



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

174th session of the FAO Council

(4-8 December 2023)

Item 9: Report of the 137th Session of the Programme Committee

Madam/Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. [XXX, XXXX, XXXX align themselves with this statement.]
3. We would like to start by thanking the chair of the Programme Committee for her excellent leadership.
4. We are pleased that the Programme Committee reaffirmed that a systemic approach will be applied across all policy fields within FAO's mandate. This systemic approach will facilitate the identification of potential trade-offs between different policy choices and contribute to better collaboration between departments and with other stakeholders.
5. The European Union and its Member States take note of the adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25. We welcome FAO management's assurance that it will continue to leverage its comparative advantage in science- and evidence-based and standard-setting work, such as the Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and its ePhyto Solution, as well as work on data and statistics, including streamlining the statistical functions.

6. We do agree that mainstreaming and advocating for youth, gender equality and rural women's empowerment, both internally within the Organization and across FAO's mandate, should be strengthened, but are not convinced that a separate 'Office for Youth and Women' is the way to go. We thank FAO for developing alternative proposals and look forward to discussing this issue further.
7. We concur with the Programme Committee's recommendation that a comprehensive approach to the Organization's funding be developed, including both assessed and voluntary contributions and other funding arrangements, in view of their contribution to the Organization's mandate and objectives and the Strategic Framework, and look forward to discussing this approach in the next Council session in 2024, through the Finance Committee.
8. The EU and its 27 Member States reaffirm the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach for FAO and encourage FAO to anchor this approach across the Organization.
9. We welcome the progress made on the implementation of integrated water resources management, and more generally the increased attention that FAO is paying to the role of water throughout its programmes and policies. Water is crucial to sustainable food systems, and sustainable food systems are critical to meeting the objectives of the UN Water Action Agenda.
10. We underline the importance of keeping trade of food and agriculture inputs and products open and appreciate FAO's efforts to strengthen the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), and we call for further support for this system as a platform to enhance market transparency and policy dialogue.
11. Finally, we appreciate the progress made on the implementation of the priority programme area 'Bioeconomy for Sustainable Food and Agriculture'. The bioeconomy has great potential for innovation in terms of sustainable production and consumption, as well as high job creation potential, contributing through bio-based solutions to progress towards reaching the goals of the UN Agenda 2030.

Thank you, Madam/Mr Chair.
