



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

172nd Session of the Council of the FAO

(24-28 April 2023)

Item 9 : Report of the 135th Session of the Programme Committee

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States
2. The following FAO Members align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine.
3. We thank Her Excellency Ambassador Rubinstein for her excellent leadership of the Programme Committee.
4. With regard to the Mid-term synthesis report, we note with appreciation the progress achieved in delivering the Programme of Work in 2022, and the positive outlook towards full implementation by the end of the biennium.
5. We highlight the importance of FAO's work on timely and neutral information to support decision-making by policy-makers and investors, based on scientific evidence, open access data, and multidisciplinary technical expertise.
6. On the proposal by Programme Committee on considering additional reporting lines on Indigenous Peoples, climate change, science and innovation, and implementation of UN development system repositioning, more information would be welcomed on how these areas are monitored by the exiting Key Performance Indicators and what would be the changes to address those reporting dimensions.
7. As highlighted by the Programme and Finance Committee, we are looking forward to receiving information on the Organization's biennial achievements against the Key Performance Indicators, as well as operational and financial performance in the Programme Implementation Report 2022-23.
8. We take note of the FAO proposals on the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-2025 and concur with the recommendations of the programme committee.

9. With regard to the interim evaluation strategy, we support the endorsement of the strategy and take this occasion to reiterate the importance of an independent, transparent and efficient evaluation function.
10. On the evaluation of the evaluation function, we welcome the process initiated by the director of OED and believe that the findings of this work will be essential to develop a new evaluation strategy. In this regard, we believe that the "Norms and Standards for Evaluation" of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) adopted in 2017 constitute a reference to be followed in any evaluation process at FAO and in the UN system in general.
11. We stress the importance of FAO's work on integrated water resources management, in line with its mandate and in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies, in particular through the UN Water mechanism, and request further information on FAO's efforts to coordinate with other relevant international organizations.
12. On antimicrobial resistance (AMR), FAO's role in combating the global threat of AMR remains critically important. We attach the highest importance to the diligent and effective implementation of FAO's Action Plan on AMR for 2021-2025. The EU and its Member States remain fully committed to supporting FAO's efforts to that end.
13. On the Private Sector Partnership, we take note of the information provided by FAO. We underscore the importance of increasing transparency and of a broad approach on the partnerships agreements to be published on the CONNECT portal, in line with FAO's Strategy for Private Sector Engagement.
14. We welcome the update on the development of the action plan for the implementation of the Science and Innovation and Climate Change strategies and reiterate the importance of aligning them with other existing FAO strategies notably the FAO Strategy on Engaging the Private Sector and the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agriculture.
15. With regards to the action plan for the FAO strategy on climate change, I will not enter into the details of the written comments. However, as a general comment, we believe that the expected outcomes, objectives and indicators of the strategy need to be elaborated in more detail, so that members get a better sense of what outcomes and impact are to be achieved.

16. With these remarks the EU and its 27 Member States endorse the Reports of the 135th and 126th Programme Committees.

Thank you, Mr Chair.
