



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

COUNCIL

Report of the Ninety-fifth Session of the Programme Committee

Rome, 8 - 12 May 2006

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REPORT OF THE NINETY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

8 – 12 May 2006

Introduction

1. The Committee submits to the Council the following report of its Ninety-fifth Session.
2. The following Members were present:

Chairperson: H.E. M.S.S. Wyatt (United Kingdom)
Vice-Chairperson: H.E. M. Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic)
Members: Mr A.R. Ayazi (Afghanistan)
Ms J. Barfield (Australia)
Mr J. Melanson (Canada)
Mr R. Parasuram (India)
Mr F.B. Zenny (Jamaica)
H.E. A.A. Zaied (Libya)
Mr G.G. Lombin (Nigeria)
Mr R.S. Recide (Philippines)
Ms V.B. Titi (South Africa)

Item 1: Adoption of the Agenda¹ and Timetable²

3. The Agenda and Timetable for the meeting were approved.

Item 2: Election of Vice-Chairperson

4. The Committee proceeded to re-elect H.E. M. Arvelo Caamaño as Vice-Chairperson for the biennium 2006-07.

Item 3: Revised Programme of Work and Budget 2006-07³

5. In addressing the proposals presented under this item, the Committee recalled the circumstances which had led to operative paragraph 2 in Conference Resolution 7/2005 on the Budgetary Appropriations, requesting the Programme and Finance Committees and their Joint Meeting to approve at their present sessions a revised programme of work and Budget for the biennium 2006-07. The Committee underlined that the context for the preparation of the document had been particularly difficult, and commended the Office of Programme and Budget for its efforts in this regard.

Available documentation and process of priority setting

6. The Committee noted that, besides the printed document, a substantial amount of detailed information was available in Annexes which had been placed on the Organization's Web site. In addition to those Annexes, it was advised that a database had also been posted, showing planned

¹ PC 95/1

² PC 95/INF/1

³ PC 95/3 – FC 113/14

biennial outputs under each programme entity during 2006-07. The Committee received additional information which had been prepared at the request of the Chairperson of the Committee namely: working papers on “*Normative and operational work of FAO*” and “*Responsibilities and relationships between headquarters and decentralized offices under the reform*”; organizational charts at headquarters going down to the service level; and “mapping table” of approved 2004-05 programme entities to 2006-07 programme entities with resource indications intended to facilitate understanding of the flow of activities and resources going into the revised programme of work, which had also been placed on the Organization’s Web site.

7. Many Members highlighted the difficulties experienced in understanding the flow of activities and resources going into the programme of work for 2006-07 when seen against the approved programme of work for the preceding biennium, due to the entirely new programme structure and the significant reformulation and consolidation of programme entities. They regretted certain gaps and fragmentation in the information and that the “mapping table” with resource indications had only been provided at the meeting. They noted that it was essential for the committee to understand the flow of activities and resources from the 2004-05 PWB to the Revised PWB 2006-07 before the Committee for approval. The Committee was advised that provision of this mapping information was unprecedented and had required considerable manual effort. Furthermore, it was regretted that information on posts abolished and new posts was not made available.

8. The Committee sought clarifications on the process used in reformulating the programme of work at the budget level approved by the Conference. It noted that the resource planning targets communicated to FAO units took account of cost savings stemming from improvements in efficiency and productivity. They also incorporated differentiated degrees of programme entity protection to known areas of interest to the membership, which units could modify based on their detailed knowledge of requirements and on local contexts. The Committee recalled in this connection that the provision for the TCP and the funding for Security expenditure had been established by the Conference itself and had therefore been taken into account in calculating the targets, with self-evident impact on the remainder of the programme of work. It recognised that the Organization faced a significant real reduction of resources as compared to the previous biennium, and that this reduction would inevitably have a negative impact on the work that the Organization could do.

9. The Committee stressed that it looked forward to receiving clear and comprehensive explanations on the effective treatment of recognised priorities from programme managers, as well as on those areas that had suffered as the result of net resource reductions, as these expectations were not fully met in the documentation. In particular, Table 11 and the text in paragraphs 123 and 124 provided insufficient information on what areas would be cut or reduced in order to enable the Organization to live within its reduced real resource constraints.

10. The Committee noted the priorities identified in Table 11, and were informed that these were based on the report of the 127th Council of June 2005. It recognised that Council guidance tended to overlook those substantive priorities of FAO which provided intermediate outputs that were not in themselves identified as priorities, but provided essential information and data to enable the work in priority areas to be done. These included the corporate statistical database, FAOSTAT, and crop and food supply assessment missions. The Committee was advised that the resource planning targets provided to units did, however, seek to take due account of activities where the Organization was assessed as having a comparative advantage.

11. The Committee observed that the net resource changes indicated in Table 11 could be understood when there was a straightforward one-to-one correspondence between entities in the old and new structures – though even in these cases the picture was not entirely clear -, but was not helpful in tracing comparative resourcing of entities in other cases. In this light, the Committee noted the information in the “mapping table” and welcomed the clarifications

subsequently obtained from the concerned senior staff on areas that had been relatively protected and those areas which were assessed to remain decisively under-funded.

12. The Committee expressed concern that what they regarded as the core technical areas of the Organization appeared to be more severely cut than some other areas, such as administration. The Committee noted that the proportion of professional staff outside HQ was rising from 30% to 34%. The Committee was advised that professional staff outside HQ would still do technical work; some Members were reassured by this but others were not convinced. The Committee also noted that FAORs would be expected to spend 30% of their time on specialist technical work in their regions; some Members thought this was unrealistic; others felt it could work.

General aspects

13. The Committee noted the *Advance indications of further changes to be proposed by the Director-General* (paragraphs 48-59 of the Revised PWB) and thanked the Director-General for sharing these with the Committees. It recognised that substantive discussions on further changes were not possible until after it had received a specific and complete proposal from the Director-General.

14. The Committee reacted to the request for guidance sought by the Secretariat on the desirability of issuing a Medium Term Plan 2008-13 (MTP), as would be due in normal circumstances for consideration by the Committees and the Council respectively in September and November 2006. It underlined that several factors militated against this, including: the fact that the ongoing Independent External Evaluation of FAO was mandated to address in depth the substance of FAO work and that its eventual conclusions would be available only much later in the biennium; and the need for adequate experience to be gained in the use of the new chapter and programme structures. Accordingly, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that the issuance of the next version of the MTP be postponed.

Substantive work

15. The Committee addressed the proposed activities under Chapters 2, 3 and 4, focusing more particularly on the treatment of higher and lower priority areas, the consequences of reduced resources and the impact of decentralization. It also addressed evaluation work under Chapter 5 (entity 5AP03); the Committee identified this as a priority area, and was satisfied that adequate resources had been allocated to it. The more detailed comments made on the main substantive thrusts under Chapters 2, 3 and 4, are included at the end of this section of the report.

16. As it constituted a common thread in the exchanges with the managers concerned, the Committee noted with some concern that resource constraints would affect most of the activities programmed under the Revised PWB. It stressed that it expected the Secretariat to be realistic in proposing objectives and outputs that could be achieved within the resources available.

17. The Committee stressed the importance of preserving the core technical work of FAO to the maximum extent possible. The Committee discussed the need for a clearer definition of what constituted technical and non-technical work and invited the Secretariat to give this further thought.

18. The Committee noted the efforts made and planned to identify efficiency savings to release resources for other activities, and looked forward to the Finance Committee's advice on whether the level of ambition in realising savings was appropriate. The Committee considered that it was also useful for the membership to be able to assess the extent of administrative costs in relation to total expenditures, often referred to as "administrative overheads". The Committee agreed that it was important to reach an unambiguous definition of administrative overheads, to facilitate building up of time series and comparisons with other organizations, and recognised that this might primarily be a task for the Finance Committee to oversee.

New programme structure

19. The Committee recognised that it was the first instance where Members were able to appreciate with some degree of detail the impact of the new chapter (and underlying programme) structure as approved by the Conference. It noted that this had permitted highlighting more directly some relatively new areas of emphasis such as climate change. The Committee expressed broad support for the efforts made to reduce fragmentation, leading to a 29% reduction in the number of programme entities. However, the reasons for placing activities such as the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) under Programme 3H or the work on rural livelihoods (Programme 3G) under Chapter 3 were not fully understood. It was also advised that the structure no longer identified as a separate programme the work of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division, which may negatively impact on perceptions from the partner Agency.

20. While giving its general endorsement to the new programme structure, the Committee underlined that some problems remained in understanding the scope of work or some of the titles used in the new structure. A notable example regarded the treatment of livestock and animal health. The reason for separation of on-farm and off-farm aspects in livestock into different entities was questioned by the Committee which advised that further careful reflection was needed on this issue. The apparent dispersion of livestock activities across several programmes and the grouping together of diseases and pests of animal and plants under Programme 2C, were questioned. The meaning of “rural infrastructure” and the exact role of FAO in this area (Programme 2M) was also felt to warrant clearer explanation. The Committee stressed that the IEE was well timed to review these issues and advise the governing bodies accordingly.

Extra-budgetary resources

21. The Committee observed that the Revised PWB included higher estimates for extra-budgetary resources in the 2006-07 biennium for both emergency-related and non-emergency activities. The Committee was advised that the sharp increase expected compared to the preceding 2004-05 biennium was due in the non-emergency portion particularly to an upward trend in unilateral trust funds (UTFs). In addition, funds entrusted to FAO to deal with other emergencies had replaced the earlier dominant position of the Oil-for-Food programme. The Committee also took note that significant trust fund resources were expected in direct support to the programme of work.

22. The Committee emphasised that these trends in trust fund resources raised the question as to whether, in future consideration of the PWB, the Committee should seek more information on extra-budgetary funding so that it could consider its decisions on the regular programme in the context of the overall resource position. It noted that there was a range of presentations in other UN organizations. The Committee agreed that this should be drawn to the attention of the Committee of the Council overseeing the IEE as being among areas that could usefully be addressed by the IEE, i.e. how best to present information on extra-budgetary funding in planning and other key documents such as the PWB, bearing in mind overall requirements of conciseness. Key aspects included the possible elements of conditionality attached to resources provided by donors, and the potentially distorting effect such conditionality can have on the orientation of the Organization as defined by its governing bodies, the desirability of appropriate cost recovery and more generally the principles under which a multilateral Organization should operate.

Decentralized offices

23. Also in the light of the additional note provided on “*Responsibilities and relationships between headquarters and decentralized offices under the reform*”, the Committee addressed at some length the work in decentralized offices under the new operating model being put in place in Africa and Central Asia. It felt that the note reflected a complex framework of relationships and accountabilities which warranted further consideration.

24. Members asked questions to increase their understanding of how the new proposed decentralised structure would work and sought clarification on the envisaged profile and skill mix

of the Multi-disciplinary Teams in the subregional offices. The Committee noted that the proposed skills mix for the new subregional offices placed greater emphasis on specific technical skills than on (i) the social and institutional side, including gender and (ii) policy advice. Some Members expressed concern that this might not be the right balance in all locations. It was advised that this aspect was still being worked out in consultations with the technical departments and the concerned regions, and that due flexibility would be applied, based on local circumstances.

25. The Committee looked forward to receiving a paper to assist its discussions at its September session on the reconfigured field office network in the concerned geographical areas. The paper should include, but not be limited to, the following issues: (i) a clear identification of cost savings that would result from the Conference-approved decentralization exercise; (ii) the terms of reference for the regional and subregional offices; (iii) the composition and skills mix of multi-disciplinary teams and the individual Members within them; (iv) the extent to which the teams will be able to deliver the normative work, on which the Committee was advised team Members would be expected to spend about 50% of their time; (v) further clarification of the reporting lines of staff in subregional offices and the measures that would ensure they are accountable for their outputs on normative and other work; and (vi) the way in which the four SROs in Africa would work together to divide labour and reap synergies. It stressed that it would be also extremely useful for the membership to obtain as soon as possible advice from the IEE on its assessment of the functioning of field offices, including the new sub-regional offices.

26. The Committee recognised that the cost of the reconfigured regional office in Africa and of the new subregional offices in Africa and Central Asia approved by the Conference had been included in the Revised PWB on a full biennial basis. It noted that the decentralized structure was not yet in place and was expected to be fully operative from 2007 or earlier where possible. The Secretariat provided an explanation of the reasons why an estimate of cost savings could not be derived from the budgetary tables in the document and opined that this was a technical matter for the Secretariat to determine. The Committee stressed that savings, if any, which could materialize during implementation (albeit of a temporary nature) should be identified by the Secretariat and used to provide relief to other high priority areas identified by the Committee.

27. The Committee took note that contacts were under way between the Secretariat and governmental authorities in Member countries in order to mobilize extra-budgetary resources to meet part of the one-time costs, while no firm commitment had been so far received. It also noted that negotiations with potential host governments of the new SROs were emphasising the need to keep all costs, including one-time costs, as low as possible.

Multi-disciplinary action

28. The Committees addressed the steps taken to enhance multi-disciplinary action, as described in paragraphs 101 to 113. It supported the special attention given *inter alia* to capacity-building, while recalling its discussion on these issues at its previous session and stressing that the main comparative advantage of FAO in this area was to act mostly at “upstream” level as a catalyst and facilitator, rather than as a more direct deliverer to individuals in non-governmental groups.

29. The Committee generally agreed with the efforts made to mainstream into the programme structure the areas hitherto highlighted as PAIAs (Priority Areas for Interdisciplinary Action), i.e. by seeking to host joint work under a clearly identified multi-disciplinary entity or programme, as reflected for ten of these areas in Table 10: *Disposition of PAIAs*. The Committee sought clarifications on the impact of this approach, and was satisfied that it facilitated resourcing for the work through *ex ante* planning of the resources required. However, the Committee noted a possible perception of “lack of identity” by those units contributing to the work other than the one leading the indicated host entity or programme, with attendant potential disincentives. The Committee was advised that the catalytic entity, now identified as 5BS02: *Support to interdisciplinary action*, had been continued with more than double its previous allocation.

However, as its title indicates, its scope would be to provide support to various forms of interdisciplinary action (including to the above multi-disciplinary entities and programmes) and not just those areas still formally labelled as PAIAs. As regards the five remaining PAIAs, not mainstreamed into the programme structure, the Committee emphasised that the resource requirements should be adequately addressed.

Conclusions

30. The Committee considered the proposed Revised PWB 2006-07, and noted the budget constraint that had informed its preparation, as well as the efforts of the Secretariat to protect priority areas. It benefited from extensive briefing from programme managers on the impact of budget allocations to planned programmes and entities. It expressed concern that the priorities both: i) identified in Table 11, and ii) stated as being underfunded in the second sentence of para 123 (i.e. support to the IPPC, plant and animal genetic resources, food safety, agricultural water management, GIEWS and support to implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries), as well as the corporate statistical database FAOSTAT, might not be funded at the level necessary to ensure full implementation of expected outcomes. The Committee requested that allotments to these priorities not fall below the budgeted amounts, and that they be considered for any savings that could arise from the implementation of decentralization. Furthermore, it recommended that the Director-General identify possible savings from amongst the programmes, including, but not limited to, 3E and 3J.

Review of Programmes within Chapters 2, 3 and 4

CHAPTER 2: SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS

31. The Committee expressed disappointment that a single official was not available to speak on behalf of the Agriculture, Biosecurity, Nutrition and Consumer Protection (AG) department on the programmes for which it was mainly responsible.

Programme 2A: Crop Production Systems Management

32. The Committee noted that the scope of Programme 2A covered the enhancement and sustainability at farm level of crop production systems and the conservation and use of plant genetic resources, together with sustainable seed production. It took note that there was a significant shortfall in allocations for priority work in plant genetic resources and biotechnology. The Committee was advised that reduced human and financial resources would make it very difficult to provide technical guidance on several aspects of sustainable crop production. In particular, FAO's technical capacities on areas such as cereal and industrial crops, range and grasslands information and management have steadily deteriorated. The Committee was advised that difficulties might also be experienced in meeting requests from the Commission on Genetic Resources on Food and Agriculture to provide information on seeds around the world, and in the delivery of the second *Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture*. Funding for the Secretariat of the *International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources*, also fell short of the indicative two-year budget adopted by the Treaty's Interim Committee.

Programme 2B: Livestock Production Systems Management

33. The Committee observed that livestock activities were now spread over nine different Programmes, which may result in a loss of visibility, programme integrity and possibly affecting resource allocations. In particular, animal health activities were divided between three Programmes: 2B (livestock production systems management – herd health management); 2C (EMPRES – transboundary animal diseases); and 2D (veterinary public health/food safety). The Committee welcomed reassurances that responsibility for FAO's livestock activities remained with the Animal Production and Health Division (AGA) (noting however its reference to the IEE in para. 16 above).

34. The Committee questioned the rationale of separating on-farm and off-farm oriented activities, bearing in mind the contributions of livestock to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also recalled that it had recently reviewed and endorsed the conclusions of an independent external evaluation of FAO's livestock programme, and did not see a direct link with the proposed arrangements.

35. Concerning Programme 2B, the Committee noted that animal genetic resources were protected from major budgetary cuts, although less than adequate funding was budgeted for this area. Reduced allocations of staff and non-staff resources would affect work on animal production, poverty alleviation, value-adding/product processing, and livestock environment interactions.

Programme 2C: Diseases and Pests of Animals and Plants

36. The Committee noted that the programme focuses on interventions for control of pest and disease threats to crop and livestock productions systems at global, regional and national level. The Committee was reassured that EMPRES-livestock was protected from major budgetary cuts. It was concerned with the capacity of the Animal Health Division to deal with both the exponentially increasing demands of avian influenza as well as other parts of its mandate.

37. Regarding plant pests, the Committee recalled the broad support for the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) within the membership, including related standard setting and information exchange. It emphasised the importance of participation in standard setting by developing countries, to be accompanied by technical support and capacity-building. It noted the protection accorded to the IPPC under the Regular Programme, as portrayed in Table 11. However, the Committee was concerned that overall resource allocations had declined in comparison with the 2004-2005 biennium when substantial funding from arrears had been available. The Secretariat was concerned that the long-term funding situation was not sustainable. It was noted that this could affect the capacity to carry out programme activities.

38. The Committee noted that funding for: *EMPRES – Migratory and Transboundary Invasive Plant Pests and Pesticide Risk Reduction through Pesticide Management, Integrated pest management (IPM) and the Use of Biopesticides* had remained at the same nominal level as in the 2004-2005 biennium, with more emphasis given to outreach through subregional offices, which could affect support from global programmes. In receiving clarifications on the response to the locust outbreak in 2004-05, the Committee was informed that, as an example of the impact of capacity-building, the national plant protection services of two affected countries were able to control the outbreak within their own territories.

Programme 2D: Nutrition and Consumer Protection

39. The Committee noted that Programme 2D included three programme entities on food safety and three on nutrition managed directly by the Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division (AGN); one on animal product food safety/veterinary public health managed by AGA; and one on the application of nuclear techniques to food safety carried out by the Joint FAO/IAEA Division. The Committee emphasised the high priority attached to the Joint FAO/WHO food standards programme (Codex Alimentarius) and the importance of assisting developing countries to harmonise international standards. It was advised that the present funding level represented the critical minimum necessary for operation of Codex. Pending confirmation from the World Health Organization (WHO) on the level of its contribution to Codex, the Committee was concerned that present budgetary constraints would entail reduction in activities, including for communications, publications and meetings. The Committee expressed concern that it had not been possible to maintain adequate funding for normative nutrition activities despite Conference guidance in this area.

Programmes:

2E: Forestry Information, Statistics, Economics, and Policy

2F: Forest Management, Conservation and Rehabilitation
2G: Forest Products and Industry

40. The Committee was satisfied that these programmes gave due attention to the continued leadership role of FAO in promoting sustainable forest management and also to meet requirements for technical advice in countries. It was advised that the number of entities under forestry-related programmes have been reduced from 20 to 14, while contributions were also made to Programme 2K relating to climate change and water. The Committee was satisfied that the lower priority assigned to forestry training, research and extension reflected the comparative advantage of international partner agencies. It noted that resources had also been targeted to country support through the new subregional offices.

Programmes:

*2H: Fisheries and Aquaculture Information, Statistics,
Economics, and Policy*

2I: Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Conservation

2J: Fisheries and Aquaculture Products and Industry

41. The Committee reiterated the priority character of FAO's work on fisheries and aquaculture, noting in particular its comparative advantage in addressing issues of the global commons in capture fisheries. It was advised that despite somewhat reduced resources, the Fisheries Department would be able to generally maintain the current range of activities, although these activities would be scaled down across the board. There was some concern that this might not reflect adequate prioritisation along the lines of its comparative advantage. The Committee's attention was drawn to an internal strategic planning exercise undertaken by the Department to improve priority setting mechanisms and allow it to remain a recognised centre of excellence in its field. In response to questions about the ecosystem approach and the importance of maintaining the association between environmental and industry aspects of the Department's mandate, it was clarified that this link would be maintained both programmatically and in the Organization structure.

Programme 2K: Sustainable Natural Resources Management

42. The Programme brought together work on sustainable natural resources management carried out by SD, AG, FI, FO and ES departments. The Committee appreciated that synergies would result from the coverage of a range of important issues including: land and water management, climate change, bioenergy, desertification and agrarian reform and rural development. It welcomed the added emphasis on cross-cutting work on climate change which was relevant to the entire membership.

Programme 2L: Technology, Research and Extension

43. The Committee noted the decline in resources and, while recognising the importance of research and extension for countries, stressed that FAO support should concentrate on areas of major comparative advantage, including continuing its leadership role in connection with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), attendant Science Council and support to the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS).

Programme 2M: Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries

44. The Committee received some information on FAO's contribution to rural infrastructure development including access to best practices through partnerships, such as with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It was also advised about the extent to which this programme works with the private sector on agro-industry development. In recalling that one of the stated under-funded areas (paragraph 123) was agribusiness development policies and practices, the Committee stressed that

many countries have a rapidly growing interest in value addition through agribusiness policy and development.

45. The Committee was advised that work relating to farm power and mechanisation, food distribution to cities, agricultural services information and farming systems had been discontinued, while work relating to farm management had been significantly reduced. However, other areas had been less affected, including work on small and medium enterprise development, farm income and livelihoods, and food processing and engineering. The Committee was also informed that marketing and rural finance aspects were being addressed under the entities on agro-industries, farmer income and livelihoods and rural infrastructure, albeit at a lower level than in the past. It further noted that the Micro-Banking System developed under the aegis of FAO, had achieved commercial viability.

CHAPTER 3: KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE, POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Programmes:

3A: Leveraging Resources and Investment

3B: Food and Agriculture Policy

46. The Committee emphasised the importance of these two programmes, noting that the work of the Investment Centre was now included under 3A and a number of valuable activities with bearing on FAO global policy work and advisory services to countries were regrouped under 3B.

Programmes:

3C: Trade and Marketing

3D: Agriculture Information and Statistics

47. In addressing these two programmes led by the ES Department, particularly in the realm of statistical and commodity related work, the Committee stressed the need to ensure adequate resource levels for the Corporate Statistical Database (FAOSTAT) and the Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions associated with the GIEWS. The placement of GIEWS under Programme 3H was not clearly understood.

Programme 3E: Alliances and Advocacy Initiatives Against Hunger and Poverty

48. The Committee recognised that Programme 3E was of composite nature, hosting a variety of activities, including liaison offices, contributing to the general advocacy work undertaken by FAO. The Committee felt that savings could be made under this Programme, as they considered that advocacy and liaison work might be of lower priority compared to more substantive programmes. Some Members stressed the importance of World Food Day in contributing to greater awareness of the need of achieving the MDGs and FAO's own goals. It was agreed that high-profile events need careful management to maximise the potential benefits and reduce the risk of negative impact. It was noted that the results of the evaluation of TeleFood would be discussed at a future meeting and therefore it might be premature to express any value judgement at this stage. With reference to entity 3EP04: *Cooperation with EU*, diverging views were expressed, with some Members suggesting that it might be of lower priority, while others urged caution, given the potential for attracting extra-budgetary resources for the Organization.

Programme 3F: Gender and Equity in Rural Societies

49. The Committee noted the content of this programme, but questioned overall implementation of the priority given by the governing bodies to gender mainstreaming. The Committee noted the reduced coverage of social issues in the decentralized offices, as currently planned, and was advised they would be addressed from headquarters, with a concentration on policy advice and capacity-building.

Programme 3G: Rural Livelihoods

50. The Committee stressed the importance of a sector-wide, strategic approach for Programme 3G in its assistance to countries on rural development policies and strengthening links between rural organizations. It was advised of the significant extra-budgetary contributions which this programme was able to generate and thus amplify its impact directly at field level, including through strong collaboration with IFAD. However, the placement of this programme in Chapter 3 was questioned.

Programmes:

3H: Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building

3I: Information Technology Systems

3J: Communication and Public Information

51. The Committee had reservations about the expression used in paragraph 211 on the FAO “brand”. Some Members questioned the value of investing in the FAO brand, and drew attention to the risk of UN agencies competing against each other for recognition and resources; others argued that such investment would be justified if it could raise resources and awareness. The rationale and relative priority of deployment of FAO media officers from headquarters to developed country capitals was questioned, with some Members expressing clear opposition. The Committee urged to keep a distinction between communication and advocacy efforts.

CHAPTER 4: DECENTRALIZATION, UN COOPERATION AND PROGRAMME DELIVERY

52. In view of time constraints, the Committee could only make a cursory review of this Chapter. It was advised of arrangements made to respond to the Conference Resolution on the TCPR and for eventual participation of FAO in ongoing UN system country pilot exercises. It noted the importance of FAO taking a positive and flexible approach to UN common programming and financing initiatives at country level, and welcomed the advice that it was indeed doing so. Regarding Programme 4E: *Technical Cooperation Programme*, it recalled that the level of the TCP appropriation had been set by a specific decision of the last Conference. Members emphasised the fundamental importance of TCP for the countries benefiting from its assistance. The Committee also recalled that the provision for Programme 4D: *Emergency and Post Crisis Management* was essentially funded by administrative and operation service cost recoveries from projects.

53. The Committee was informed that negotiations on the location of, and possible government counterpart contributions to the new subregional offices in Africa and Central Asia were presently ongoing with the concerned countries. It noted that the budgetary allocations for the FAOR network were shown under the pertinent programmes, including entity 4BS01, covering contributions from these offices to supporting overall work on knowledge management, networking and advocacy.

Item 4: Evaluation of Partnerships and Alliances⁴

54. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the quality of the report and the usefulness of the recommendations. It noted its emphasis on the functions of partnerships and weaknesses and strengths in partnering, rather than their resulting impacts. The Committee regretted that the report did not provide information on cost implications of some of the recommendations. It requested that to the extent possible future evaluations should provide basic information on the cost implications of recommendations.

⁴ PC 95/4 b)

55. The Committee noted the late circulation of the Management Response which was nevertheless appreciated. The Management Response was largely in agreement with the findings and most of the recommendations of the evaluation. However, the Committee considered that the intention and commitment to implement specific recommendations made by the evaluation were insufficiently clear. The extent to which the Director-General's Reform proposals had considered the evaluation findings was also discussed. The Committee appreciated that aspects of the headquarters restructuring were designed to reinforce partnering but looked forward to further information on the extent to which an overall change was taking place in the way that the Organization approached partnerships and the incentives in place to encourage partnering.

56. The main thrust of the evaluation recommendations was supported by the Committee. In the context of the resource constraints facing the Organization, it particularly appreciated the call for more strategic prioritisation of partnerships including careful and systematic selectivity in identifying partnerships based on complementarities, FAO's overall priorities and comparative advantages, and the potential of the partnerships for added value.

57. The importance of strengthening partnerships with the UN, including collaboration among the Rome-based agencies, was stressed by the Committee. The Committee emphasised the importance of partnering within the UN system at country level and appreciated the information provided by management that the Organization was fully committed to working within the UN country team and to the role of the UN Resident Coordinator. Members emphasised in this context Resolution 13/2005 of the Thirty-third Session of the FAO Conference "Implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 59/250 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System". They requested that the status report on decentralization in Africa and Central Asia, to be presented to the September session of the Committee, should include an assessment of compliance with the TCPR resolution. Concerns were, however, expressed on the difficulties faced by FAORs in view of their limited resources.

58. The importance of partnering with regional bodies, the long-standing partnerships with the CGIAR and the IFIs were also noted as was the need for new and realistic modalities of partnerships with the business sector. In discussing civil society partnerships, Members further stressed the need for inclusive relationships with different categories of constituencies through networks.

59. The Committee suggested that the Independent External Evaluation of FAO (IEE) should address the issues of partnerships, including those at country level. It also urged the IEE to examine the value of various modalities for involvement of the non-governmental sectors in FAO's governance. As was normal practice, the Committee noted that it should receive a follow-up report after two years on the progress in implementing those recommendations of the evaluation accepted by management.

Item 5: Content of Evaluation Reports submitted to the Programme Committee⁵

60. The Committee noted that it had the responsibility to recommend to the Council the programme of evaluations to be undertaken by the Evaluation Service. These evaluations were a priority for the membership as a whole and needed in all cases to be available to the membership at large, in the public domain and presented to the Governing Bodies through the Programme Committee. In the interests of ensuring independence and transparency, such evaluations were normally externally led and evaluation teams were primarily composed of external consultants. The programme of evaluations reported to the Programme Committee was thus quite distinct from

⁵ PC 95/5

the auto-evaluations undertaken by managers which would in future be reported in summary through the Programme Implementation Report.

61. In this context, the Committee also noted that the Joint Meeting of the Programme and Finance Committees in September 2003 had made recommendations to the Council on strengthening the independence of the Evaluation Service and that these recommendations had been largely implemented. At that time, the Joint Meeting had requested a follow-up report to the Programme Committee. The Committee considered that its discussion of the need for any further changes should now take place following receipt of the report of the Independent External Evaluation which, under its terms of reference, was examining evaluation arrangements within the Organization.

62. In deciding on the most cost-effective format for the Programme Committee to receive the reports requested from the Evaluation Service, the Committee noted that FAO was alone among the UN agencies in presenting all reports to the Governing Bodies in full in all the official languages. This resulted in a cost of some US\$ 200,000 per biennium for translation, while printing in itself was not a significant cost. It was, however, important that those evaluations addressing issues of crucial importance for decision by the membership at large be available in all the official languages.

63. The Committee thus resolved that at the time of approval of the evaluation work-plan it would decide on the basis of a recommendation from the Evaluation Service, if an evaluation report should be presented for its consideration in full or in an extended summary form in all the official languages of the Organization. For those reports discussed only in summary, the Committee could also subsequently decide as a result of its discussion that there was a need for the report to be available in all the official languages, and:

- reports presented in summary should include a very short executive summary and an extended summary of the findings and recommendations;
- reports of evaluations presented to the Committee in summary should be made available in full in the original language on the Internet;
- annexes, including evaluation terms of reference, would not normally be included in the report for consideration by the Committee but would always be included in the original language version on the Internet; and
- evaluation terms of reference should include word limits for the report, as standard practice.

64. In considering in which format it would wish to receive those evaluation reports currently programmed for the remainder of the 2006-07 biennium, the Committee decided:

- Evaluation of TeleFood – in full;
- Evaluation of FAO Strategic Objective D2 Conservation, rehabilitation and development of environments at the greatest risk – in summary;
- Evaluation of FAO's work in Agricultural Commodities and Trade – to be decided at the next meeting on the basis of a recommendation from the Evaluation Service (the terms of reference of the evaluation would be made available informally to the Committee in the original language to facilitate that decision); and
- Evaluation of the Workings of the International Plant Protection Convention (in full – noting that the document would be fully translated for consideration by the IPPC-CPM).

65. The Committee also decided to consider a summary of the multilateral evaluation of the 2003-05 desert locust campaign at its next session.

Item 6. UN Joint Inspection Unit Reports

*Some Measures to Improve Overall Performance of the UN System at the Country Level – Part I: A short History of Reform in Development and Part II (JIU/REP/2005/2)*⁶

66. The Committee took note of this JIU report and of the comments of the Director-General thereon.

Item 7: Any Other Matters

67. The Committee agreed that, in addition to the standing items on its agenda, it would discuss at its next session, the following:

1. The Programme Implementation Report 2004-05;
2. Programme Evaluation:
 - The evaluation of Telefood
 - The evaluation of Strategy D.2: *Conservation, rehabilitation and development of environments at the greatest risk*; and
 - The evaluation of the desert locust programme.

*Synthesis of the Results of the Questionnaire Addressed to Member Nations on the Role of FAO*⁷

68. The Committee reviewed the results of the above survey, with the benefit of two Members explaining the intensive process of internal consultations and analysis adopted in their own countries in order to provide a considered and fully representative reply. In the case of one Member, the reply to the questionnaire noted concern with the methodology.

69. The Committee recognized that problems had been experienced by some respondents with the methodology used, which had contributed to a non-response by many countries, especially in one region. In response to queries, the Committee was advised that informal advice had been obtained on the design of the questionnaire from such units familiar with this type of surveys as the Evaluation Service and the Statistics division, while the exercise had not been led by them. The Chief of Evaluation said that he could not confirm that the methodology used would meet best practice. The Committee urged due caution in the use of the results, particularly with respect to priority-setting or other important policy choices in the Organization.

70. The Committee suggested that the detailed data collected could still be of use, and recommended that it be made available to the IEE team, who would also be in a position to make observations on the methodology.

71. Looking to the future, the Committee drew attention to two practical lessons from this exercise, as follows:

- that it would be preferable for such requests to emanate from the Governing Bodies, e.g. by obtaining prior concurrence of the Programme Committee in this case, since the questionnaire was primarily about the type of services expected from FAO by individual countries, with indication of relative priorities;
- that the design and interpretation of surveys of this type should formally involve, and where appropriate be led by the units possessing expertise in the methodology.

⁶ CL 131/INF/10

⁷ PC 95/INF/5