issues. I must reiterate that some 80 percent of all of our resources were spent on saving lives, with more than 53 million people assisted through general food distributions. Whereas Strategic Objective 3 which focuses on reducing risks to livelihoods and strengthening resilience showed moderate progress. It also received the least amount of resources and had the lowest rate of needs met. Food Assistance for Assets was often the first activity that was deprioritized when there were funding gaps. The ration analysis will confirm that.

Capacity development was an overarching challenge. We know this was also picked up in the Capacity Development Evaluation. WFP has introduced a new outcome level metric for its 2017–2021 Corporate Results Framework that Country Offices will use to plan and assess progress and we are currently testing new approaches in the field to have the best tools for monitoring and reporting on our capacity strengthening activities.

I want to spend some time on gender and accountability to affected populations. These are WFP's cross-cutting commitments that continue to be part of the current Strategic Plan. During 2016, WFP operations reported that women's decision-making in households increased in 54 countries, of which 14 rank lowest in terms of Gender Equality Index. In addition, there was substantial progress in joint decision-making of women and men over the use of food and cash. These positive trends confirm the value of the Gender Transformative Approach adopted by WFP.

To be able to constantly improve the design of programmes, beneficiary feedback is critical. Seventy-one percent of WFP Country Offices have set up dedicated complaint and feedback mechanisms and work is underway to expand these.

On the management side, the overall assessment is positive. We used key performance indicators to find as part of the previous Management Results Framework to measure our progress. When the Management Results Framework was put in place at the beginning of 2014, it focused on areas that needed corporate attention at that time. This includes issues such as gender mainstreaming, reporting on common QCPR indicators, and lead time reduction using advanced filing mechanisms. It is therefore important to note that at the end of the Strategic Plan, we can report achievement of all of these targets.

Looking forward, we are now at the end of 2017 and we are already working on the next Annual Performance Report, which, as I mentioned earlier, will reflect the new organizational structure basing Corporate Results Framework and reporting against the new Strategic Plan and our Management Plan. This will allow us to report even more clearly the link between resources and results and further sharpen our value for money lens.

2017 has been another challenging year for WFP which continued to respond to a number of complex emergencies while undergoing a radical organizational change to fully align with Agenda 2030 and be better equipped for eradicating hunger in the long term. As we continue implementing our Integrated Road Map in 2018, we look forward to being able to demonstrate what has been achieved in 2017 in the next report. Thank you very much.

Mr Tarekegn Tsegie HAILE (Ethiopia)

Ethiopia is making this statement on behalf of Africa Regional Group.

At the outset we would like to express our appreciation to WFP management and its staff members at all levels for their unwavering commitment made to save lives and livelihoods of people who are affected by natural and human-made disasters.

The Africa Regional Group looked at the 2016 Annual performance report of WFP, which describes WFP actions and achievements in serving people's food assistance needs in 2016. As highlighted in the report WFP directly assisted 82.2 millions of the most vulnerable people in 82 countries. In the year, apart from the regular work carried out across the Globe, the response made to countries which are at protracted conflicts like Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, North East Nigeria was the most complex and difficult job demanding high resource and effort. We commend WFP for its relentless effort made in this regard.

In the year WFP also demonstrated strong performance in both Programme and Management results and its level of funding was USD 5.8 billion. Almost 80 percent of the expenditure was also directed towards emergency operation.

In 2016 WFP also developed an integrated road map for change with four critical elements which consist of a new Strategic Plan for 2017 to 2021 aligned with SDGs, Country Strategic Plan, Financial Framework and Corporate Results Framework. These four elements of the integrated road map were approved by the board in 2016. In this case we would also like to commend WFP management and its staff members for delivering this comprehensive and forward looking plan.

Finally, Africa Regional Group fully supports the annual performance report to be approved by the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I have got no other requests for the floor, so I will summarize the discussion and the presentation of the report of WFP Executive Board.

Item 10.2, Annual Report of the World Food Programme Executive Board on its Activities in 2016. The Council welcomed and endorsed the Annual Report on the World Food Programme Executive Board to the Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, and to the FAO Council on its activities in 2016.

2. In particular, a) the Council acknowledged WFP's results in meeting its Strategic Objectives supported by achievements by Management Results dimensions;
- b) recognized the commitment of WFP staff in the field working in challenging circumstances both in addressing an unprecedented number of Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies in addition to protracted crises;
- c) welcomed the adoption of the Integrated Road Map, including the new Strategic Plan for 2017–2021, the new approach to Country Strategic Planning which ensures countries are in the lead as well as the Financial Framework Review and Corporate Results Framework which fully aligns WFP's strategy to the Agenda 2030 and its principles;
- d) welcomed WFP's involvement in partnership and coordination efforts, its engagement with partners towards Zero Hunger and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- e) welcomed WFP's improvements in implementing the decisions of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, in particular in the areas of gender mainstreaming, results-based management tools and principles, as well as implementation of common services and contribution to the resident coordinator system;
- f) noted WFP's ongoing efforts to complete implementation of the Integrated Road Map by 2018 and to strengthen organizational risk assessment and management processes; and
- g) called for strengthened South-South and Triangular Cooperation in WFP programmes.

Those are points from the Report of the WFP Executive Board, and the presentation of Ms Pearce, as well as the comments from Ethiopia. The rest of the Membership was silent, so I take that to mean they agree with the Report of the Executive Board of WFP. So, that being so.

We can go to the next item.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Item 12. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 156th Session of the Council (24-28 April 2017)

Point 12. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent cinquante-sixième session (24-28 avril 2017)

Tema 12. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 156.º período de sesiones (24-28 de abril de 2017)

(CL 158/LIM/3)

CHAIRPERSON

Our next item this morning is Item 12, *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 156th Session of the Council*. The relevant document is CL 158/LIM/3. The Council is invited to note information on the implementation of decisions taken at its 156th Session in April 2017, as well as updates on decisions taken at relevant previous sessions. I will now open the list of speakers.

Ms Anna-Marie MOULTON (South Africa)

This statement is delivered on behalf of the Africa Regional Group. The Africa Regional Group wishes to thank FAO for compiling a table reflecting the current status of implementation of decisions taken at the previous FAO Council as it provides a clear indication of items or issues that will require the attention of Council in the next biennium and beyond. The Africa Group briefly wishes to focus on two of the issues highlighted in the table.

Firstly, it welcomes the intentions of the FAO Council to keep its single-minded focus on gender by requesting an annex in future strategic objectives dedicated to gender and that FAO's Gender Policy Standards be used as a baseline as highlighted under point four. It is important that we do not lose focus on this pertinent issue.

Secondly, with regard to RBA collaboration, Africa Regional Group wishes to express its gratitude to the leadership for the informal RBA joint meeting that took place at FAO in September. It was a very useful meeting, in the sense that it provided the opportunity for the Heads of the three Agencies to voice their respective views and positions on issues of common concern to Members and we hope that this was the beginning of future meetings to come, so as to foster and deepen collaboration, thereby avoiding duplication and unnecessary wastage of much needed resources.

Building partnerships for sustainable development amongst RBAs under SDG 17 is imperative for the eventual eradication of poverty and ending hunger by 2030. Africa is a major recipient of humanitarian assistance. Using available resources more effectively in a smart, coordinated, and mutually supportive manner could help the continent to more comprehensively address its food and nutrition security challenges, resulting progressively in less dependence on support from the RBAs. The Africa Regional Group looks forward to a regular update from the relevant departments at FAO as far as the implementation of the various decisions listed is concerned.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

China thanks the Secretariat for the document. We have the following comments.

With regard to the first point, China notes that FAO recently created a Division for Partnerships and South-South Cooperation. This is reflected in the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2018–2019. China, at the same time, would like this point to not be reflected as achieved. It should not be recorded as being achieved with the transfer of South-South Cooperation from one division to another. Further rigorous analysis should be carried out into the role of and impact of FAO in the global South-South agricultural cooperation. So, this is not simply a question of completeness.

We need to look at how to strengthen South-South Cooperation. We would like to ask the Secretariat what the specific actions and measures that have been adopted to strengthen South-South Cooperation within FAO have been. And what are the actions to promote the leading role of FAO in global South-South Cooperation in agriculture? We also need a road map and a timetable. China would like to cooperate, of course, with FAO in accordance with the Trust Fund Agreement and the Implementation Plan so that South-South Cooperation can play a more prominent role in the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the five Strategic Objectives.

Secondly, on point nine, the document notes the greater dissemination and outreach of knowledge products in all FAO languages. China welcomes this and reaffirms the equal status of the six official languages of the Organization. But China has noted that on the FAO intranet, content relating to several divisions and themes have not been translated into Chinese and this is a big problem.

What is more, we have noticed that FAO is in the process of reducing the professional language posts and we are opposed to this practice. China is of the view that it is imperative that the number of professional language posts be maintained and to ensure the provision of high quality language translation and interpretation to Member States. Outsourcing could lead to uneven quality. So, we believe that this situation needs to be improved.

CHAIRPERSON

I see no other requests so I will ask the Secretariat to comment on some of the points raised by China.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

This is always an item where we have to adapt to circumstances because we are never quite sure what subject will come up. We are trying to reach the Deputy Director-General, Programmes to address the first point raised by China regarding South-South Cooperation.

I think I can attempt to respond to the second point raised by China, regarding item 9 in the table, going back to a decision made by Council at its 153rd Session in November 2015. It is still there although it was marked as “*completed*” and it focuses on the tools, FAO’s contribution on knowledge on food and agriculture and looks forward to reviewing progress on action taken.

Now if I understand correctly, China highlighted that there was still an issue with the dissemination of knowledge products, noting that some pages on the FAO website are still not translated into Chinese.

Then the reference was made to the required number of language posts and the provision of quality translation and interpretation services to Member States.

There was also a reference to outsourcing practices.

Now what I can clarify, as Director of the CPA Division and responsible for the provisions of language services in terms of interpretation and translation, is that, of course, this issue is central to our work. The question was discussed at length if you remember at the spring session of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees where we presented the model of work which would allow for the number of posts that were reprofiled from administrative to technical. You will remember that a major feature of the PWB for the next biennium is that a significant number of posts located in administrative divisions were reprofiled into technical positions to be put to service either at headquarters or in decentralized offices.

CPA was among the divisions that contributed to this effort in supporting the work of FAO in decentralized offices and at headquarters and technical areas. At this Joint Meeting, we presented our model and I hope that we managed to demonstrate the fact that we outsource does not mean that the quality of translation is any less than of high quality.

The same goes of course for interpretation services. In that regard, as concerns China, I believe at the time we demonstrated that, in terms of interpretation, the apparatus, if I may say, in place to provide interpretation in the Chinese language did not sustain any changes.

What I want to explain to China is that, as concerns translation and interpretation, the website is not in my Division. It is in the Office for Corporate Communication (OCC). And this is a question of resources.

I remember my colleague from that Division explaining that this was a progressive endeavour and of course the objective is not lost on OCC, not only with respect to Chinese but *vis-à-vis* all languages. But I am afraid this is as far as I can go as concerns the FAO website. With your indulgence, China, I will stop here and, if you want, arrange for OCC to provide the needed information to China in that respect. That is for your second point regarding item 9.

Let me check if we have managed to reach the Deputy Director-General, Programmes regarding item 1.

Mr Chairperson, knowing that we will aim at finishing our agenda tonight but will be back in Plenary on Thursday morning after the Committee has sat tomorrow afternoon, what I can suggest is to ask Dan Gustafson at some point during the session to address the point raised by China.

I think this is the best I can offer in the circumstances.

CHAIRPERSON

China, is that agreeable? Okay.

The closure of this item will be on Thursday.

Item 14. Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2017-19

Point 14. Calendrier 2017-2019 des sessions des organes directeurs de la FAO et des autres réunions principaux

Tema 14. Calendario de los períodos de sesiones de los órganos rectores de la FAO y otras reuniones importantes en 2017-19

(CL 158/LIM/1 Rev.1)

CHAIRPERSON

We now move on to our next item, item 14, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2017-19*. The document before Council is CL 158/LIM/1 Rev.1.

To avoid meetings overlapping, FAO draws up this calendar in close coordination with IFAD and WFP, and through the web-based RBA Common Calendar, which may be consulted by Members through the FAO Members Gateway accessible on the FAO Home Page.

The schedule of meetings for 2018 is before Council for approval.

Any changes made since the last Session, when the calendar was presented to the Council for information, are indicated with an asterisk.

Are there any queries or comments on the proposed calendar?

I see no requests for the floor so we can go to the next item.

Item 13. Provisional Agenda for the 159th Session of the Council (June 2018)

Point 13. Ordre du jour provisoire de la cent cinquante-neuvième session du Conseil (juin 2018)

Tema 13. Programa provisional del 159.º período de sesiones del Consejo (junio de 2018)

(CL 158/INF/2)

CHAIRPERSON

The next item is item 13, *Provisional Agenda for the 159th Session of the Council (June 2018)*. The relevant document is CL 158/INF/2.

I will now give the floor to delegations who wish to speak on this item.

There are no requests for the floor so we will go to the next item.

Item 15. Any Other Matters

Point 15. Questions diverses

Tema 15. Asuntos varios

CHAIRPERSON

As announced on Monday, the Republic of Korea has asked to take the floor under this item on the matter of the World Fisheries University. Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

Mr Keun Hyung HONG (Republic of Korea)

Korea would like to update on the World Fisheries University pilot programme since the 40th Session of Conference last July. As encouraged in the 32nd COFI in July 2016, Korea launched the pilot programme in September this year in accordance with previously agreed step-by-step approach to establish the World Fisheries University.

The programme recruited potential students and faculty members. It was a two-month-long period that finally resulted in 30 students from 17 developing countries for the Master's Degree course. They are beating the odds of one in four from 34 countries in total. Also, three professors, one of each major were selected from nine applicants in three majors, namely aquaculture technology, fishery resource management, and fisheries shared science.

The opening ceremony of the programme was held in Pukyong National University in Busan, home to the World Fisheries University graduate school, on 7 September with 300 distinguished guests, mainly from the Member States and international organizations.

Currently 30 promising students work hard with three professors aforementioned and six other faculty members of Pukyong National University.

Along with this eighteen-month long course, completing in February 2019, we plan to proceed to a one-year course for the short-term and intensive training in fisheries targeting 15 more students from the Member States.

It is unfortunate that cooperation between Korea and the FAO in the pilot programme is still in a deadlock due to some difficulties on the establishment of a Partnership and Liaison office in Korea linked with the World Fisheries University initiative by FAO, not because of the WFU pilot programme itself.

While the bilateral negotiations and the challenges are now in operation, the next bulletin will consistently be reported in the Council.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the Legal Counsel to see if he has any comments.

LEGAL COUNSEL

We do not have any observations. The statement by the Representative of the Republic of Korea reflects indeed the situation also in relation to the Liaison and Partnership Office of FAO in the country, which is on the table.

CHAIRPERSON

I thank the Republic of Korea for giving us this progress report.

Mr Antonio Otávio SÁ RICARTE (Brazil)

We are still under any other matters?

In 1978 in Buenos Aires, the United Nations celebrated a conference that started the practice of South-South Cooperation. Next year we will be celebrating the 40th anniversary. As already mentioned by Ms Marcela Villarreal, a couple of weeks ago IFAD and the Brazilian government organized a seminar on *Rural Development in South-South Cooperation*. The report of that seminar has been sent to the Secretariat.

I would like to request that it be included in the Member's Gateway so we can take into account in the preparations for the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 40th anniversary next year. I believe it will be an important input into the work that we have to undertake next year.

CHAIRPERSON

I give the floor to the observer, the Russian Federation. I believe you wanted the floor for the item which the Republic of Korea was reporting on?

Mr Anton MINAEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Actually it's a different question or a different issue. It's not in relation to Korea's statement. If you will allow, I would like to make a statement.

CHAIRPERSON

A statement on what?

Mr Anton MINAEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

As far as I understand, we are dealing with the item *Any other matters* [in English].

CHAIRPERSON

Here I will get some information but I think to speak under *Any other matters*, one has to request that when the Council is adopting the agenda. But the Russian Federation did not make any request in this regard.

Mr Anton MINAEV (Russian Federation) (Original language Russian)

Mr Chairperson, I am not sure if I understand. Are we allowed to make a statement or not?

CHAIRPERSON

I will pass the floor to the Legal Counsel.

LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr Chairperson, I confess that I am lost with this. I would say that I have not seen situations where a non-Member takes the floor under any other matters on an unspecified topic. We do not know what the issue is and I am very surprised in fact by this situation. At first sight, I do not see a reason for the Representative of the Russian Federation to intervene under this item.

We do not even know what the topic is under discussion so I am sorry that I cannot go much further on this. That is all I can say.

CHAIRPERSON

Members of the Council, I think that opinion by the Legal Counsel is clear enough so I will go to the next item on our agenda.

At the start of our meeting, I had mentioned that the Staff Representative of the Union of General Service Staff wanted to deliver a statement so I will give them the floor to make the statement.

Ms Eva MOLLER (Deputy General Secretary, Union of General Service Staff)

The Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) are grateful to be afforded once again the opportunity to speak before the Council. As FAO staff of many years, we are fully aware of the financial difficulties that are being faced by our Organization and share your concern for its future.

In this respect, we wish to play an active role in seeking innovative ways to carry out operations, streamline procedures and attain sustainable efficiency gains. However, although the SRBs are consulted on a regular basis, our input for positive changes within FAO is rarely taken into account in a meaningful way, when changing policies or procedures. Today we would like to focus on the following areas, which remain of serious concern to the staff: recruitment and selection process; commissary closure; internal justice system; mandatory age of separation; rental subsidy; medical insurance.

On previous occasions, we have expressed our concerns that the decision-making processes for the recruitment of General Service (GS) and Professional (P) staff are overly centralized, and therefore unable to ensure, in our view, a robust and transparent selection based on merit and on choosing the right person for the job. This is of particular concern to staff, since the de-facto elimination of promotions means that the selection for a new post now represents the sole career advancement opportunity. It has therefore become cause for great concern that the recruitment decisions in the Organization are no longer following clear and transparent procedures in line with regulated delegation of authority, but rather are taken following an unpublished set of rules covered by an all-encompassing confidentiality clause.

We have witnessed appointments within both the GS and the P categories made without standard interviews, and external candidates selected for positions they demonstrably were not qualified for, on the basis of unknown criteria, in clear disregard of Staff Regulations and the UN Charter.

The new selection mechanism was the object of a detailed report submitted by the Union of General Service Staff (UGSS) to the Office of Human Resources (OHR), but the recommendations therein were substantially disregarded. As mentioned in previous addresses to the Council, most GS staff feel disillusioned when it comes to their chances of career growth or selection because the opportunity to view, and apply for, available positions has been removed.

Indeed, for the first time in the United Nations Common System, vacancy announcements have been abolished and "*calls for expressions of interest*" have replaced vacancies of posts based on sound classification standards, inviting external candidates to "express their interest" in working for the Organization, without clear information on the terms of reference, qualifications required, salary or responsibilities of the post.

This approach has also been taken in the recruitment of consultants, as FAO has decided to publish calls for expressions of interest for this vulnerable category just recently. This unclear selection process is being applied to jobs that should be time-bound in nature, thereby institutionalizing the role of non-staff human resources rather than giving them a fair chance to participate in a transparent staff selection process with all the benefits that entail. We have witnessed FAO move from being a fully-staffed organization, to one where staffing levels are suboptimal compared to the number of consultancies, which have skyrocketed with non-staff to P-staff being at a ratio of almost 3:1.

From these measures follows a dilution of experience and a high turnover in staff and non-staff human resources with a consequential negative impact on FAO's institutional memory and on the accountability of individuals.

This, together with a systematic reduction in staff welfare measures such as making it more difficult to obtain leave without pay or permission to telework, without substantiated evidence that would suggest

any negative impact on the effectiveness or financial resources of the Organization, has done nothing but demoralize staff to unprecedented levels.

Shortly before the Conference in July this year, FAO Senior Management unilaterally abolished the Joint Commissary Committee (JCC) without consulting either the SRBs, or even WFP, and soon after decided to close the Commissary, an institution founded for staff in 1951. The JCC had been designated to provide advice and suggestions on the policy and the overall management of the Commissary, and to be directly responsible for making decisions and recommendations on certain aspects of its management. The Commissary was established to operationalize staff duty-free privileges granted to staff by the Italian Government under the original Headquarters Establishment Agreement. Its operations, including its staff, were fully self-funded. The necessity of such a closure was never substantiated by facts or figures, or even accompanied by a feasibility study for a new business model, in spite of our numerous requests to this effect. It still remains unclear to staff why exactly the decision to close the Commissary and the removal of such an institutional entitlement was a priority, and after several months we are still waiting for Management to inform staff of the announced new business model.

We also wish to bring to your attention our concerns about the FAO internal justice system. We recognise the need to maintain our immunity from local jurisdiction by means of an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. However, where internal justice fails to provide a timely, independent, transparent and equitable system, staff are effectively left without legal recourse, which is a fundamental human and labor right.

Currently, our Appeals Committee is suffering from a serious shortage of staff. Consequently, until July this year, there was a back-log of approximately two years. The Secretariat and the Committee made a monumental effort to clear this back-log and have succeeded. However, new cases are being filed in short order, and without a dedicated Secretariat of full-time staff and a full complement of Committee members, the delays will soon build up again. Since justice delayed is essentially justice denied, we would greatly appreciate the Governing Bodies' support in restoring the full functionality of the internal justice system in FAO.

Turning to the work of the Committee itself, we regret to say that, no matter how prudently the Committee reviews the cases and makes its recommendations, the outcome is too often familiar: findings in favour of the appellant are rejected by the Director-General. Not only does this undermine the confidence of staff in the internal justice system, but when appealed, this approach has resulted in several judgements being handed down from the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) against FAO and WFP. These judgements were particularly embarrassing when the ILOAT was pointedly complimentary about the careful analysis and reasoning that led to the Appeals Committee's initial recommendation. In this regard, you may wish to refer to judgment numbers 3593, 3742 and 3880 to mention a few.

The composition of the Appeals Committee itself would benefit from a review, and the pool of appointed and elected staff could be widened. In this regard, we wish to draw to your attention that the number of staff available and willing to dedicate their personal time to this Committee is dwindling, as confidence in the work of the Committee diminishes. If no staff are available to conduct the work of the Committee, then the internal justice system automatically fails. Finally, the Committee has been further hampered by a unilateral decision to divide the available Committee members by Organization, so that only FAO staff hear FAO appeals and only WFP staff are present for WFP appeals. While the grounds for this decision remain unknown, just as there is no rule upon which this decision has been based, we are greatly missing out in terms of collaboration and shared expertise among agencies in an area where this has proven quite fruitful, at least in the past.

Two years ago, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) decided that organizations of the common system should raise the mandatory age of separation (MAS) to 65 years for staff in service prior to 1 January 2014. Most common system organizations will be implementing this measure at the beginning of 2018; some have announced that they will do so in 2019 or 2020. FAO remains the only organization that has decided not to implement the ICSC decision, thus depriving staff members of the possibility to continue working after 62 years of age.

ICSC, in its latest report to the United Nations General Assembly, condemned FAO's behavior highlighting the peril that "... *without the implementation of [ICSC's] decisions there was no point in having a common system*"; and underscored "*the need for organizations to implement decisions of the General Assembly and the Commission in a timely manner and in full compliance*".

Presumably, FAO's reluctance to follow the common system is linked to what seems a strategy to diminish the number of staff who would be entitled to pension at the end of their careers. Increasing the MAS by three years could allow for more staff to obtain pensions and FAO's decision has yet again demonstrated that staff is considered but a liability for the Organization.

Another point of concern we wish to bring to your attention is that of the unilateral change made by Management to the rules governing the approval of the rental subsidy process for colleagues in the field. Upon renewal of their rental subsidy, colleagues around the world are being informed that the procedure has changed, although no formal changes have been made to the relevant manual section. The result has been a steep decline in the reasonable rent amount, which is taken as reference point to calculate the rental subsidy. This contradicts the ICSC rental subsidy calculation mechanism. Instead, the ICSC's place-to-place household survey results are being used by Management to artificially set new maximum rent amounts, based on the average rent amount paid by staff at a given duty station, disregarding the fact that these same survey results are already being taken into account when calculating the personal rental subsidy threshold for a specific duty station. The SRBs have strongly objected to this unofficial and undocumented policy change because it is causing significant financial hardship to staff, and because of the lack of transparency in its implementation, which clearly contravenes our Recognition Agreement.

The medical insurance represents yet another and very worrying example of Management's refusal to abide by the existing legal framework. The current insurance contract is expiring at the end of 2017, and following a failed tender process for a new insurance, Management decided to extend the current contract for two more years. The matter, from the design of the tender to the decision on the extension should have been discussed by the Joint FAO and WFP Advisory Committee on Medical Coverage (JACMC), in accordance with its terms of reference, but Management disempowered the JACMC by proposing changes to its composition (such as excluding some of the stakeholders, among other things), and then simply bypassed the Committee altogether. The SRBs repeatedly called for Management to follow the established procedures, which would likely have ensured a successful tender – and less costly process for the Organization.

It pains us to witness the systematic destruction of the collaborative structures, built on good sense and hard work, and put in place over the long history of this Organization. Our concern is not only related to the fact that staff are not considered valuable stakeholders, but also to the fact that we are convinced that these structures were put in place for sound reasons such as ensuring cost-efficient, fair and transparent processes.

In conclusion, let us recall what the most successful companies and organizations worldwide have in common: motivated staff who work under the direction of a strongly ethical and transparent Management. Contrary to what would therefore seem not only a modern trend towards a greater work-life balance, FAO seems to continue on a path to demoralize and demotivate its staff. Staff expertise and competencies are not considered in redeployment exercises and selection processes, just as mobility is more about meeting quotas than it is about the real technical demands of the Organization. Add to this the growing trend to employ staff on temporary contracts, where the decision for renewal is centralized, and from staff to non-staff human resources being used for core functions, with the resulting constant struggle to retain employment without full accountability, independence and transparency, and it becomes apparent how hiring managers lack flexibility and fail to meet the minimum requirements for effective workforce planning.

You can trust that the SRBs will continue to work determinedly towards ensuring their voice is heard and that staff contribution is acknowledged and taken in consideration.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

We have now concluded the substantive work of the Council.

The first meeting of the Drafting Committee will take place tomorrow afternoon, Wednesday, at 14:30 in the Iraq Room.

It is foreseen that Council will reconvene on Thursday morning at 09.30 for agenda item 11 Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO, which is presented to Council for information only.

Following this, there will be a Debriefing on the Field Visit to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, which took place from 24 September to 1 October 2017.

The Adoption of the Report is also foreseen for Thursday and the exact time will be announced in due course. Before we close, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for some announcements.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I would like to remind delegates of two side events which will take place on Thursday 7 December: the first side event on *World Food Safety Day* will take place in the Sheikh Zayed Centre from 12:45 to 14:15; the second side event "*End poverty, build prosperity: stories from Zambia and Paraguay*" will be held from 15:30 to 17:00 in the Iran Room.

I wish to also remind Members that the Draft Council Report will be transmitted through the FAO Members Gateway, and will be available on the password-protected area of the portal.

CHAIRPERSON

Members, with this, our work for today has been concluded and so the meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 21:41 hours

La séance est levée à 21 h 41

Se levanta la sesión a las 21.41

COUNCIL CONSEIL CONSEJO

**Hundred and Fifty-eighth Session
Cent cinquante-huitième session
158.º período de sesiones**

**Rome, 4-8 December 2017
Rome, 4-8 décembre 2017
Roma, 4-8 de diciembre de 2017**

**FIFTH PLENARY MEETING
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
QUINTA SESIÓN PLENARIA**

7 December 2017

The Fifth Plenary Meeting was opened at 9.32 hours
Mr Khalid Mehboob,
Independent Chairperson of the Council, presiding

La cinquième séance plénière est ouverte à 9 h 32
sous la présidence de M. Khalid Mehboob,
Président indépendant du Conseil

Se abre la quinta sesión plenaria a las 9.32
bajo la presidencia del Sr. Khalid Mehboob,
Presidente Independiente del Consejo

Item 11. Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO**Point 11. Évolution des débats au sein d'autres instances intéressant la FAO****Tema 11. Novedades en foros de importancia para el mandato de la FAO: para información**
(CL 158/INF/4)**CHAIRPERSON**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, I call the Fifth Meeting of the 158th Session of the FAO Council to order.

Before we start with item 11, I will pass the floor to the Secretary-General for an announcement.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to inform Members that the Draft Report has been transmitted to Members through the Members Gateway and is also available on the password-protected area on the portal. I also wish to remind Members of the print-on-demand facility available at the Documents Desk.

CHAIRPERSON

We now take up item 11, *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*, which is presented to Council for information only. The relevant document is CL 158/INF/4.

The Council will be updated on developments in other international fora which are of relevance to FAO's mandate. Following the completion of all the presentations, I will open the floor for questions.

The first topic on the "*High-level Political Forum 2017*" will be presented by Ms Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources)

It is my pleasure to present to you the report on the outcomes of the 2017 High-level Political Forum (HLPF).

You may know that HLPF is the political forum responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is under the umbrella of the United Nations General Assembly and the ECOSOC. This year it was convened from 10 to 19 July and the objective was to review a set of Sustainable Development Goals under the theme "*Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World*".

FAO was engaged very actively throughout the process, during the preparation but also during the meeting where I attended on behalf of FAO. We did not work alone. We worked with the Rome-based Agencies and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. I believe our contribution was very much appreciated. As I said, we ensured a high-quality debate on food and agriculture, rural development, and other issues I will be mentioning later on under discussion during the HLPF.

We started with a Victoria Falls meeting on agroindustry development. It was convened by the President of ECOSOC to address the policy capacity and financing gaps on achieving SDG 9 which is linked to industry, innovation, and infrastructure. FAO worked with UNIDO. We are not alone. We contributed also to SDG 14, life below water, especially under the preparation of the Oceans Conference. Arni Mathiesen will report on the outcomes of the Conference later. But I should say that the Conference adopted an ambitious call for action.

We also contributed to an expert meeting on SDG 2 which was organized jointly with RBAs. As SDG 2 was under review, I believe our messages were very much taken into consideration. If you go through the outcome of the Ministerial Declaration, you will find clearly the RBAs contribution.

Another important part is the preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) because we report on the SDGs, but the milestone is the countries presenting their VNRs. FAO contributed to the two parts of the process.

The VNR is a preparatory process with a mechanism to enhance national coordination, mobilize participation, and make SDG target-setting a process more inclusive. It is not only done by the

government, but also by the private sector, and the civil society. They are all part of this process. The national review showed advance in national planning and programming towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and recognized the importance of putting in place a clear institutional framework and cross-sector coordination mechanism to guide the SDG implementation.

Member States underlined that ending poverty in all its dimensions, including hunger, was the greatest overall challenge of the 2030 Agenda and emphasized the interlinkage between ending poverty and the entire Agenda. They also cautioned the lack of adequate data making it difficult to monitor progress against many specific SDG targets.

I can say that throughout discussion the data came from all the presentations. How are we going to monitor progress towards SDGs, if we do not have appropriate and accurate data? As you know, FAO is custodian of 21 indicators and we are also contributing to other indicators. This is an important point, I think, coming from developed and developing countries. It is not a problem only of the developed countries.

We have the outcome document of the HLPF, which is the Ministerial Declaration, whereby FAO also contributed. The Ministerial Declaration has a paragraph dedicated to SDG 2. The Declaration highlights the need for resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food systems, and recognized the interlinkage between hunger and poverty, the need for coherent policies, accountable institutions, and responsible investment, and also the need to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation. It also draws attention to the growing number of people experiencing emergency levels on food security. This was later on confirmed by our SOFI.

This upcoming year in 2018, the HLPF will review SDGs on water, urban development, sustainable consumption and production, forests, land use and biodiversity. You can see that they are all relevant to FAO. We are discussing how should be our participation because we consider we had a good experience, but we need to be more focused on the way we support this process. We have already started the engagement for the next HLPF in 2018.

Our cooperative work will build on lessons learned from 2017 and will support national leadership on the 2030 Agenda through policy and programme issues, including ongoing work to strengthen data management and analytical capacities, as well as partnerships. Partnerships is under SDG17 and is a recurrent point discussed in all HLPF meetings, also, investment and resource mobilization for national SDG plans.

FAO, as you can see, has been fully involved in the process at national, regional, and at global levels, and will continue working on the preparation of the 2018 HLPF and the 2019 HLPF which will be attended by the Heads of State because every four years is the High-level organized by the General Assembly and attended by the Heads of State which we have already started our preparation for FAO to be fully involved.

CHAIRPERSON

Our next speaker is Mr Árni Mathiesen, Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, who will provide an “*Update on ‘Our Ocean Conference’*”, which was held in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017.

Mr Arni MATHIESEN (Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department)

I am very happy to report on “*Our Ocean*” Conference in Malta, which was successfully hosted by the European Union and the Maltese Government. The Conference was held on 5 and 6 October 2017 in Malta and was the third in a series of high-level international events on the importance of oceans in that year, which started with the High-level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 held from 5 to 9 June 2017 in New York and the HLPF from 9 to 18 July 2017, also in New York. FAO provided technical advice and support to Members in the lead-up and during these events.

“*Our Ocean*” Conference focused on issues related to the ocean and climate change, marine pollution, sustainable fishing, sustainable Blue Growth, ocean governance, and empowering a new generation to lead the way. It increased visibility for the countries, industry and civil society in their work to overcome the problems currently being faced. The Conference also engaged participants towards

making significant commitments aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans' resources.

The Conference generated 437 commitments, including more than 200 commitments from governments and 100 from the private sector, in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, as well as recommendations on the implementation of SDG 14. Furthermore, financial pledges for a total amount of EUR 7.2 billion were made and the establishment of 2.5 million square kilometres of additional Marine Protected Areas was announced.

During the Oceans Conference in New York, FAO announced some major voluntary commitments ranging from general support to SIDS and technical assistance on issues related to market access and trade-related aspects, to the strengthening of fisheries governance as well as States' capacities to prevent, deter and eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, all to be implemented through the FAO's Blue Growth Initiative, which is based on FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF) and the ecosystem approach.

As a matter of fact, the Oceans Conference agreed on the following challenges in relation to fisheries, all of which are at the core of FAO's work in fisheries and aquaculture and require our collective and urgent attention. These are: IUU fishing; challenges in the management of shared, straddling and migratory stocks on the high seas as well as in coastal sovereign waters; and improving the status of fisheries in coastal communities in developing countries, including SIDS. These are mostly small-scale fisheries, and those concerned make up over 90 percent the people involved in the fishing industry globally.

FAO is currently working together with the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, (His Excellency, Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, and the broader UN system on the needed follow-up actions to the commitments made at the Oceans Conference, by performing the function of focal point for the Community of Ocean Action on Sustainable Fisheries, which had its first worldwide webinar last week.

During the "Our Ocean" Conference in Malta, FAO reaffirmed some of its major commitments made at the Oceans Conference in New York and also announced some additional commitments aimed at upscaling its work with member countries, small-scale fisheries actors and other partners to raise awareness, strengthen institutional capacities, empower small-scale fisheries organizations, generate and share knowledge, support policy reform and provide technical assistance to support the implementation of the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (SFF Guidelines) at global, regional and national level.

On this occasion FAO also announced its Blue Hope Project which will focus on building coastal community resilience through improved technical capacity among government agencies and communities to sustainably manage their coastal resources, especially inshore fisheries, thus improving their food security and their livelihood opportunities as well as their capacity to respond to drivers of change such as climate and migration. FAO also announced it will join efforts promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to address the highly important issue of decent work in fisheries and aquaculture.

FAO is currently in the process of carefully looking at some of the other commitments announced at the "Our Ocean" Conference, to see whether some synergies could be created and cooperation established with other entities, in particular with the private sector with the aim of supporting the full implementation of such commitments.

It is expected that the next sessions of the "Our Ocean" Conference will take place in Indonesia (2018), Norway (2019) and Palau (2020).

FAO stands ready to continue to provide its technical support to states to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean's resources, an effort that is geared towards the full attainment of the goals foreseen by the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 14.

CHAIRPERSON

I now call upon Ms Thais Linhares Juvenal, Senior Forestry Officer, Forestry Department, who will speak on the Global Meeting “*Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World*”, which took place in Rome on 31 October and 1 November 2017.

Ms Thais LINHARES JUVENAL (Senior Forestry Officer, Forestry Department)

It is a pleasure to address you today to present the results of the Global Meeting Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World which took place in FAO headquarters on 31 October and 1 November. The meeting was organized by FAO in collaboration with ITTO, the World Bank, FAST, CIFOR, and WWF, as well as the FAO Advisory Committee for Sustainable Forest Industries.

The meeting consisted of an audience of 100 professionals from different parts of the world. The audience was extremely balanced with representatives from public and private sector as well as civil society and academia. More importantly, the meeting reached not only foresters and forest industry but also representatives of consumer industries and art techs.

The main objectives of the meeting was to raise awareness of the availability of sustainable wood products and their wide use and benefits and its contributions to sustainable development. The meeting promoted methods and showed how, when, and where wood contributes to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. It also helped to dispel the perception of wood production as a driver of environmental damage and inequity. And it aimed at unblocking markets and finance for sustainable wood.

The main outcome of the meeting was the development of some takeaway messages. The audience contributed to formulate messages on some key contributions from sustainable wood value chains, sustainable wood products for the SDGs beyond SDG15 which is life on Earth. The meeting considered that sustainable wood value chains are critical for achieving SDG13. As trees sequester carbon, wood products have a lighter carbon footprint and contribute to mitigation and adaptation. The meeting also concluded that sustainable wood value chains are critical for SDG12 as wood can substitute other non-renewable and less sustainable products. Also, for SDG8, as the sustainable forest sector contributes to poverty reduction, responsible consumption, and sustainable communities.

The meeting also agreed that sustainable wood value chains for sustainable landscapes are intrinsically related. Sustainable wood production contributes to sustainable landscapes which should consider tenure, multiple use, and product contexts. Regarding livelihoods, it was agreed that the concept of multiple use underlies contribution from sustainable wood production to enhance livelihoods. Baskets of value chains, meaning that several value chains should be considered in combination, and revalue of forest work with a focus on women and youth was considered fundamental.

Sustainable wood value chains also provide important contributions to mitigation as harvested wood products can store greenhouse gasses and substitute higher carbon footprint materials, especially in the construction sector. However, finance is still an issue. It was suggested that a virtual investment promotion facility or network for sustainable wood value chains generate reliable information, connect producers, consumers, and investors, and build capacity for formulation of investible projects.

This meeting was not a standalone initiative. It actually paved the way for further work. It is envisaged that these messages are going to be conveyed in several international dialogues and that FAO and its partners will continue to work with countries, other international organizations, regional and national stakeholders on initiatives to promote sustainable wood. FAO is also committed to support countries on adoption of policies and measures as well as capacity-building for more inclusive and accessible value chains and also to engage with the private sector to strengthen commitment to sustainable wood and legality.

For more information, you can consult the website on the Forestry Department webpage Sustainable Wood (<http://www.fao.org/forestry/sustainable-wood/en/>) and also follow us on Twitter, #SW4SW and #woodisgood.

CHAIRPERSON

Our next speaker is Mr Tom Heilandt, Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, who will speak on the “*Outcome of the 40th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission*”, held in Geneva from 17 to 22 July 2017.

Mr Tom HEILANDT (Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission)

It is a pleasure to update you on the work of Codex in the last year. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC), as you know, was established between 1961 and 1963 to protect consumer health and promote fair practice in the food trade. Wisely, FAO and WHO decided to work together on this and they have made the joint FAO-WHO Food Standards Programme today the most long-standing and successful cooperation in the United Nations System. It is not always easy to have two bosses, but I would not want to have it any other way. Both FAO and WHO contribute financially and substantively to Codex and have protected our budget. Sometimes forgotten is that an almost equal part is paid by our Members who have kindly accepted to host and pay for our technical committees. Our thanks go to all of these countries.

Codex is all about cooperation as we all depend on each other in world food trade. There can be no food security, no Zero Hunger without food safety, but food safety needs to be based on sound science and standards. Only by following the same fair principles can we ensure the smooth and safe functioning of the food supply chain that we depend on nowadays. Still an estimated 600 million people in the world every year fall ill after eating contaminated food. Those suffering most from hunger and malnutrition are the most affected by these dangers as well.

CAC 40 in July 2017 adopted over 50 new and updated standards – I am going to highlight some of the things that we adopted and also proved new work. One of the main items of new work that we approved is on antimicrobial resistance. For the first time, guidelines will be set on integrated AMR surveillance that can be adopted by Codex Member States. Our thanks goes here to the Republic of Korea for hosting this work.

In the wider picture, CAC 40 agreed on the significant value of the synergies between SDGs and Codex work, and that we will take SDGs up in the development of our new Strategic Plan 2020–2025. Codex is a multi-stakeholder process of 188 members and 229 observers at the moment. We are working together towards consensus on complex issues in an inclusive and transparent manner. That is not always an easy task.

This year, the Commission elected a new leadership. As Chairperson, we have Mr Guilherme Antonio da Costa Jr from Brazil, and as Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Purwiyatno Hariyadi from Indonesia, Ms Mariam Eid from Lebanon, and Mr Steve Wearne from United Kingdom.

Sound scientific evidence is the basis for Codex Food Safety Standards. This has secured our role within the SPS agreement of the WHO. Excellence, independence, transparency, and universality are the main principles of this advice provided by FAO and WHO. This comes at a cost and CAC40 has encouraged countries to continue providing funds for the Scientific Advice Programme as well as to the Codex Trust Fund. That is important to ensure that countries can fully participate in Codex. I repeat that appeal here. FAO has recently agreed to an innovative approach of using unspent funds of one Biennium for scientific advice to Codex in the next Biennium. We welcome this approach very much.

CAC40 welcomes that the FAO Conference at its 40th Session adopted a resolution on observing a World Food Safety Day on 7th June each year. World Food Safety Day will raise awareness of the global threat posed by food-borne diseases. It will reinforce the need for governments, the civil society, food industry, individuals, each to take their responsibility in insuring that food is safe in every home.

Codex Standards provide a level playing field for trade. When a country operates with a system of harmonized international standards, they are better placed to seize trade opportunities which in turn have far-reaching social and economic advantages. Together with our colleagues in FAO and WHO, we work on tools and programmes to allow improving coordination processes and fundamental capacities at the national level to give all members the possibility to participate equally in Codex.

Now a little bit of publicity. There will be a side event at lunchtime today from 12:45 to 14:15 in the Sheikh Zayed Center where delegates can know more about the World Food Safety Day and about Codex.

CHAIRPERSON

I now pass the floor to Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Assistant Director General, Economic and Social Development, who will speak on "*Migration*".

Mr Kostas STAMOULIS (Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Development)

I will try to make a short presentation on a big issue, which is migration. Migration is an essential part of development, economic and social transformation of countries. It is also an increasingly relevant area for FAO's work and is linked to FAO's global goals for fighting hunger and achieving food security, reducing rural poverty and promoting sustainable use of natural resources. It is part of FAO's integrated approach for rural poverty reduction and resilience building. FAO's work on migration considers that it is a key component of the livelihood strategies of rural households. FAO works towards strengthening the positive contribution that migrants bring for economic growth, sustainable development, poverty reduction and food security, and provides alternative livelihoods to distressed migration, which is a real problem.

Working across its core functions, FAO's work on migration has revolved around the following five main areas: generate evidence on rural migration trends, root causes, and consequences; advise and support capacity development for governments and rural stakeholders; facilitate, promote and support policy dialogue at global, regional and national levels, to foster policy coherence; disseminate and improve the uptake of knowledge and good practices, and strengthen partnerships and advocacy at national, regional, and global levels.

Since June 2014, FAO is a member of the Global Migration Group (GMG), which is a group of 22 UN Agencies. Joining the GMG, FAO gains access to the main body for dialogue on migration issues at global level, and thus gives FAO the visibility and recognition that are necessary to expand work in this thematic area.

Being part of the GMG is an effective channel to better mainstream agriculture, rural development and food security concerns in the global migration debate.

FAO has been appointed, very significantly, as co-chair of the GMG together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for 2018, which year is going to be critical for the future of migration as UN Member States will adopt a Global Compact for safe, regular and orderly migration and one on refugees. On 7 November, during the GMG Principals' meeting in New York, the Director-General of FAO reaffirmed how FAO is eager to co-chair the GMG with IOM in such a crucial moment.

The key pillars of the joint programme of work and priorities of the IOM and FAO are: the enhancement of partnerships, inside the GMG and externally; to steer the GMG and its work towards the formulation of a successful global compact on migration through provision of UN technical expertise and Delivering as One; at the request of the Member States which are the key drivers of the compact enhancing the GMG's real and potential value added to Member States and other stakeholders, both as a collective entity and in its constituent parts.

The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration will promote a long-term coherent framework for migration.

In 2018, as co-chair of the GMG, FAO will work with IOM to support the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration and the President of the General Assembly along the lines agreed with Member States. I have to underline the Member States' driving role, both in the stocktaking phase and during the process of intergovernmental negotiations to be held between February and July 2018.

FAO, in collaboration with IOM, WFP and OECD, is contributing to the discussions of the Group of 7 (G7) and the Group of 20 (G20), providing technical inputs and relevant data and information on migration, food security and rural development.

At the request of the G7 Presidency of the Republic of Italy this year, FAO, IFAD, WFP and OECD have submitted a report which sensitizes the ministers for agriculture to the linkages between agriculture, food security, rural development and migration.

During the G7 Agricultural Ministerial Meeting in Bergamo (14-15 October 2017), the FAO Director-General stressed the role of agriculture and rural development in addressing prevention and responses related to conflicts, migration and food security.

FAO is making an effort to address the dearth of data and evidence concerning migration. And this dearth is very unfortunate. In 2018, FAO's flagship publication, the FAO State of Food and Agriculture will focus on migration and its linkages with agriculture and rural development. The Atlas, entitled Rural Africa in motion. Dynamics and drivers of migration south of the Sahara provides evidence that many migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa originate in rural areas and move within their own country or within the continent; and that agriculture and rural development is necessary to address the complex set of factors behind people's movement.

FAO conducts advocacy at global level, for a common position on migration, addressing its root causes. The theme of the World Food Day 2017 was "*Change the Future of Migration*". Invest in food security and rural development.

Finally, FAO works at country level to address the root causes of distress migration through the promotion of productive and decent employment opportunities, especially for the youth.

CHAIRPERSON

Our next speaker is Mr Benjamin Davis, Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction Programme Management Team, who will speak on "*Child Labour*".

Mr Benjamin DAVIS (Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction Programme Management Team SP3)

To clarify from the outset – not all work undertaken by children is child labour. In general, child labour is engagement in activities that interfere with education, that are hazardous, or for which the child is too young, whether this is on plantations or in family farming.

Some involvement of children in agriculture can support their learning, skills development, and food and nutrition security, but UN and ILO Conventions along with national legislation set clear limits.

Unfortunately, the most recent global estimates show a serious child labour problem in agriculture.

The just-released 2017 ILO global estimates on child labour show that child labour is overwhelmingly and increasingly concentrated in agriculture. The vast majority of both boys and girls in child labour are engaged in agriculture.

The prevalence of child labour in the agricultural sector has gone from 59 percent in 2012 to 71 percent in 2016. The numbers of child labourers in agriculture are increasing. In four years, this number has gone from 98 to 108 million children.

The majority of child labour – about 70 percent – is unpaid family labour. While often less visible, child labourers in rural areas work on farms, fishing boats, plantations, in forests, in mountain areas, herding livestock or toiling as domestic servants.

What is SDG Target 8.7? It is to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

Alliance 8.7 was launched in 2016 to support this goal. It is led by the ILO, but has strong commitment from particular governments, private sector and NGOs. FAO participated in the recent first formal meeting of the Global Coordination Group of the Alliance which took place in Argentina in November.

FAO is a leading member of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture established in 2007. Through the Partnership, FAO works closely with ILO, IFAD, the

international union of food and agriculture workers' associations (IUF), and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), as well as in collaboration with partners at national level, including ministries of agriculture and labour, farmers associations and other producers' organization, agricultural extension services, and resource partners.

The IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour was recently held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where FAO played an active role.

The *Buenos Aires Declaration* was adopted at the Conference. The document, along with the conference events, emphasized the need to address child labour specifically in agriculture and its various sub-sectors, such as fisheries and livestock; the importance of rural poverty reduction; and the role of agricultural policies and agricultural stakeholders in addressing child labour.

The Conference also promoted the Call for Action issued by African agricultural workers unions and producers' organizations, which was developed in a workshop supported by the partnership. The call for action highlights the role they can play in addressing child labour and the need to address the root causes of child labour.

The just-released 2017 ILO report "Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes" supports these conclusions and recommendations. These outcomes are fully in line with FAO Strategic Programme 3 on Rural Poverty Reduction.

FAO is mainstreaming child labour prevention in its work, through the FAO Environmental and Social Risk Management Guidelines, FAO Project Cycle management, and the FAO Strategic Framework. And child labour concerns have been included in a number of sectoral policies or processes supported by the Organization.

What we need now to scale-up impact is to more systematically include child labour concerns in large-scale agricultural strategies and programmes and engage in inter-ministerial cooperation and multi-actor programmes on child labour in agriculture, including, for example, school feeding programmes to increase the access to and incentives for school attendance.

Also, we need to work closely together with ministries of agriculture and private sector, including producers' organizations; and to increase action at country level, addressing the root causes of child labour such as rural poverty and the functional dependency on child labour.

FAO has laid the foundation for agricultural stakeholders to build capacity and engage in this area, including tailored e-learning courses on child labour in agriculture, and practical guidance to support mainstreaming, such as the handbook for monitoring the impact of agricultural programmes on child labour. We need to work together to ensure they are used and translated into action.

FAO will continue to be a leading member in the child labour in agriculture partnership and will work to mobilize resources to scale-up country action and implementation of the *Buenos Aires Declaration* and the African workshop's "*Call to Action*".

The vast majority of child labour worldwide is in agriculture. Progress or failure on SDG 8.7 will be decided in agriculture. The 108 million girls and boys in child labour in agriculture represent more than half of the entire SDG 8.7 target.

FAO, ministries of agriculture and the private sector have a role to play. Together with partners, FAO is working to build the knowledge base, develop capacities and provide policy and technical support to mainstream child labour concerns in agricultural policies and programmes. We need more Ministries of Agriculture and also Fisheries to step up their efforts and play their role. For example, taking the comprehensive FAO and ILO e-learning course on Ending Child Labour in Agriculture that is specifically targeted to agricultural stakeholders can be a good starting point to raise awareness and to build job specific capacities.

In short, FAO aims to make agricultural livelihoods safer, more productive and resilient, so that rural families and agriculture are not dependent on child labour. To achieve the SDG target, we must scale-up these initiatives targeting child labour in agriculture, in particular at country level.

CHAIRPERSON

Our last speaker today is Mr Rene Castro, Assistant Director-General, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department, who will give a presentation on the “*Outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 23)*”, which was held in Bonn from 6 to 17 November 2017.

Mr René CASTRO SALAZAR (Assistant Director-General, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department)

Every COP is just a stepping stone in global objectives dealing with climate. What we want to do is to stabilize the climate in around 2 °C, hopefully 1.5 °C than it is today. The main challenge, let us say in the next decades, is the growing population. Ten billion people that we will need to feed. And also to feed with a maximum of one ton per capita which is the absorbed capacity of the atmosphere.

Ten billion people, one ton per capita, we are today in five or around five and about 50 percent more food. What we did in COP 23, in the 23rd stepping stone, was to introduce the Talanoa dialogue which is Fiji’s way of talking openly, building consensus, and trying to figure out where we are moving forward.

At COP 23, we received the report from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and others but we are far from the 2 °C target. We are more closely to 3 °C with the current world’s commitments.

During COP 23 the following initiatives were established: Gender Action Plan, main operationalization of the local communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform as well as assessment of the technical examination processes on mitigation and adaptation. It is clear in mitigation how many tons you are mitigating. However, it is less clear on adaptation. How do you measure that? Is a country better prepared? Is it less prepared? What is to be vulnerable?

And then very important for us, and I have been around since COP 1, was the decision called the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture. Koronivia is a small place in Fiji. This decision requested the two main Subsidiary Bodies of UNFCCC, Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to work together in answering how agriculture will fill in this global goal. And we have to do that in the next three years.

And essentially what they are asking us is to do something in methods and approaches for assessing adaptation. As you know, adaptation co-benefits resilience in agriculture when we do a better soil management, when we manage the forests better, it is also important for mitigation.

Then soil carbon, yesterday we presented the first ever soil carbon map to the world. Soil health and soil fertility, nutrient, use, and manure management, livestock management systems, and livestock will be very relevant as it is one of the major opportunities for both reducing mitigation and adaptation and socioeconomic and food security dimensions, including water.

We agreed last Monday in the side event of this Council that the three Rome-based Agencies will work together to present by 31 March 2018 the views of the road ahead and this is part of the responsibility, that we will have to come back to the convention.

We are also working with the countries and remember, this is one of the first times that the countries presented bottom up proposals to the UN, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and we are working with the countries and the NDC partnership. Also as we speak, the countries are working on the National Adaptation Plans. With funds from Germany, FAO will be developing a knowledge hub for agriculture and climate change. We will continue working with the Marrakesh Partnership in agricultural based climate solutions.

Is this stepping stone getting us closer to the goal? Yes, but we are still at the level of 3 °C. The next stepping stone, COP 24, will also start discussing what all of the countries have to do in January 2018 to review the NDCs, adapt them, make them more measurable, and we will have a role in that, especially in the agricultural sector even if agriculture may be one fifth of the problem. If we invest about one fifth of the funds, we will be also providing that part of the solutions.

Mr Willem OLT Hof (European Union)

Thanks to all presenters. It was a very interesting display of many of the areas in which FAO is involved and all of them were very relevant and worth highlighting. I have three questions.

The first is on the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). Many thanks for the explanation that has been given. As someone who has a first-hand experience of what FAO did in New York, I would also like to express my appreciation to the work of FAO in collaboration with the Rome-based Agencies in preparation for the HLPF and the associated programmes.

My question is about the messaging to the HLPF, in particular the reporting and the statistical background for that. HLPF, as a main body that looks at the SDG progress, has many ways in which the Forum is being informed, including global statistical data, UN programmes and so on. My question is, whether FAO is planning to align FAO's reporting cycle and its themes with reporting to the HLPF themes and time schedules. For instance, SOFA, which themes could coincide with some of the SDGs themes, as well as special editions of SOFI might influence the deliberations in New York.

My second question is on the sustainable wood presentation. Sustainable wood has a lot of links with sustainable forestry. This year, the CFS produced a report by the HLPE (High-level Panel of Experts on sustainable forestry and food security). And I sense that some of the conclusions, that the Global Meeting in November had, were closely aligned with what the HLPE presented. So my question is whether there has been some use of the work of the CFS for the work of the Global Meeting?

And my last question is on the climate change. We would like to thank you for a very lively presentation on what happened in Bonn and we fully agree that for agriculture it was a historic moment.

My question is whether you can be a little bit more specific on the ideas around the knowledge hub at FAO. We believe this is an excellent initiative, maybe a bit overdue even, but this is something where FAO can probably play a very important role in the world in connection with climate change in the near future. We would like to hear a little bit more explanation on that.

Ms Nomiso NOZAKUTHETHWA (South Africa)

I would like to make a statement rather than posing a question to a specific presentation.

In the opening remarks on Monday, the Director-General made reference to the fact that after a period of ten years of decline, the number of hungry people has increased to more than 850 million. This is a source for concern. Immediate action is therefore needed to prevent this number from increasing.

Now that Southern Africa no longer has to deal with the effects of the drought, we are confronted by the Fall Armyworm epidemic which is devastating much needed crops, especially maize that is a staple food of many Africans.

Although the epidemic is currently predominantly an African problem, some experts are predicting that it could spread to other regions of the world, including Asia. Therefore needs to remain on high alert. It is not yet clear if Southern Africa could expect a flare up in the new season. It is therefore important and it would be very useful if FAO could remain engaged on the issue of Fall Armyworm as the Director-General indicated last week during the pre-Council briefing.

South Africa would especially like to recommend that funding for research, surveillance, and emergency response be the focus of FAO's possible intervention, especially since there are concerns that the epidemic could spread to other regions of the world.

In his opening remarks on mandate, the Director-General also informed us that the upcoming EU-AU Summit in January will provide an opportunity to reinforce the fight against hunger. If we are successful to stop hunger, we should deal decisively with elements that will impact on the much needed fight against hunger, including Fall Armyworm. It is vital that we protect our crops and animals if we want to reduce the number of hungry persons in the world today.

Ms Marie-Therese SARCH (United Kingdom)

Thanks very much to colleagues for the presentations this morning. I would like to make a general point and then some specific points. The United Kingdom is proud of our commitment to international development. It is a crucial part of Britain's place in the world.

Our new Secretary of State for International Development, Penny Mordaunt, has said that the United Kingdom commitment to development gives the British people every reason to feel pride.

The UK has led the way in responding to urgent need around the world, working as a proud and proactive member of the United Nations. It is because the UK is a committed supporter of the United Nations that we are working so hard to improve it.

Disasters, famines, persecution, and violent extremism are leaving millions of our fellow citizens without hope or aspiration. From Yemen to Somalia, an estimated 141 million people are in need. The international system is struggling to cope and the achievement of Zero Hunger is under threat.

These crises have shown the weakness in our international system, weaknesses that are recognized by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres. The Secretary General is building a UN for the 21st century, a UN that the UK believes must be transparent, efficient, and able to justify to all of our taxpayers, what it does and what outcomes it achieves on our behalf.

The Secretary-General has United Kingdom's support in driving forward this change.

I would now like to turn to some specific issues and, in particular, I would like to echo the concerns raised by South Africa just now and Zambia on Tuesday. It is about the spread of Fall Armyworm to Africa. This is not yet a humanitarian crisis but it has the potential to devastate maize and other harvests – and the other harvests of many family farmers across the African continent. Experts have estimated that losses from fall armyworm could reach as much as USD 6 billion in 12 countries.

We are looking to FAO to lead the international response to this pest. We see the following three next steps as essential. Firstly, we are looking to FAO to provide authoritative and evidence-based advice on what to do. We are hearing about situations where farmers and governments are receiving different and conflicting advice on how to tackle Fall Armyworm. We are looking to FAO to mediate these differences and negotiate a common approach between donors and specialist agencies.

Secondly, we are looking to FAO to be clear about what FAO can do and what FAO cannot do. We welcome FAO's actions so far but responding to Fall Armyworm cannot be about FAO alone. The scale and complexity of Fall Armyworm demands that FAO must work with others to support national response plans. This is a significant coordination challenge and we encourage FAO's most senior managers to lead this work.

And thirdly, we are looking to FAO to prioritize. Fall armyworm threatens the whole continent and is unlikely to be eradicated but we need FAO to identify which actions in which places will have the greatest impact in the short-term.

I would now like to return to the presentation on COP 23.

The UK very much welcomes the focus on agriculture at the recent COP meeting in Bonn and as the European Union has said, we particularly welcome FAO's commitment to prioritize sustainable agriculture and to prioritize the Koronivia joint work themes. And we are particularly encouraged and we very much welcome the commitment that we have heard just now to work in collaboration with IFAD and WFP on this work.

Sra. María Fernanda SILVA (Argentina)

Agradecemos el Informe sobre la Conferencia Mundial Contra el Trabajo Infantil. La misma se realizó en mi país y en la ciudad autónoma de Buenos Aires, parte de los muchos eventos que le tocan a nuestra ciudad por estos días. Allí los asistentes se comprometieron a diez principios que se reflejen en las políticas públicas de sus respectivos países, y se han establecido nuevas metas para la erradicación de este flagelo, algunas para 2025, otras para 2030. Debemos recordar que aquella meta que se proponía eliminar el trabajo infantil para 2016 lastimosamente no la hemos cumplido. Por tanto, tenemos mucha esperanza en esta nueva propuesta, en estas nuevas metas, esta Cuarta

Conferencia Mundial que organizó nuestro gobierno, el Gobierno Argentino, con el apoyo de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, la OIT. También incluyó un llamado a las delegaciones de los países integradas por representantes de gobierno y de organizaciones de empleadores y de trabajadores, así como a la sociedad civil y organizaciones regionales e internacionales, para realizar una serie de promesas que implicarán medidas concretas para acelerar los esfuerzos contra el trabajo infantil y el trabajo forzoso.

En los tres días se recopilieron cerca de un centenar de promesas para ser leídas por quienes se comprometieron en una sesión en la jornada final del encuentro. La Declaración de Buenos Aires, así se llamó el documento que emanó de esta cuarta Conferencia Mundial, fue entregada a la OIT por nuestro Ministro de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social, el Ministro Jorge Triaca, y por representantes de los actores sociales que le hicieron entrega de esta declaración al Director de la OIT.

Esta Conferencia también se refirió al trabajo joven y la necesidad de encontrar trabajo joven decente en todo el mundo. Recordemos que hay al menos de 71 millones de jóvenes que todavía están desempleados. El empleo joven es también, debo decirlo, un tema central de la Presidencia argentina del G20. Esta Conferencia en Buenos Aires hizo un repaso de la anterior que tuvo lugar en Brasilia, en Brasil, así como los resultados de aquella. Recordemos que por segunda vez consecutiva la Conferencia Mundial Contra el Trabajo Infantil se realiza en Suramérica, cosa que nos honra.

Y finalmente, destacamos el apoyo que hemos tenido de múltiples organizaciones para esta Conferencia, y, sobre todo, el apoyo de la OIT. Agradecemos vuestro informe; recordamos que la prevalencia de trabajo infantil forzado en todas las Américas es de uno cada 19 niños, y finalizo con las palabras que pronunció en aquella oportunidad en el mes de noviembre el Director General de la OIT, cuando dijo “Esperamos que Buenos Aires sea lugar donde la comunidad internacional tome las medidas para no tolerar lo intolerable”.

Mr Abdul Razak AYAZI (Afghanistan)

We would also like to thank all the seven speakers on our excellent topics.

We wish to raise two points. Both are questions. One deals with HLPF efforts and the other one with migration.

On HLPF. First, I want to associate myself with what my colleague from the EU has said. He raised a very legitimate issue. My question is, at the moment, FAO, WFP, IFAD, all four make separate contributions to HLPF. What prevents them from making one joint written statement that will carry more weight? That is my question on HLPF.

On migration. I would like to ask Mr Kostas Stamoulis. You did not say anything about remittances. Remittances are an essential part of the migration, whether it is migration South-North or South-South, it contributes to development. This is more so because now FAO is part of GFMD. Remittances could make enormous contribution to rural development in all developing countries.

Sra. Tamara VILLANUEVA (Chile)

En primer lugar, quisiera agradecer las presentaciones de todos los oficiales de FAO. Esta información es muy relevante y da cuenta de una manera holística sobre el involucramiento de la Organización en temas de gran importancia para nuestros países, como cambio climático y la COP23, protección y desarrollo sostenible de nuestros recursos naturales, migración y trabajo infantil, y llama nuestra atención hacia los principales desarrollos vinculados a la agricultura y la alimentación que debemos relevar ante nuestras capitales.

En particular, quisiera destacar la importancia para nuestro país de la protección y conservación del océano, de la mano con una producción sustentable que protegía nuestra biodiversidad y recursos naturales marinos. Chile ha participado activamente en las Conferencias Internacionales *Nuestro Océano*, y hace algunos meses, en el Congreso Internacional de Áreas Marinas Protegidas (IMPAC 4), sé anunció la creación de un área marina costera protegida de múltiples usos, que abarca la totalidad de la zona económica exclusiva de la eco región marina la Isla de Pascua. Con esto, Chile ha logrado tener más áreas marinas protegidas que territorio en el continente, demostrando ante la comunidad

internacional el real compromiso de Chile y del Gobierno de la Presidenta Bachelet en materia de conservación, protección y uso sostenible de los recursos marinos.

Hacemos un llamado a la comunidad internacional a sumarse a estos esfuerzos colectivos, en beneficio de todos, y en particular de nuestras futuras generaciones.

Ms Teresa TUMWET (Kenya)

Kenya presents this statement on behalf of the Africa Regional Group because we realize the discussions that are being held are very important to our region.

We appreciate the presentations by the Secretariat on *Developments in Fora of Importance to the Mandate of FAO*.

Allow us, Chairperson, to make a few comments.

The areas of focus in these presentations cut across sectors and have highlighted the importance of having a coordinated approach to sustainable development.

The recently released State of World Food Security and Nutrition paints a gloomy picture of our development, the number of undernourished increased to 815 million in 2016 from 777 million in 2015.

The Africa Regional Group welcomes the commitment by FAO, WFP and IFAD in the participation of this year's High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in which the importance of resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems were highlighted as a prerequisite for sustainable development. We also appreciate the continued efforts that FAO is putting in place to address these issues.

The HLPF also noted that hunger and poverty are interlinked and therefore there is a need for responsible investments, coherent policies and accountable institutions.

We note also the "*Our Ocean*" Conference, which was also held this year and focused on issues related to the ocean and climate change, marine pollution, sustainable fishing, sustainable blue growth, ocean governance, and empowering a new generation to lead the way. The effect of climate change on the water bodies cannot be over emphasized. Water levels have risen, temperatures have increased and life in water is adversely affected. We welcome the commitments that were adopted during the Conference and look forward to their implementation.

We welcome the partnership between FAO and other development partners as well as cooperation with institutions such as IFAD as they augment the work of governments across the world to address child labour in the agriculture sector through rural transformation. The lack of opportunities for improved livelihoods in rural areas often lead to increased migration to the urban centres, especially by the youth.

As regards some of the issues discussed during the 40th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Codex Trust Fund is a noble initiative for supporting the work of Codex in Africa. We encourage Member States to continue contributing towards the fund for increased participation by Member States in the activities of Codex Alimentarius.

As relates to the issue of climate change, there was the International Congress on Climate Change and Fisheries held early in October. We were looking forward to hearing a presentation of the outcomes or commitments. Maybe it will be clarified as an addition. With these remarks, the Africa Regional Group endorses the report on *Developments in Fora of Importance for the Mandate of FAO*.

Sra. Martha Elena BÁRCENA COQUI (México)

Me sumo a lo dicho por Chile, agradeciendo a todas las presentaciones de esta mañana que han hecho los diversos funcionarios de la FAO. También a la sugerencia de Afganistán de que los informes escritos sobre cada uno de estos temas serían de gran utilidad para los Estados Miembros.

En este sentido, quisiera hacer varias referencias.

En primer lugar, en lo que se refiere a la Conferencia sobre Nuestro Océano, con mucho orgullo informo que el 27 de noviembre de este año el Presidente de México, Don Enrique Peña Nieto, declaró

Área Nacional Protegida a la zona de las Islas Revillagigedo y toda la zona marina circundante, en donde coinciden dos de las principales corrientes marinas del mundo. Esta Área Nacional Protegida incluye a casi 15 millones de hectáreas. Tiene 366 especies, de las cuales 26 solo se localizan en este parque marino, entre ellas las famosas mantarrayas gigantes, que solo se encuentran en esa zona.

Con ello, el Gobierno de México quiere ratificar la importancia que concede a la protección del océano, de los mares y la biodiversidad que prevalece en ellos.

En segundo lugar, quisiera hacer una mención especial al tema de las labores de la FAO en la cuestión de la migración. Como es del conocimiento de todos, del 4 al 6 de diciembre se llevó a cabo en México una reunión de evaluación de los avances realizados hasta ahora en la negociación del Pacto Mundial sobre Migración. La primera fase de este proceso comenzó el año pasado y se decantó a través de seis reuniones temáticas y varias reuniones regionales, en donde se prestó sobre todo como objetivo el identificar realidades de la migración. En esta reunión, que tuvo lugar en Puerto Vallarta, se ha decantado esta información. A partir de ella, se presentarán dos documentos, uno por parte del Secretario General y otro por parte de la Presidencia de la reunión de Puerto Vallarta, que serán la base para el llamado documento cero que dará inicio a las negociaciones del Pacto Mundial sobre Migración.

Estas negociaciones comenzarán en febrero del 2018 y esperamos que concluyan en julio del 2018, para poder adoptar este pacto hacia finales de año. La Representante Especial del Secretario General para estas negociaciones, la Señora Louise Arbour, señaló que el Pacto Global sobre Migración será el mejor posible que se pueda tener en el siglo 21. Y destacó que estará basada en el respeto a la soberanía nacional, al mismo tiempo que subraya la necesaria cooperación internacional en todos los ámbitos que afectan a la migración, inclusive la protección de los derechos humanos y la prevención de los conflictos. En este sentido, el trabajo de la FAO como coordinador del grupo sobre migración, co-coordinador con la Oficina Internacional de Migración de todo el sistema de Naciones Unidas, adquiere una relevancia especial y creemos que se le debe dar un especial seguimiento durante este año. Por eso saludamos que el próximo informe se dedique al tema de migración, tal como lo señaló el Director Kostas Stamoulis.

En el tema de migración y trabajo infantil, quisiera sugerir que se investigara justamente cuál es la posible relación entre el trabajo infantil y la migración en el área rural. Porque tenemos los datos de que al migrar muchos hombres del área rural, justamente el trabajo que antes hacían esos hombres jóvenes viene a ser realizado por mujeres y niños. Creo que es un área en donde no se ha explorado suficiente, y la FAO está en capacidad de hacerlo.

Damos la bienvenida a la participación de la FAO y a los resultados de la COP23 por su enfoque en el sector agrícola y el cambio climático. Las tres Agencias de Roma tienen ahora el tema de cambio climático como uno de sus temas transversales en todos sus programas futuros. Ello nos da esperanzas de que en toda la comunidad internacional se haga una nueva conciencia sobre la relevancia de las tres agencias de Roma en el tema de cambio climático.

Con esto, quisiera terminar mi intervención agradeciendo de nuevo a los funcionarios de la FAO y alentándolos a seguir con mucha atención todos los temas que hoy nos han presentado.

Mr Yubo XU (China) (Original language Chinese)

I think all the subjects are closely linked to the 2030 Agenda. We think that the rural area is the assured area for the 2030 Agenda. That is why we should put more emphasis on rural areas. I would like to share with you that China is undertaking a policy on rural areas in five areas: rural productivity; creation of a good living space in rural areas; education and healthcare sectors; good governance in rural areas and an increase and improvement of the livelihoods, especially for the small scale farmers.

China places great importance on the sustainable development of agriculture and to create a world free of hunger, so we are promoting the South-South Cooperation and we are working in more than 20 countries. More than 1000 experts were sent to these countries for two years of work to teach local farmers to improve their productivity and their agricultural production. The results are well known by the world. Now the South-South Cooperation is transferred to Partnerships and South-South

Cooperation (DPS) and we hope that South-South Cooperation can play a greater role in this new division.

I am very happy to share the information with you that China is preparing a new Memorandum of Understanding with three countries: Morocco, Malawi, and Sri Lanka. As in the past, we will send three very strong expert teams to the three countries in rural areas to help the farmers to develop their agriculture. I believe that this is an example and another contribution to the South-South Cooperation in agriculture.

Ms Mi NGUYEN (Canada)

Thank you for this interesting session as always. We do not always have enough opportunities to hear about what is going on in other foras and how it is important to our work.

I would like to thank Assistant Director-General, Mr René Castro, for his very lively summary of breakthrough outcomes of COP 23. I would be interested in finding out the implications for FAO's work, given that FAO has already highlighted some activities, like supporting countries in implementation of their NDCs and so on.

We know that the future presidency is very much marked by the implementation focus and catalyzing action. Gender Action Plan and operationalization of an Indigenous Platform are also among them.

How do you foresee that this will impact FAO's recently adopted Climate Change Strategy and how FAO can scale up for a bigger impact?

Mr Patrick MINK (Observer for Switzerland)

Switzerland thanks FAO and all speakers for this clear overview of selected key events and processes.

The need to strengthen collaboration with civil society and private sector actors was reiterated on several occasions this week.

In this light, we would like to stress the key role of multistakeholder partnerships, in promoting the kind of inclusive, non-traditional collaboration required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

There are several examples of such multi-stakeholder partnerships in which FAO plays a central role, for example: the Mountain Partnership that will hold its global meeting in Rome next week; and the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock, which in May convened its last multi-stakeholder meeting in Ethiopia, underpinning the contribution of the livestock sector to the SDGs.

Another multi-stakeholder forum that we would like to highlight, especially in the context of the Council's endorsement of the Programme Committee's call for FAO to support broadening understanding and application of an agricultural and food systems approach, is the Sustainable Food Systems Programme of the UN 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

With technical support and inputs from FAO, this Programme held its First Global Conference last June in South Africa, calling for strengthened multistakeholder action to promote and implement a holistic, systemic approach to tackle joint food system problems.

Against this background, and given that the last FAO Conference stressed the importance of FAO's work on sustainable food systems in relation to the UN 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production, we would like to express our view that:

Firstly, more weight may be given to such multistakeholder partnerships in future Council information documents on fora of importance for the mandate of FAO. It would be interesting to understand better the different roles the FAO Secretariat plays, such as convener, provider of technical expertise or of secretariat functions, or as a steering committee member; and

Secondly, and more specifically, FAO's efforts to broaden the understanding and application of the food systems approach should both contribute to and take into due account the multistakeholder work under the UN 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer for the Netherlands)

Netherlands aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank all the presenters for their excellent presentations and the overview which was given for the developments which are taking place worldwide about crucial issues for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and SDGs. For me it underlines the crucial role which FAO plays in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and in particular, majority of SDGs.

My question to all of us, and especially to Independent Chairperson of the Council, I would very much appreciate if we had this presentation and this discussion at the beginning of this week because we directly went into the more technical discussions about the adjustments of Programme of Work and Budget, and after that, of course, the reports of the Joint Committee Programme and Finance Committee. But many of the discussions that we had were related to the developments and issues presented right now.

I think having a presentation about worldwide developments at the beginning of the Council underlines not only the crucial role of FAO but also the crucial role of FAO in supporting these developments and taking them into account when we are discussing and adopting our reports. I am certain that some of these presentations would have enriched the discussions, for example, on climate change and other issues when we spoke about the report of the Joint Committee and the Programme Committee.

Now perhaps on some specific issues. First, fisheries. I would like to thank the ADG of Fisheries and Aquaculture for his presentation on the Conference "*Our Ocean*" in Malta as well as the United Nations Conference in New York. Of course, it is impressing that we see the pledges this year. Last year we had pledges of USD 8 billion when we were at "*Our Ocean*" Conference in Washington.

My question is: these pledges are crucial, but are we also monitoring the implementation of these pledges and the results of these pledges? And what kind of role could FAO play in the monitoring of these pledges? Until now, and the reports I have read from both meetings, I did not see any clear indications whether or not the pledges of last year were implemented and the results of these pledges. I think it is important for our work within FAO to know.

I would also like to thank the presentation on the sustainable forests. I think the messages are clear. They are very much in line, I think, with the United Nations Strategic Plan for Sustainable Forests 2017–2030. But I am a little bit missing that context because I think the United Nations Strategic Plan, which is also a Strategic Plan for our work within FAO, goes beyond the messages which were given at that Conference.

It goes also beyond the HLPE report which we have discussed at CFS. When I look at the way forward, when it was presented, it was quite vague about actions to be taken and results to be achieved. Could you give some indication whether or not actions were decided upon during that meeting, which timeframe and what kind of results are going to be achieved?

Last but not least, I would like to come to the issue of the Codex Alimentarius, and also thanks for the presentation of the Secretary of the Codex. He clearly stated that he had two bosses. We have decided here that one boss is going to increase its contribution and also financial contribution to the Codex Alimentarius. Wouldn't it be appropriate if we also ask the other boss to increase its contribution to the work of the Codex Alimentarius? And my question to you is do you have any indication whether or not WHO is also going to increase its contribution to the important work of the Codex Alimentarius?

I would like to conclude by stating that the presentations made are very clear about the fact that we do not only have to join our efforts but we have to strive for more concrete results and a more results-oriented approach.

And you can be sure that the Netherlands is very much committed in doing so and especially via a multilateral approach together with you.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Ambassador. Your suggestion of re-scheduling this agenda item will be taken up at the regular meetings of the ICC with the Chairpersons and the Vice-Chairpersons of the Regional Groups.

Mr Asmerom KIDANE (Observer for Eritrea)

I also thank all of the presenters for the very important highlights on the progress and definitely I appreciate the involvement of FAO in all of the different sectors of activities.

However, I have the following three questions. The first one is on migration, the second one on climate change, and the third one on labor and child labor.

Migration has definitely negative impacts, particularly to the home countries of the migrants and, of course, it is even very difficult to measure the negative impact. Therefore, what main strategies are designed to decrease and stop the negative impact of migration, particularly in the countries of Sub-Saharan African, so that people have opportunities to work in their home countries rather than migrating to other countries such as Europe and so on.

The second question is on climate change. Mr Castro, I appreciate the important highlights. Over the last years, temperature has been rising and reaching up to 2 °C. To what extent it is realistic and practical to reduce by the next few decades to 1.5 °C, while some countries are resigning from the Paris Agreement? And what are the main practical strategies that you have put as a priority which can be conducted by all of the countries?

And the third question is on child labour. It is also another particular pertinent issue in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

As per presentation, the number of child labour is on the rise. The numbers of a child labour have significantly increased in 2017. Therefore, to what extent is it practical to aim to end child labour by 2025 which is only eight years from now? What are the strategies, particularly in agriculture, that were designed to be conducted by all the countries.

Mr Nii QUAYE-KUMAH (Observer for Ghana)

We thank the seven presenters for sharing the information with us.

We take the floor to contribute to the discussion on the Fall Armyworm (FAW) which is currently wreaking havoc in a good number of countries in Africa. We do this against the background of the observed rise in hunger after a decade of constant decline as stated by the SOFI Report and having Goal 2 of the SDGs and our collective commitment to leave no one behind in sight.

Being an indigenous pest of the Americas, many of us believed, or at least thought and hoped, that it would not spread wide within that region, let alone spread to other regions. But what do we have now? A pest on the march!

A recent UK DFID commissioned report indicated that the pest that has not previously been established outside the Americas has two strains now appearing in Africa and are rapidly spreading throughout the tropical and subtropical regions of the continent. As at September 2017, 28 of the 54 African countries have confirmed the pest on their territory (compared to 12 in April 2017) and it does not look like abating in the near future.

It is also reported that the pest could reach Asia and the Mediterranean in the next few years and threatens to devastate Asia's rice industry.

Now, that is scary because the pest is known to be one of the most damaging crop pests in the Americas, feeding on over 80 different crops. Its impact so far on maize yields in Africa has been, and is likely to continue to be, significant.

Indeed, the impact of FAW on maize yield and economics at national, continental, household and trade perspectives in Africa presents us with major challenges.

To elaborate this with the Ghana example, the impact was felt in the macro-economic situation of the country, the implementation of the food and agricultural sector policy, overall national food security programmes, household incomes and the environment. Some specific impacts were:

Up to 100 percent yield loss was reported in heavily infested maize fields;

Some smallholder farmers abandoned their heavily infested fields; that is having implications for food insecurity, seed security and incomes in some families;

Intensive pesticide use increased maize production costs with the attendant environmental impacts;

It had an initial impact on the Government's flagship programme *Planting for Food and Jobs* as some farmers were hesitant to accept the inputs for fear of the pests invasion;

A total of 14 000 hectares of maize fields were destroyed – that translates into a loss of about 29 000 metric tonnes of maize and a cost of GHC 29 million (around USD 6.67 million) to the Government;

The effect on the national budget: the Government had to raise GHC 15.8 million for FAW management, an expenditure that was not planned for and therefore impacting on the national budget.

Overall, through the Government's intervention and with the support of partners, the Fall Armyworm invasion was successfully managed and kept under control for the planting season. Through this intervention, 90 percent of affected farmlands were recovered.

We realize that this pest is not one that goes away easily. So Ghana has put in place a few measures: strengthen the national pest surveillance system; establish a strategic stock of pesticides; manage FAW with environmentally friendly products; and intensify research.

Putting the current situation in perspective, we reckon that this will call for a bold initiative to mobilize additional resource to complement the efforts of the affected countries, as well as FAO which is providing technical support in dealing with this outbreak as indicated by H.E the Ambassador of the United Kingdom.

In this regard, Ghana is collaborating with FAO in a resource mobilization event themed Pests on the March, scheduled for early 2018, and we encourage all Members to support this event. The reason is this, we do not know where else the Fall Armyworm is headed and, if collective action is not taken, its spread will be unstoppable and the implications will be enormous for global food security and for our efforts towards achieving zero hunger.

Considering that geographical aspect, the shortest distance between Africa and South America, where it is believed the pest has come from into Africa, is some 2 575 km compared to the shortest distance of just 14 km between Africa and Europe (if you use the Gibraltar Strait crossing), there is a need for caution and joint action.

In concluding, we want to thank the UK and other partners for their strong support in the efforts to bring the spread of destruction of the Fall Armyworm, especially in Africa, under control. We are confident that working together, we can stop these pests marching further and derailing our progress towards achieving zero hunger.

Mr Zoltán KÁLMÁN (Observer for Hungary)

Although we have had no coordinated joint EU statement, I fully support the statement made on behalf of the European Union delegation. I also agree with many of my fellow colleagues in the Council, Members and Observers, particularly those who have referred to the extremely important issue of the Fall Armyworm explained also by my friend from Ghana.

I would like to shortly make a comment on the COP 23 to complement the information provided. I just wanted to mention that an official side event of the COP 23 UN Climate Change Conference was held in Bonn on 16 November and the title was: *“How can agroecology help countries achieve their climate commitments?”*

The event was organized by the Governments of Hungary and France, in collaboration with FAO and IFPRI, and I would like to express appreciation to our organizing partners. This side event focused on

the role of agroecology in climate change adaptation and mitigation, building resilience, improving food security and facilitating countries in meeting their Paris Agreement commitments.

The programme consisted of an expert-level segment and a ministerial panel, and included a video showing testimony of farmers from all over the world practicing agroecology. Effects of climate change on smallholder farmers and their adaptation to climate change was highlighted through real life examples.

In the ministerial panel, five ministers participated as speakers: Ministers for Agriculture from Hungary, France and Tunisia, as well as Ministers for Environment from Burkina Faso and Poland, the latter who will be the next president of COP 24.

The Ministers highlighted the important role and comparative advantages of agroecology in sustainable agriculture and in contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We were pleased to see the great interest for this theme at the COP 23. The event was attended by approximately 150 participants, and was also broadcasted live in the UNFCCC video channel on YouTube.

We look forward to cooperating with our partners, especially with FAO in promoting agroecology in the future. We are also looking forward to the Second International Symposium on Agroecology which will be held next year and that will be an excellent opportunity to present agroecology as a holistic, inclusive and innovative solution to transform our food system and make it more sustainable, at the same time providing an adequate response to climate change challenges.

Ms Maria Helena SEMEDO (Deputy Director-General Climate and Natural Resources)

I would like to start by giving some comments to the questions from the European Union and Afghanistan regarding the HLPF. Thank you for the strong support on FAO's participation and the appreciation of the work of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) towards the preparation of the event.

For sure, we consider that we should align all of our products to the Sustainable Development Goals and how they can be used. In this regard, while aligning the SOFI with indicators for the SDG 2, and the same not only the SOFI, but we have the SOFO for forests which can be used for SDG 15 and we have the SOFIA which also will provide inputs and indicators for the measurement and monitoring of SDG 14.

Also in all of the technical committees, a discussion will be held regarding the contribution to the SDGs as a contribution to the HLPF in 2019. Unfortunately, when we will be having the HLPF in 2018, we will be having COFI and COFO but not COAG. It is difficult to align but we are fully committed and our products will be aligned so that they can be contributed not only to the indicators but also to the general debate and the theme on debate on the HLPF.

Considering the question of Afghanistan, yes, I think that this year it is what we did in the preparation where a draft will be delivered together with the message on SDG 2 and other SDGs that were coming from RBAs and the CFS. I intervened on SDG 2 on behalf of RBAs and, in other SDGs, WFP and IFAD took the floor on behalf of the RBAs.

It was the first time and we should have prepared ahead of time. But I think it was a lesson learned, as what we committed to do in 2018 is, instead of each agency speaking, there will be one speaking on behalf of the three and also we will see how we can do the same with the CFS.

Considering the Fall Armyworm, it can hamper the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda. As it has already been said, it is an endemic transboundary pest. It came from South America and now it is hitting the majority of the African countries. Even my country, Cabo Verde, far away but it has already been reached by the Fall Armyworm.

We are concerned by that. As you know, FAO has been working. We prepared a plan. We have been mandated by the African Union and SADC (Southern African Development Community) for FAO to lead. We are working on a plan and, considering that the pest became endemic, we need to see what is the approach because sometimes the approach is to use pesticides. It is no longer effective.

We have a plan considering what is the status of the pests in this moment but Ren Wang will explain later because he understands better than me. But what I wanted to say is that we have a plan. Our plan will cost around USD 90 million. FAO has committed USD 8 million. We have 28 operational TCPs.

We have received some other contributions but it is not enough. We call on all of you to help FAO support the countries in fighting this pest and contribute to food security because it is not only food security; it also has socioeconomic impacts as has been mentioned here by South Africa and Ghana.

What I will ask, with your permission, is if Ren Wang who is a specialist, an entomologist, can speak. He understands better than me and can provide better replies.

Mr Ren WANG (Assistant Director-General, Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department)

I am not sure how much I can add, although I am an entomologist, as Maria Helena has already largely answered the questions. Let me say that FAO has been very active, in close consultation with countries and the African Union, led by our Regional Office in Accra with the subregional offices as well as the network of our Country Offices.

Here at headquarters, our activities on Fall Armyworm are anchored at the Strategic Programmes 2 and 5 and also those Strategic Programmes are involved. We have already, with a special allocation from the Director-General of USD 800 000, carried out training of trainers on the ground and also consultation meetings. For instance, we held a consultative meeting on the Fall Armyworm on 27 November.

Partnership is the cornerstone of these FAO activities and consultations, and perhaps I could address the question and comment from the Ambassador of the United Kingdom that it is very critical, as you advised, that FAO be clear on what we can and cannot do.

We have been in consultation with organizations such as CGIAR, CIMMYT, in particular IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture) in Africa, the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE) based in Nairobi and CB International, also through South-South Cooperation. For instance, we have experts from Brazil attending the meetings, as well as experts from the United States of America, from the universities. So there is already a formulation of a consortium of partners.

As regards short-term solutions and activities vis-à-vis the medium term and the long term, that is actually considered in the FAO plan. For instance, at the moment we are focusing on awareness raising and providing technical information and, especially on pesticide management, advising the judicious use of pesticides and how to manage them and also training on integrated pest management, IPM programmes, as well as early warning. These are rather short-term activities. We also included discussions on identifying research priorities for the medium range and the longer term, components, development of components for integrated pest management.

Mr Árni MATHIESEN (Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department)

I would first reply to the question from the Netherlands and then move on and make a few comments directly pertinent to the input from Chile and Mexico and indirectly related to the comment by Kenya.

I am sorry if it is a bit confusing when I jump from talking about the various past and future “*Our Ocean*” Conferences and the UN *Ocean Conference*, but they all have as a major output pledges made by the various participants, be it countries, NGOs, private sector or international organizations.

In the context of the “*Our Ocean*” Conferences, FAO does not have a particular monitoring or a follow-up role. But as focal point in the action community on sustainable fisheries, one of our roles is to monitor the follow-up to the implementation of the pledges.

And as we proposed at last week’s meeting on this, we will have as a basis for this follow-up the report made to the Conference at the final session last June by the Minister from Senegal from the Sustainable Fisheries Panel, which I cited in my earlier opening remarks.

So that would be an active follow-up and we have also then basically due to how very close to our work many of the pledges from the multiple conferences are, we have been looking specifically at them to look for synergies with those that have been pledging there.

We will try as we can to link that together and we hope that we will be effective and successful in that.

But it is not just about the monitoring. It is more about supporting the countries and actually implementing the pledges because some of them are quite complex and not easy to do. And we are doing a number of things to be more capable in doing that and I would like to mention one of them, that is the plans for a Blue Growth Network Secretariat to be setup here in the department where we have had very good encouragement from the Netherlands and others in recent months and we hope to be able to do this next year.

I would then like to say a few words about what Chile and Mexico mentioned on the marine protected areas (MPA) and certainly the IMPAC Conference in Chile. FAO participated in that and we have been following events about the MPAs in Mexico and it was under discussion also last week at a Blue Growth Conference that I attended.

But as I mentioned in my speech, we have vast areas of marine protected areas all over the world so it is a huge task how we manage them. And luckily there is a synergy with our IUU work. If we divide the work on the MPAs into two parts, the external protecting of the MPAs and the internal management, what we are doing on the IUU I think will be very positive and help Member Countries in protecting the MPAs from illegal activities that otherwise might have persisted.

And the IUU umbrella programme that we are working on with a number of countries is moving on very well and we have already held 15 capacity gap analysis seminars this year in various countries and we can foresee that next year we might be working simultaneously with 40 countries in improving the situation with regard to IUU. I think that will be a very significant input into the MPAs work.

But then there is the internal management and I think that is an issue that we need to start looking at more closely. The MPAs are very different and the methods will not all be the same. So we need to think it through quite well so that in the context of the general situation, the food insecurity and nutrition security situation and the effects of climate change, that the protection actually is effective and beneficial for the communities.

I would like to mention at the end that there was a very nice video presented by Chile at the Conference "*Our Ocean*" in Malta from the marine protected area around the Hernandez Islands which I think was a very good example that we could all benefit from having a look at.

Ms Thais LINHARES JUVENAL (Senior Forestry Officer, Forestry Department)

Thank you for the comments and welcoming the global meeting on Sustainable Wood for a Sustainable World.

Related to the comments on alignment with the CFS Agenda, I would like to say that the event took place just after the CFS meeting and that we built on the work that was developed on progress contributions to development, including for food security. The CFS report released just before the SW4SW had its key message included in the meeting background document and in the discussions on contributions to enhance livelihoods.

Related to partnerships and how these events will deliver outcomes and how this is going to be implemented, it is important to say that the meeting was taken as a 'test the waters' event to test the relevance of this agenda for global development. In fact, the success of the meeting confirmed what we expected: that there is a need, a gap in discussing sustainable forest value chains in the Development Agenda.

Therefore, the organizing institutions decided to continue this work. A road map is going to be elaborated and made available in January establishing the main outcomes, the main objectives and milestones to advance sustainable wood value chains work, including work to be presented in COFO 2018. We hope we can work with a broad range of stakeholders and that these discussions can move towards practical implementation at country level.

Mr Tom HEILANDT (Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission)

There was only one question for me, I think, which was about the financing and the financing from the two parent organizations.

Now, just to clarify, we did not ask for an increase in the budget to the Codex Secretariat. At the moment, the budget that is provided by FAO and WHO to the core work, the one that I am doing and my team on organizing the meetings, that is working well. Where we have a lack of funds is the Scientific Advice and also contributions to the Codex Trust Fund.

FAO has taken the decision to use unspent funds, to make it possible to use unspent funds, move them to the next biennium and use them for scientific advice. But we will still need more in order to deal with the backlog that we are having at the moment in the Scientific Advice that is holding up some standard-setting in Codex. I hope that answers the question.

Mr Kostas STAMOULIS (Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Development)

Let me start with the question from Afghanistan of which I am guilty as charged. I did not mention the remittances which is quite an important part of the whole migration story. Let me give you a couple of numbers in order to put you in the picture of the remittances. In 2016, total remittances for migrants, the ones that are recorded because there is a lot of it that is not recorded, was about USD 585 billion, of which USD 442 billion are going to the Developing Countries.

Now IFAD estimated that 40 percent of the remittances go to the rural areas. I made the calculation and that means USD 176 billion is going to the rural areas from remittances of migrants and migrant communities. ODA (Official Development Assistance), in comparison, was USD 142.6 billion in 2016. So, compare USD 176 billion to USD 142 billion. The remittances that go to the rural areas are higher by USD 30 billion of total ODA coming from OECD data. So, indeed, it is a very important part of the whole story, which brings me to the question by Eritrea and then I will move to the statement from Mexico.

It goes to show you that not everything is negative to the origins of migrants. There is an Alice in Wonderland story that everything works beautifully, which the real story is that things are not always as beautiful. Let me explain. In a normal transformation process, as I said before, migration is part of the development story. What do you have? You have increasing population, increasing productivity in agriculture, you do not need that many hands. But in urban areas, services or industry have high productivity and they are expanding. So, we have a normal transition from rural areas to urban areas. Now make an extension of it and you can have from agriculture-based countries to more industrial countries. That explains the international migration.

But things do not always work that way. There are a lot of countries that are laggards, or they are behind in this transition process. Population increases, agriculture and rural productivity does not increase, urban industry or services do not increase in productivity, so you have very poor people forced out of agricultural rural areas into urban areas where they become slum-dwellers and they augment the army of the urban poor. Now this is the point. That is where the whole story of migration goes bad, both for the sending areas, the origins and to the destination.

However, there are positive elements, as I said before, of which one is the remittances. The other is it relieves labour pressure in the rural areas. It stops the subdivision of land. If you have lot of kids and you have to divide your land into many pieces, it becomes unproductive. So, migration also moves to the more remunerative activities within the rural areas.

But, at the same time, there are negative aspects, as Eritrea pointed out. It deprives talent and capacity. Please note that the bulk of the migrants are in the 16 to 34 year cohort and the migrant-sending households are more educated on average than those that stay behind. So, you lose a young and educated labour force *vis-à-vis* what stays behind. Despite the fact that the migration decision is a strategy by the rural households, a lot of times you have a feminization of agriculture in rural areas because of the move of young and educated migrants which are predominantly male. And, also, child labour.

So, those who stay behind work in agriculture and that is where the child labour story is. FAO is doing exactly what the Eritrea representative said; that is, we try to create opportunities so there is no forced migration. So, if one is a migrant, he/she goes for a better future but is not forced to a future that is uncertain, etc. We are working on it in at least four countries at this point, including the mobilization of remittances.

Regarding Mexico. First of all, Mexico is to be thanked for their role as co-facilitator of the Global Compact. FAO will bring the types of things that I said now. These are the kinds of discussions that we will bring as a member and a co-chair of the GMG, the agriculture and rural story, which is fundamental. As I said before, 40 percent of remittances go to the rural areas, and that makes us expect that more than 50 percent of migrants come from the rural areas. These issues of feminization of agriculture under adverse conditions and child labour in agriculture because of who migrates are something that we plan to put in the GMG and how to maximize the benefits from migration.

Mr Benjamin DAVIS (Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction Programme Management Team SP3)

We welcome the question from the representative of Eritrea. I think the goal of 2025 really stresses the urgency of the challenge that we face and what we need to strive for. There are a number of practical strategies that we can take. First, we need to remember that this is really linked to achieving also SDGs 1 and 2. We have to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, get at the structural causes behind them which are also driving a lot of child labour.

At the country level, we need an integrated approach. We need to bring together different ministries, partners, we need to address the issue from the aspect of education, health, migration, as we heard in the comment from Mexico, from all these different angles, most importantly from the agricultural stakeholders, given the predominance of child labour in agriculture.

Child labour issues need to be built into these sectoral policies and strategies. I think most importantly, though, is simply making it a priority and putting all our efforts with government and with development partners in order to bring these efforts to scale. That is the way to address it.

Mr René CASTRO SALAZAR (Assistant Director-General, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water Department)

We received seven questions and comments.

Starting with the knowledge hub, so far, we have received USD 1.5 million in pledges from the German Government, USD 1 million is mainly for NDCs and half for the hub specifically. It will produce a global product for the SP2. We will pull together tools, guidelines, publications and develop in one single access point. It will simplify the access. We will provide additional guidance on how to use them and how to access with training and advice.

Additionally, on the development, and as we speak, we are discussing it with other countries as a multilateral approach. We have received requests for this knowledge hub, for example, farmer-to-farmer exchanges, South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Just to give you a few examples, we have people interested in going to China to learn how to produce better tea with lower emissions, or to go to Brazil and know how to produce better livestock and increase the productivity and reduce emissions, and then to Costa Rica and learn the same about coffee.

We received recently support from Italy to work with other countries, especially with the *Carabinieri* [Italian military force] and the Italian universities on issues like forest fires response and training. Of course, report and monitoring of greenhouse gasses, inventories and land use are also part of this knowledge hub and exchange.

Then, yes, to the United Kingdom, the RBAs will be happily reporting together by 31 March what the work ahead will look like. This is already an agreement.

To Kenya, what are the issues we will be raising? I think the new challenges for climate will be blue, both in oceans and in water management, especially the races of the oceans and all the problems with biodiversity but also the use of water. Seventy percent is used in agriculture and is essentially misused and is being neglected. We are working on that. We will be doing more now as part of the World Water Forum.

I mentioned already the people interested in working closer with China also on issues like GIAHS, especially on the international network of the sites that already exist in the world; 38, very likely to reach 50 by next year. So, that will be a growing and important point.

To Canada, yes, there will be a very concrete impact in both the strategy and the annual plans. For example, in 2018, all the countries will be adjusting their NDCs. Naturally, in the new NDCs, the gender issues, the indigenous people will have more presence. For example, land tenure is a natural one. We know that will increase agricultural productivity and will increase also social and economic well being. I expect that to be a measured reaction in the next NDC review.

Finally, the points of the Netherlands. We would love to have you as a partner in the hub and these exchanges between farmers and South-South and Triangular Cooperation. That would really be a gain for everybody.

The toughest question, I think, came from Eritrea. How practical FAO measures could be for the 1.5 °C goal. I said that, with the current goals, we are more in the 3 °C neighbourhood. Not in 5 °C as doing nothing, but closer to 3 °C than to 1.5 °C. So, an increase in ambition will really be needed to go closer to 1.5 °C. What can we do?

Well, I think FAO can do one specific thing, which is to advise, to disseminate, to promote that more than 90 percent of the countries presented proposals for both mitigation and adaptation in agriculture, but also that agriculture, as I mentioned, represents around one-fifth of total global emissions and could be about the same for the more efficient, the least cost mitigation options and adaptation options.

Why is that not clear to the countries and to the Convention? Because it is being neglected. Because it was difficult to measure. Because it was scientifically hard to assess, for example, the carbon in the soils or the carbon in the forests. But now we have the methodologies. After 23 years of COPs, I think we can do it.

Finally, in the next decade, there is no other option as efficient in terms of cost and results as the agricultural ones. So, we should show results to the world. We should increase the investment on the agricultural side. And later, other options in energy and transportation and other areas will also kick in and will provide additional possibilities. But in the next ten, even 15 years, there are no other alternatives more efficient than the ones based on agriculture.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer for Netherlands)

Sorry to come back, but there was a question on the Codex Alimentarius. The Council is going to adopt the report of the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in which we agreed that we should push WHO to contribute more to the funding, not only for the immediate but especially for the scientific work. My question was: is the Joint Secretariat also going to push WHO? You can be assured that the Netherlands is going to do that.

While I have the floor, I hope that at the COFI meeting we can get an update on the implementation of the commitments.

Last but not least, perhaps on the question on forests which were not answered. Perhaps we could get those answers during the next Conference in the beginning of next year on forests.

Mr Tom HEILANDT (Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission)

Of course, there are long discussions about the budget of Scientific Advice, also with WHO. If we are going to push from the Secretariat – well, it is never a good idea to push your parents – but definitely we are in these discussions. FAO now has taken a good step forward and we are looking forward to good steps coming from WHO as well. Let's say it like that. But the discussions are going on.

CHAIRPERSON

Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes item 11 of the agenda which was presented to the Council for information only. The list of presentations has been included in the draft Report, and the power point presentations we have just seen will be uploaded to the FAO Members' Gateway.

*Debriefing on Field Visit to Dominican Republic and Haiti (24 September to 1 October 2017)
by Senior Officials of Rome-based Permanent Representations*

*Compte rendu sur les visites de terrain effectuées à Haïti et en République dominicaine
(24 septembre-1er octobre 2017) par des hauts fonctionnaires de représentations permanentes
sises à Rome*

*Informe oral acerca de la visita sobre el terreno realizada por altos funcionarios de las
Representaciones Permanentes en Roma a la República Dominicana y Haití (del 24 de septiembre
al 1 de octubre de 2017)*

CHAIRPERSON

I now welcome to the podium Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan Olaniran, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO, for a debriefing to Council on the Field Visit to the Dominican Republic and Haiti, which took place from 24 September to 1 October this year. We will start the debriefing with a short video presentation.

Video Presentation

Présentation vidéo

Videopresentación

Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan OLANIRAN (Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO)

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you as Independent Chairperson of the Council and for the good job that you have been doing since Monday.

Let me start by encouraging us that field trips do a number of things for us as Members of the Governing Body but also an encouragement to the various centres we visit. Field trips are not evaluation or inspection missions. They are put there so that they build the opportunity of awareness of what is going on, information exchange, and also the creation of understanding between the projects, managers, as well as those of us who are members of the group. The visits give an understanding to us. Until you visit somebody else's farm, you do not know what you have or what you do not have.

Visiting the Dominican Republic and Haiti, they are the same island but divided into two, but the contrasts are unbelievable for many reasons. So, we had the opportunity of interacting with the government officials in the Dominican Republic, the ministers, and we also had the privilege to see the Vice-President who happens to also be the FAO Special Ambassador on Food Security. The priorities of the Dominican Republic are essentially four: food and nutrition security and poverty reduction, strengthening of family farming, integrated watershed, and management of efficient usage of natural resources.

Climate change was also factored in. FAO was helping them in the area of policy dialogue with respect to enacting a law on food sovereignty, food security and nutrition. The Government actually appreciated all that FAO is doing. FAO is also involved in sustainable livestock development for the nation and also in the area of forestry and forestation.

Out of the programmes we visited in the Dominican Republic, I will take one, which is called "*The Seed of Life*" at the Training Centre for youth in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Unfortunately, the young people are not able to articulate the role of FAO in the programme because it is a joint programme. However, we realized that it has a positive impact on their lives. Now they want to get involved in organic agriculture, and FAO and IFAD are helping them. By the time they finish they will go in their family farms to make things happen there.

With respect to Haiti, it is a different ball game. The distances are very remote, the roads are not too good and they are difficult. One can not easily compare walking in Haiti with walking in the Dominican Republic. FAO is helping with the EU Fund to reach the very remote rural communities and part of what they are doing has to do with fisheries, production of small enterprises, a sort of value-chain approach.

To us, they look meagre but the people, because of the fiscal experience, were bold to tell us that the production of a small bag of peanuts may mean nothing to us, but to them and their family members it is huge.

What that translates into is the improvement in their lives which money cannot buy.

There is also collaboration between the EU, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic in the area of making marketing available to the different people. It is a difficult environment in Haiti with respect to the Government interacting with UN agencies, many of them. But in case of FAO, the Country Director has been able to liaise with some parliamentarians and they formed what they called the Parliamentarian Forum in which there is open conversation about the objectives of the fight against hunger, the challenges, the opportunities available, and FAO is helping them in the areas of enacting their laws on national food security and sovereignty, forest law, fisheries, and aquaculture, and in general, economic development.

Now it is an area that I said is difficult. For instance, to go on a journey of 35 minutes by air, we had to leave the hotel four hours before to navigate the town. It is also an area where we are seriously monitored as we move, because when we were there, there was a riot and so it was not easy to move as one would want.

We had discussions and dialogues with the various UN agencies. There were various opinions and approaches, depending on who you speak with, but one thing that struck us which gladdened the hearts of most of us is that the aspiration that was inspired by the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, which was the work of FAO and CFS, turned out to be a cardinal point in their development.

FAO was also able to promote the South-South and Triangular Cooperation between the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba and that helped them to be able to work hard on about a million Haitians who are in the area.

Let me conclude by saying that what we saw gave us a broad spectrum of what FAO can do and it is not very easy to extrapolate one country's activity on the other because they are very different. But the beauty of it is that each country has the advantage of the collective experience of FAO in helping them solve their problems.

Sra. María Fernanda SILVA (Argentina)

Agradecemos el Informe que hemos recibido. Es un honor para esta Delegación solicitar el derecho de palabra para la República de Haití.

M. Yves THEODORE (Observateur de Haïti)

Je voudrais, au nom du Gouvernement haïtien, remercier le Directeur général de la FAO, M José Graziano da Silva pour son soutien à mon pays. Récemment, une équipe de la FAO a effectué une visite en Haïti dans le cadre de la coopération Sud-Sud suite à une demande du Ministre de l'agriculture, des ressources naturelles et du développement rural de la République d'Haïti.

Monsieur le Directeur Général, vous avez comme d'habitude tenu promesse et, même en votre absence, je tiens à vous renouveler toute la gratitude qu'exprime mon Ministre à votre égard. Cette démarche a donné lieu à la signature d'un protocole d'accord entre Haïti et la FAO. Ce nouveau support permettra le renforcement du Ministère de l'agriculture, des ressources naturelles et du développement rural, pour l'appui aux services d'assistance technique dans le Département du Sud. Je tiens aussi à remercier le Gouvernement cubain et d'autres partenaires qui, depuis des décennies, coopèrent avec Haïti dans plusieurs secteurs comme la pêche, l'agriculture, le sport, l'éducation et la santé, pour ne citer que ceux-là. En fait, cette nouvelle assistance de la FAO sera mise en œuvre avec l'appui du Gouvernement cubain, qui facilitera l'envoi d'experts dans les domaines de récupération et restauration des terres, de diversification agricole et de production agro-forestière.

Nous n'avons pas de conflits armés en Haïti, mais nous sommes obligés de nous tenir prêts tous les ans à affronter une situation de réhabilitation et même de reconstruction. Comme nous le savons tous, ici présents, et compte tenu des derniers événements causés dans les Caraïbes par les cyclones Maria et Irma, Haïti est particulièrement vulnérable aux catastrophes naturelles. Au cours de la dernière

décennie, une série de catastrophes naturelles a frappé le pays - tempêtes tropicales, sécheresses, inondations et tremblements de terre.

Aussi, comme les deux tiers de la population haïtienne dépendent de l'agriculture, les moyens de subsistance des ménages n'ont fait que se détériorer et ont, dans certains cas, été détruits, ce qui a également amené à une situation d'insécurité alimentaire aiguë. On se rappellera qu'en octobre 2016, le pays a été gravement touché par l'ouragan Matthew, causant des dommages considérables au secteur agricole. Selon le Rapport d'évaluation des besoins après l'ouragan, réalisé par le Ministère de l'agriculture, des ressources naturelles et du développement rural, les dommages ont été estimés à 7 pour cent du produit intérieur brut (PIB) et à environ 31 pour cent de la perte de valeur ajoutée des activités agricoles; 428 000 agriculteurs, soit plus de 2 millions de personnes, sont décapitalisés. Bien que des mesures d'urgence aient été prises pour restaurer la base d'actifs initiale, des mesures plus durables sont nécessaires.

Le secteur agricole haïtien contribue pour environ 25 pour cent du PIB et absorbe environ 60 pour cent de la main-d'œuvre, selon les données de la Coordination nationale de la sécurité alimentaire. L'agriculture est à la fois une source de nourriture et de revenus pour la zone rurale. D'une part, la production agricole permet aux populations rurales de couvrir une grande partie de leurs besoins alimentaires. D'autre part, la vente de main-d'œuvre pour les activités agricoles est la principale source de revenus pour les personnes vivant dans le milieu rural avec un accès limité aux terres agricoles. Pour ainsi dire, l'agriculture reste un secteur stratégique susceptible de contribuer à la stabilité sociale, à l'amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire et à la croissance économique nationale.

La FAO peut aussi aider à diminuer l'exode rural en continuant à accorder beaucoup plus d'importance à des programmes qui visent une production agricole plus rationnelle face aux changements climatiques, incluant les femmes, les hommes et les jeunes ruraux. Elle apporterait ainsi une contribution particulière aux objectifs de développement durable (ODD) et changerait les facteurs de migration et de fragilité des zones rurales en Haïti.

Le partenariat, établi depuis 1978 entre le Gouvernement haïtien et la FAO, marche très bien. On ne peut passer sous silence le fait que la FAO travaille sérieusement à l'identification des secteurs clés où elle peut intervenir en vue d'atteindre ses objectifs, plus particulièrement aider les pays à soutenir les politiques et engagements en faveur de la sécurité alimentaire, appuyer le secteur agricole en assurant l'inclusion de la grande majorité et réduire la pauvreté en soutenant le mieux possible les populations rurales. Récemment, la FAO a fourni des semences et des outils, des transferts en espèces, ainsi que des formations techniques pour aider les agriculteurs à augmenter leur production agricole. La FAO a augmenté la distribution de semences et d'outils à 21.650 ménages dans les départements les plus touchés par la campagne agricole hivernale et les semences des cultures à cycle court, dont la Grand'Anse, le Nord-Ouest, le Sud, l'Artibonite, l'Ouest et le Sud-Est du pays.

Le Gouvernement haïtien a mobilisé beaucoup de ressources dans le cadre de sa «Caravane du changement»: 3,5 milliards de gourdes pour les trois départements du grand Sud touchés par l'ouragan Mathieu. Des routes et des structures de pénétration sont en train d'être construites partout dans tout le pays, sans oublier la construction de systèmes d'irrigation, curage des canaux et des rivières, barrage sur les rivières, conservation et utilisation des eaux des rivières pour irriguer les terres. Tout cela se fait avec les moyens propres de l'État, les équipements, les personnels qui sont disponibles et déployés dans plusieurs régions du pays. La Caravane commence déjà à produire un effet positif sur le développement économique du pays en touchant les populations les plus défavorisées, comme le prévoit le Programme pour le développement à l'horizon 2030. Dans ce même ordre d'idées, l'État haïtien a acheté 20 pompes spéciales pouvant arroser 2 000 hectares chacune et a financé le secteur semencier dans le cadre du Fonds fiduciaire unilatéral. Le Président de la République, Son Excellence M Jovenel Moïse, donne priorité à l'agriculture et l'infrastructure, qui sont deux éléments majeurs de développement liés aux objectifs de développement durable, ODD1, ODD2 et ODD3.

Mr Wierish RAMSOEKH (Observer for Netherlands)

I was fortunate enough to be part of the group that went to both countries and the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO already gave an excellent report on our

visit. I would like to emphasize one specific issue and share that observation with you, and that is the communication between headquarters and the field office.

To give one specific example, we found out that in the Dominican Republic, the excellent Country Director in his seven or nine years only went twice to Rome and I think that is a telling factor. Most of you know that the topic of RBA cooperation is very close to my heart and I raised that also in both countries.

I found again that there is a distance between the conversation in Rome and what is known of that conversation at field level. So this is a plea to look at this issue again to see whether we can improve on the communication between headquarters and field levels. Having mentioned RBA cooperation, it might be an excellent idea. I know it is floating around but let us do it to have joint RBA field visits when we go out.

Mr Yaya Adisa Olaitan OLANIRAN (Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to FAO)

Thank you very much, Netherlands. That is true. I think there is work to do and the more of us that get on the road, the better our understanding will be. Thank you very much and God bless.

Item 12. Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 156th Session of the Council (24-28 April 2017) (continued)

Point 12. Suite donnée aux décisions adoptées par le Conseil à sa cent cinquante-sixième session (24-28 avril 2017) (suite)

Tema 12. Estado de aplicación de las decisiones adoptadas por el Consejo en su 156.º período de sesiones (24-28 de abril de 2017) (continuación)

(CL 158/LIM/3)

CHAIRPERSON

As agreed on Tuesday evening, we will now return to item 12, *Status of Implementation of Decisions taken at the 156th Session of the Council*. Please ensure you have document CL 158/LIM/3 before you.

Members will recall that this item was left open pending additional clarification to be provided to the delegation of China by the Secretariat regarding line one in the table contained in document CL 158/LIM/3.

I am informed that in the meantime informal bilateral consultations took place between the delegation of China and the Secretariat, and I now invite Mr Dan Gustafson, Deputy Director-General Programmes, to address the Council on this matter.

Mr Daniel GUSTAFSON (Deputy Director-General, Programmes)

Just very briefly, to reiterate what the Chairperson has said, the item that was requested by the Council to move South-South Cooperation out of one Division into the other and change the name now to the Office for Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division (DPS), we consider to be completed. Nevertheless, there is quite interesting and considerable expansion to be done in South-South Cooperation activities and South-South and Triangular Cooperation activities in a variety of areas.

It is a very powerful and popular tool for us. It comes up in a lot of discussions. Last week for example, it came up in the discussion around the African orphan crops consortium, looking at 101 food crops that are not dealt with sufficiently in informal research programmes, most of which depend on very localized knowledge of those crops and so on. And that, for example, looks like a very interesting use of South-South Cooperation among others. I only give that as one example.

So we recognize the remaining opportunities and work to be done in South-South Cooperation beyond the formalization of moving that work into what is now the DPS Division. So we would be happy to present an update on this at the next session, possibly of the Joint Meeting if that is what the Council would agree, but it is in fact a very important area with a lot happening in how we develop it further. It would be an interesting topic to provide additional information at the next set of meetings in May.

CHAIRPERSON

I now open the floor for any comments which Members may have. I believe there is no request for the floor, so I can read out my conclusion on this item.

The Council took note of the status of implementation of decisions taken at its 156th, 155th, and 154th sessions. In particular, the Council recommended that line 1 in document CL 158/LIM/3 be marked as “*ongoing*” and that further progress with regard to the continued use of partnerships with civil society, the private sector, academia, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, be provided to the Joint Meeting in the form of a roadmap detailing planned activities for 2018-19.

I see no comments.

As you may have seen in the Draft Report, this text was submitted to the consideration of the Drafting Committee which agreed to include it in bracketed text in the Draft Report, subject to approval by the Council.

I read out my conclusions. With this item 12 is concluded and the brackets may be removed from the text included in the Draft Report which will be presented to Council shortly for Adoption.

May I take it that Council is in agreement with my proposed way forward?

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

I would like to thank the Secretariat, Deputy Director-General Programmes, and the Secretary-General for this consulted text to solve this issue. Actually, now what is in the text is very different from what China proposed initially because here it says “*with civil society, private sector and academia*”.

South-South Cooperation and the private sector and academia are not the same issue on the same level. That is my first point. South-South Cooperation is mainly led by governments. Of course, the private sector, civil society and academia can also be involved in South-South Cooperation.

My second point is here it says “*including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation*”. This is really putting South-South Cooperation at a much too low level because South-South Cooperation is of common knowledge and agreement, a very major complement to North-South Cooperation and is also to help countries achieve the 2030 Agenda so that they can work together in cooperation. This is a major business. It is not mainly a tool. It is not a mere tool.

Therefore if we say “*including*” something, we are not putting priority on South-South Cooperation. Moreover, in recent years with the help of all parties, South-South Cooperation with the efforts of the Secretariat, has been having good results and good achievements.

Of course, I can feel that in South-South Cooperation, the main ideas or the objectives and the methods used and also different experiences can be gathered together, including the IT system, and put in place, and are all on the right path and have large potential to be developed.

So I would like to have this reflected to reinforce this kind of work. That is why I ask to initially put “*ongoing*” in the column in line 1 in the document, whereas now the new wording is putting more complexity in this issue.

When we talked about this issue last Tuesday, nobody talked about civil society, private sector or academia. I do not know why it has been put forward now and included in this text. I really do not see why it is included here because we want to put the stress on South-South Cooperation. So I do not see why this new wording has been added to the text. I do not agree with the new wording.

Mr Khaled EL TAWHEEL (Egypt)

Egypt agrees with what was mentioned by China. Nevertheless, when I look at this document, I think we are making reference to the Council decision in April. This is what we are measuring progress against.

In this regard, I think we should stick to the language that was adopted under paragraph 9, if I am correct in the Council decision. It is paragraph 9, point g), it says exactly “*encouraged the continued use of partnerships to enable the Organization to leverage its comparative advantage, including*

through South-South and Triangular Cooperation". In my understanding, this is what we measure our performance against.

Mr Hans HOOGEVEEN (Observer for Netherlands)

I was going to propose the same as what was proposed by Egypt. But to make the report consistent, because we had the same discussion when we were discussing the report of the Programme Committee, if you look at paragraph 1, point a) under item 4, there we also make use of partnerships, such as South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation as well as public-private partnerships. So, there you combine both. It was also suggested by Egypt.

CHAIRPERSON

In view of the interventions, what we could do would be to delete the words "*with civil society, private sector and academia*". So, the text would read: "*in particular, the Council recommended that line 1 in document CL 158/LIM/3 be marked as "ongoing" and that further progress with regard to the continued use of partnerships, including through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, be provided to the Joint Meeting in the form of a road map detailing planned activities for 2018–19*".

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Is the word "*through*" left?

CHAIRPERSON

We can delete "*through*" as well.

Mr Jianmin XIE (China) (Original language Chinese)

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, China.

ADOPTION OF REPORT

ADOPTION DU RAPPORT

APROBACIÓN DEL INFORME

CHAIRPERSON

We will now proceed with the Adoption of the Report. The relevant document, CL 158/Draft Report, was transmitted to Members through the Members Gateway and posted on the password protected area of the portal.

I now invite Mr Vlad Mustaciosu, Chairperson of the Drafting Committee, to present the report.

Mr Vlad MUSTACIOSU (Chairperson, Drafting Committee)

Mr Independent Chairperson of the Council, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to report on the works carried out by the Drafting Committee of the 158th Session of the FAO Council.

It was a great honor and pleasure to work alongside all members of the Drafting Committee, so my strong appreciation goes to Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Egypt, Estonia, India, Japan, Sudan, and Venezuela. I thank them for their constructive spirit and their respect for the customary rules of the Drafting Committee.

I am pleased to report to you that the Committee met for one session only on Wednesday 6 December and successfully finished its deliberation and rich consensus. I believe that we have to thank the ICC for its efficient leadership and excellent summaries of the agenda items which facilitated a lot our work. Also, the excellent support from the Secretariat made our work a lot easier. I would like to thank them for that. I also thank the interpreters for their excellent and tireless work.

The item 12 of the agenda that was left open, as you are aware, was reached by consensus during this morning session. The draft report was agreed by consensus by the members of the Drafting

Committee. Keeping the above in mind, Mr Chairperson, we recommend you to invite the Council Members to adopt the report “en bloc”.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you Mr Mustaciosu. I would like to extend my appreciation to you and to the members of the Drafting Committee for the good work done.

It appears that the Report of this Session may be approved in block.

Any linguistic observations should be communicated in writing to the Secretariat for inclusion in the Final Report.

Does the Council wish to adopt the Report in block?

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

Thank you. The Report of the 158th Session of the FAO Council is adopted.

I now invite the Director-General to address the Council.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I would like to start by thanking all of you for your support in approving all the proposed adjustments we made to the Programme of Work and Budget, as well as the other items on the Agenda. I want also to compliment all of you for this record timing to finish the Council and approve the Report with unanimous support. We are still keeping our consensus-building at high level. I appreciate that and I think that is one of the most important values of this Organization nowadays.

As I said in the opening, we have a very busy agenda next year. But for me, and I hope that it will be also for you, the most important thing is to bring the hunger numbers down again. This is the main commitment that we need from all of us, not only the Secretariat, but all Member Countries, civil society, private sector and all our partners.

I would like to say just a word to clarify one of the issues that has been discussed, about the consultants. I already met the Human Resources Team and gave instructions to carefully revise all the records we have, including the verbatim records, to see all of the considerations made by different members and to start to implement this new rule.

But what we have to say is that these rules will apply only to international consultants, and I must say that. You know that we have nowadays, according to one of the tables that we shared with you on the new information, the second tranche, we have nowadays 13 251 people working for FAO around the world. It's a big number.

Out of that, only 2 000 are international consultants. And we are looking more carefully in detail about the number of those international consultants. Usually FAO has had this 2 000 consultants for a long time. This is not a new number and it has not increased significantly in the last years. Similarly, there are 4 000 national consultants and 3 500 contractors whose contracts will be provided in the same way.

So we will start to apply this rule to the recruitment of international consultants following the guidance to respect the geographic distribution.

I would like also to say that we will provide at the beginning of the year a proposal for another format and dates for our informal seminars. The idea is to have a format for discussion that would allow us to debate on more substantive issues of our ongoing agenda for 2018-19.

I would like to conclude repeating my appeal for Members to pay their assessed contributions to the Organization as soon as possible. I would like to remind you that according to FAO Rules, the payment must be made before 31 January. After that, countries are technically considered in arrears and unfortunately we have big arrears this year and also big arrears coming from last year.

So my appeal to you all is to pay in full and on time and, for countries that are in debt, to pay because if not, this will simply block the Organization. So all of our discussions will be in vain if we do not have the money to implement all of the decisions you made.

Let me conclude by thanking everyone involved in this Council, not only the Member Countries but also Secretariat, messengers and, in particular the interpreters. Without you, this would not be possible; especially when we need to have consensus building, the interpreters are fundamental.

And I would like also to wish all of you a happy holiday season and for those who came from the capitals, a safe journey back home. Thank you very much for your support.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you, Director-General, for your closing remarks and providing some additional information on important issues.

Mme Delphine BORIONE (Observateur de la France)

Une simple information pour vous dire que nous sommes heureux d'inviter les chefs des délégations des Membres du Conseil, ou leurs représentants, à l'inauguration que nous allons faire maintenant en présence du Directeur général, et je le remercie, du bureau du Président indépendant du Conseil, qui a été rénové par la France. Ainsi, nous vous convions à cette inauguration, qui sera suivie d'un verre en salle A382.

CHAIRPERSON

Before we continue I will give the floor to the Secretary-General who will make some announcements. Mr Gagnon you have the floor.

SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to remind Members that there will be two side events taking place during lunch time today: the first one at 13.30 the Side Event on *World Food Safety Day* will take place in the Sheikh Zayed Centre; and the Side Event on *End poverty, build prosperity: stories from Zambia and Paraguay* will take place in the Iran Room from 15.30 to 17.00.

CHAIRPERSON

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, we have held five busy plenary meetings during this session of the Council. Discussions on some agenda items lasted many hours, yet for the first time we managed to complete our substantive work in two days.

I believe this has been a very productive and intense week, with an excellent job done by the Drafting Committee in under three hours on Wednesday afternoon. There have been a number of side events of great interest to Members, which was reflected by the large number of participants at every occasion.

This was my first full session of the Council. I was happy to see the dynamic and interactive discussions, characterized by a strong commitment to working towards consensus, both amongst Members and Regional Groups, as well as between Members and Management.

Consensus building continues to serve as the basis for Council deliberations, and I am grateful for this, because it unites the Membership and strengthens the Organization. It also greatly facilitates my task as the Independent Chairperson.

As we reach the close of this session of Council, I wish to also extend my gratitude and recognition to the Chairpersons of the Committees which report to Council, and to you the Members of those Committees and the Council as a whole.

May I also express my appreciation for the work of those who enabled the session to take place, in particular, I wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General and their team,

conference services staff, interpreters, translators, messengers, security staff and all those who have worked behind the scenes.

Before I close this session, I wish to pay tribute to a long-standing staff member of FAO who has assisted the Council over the years and who, after 35 years of service, will be retiring at the end of this month. The staff member is Mr Boyd Haight, Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management. Boyd began his career as a UN Volunteer in the Central African Republic in 1976. He joined FAO in 1983 as a Fish Farming Extensionist in Kenya. Mr Boyd Haight worked in the field in various countries, mostly in the Southern Africa region until 1996 when he was transferred to headquarters as Chief of the Management Support Unit in the Fisheries Department, and later in the Agriculture Department. Mr Boyd Haight also served as Secretary of the Committee on Agriculture. In 2003 he was appointed Chief of the Programme and Budget Service and since 2009 he has been Director of the Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management.

I have had the privilege of knowing Mr Boyd Haight for most of his 35 years with FAO. Over this long span of time, he has consistently served FAO with unwavering dedication and commitment. He has contributed significantly to the work of the Organization through his in-depth institutional knowledge, skilled technical capacity and impeccable professionalism which we have all come to know him for. I wish Mr Boyd Haight well as he starts the next chapter in his life and know that he will be missed by his friends and colleagues, but also by the Membership.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

M. MOUNGUI MÉDI (Cameroun)

C'est là une grande surprise, car si vous nous aviez annoncé au début de cette session que M. Boyd Haight était en fin de parcours, nous nous serions mieux préparés. Je crois pouvoir porter témoignage du travail que nous avons fait ensemble depuis 2003. Je suis arrivé un peu avant et suis donc un peu plus doyen, mais j'ai été membre du Comité du Programme et j'ai vu ce que M. Boyd Haight a réalisé pendant tout ce temps. Nous en avons été témoin lors de l'évaluation indépendante de la FAO, mais aussi après. Pour tout ce qui concerne la planification du travail que nous vivons aujourd'hui, nous avons pu voir M. Boyd Haight à l'œuvre.

Je crois qu'il n'y pas suffisamment de mots pour donner la mesure de la contribution de M. Boyd Haight au travail de la FAO. C'est un «monstre du travail» qui va nous quitter. Et malgré le fait que nous avons décidé ici de limiter le nombre de consultants, je pense savoir que M. Boyd Haight restera comme consultant, car sa contribution continuera à être nécessaire. Mais pour celui qui prendra son relais, il sera difficile d'entrer dans ses souliers, cela va sans dire.

M. Boyd Haight, tout ce que nous pouvons vous dire, en tant que compagnons de longue date, ayant réalisé beaucoup de choses ensemble, au Comité du Programme, au Comité financier, je vous souhaite bon vent dans toutes vos futures entreprises, mais également durant votre séjour, où que vous alliez, parce que vous allez pouvoir mieux vous occuper de Madame, des enfants et de votre famille et leur consacrer maintenant plus de temps. Bon vent.

Applause

Applaudissements

Aplausos

CHAIRPERSON

I just want to conclude by saying that, with these comments, we have concluded the 158th Session of the FAO Council. For those staying in Rome, I wish you a restful weekend; for those travelling, I wish you a safe journey home and a peaceful holiday season to all.

I declare the 158th Session of the FAO Council closed.

The meeting rose at 13:11 hours

La séance est levée à 13 h 11

Se levanta la sesión a las 13.11

