

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

174th Session of the FAO Council (4-8 December 2023)

Item 13: Update on FAO's collaboration with other UN system entities

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 Member States regarding the aforementioned Agenda Item for the 174th Session of the FAO Council.
2. The EU and its Member States thank FAO for the information provided in document CL 174/12 and welcome that the update covers FAO's collaboration across the UN system, including but not limited to the RBAs, and appreciate FAO's stated ambition to strengthen and deepen its collaboration within the UN System. We particularly welcome the focus placed on the UNDS repositioning and collaboration through the RC-system and the UN Country Teams.
3. Partnerships within the United Nations (UN) system, including with the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) is paramount if we want to transform food systems and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We very much welcome the new global tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which emphasizes the spectrum of the RBA collaboration, spanning from humanitarian to development activities. We encourage FAO in collaboration with RBA to focus on the five long-term priorities and the set of recommendations resulting from the 2021 evaluation.
4. We commend FAO for playing a key role in the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, as well as the Global Network Against Food Crises, and in the coordinated efforts and collaboration of the RBAs in response to the ongoing global food crisis.

5. In addition, we very much welcome FAO's continued engagement with the outgoing and incoming COP-presidencies, to make food systems visible, and have a positive contribution to tackle the climate crisis.
6. The document rightly puts a strong emphasis on the crucial role of FAO regional and country offices with the UN country teams, coordinating mechanisms, thematic networks and UN joint programs. In that respect, the EU welcomes the review of FAO's Decentralized Offices network as a first step for further, more in-depth discussions.
7. Unfortunately, the document does not put enough emphasis on the importance of continued, or even ,where possible strengthened RBA support to the CFS, including through financing and staffing, and of ensuring that the CFS, its High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and its products, remain an integral part of the RBAs' follow-up activity to the Food Systems Summit, with the aim of consolidating the position of CFS as the leading international platform for policy coherence and convergence on food security and nutrition.
8. The EU appreciates the collaboration with the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, hosted at FAO, to actively advance the goals set by the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit to transform global food systems in alignment with the SDGs.
9. We appreciate the broad overview of FAO's current UN partnerships and the informative examples of thematic engagements (nutrition, health, food safety, gender equality and women's empowerment, transparent markets and trade, integrated policy support, climate change, biodiversity and the environment, emergencies and resilience, science technology and innovation). Here we underline the importance of the work of the Quadripartite on the One Health approach.
10. We welcome FAO's planned actions to continue to enhance UN collaborations at all levels, notably the further strengthening and institutionalizing of key UN system partnerships and the leveraging of joint funding mechanisms and investments as a key driver of UN collaboration.
11. The EU and its Member States welcome further regular updates on the progress made by FAO in partnering with the wider UN system, including the RBAs.

Thank you, Mr Chair.