



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Briefing to the RBA Membership on the discussions of the Senior Consultative Group
by the WFP DED on behalf of the RBAs

15 September 2020, 16:00-17:00hrs

1. On behalf of my colleagues from FAO, IFAD, and WFP, I am pleased to welcome you to the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) Senior Consultative Group (SCG) informal briefing session;
2. As you are aware, the Senior Consultative Group is composed of the Senior Management of the three RBAs and meets three times a year. It is hosted on a rotational basis among the RBAs. The second SCG of 2020 was hosted virtually by IFAD on the 13th of May, followed by a virtual informal briefing to you all on the 5th of June;
3. The purpose of today's session is to brief you on the discussions from our third meeting this year, and which was hosted virtually by WFP on the 7th of September. The meeting, as always, was productive and constructive, which truly reflects our willingness to cooperate;
4. In terms of the format of this afternoon's discussion, after our summary, I will open the floor for comments and questions;
5. The agenda of this edition of the SCG covered two important items - updates on our COVID-19 response efforts and the 2020 Joint Progress Report on RBA Collaboration;
6. Regarding our COVID-19 response efforts, you have heard about each of our organization-wide frameworks - FAO's response and recovery programme; IFAD's four-pronged approach to supplement and preserve its long-term development objectives with short-term actions; and WFP's Medium-term Programming Framework;
7. We are collaborating across four broad areas: i) Country Programming/Planning; ii) Policy & Analytical Support; iii) Advocacy and information sharing; iv) Business Continuity;
8. Despite COVID-related measures taken by the Governments and UNCTs that have had a significant impact on the implementation of RBA 2020 country-level activities, there is a lot that we have been doing together, in the context of COVID-19, for the past 6 months;

9. In this regard, the RBAs, along with all the other partners we engage, have repurposed programmes and plan new and innovative interventions to ensure food security and nutrition for the most vulnerable. For example, the RBAs have been working closely on designing the IFAD RBA G5 Sahel +1 Resilience Programme, which will scale up existing FAO and WFP initiatives in the region, with a strong focus on COVID-19, conflicts and climate change.
10. Additionally, we discussed the scope of how FAO and WFP could support governments vis a vis the IFAD Rural Poor Stimulus Facility;
11. Within the framework of the Global COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan, a four-pillar approach was elaborated, involving a large degree of partnerships, mainly between FAO, WFP and local organizations. In this context we established the Global Data Facility within the framework of the Global Network against Food Crisis. The Facility gathers food security data in high-risk contexts and informs our planning, evidence-based programming and anticipatory action;
12. The FAO-WFP co-led global Food Security Cluster is responding to the COVID-19 crisis to stabilize incomes and provide access to food through programmes such as cash-based transfers. These programmes, where feasible, are being linked with social protection schemes. Within the Cluster we are also ensuring the continuity of the food supply chain;
13. The RBAs are collaborating within the Task Force focusing on COVID-19 impacts in Africa. Members include the EU, RBAs, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the African Union Development Agency. The Task Force is providing coordinated support to food security “hot spots” resulting from COVID-19, with a particular focus on countries facing multiple threats such as the Desert Locust infestation in Eastern Africa and Yemen;
14. We are providing policy advice and analyses to help countries strengthen their responses to COVID-19. We offer a wide array of complementary tools which enable data collection and analysis of information on food security and nutrition which informs the design and implementation of effective policies and programmes;
15. For example, in Egypt, FAO, IFAD, WFP, UNIDO and the International Food Policy Research Institute are conducting a rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the agriculture sector. We are also participating in several national COVID-19 policy response groups and contributing to several other ongoing analyses;
16. In the Philippines FAO, IFAD, WFP and UNICEF, are conducting a rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on rural livelihoods, agricultural market chains and food security;

17. In Iraq and Jordan, FAO, IFAD, WFP and the World Bank, are producing a series of publications on the impact of COVID-19 on food security;
18. The RBAs have also been jointly advocating and raising awareness of the grave effects that the COVID-19 pandemic is having globally on food security and nutrition. Our joint voice ensured that the effects COVID could have on the food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable populations were included in the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19. Furthermore, we jointly contributed to the drafting of the SG policy brief on the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition.
19. We have been using online tools to organize and participate in various events, webinars and briefings so that important work and sharing of good practices and lessons learned continue despite the physical barriers presented by COVID-19;
20. Many of you have participated in briefings held in New York in the context of the Group of Friends of Food Security and Nutrition, as well as our own Rome-based Group of Friends of the Food Systems Summit;
21. In the area of business continuity, we are constantly in contact to make sure that we are coordinated so to ensure the health, safety and security of all our employees and their families, irrespective of location, against the threats of COVID-19. We have also been safeguarding our business continuity for the benefit of our stakeholders and beneficiaries. In fact, we used the opportunity of the SCG meeting to discuss back to office plans for staff.
22. We discussed the 2020 Report on RBA Collaboration and agreed on a new approach and format to our reporting. In this revamped report, we aim to respond to your recommendations and the requests you made last year to focus on more strategic issues, lessons learned, and challenges faced arising from RBA collaboration and particularly at the country level;
23. While previous reports have summarized collaboration activities across the four pillars of RBA collaboration, we have refined the reporting format and content to facilitate strategic discussions, and by highlighting key opportunities to enhance collaboration;
24. Regarding integrating administrative functions, we agreed that we will apply and use the new Business Operations Strategy (BOS) framework to identify opportunities where we could strengthen our efforts, particularly in Rome. Field level collaboration is being defined in the context of the BOS, the new proposed Common Back Office (CBO), and vis a vis the UN Country Teams;
25. Finally, while COVID-19 has hampered many joint activities amongst us all, the RBAs have none-the-less still managed to work together in areas where we add value and where it makes sense. We have shown that by joining forces, our advocacy efforts

produce strong results. Through them, food security and nutrition are now part and parcel of the global response to COVID. Thank you.