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Summary report on the joint evaluation of United Nations Rome-based agency collaboration

Draft decision*

The Board takes note of the summary report on the joint evaluation of United Nations Rome-based agency collaboration (WFP/EB.2/2021/6-B/Rev.1) and coordinated response (WFP/EB.2/2021/6-B/Add.1) and encourages further action to improve RBA collaboration based on the recommendations set out in the report and including follow-up to the Food Systems Summit, taking into account the considerations raised by the Board during its discussion.

The Board also takes note of recommendation 6 and agrees that RBA collaboration should be considered as part of the broader United Nations context, in particular the reformed United Nations coordination taking place at country-level and the efficiency initiatives being implemented. It also looks forward to receiving annual updates on the status of the implementation of the recommendations by the RBAs and will endeavor to adjust resourcing for RBA collaboration actions accordingly and to monitor annually the funding requirements.

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the decisions and recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

In line with the Evaluation Policy (2016–2021) (WFP/EB.2/2015/4-A/Rev.1), to respect the integrity and independence of evaluation findings the editing of this report has been limited and as a result some of the language in it may not be fully consistent with the World Food Programme's standard terminology or editorial practices. Please direct any requests for clarification to the Director of Evaluation.

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Joint Evaluation of Collaboration among the United Nations Rome-based Agencies Summary Evaluation Report

Executive summary

1. The Evaluation Offices of the United Nations Rome-based agencies (RBAs) have conducted an evaluation of RBA collaboration (RBAC) since 2016. It assesses the relevance and results of all forms of collaboration; the factors affecting those results; and the value added by RBAC.
2. RBAC takes many forms, from joint advocacy, policy and technical work to joint projects. Since 2018, and especially at the country level, the drivers of RBAC in support of the 2030 Agenda have been significantly reshaped by the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS), and by reforms aimed at enhancing operational efficiency.
3. RBAC is relevant to the strategic direction of the UNDS. In practice, it has had mixed results in strengthening coordination. There is a strongly collaborative spirit in some countries; pragmatic collaboration and recognition of complementarity in many countries when RBAC is seen to make sense; and, in some, little or no strengthened collaboration. Gender and nutrition are examples of areas in which RBAC has enhanced the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice at all levels. Emergency response contexts provide a conducive framework for RBAC within United Nations response structures. But RBAC is more challenging in formal development project settings. In development work, the RBAs have made limited progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication. Achievement of their shared objectives is still impaired by misunderstandings about the mandates of FAO and WFP. The success of RBAC in enhancing joint administrative efficiency has been limited.
4. Government attitudes range from strong support for collaboration to indifference or dismay about perceived duplication and competition. The official global structure and processes of RBAC do not significantly strengthen coordination. Donor support for RBAC is not as strong or coherent in practice as donor advocacy of it implies. RBA leadership expresses a spectrum of support and scepticism about collaboration. Some Member States urge stronger collaboration, but overall, RBAC is not a high priority for the Governing Bodies or RBA management.
5. There is limited quantitative evidence on the added value of RBAC. It can enhance effectiveness and achieve administrative cost savings. But there are multiple administrative difficulties in achieving constructive interfaces between the structures and cultures of the RBAs. Outside formally structured project settings, these difficulties can be overcome through the often-displayed ability of technical colleagues to work together where they perceive clear mutual interest. This kind of mutual technical respect and support is a daily reality (often in wider United Nations frameworks), but across the RBAs there is widespread ambivalence about RBAC.
6. The evaluation recommends that the RBAs update their memorandum of understanding to reflect realistically the context, constraints and opportunities around RBAC; restructure the

coordination of RBAC; engage proactively with the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level; focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda; and be alert to the likely higher transaction costs that joint projects impose. Again urging realism, it recommends that the Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBAC.

I. Introduction

A. Evaluation features

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are the three Rome-based agencies (RBAs) of the United Nations. Since 2008, there have been growing calls, mainly by Member States (through the Governing Bodies and by individual governments), for RBA collaboration (RBAC) to be intensified and optimized.
2. The RBAs have responded with a number of strategic statements about collaboration. In 2018, they signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in this regard.¹ To date there has been no evaluation of RBAC that can provide credible evidence of the extent and quality of joint RBA performance towards their shared objectives, or explanation of the reasons for that performance. Nor has the potential value added by RBAC been systematically assessed. The Evaluation Offices of the RBAs have therefore conducted a joint evaluation of their collaboration from November 2016 to the present, appointing an independent evaluation team for the purpose. Data were collected between October 2020 and May 2021.
3. The evaluation answers four questions:
 - How relevant is RBA collaboration in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
 - What are the positive, negative, intended and unintended results of RBA collaboration to date?
 - What factors have enabled or hindered the effectiveness of RBA collaboration?
 - What is the added value of RBA collaboration (as opposed to single-agency processes and results) across the different aspects and levels?
4. The evaluation spans RBAC at the country, regional and global levels (focusing on the country level) and includes all forms of collaboration (which it defines as joint work) between the RBAs.
5. Evidence was gathered remotely (due to COVID-19) through 12 country studies; eight “deep dive” studies of selected themes; extensive document review; and an online survey of RBA Professional staff. Some 400 informants expressed their views in interviews and meetings.

B. Context

6. Since 2018, the drivers of RBAC have been significantly reshaped by the reform of the United Nations development system (UNDS). The most significant consequences of this evolving context are at the country level, under the auspices of a strengthened United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) function. Each RBA's multi-annual country programme is now expected to be clearly linked into a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), preceded by a reinforced United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCA).
7. Other United Nations reforms aimed at enhancing operational efficiency are being pursued with the support of the Business Innovations Group. They include the Business Operations Strategy, which focuses on common services that are implemented jointly or delivered by one United Nations entity on behalf of other United Nations entities.

¹ FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018. Memorandum of Understanding between Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP). Rome: FAO, IFAD and WFP, June 2018.

8. The RBAs (particularly FAO and WFP, which co-lead the global Food Security Cluster) play important roles in United Nations humanitarian work. They are committed to the collaborative intent of the New Way of Working,² and are actively exploring the opportunities and approaches implicit in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

C. Subject of the evaluation

9. The RBAs share a headquarters location, a commitment to food security and an evolving interest in sustainable food systems. They are also significantly different institutions. FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations, combining normative and operational functions in food and agriculture, food security and nutrition across the humanitarian–development continuum. Its funding combines assessed contributions by each Member State with voluntary contributions of extrabudgetary resources. IFAD is an international financial institution, funded to date through periodic Member State replenishments, providing finance for combating rural poverty and hunger to the governments of developing countries, mainly through loans. WFP delivers emergency food assistance and uses food assistance to support economic and social development. It is financed entirely by voluntary contributions.
10. The objective of RBAC has always been to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agencies' contribution to food and nutrition security. Since 2016, this objective has been framed in terms of a stronger contribution by the three agencies to the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2. The RBAs have committed to collaboration to deliver more efficient and effective field operations; stronger policy development at the national and international levels; more effective participation and advocacy in international forums and the creation of globally recognized frameworks and tools; improved mobilization of resources and overall performance; and increased capacity to operate in multidisciplinary contexts.
11. RBAC occurs at the country, regional and global levels. At all levels, it may include the provision of joint corporate services. The variously defined categories of RBAC also include joint work on policy, strategic and thematic advice; advocacy; knowledge management and monitoring; and the implementation of projects and programmes. The latter mode of joint operations requires the formal sharing of resources and detailed harmonization of procedures, whereas joint work in such fields as advocacy, policy and knowledge is less administratively demanding. Most of the collaborative activities that the evaluation could identify are undertaken at the country level, with 42 per cent also involving at least one non-RBA organization, most commonly the United Nations Children's Fund. Although RBAC is common, it is only a small part of each RBA's portfolio.

II. Evaluation findings

A. Relevance

12. RBAC is largely relevant to the agreements that guide the strategic direction of the UNDS. It is highly relevant for the overall direction of the latest phase of United Nations reform concerning repositioning of the UNDS. It is most relevant at the country and regional levels. The Secretary-General's efficiency agenda now makes RBAC in the joint delivery of core corporate services at country level less relevant.
13. RBAC is relevant to the strategic objectives and goals of the three entities. The RBAC agreements state the comparative strengths of the RBAs but do not adequately specify the fundamental differences between them and the implications of these differences for collaboration.

² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2017. *New way of working*. New York: OCHA.

14. RBAC, as currently designed through various agreements, is not aimed at specific global targets. Rather, these agreements set a framework and strategic direction to facilitate and encourage collaboration at all levels. While this may be appropriate, the lack of ambition has implications for the ability of RBAC to make a meaningful contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

B. Results

15. RBA collaborative efforts have had mixed results in strengthening coordination over the review period.
 - In some countries, a strongly collaborative spirit has developed. In many, the RBAs collaborate effectively where there is a clear advantage in doing so; in others, there is little or no evidence of strengthened collaboration.
 - Coordination is generally easier around thematic and advocacy work than in formal operational project settings, where transaction costs are higher and arranging joint action may be slower.
 - The formal global structure and processes of RBAC do not significantly strengthen coordination.
 - There has been some strengthening of common messaging and communication.
 - Although joint corporate services are often arranged where they offer clear practical benefits, coordination has not become stronger in this regard.
16. The RBAs have made limited progress in reducing overlap, competition and duplication of work. In some projects, countries and thematic areas, the complementarity that the RBAs can achieve is recognized and exploited; nutrition is one of the best examples of successful efforts (by the RBAs and other United Nations entities) to end duplication. At all levels, however, misunderstandings over mandates and competition for funds between FAO and WFP persist, sometimes alongside good technical collaboration on certain themes and tasks.
17. Practical and effective steps have been taken to reduce overlap and duplication through some joint corporate services, but the opportunities to do this on a significant scale are limited.
18. RBAC has enhanced the sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practices at all levels. Given the three agencies' mandates, it is a natural part of their corporate mindsets to recognize and share each other's knowledge and experience. The depth, quality and practical value of the sharing vary, but in many fields there is significant technical interdependence between the RBAs. Joint knowledge management and learning are simpler to arrange than joint operations, and the RBAs have strengthened their performance in this regard. Mutual technical respect and support are widespread across the three agencies, but this sharing of knowledge, lessons and good practice often occurs in wider United Nations frameworks.
19. The results of RBAC reflect and embed the three agencies' commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, although the extent to which these commitments carry through to operational practice is varied. RBAC around gender is well established at headquarters level. Protection principles are well embedded in RBAC, within the broader frameworks of humanitarian action. Commitment to environmental safeguards and sustainability is clear, but the evidence on practical mainstreaming in RBA collaborative activities is mixed.

C. Factors affecting RBAC

20. The global, regional and country contexts present a spectrum of support and constraints for RBAC.
 - Emergency response contexts provide a clear and conducive framework for RBAC within broader United Nations response structures.

- Two developments combine challenge with opportunity.
 - United Nations reform and the introduction of the UNSDCF reconfigure the institutional environment for RBAC, but do not make it irrelevant.
 - Countries' shift to middle-income status means the RBAs may collaborate in different kinds of work with better-resourced governments, beyond the conventional aid paradigm.
 - Government attitudes range from strong support for collaboration, to indifference or dismay about perceived duplication and competition.
 - Donor support for RBAC is not as strong or coherent in practice as donor advocacy of it implies.
 - Similarly, RBA leadership expresses a spectrum of support and scepticism about collaboration: recognizing its many benefits, but in some cases doubtful about system-wide requirements and procedures.
21. Interactions between the RBAs and their Member States through governance processes reveal mixed understandings, motives and priorities with regard to RBAC. Member States urge for stronger collaboration, but many RBA staff consider this pressure too general and insufficiently attuned to the range of operational realities. The lack of clarity and consensus means that, despite appearances of regular meetings and reporting, the strategic and governance foundations for RBAC are weak. Explanation and understanding of RBAC strategy and procedures are also incomplete. Overall, RBAC is not a high priority for the Governing Bodies or for RBA management, and under-resourced coordination units often struggle with the time-consuming complexities of their task.
 22. The evolving character and context of IFAD's operations are reshaping its contribution to the RBAs' shared objectives, but not diminishing its importance.
 23. The significant differences between the RBAs do not always obstruct meaningful collaboration. As communications improve and the significance of physical proximity declines, the structure and geographical distribution of RBAs' representation around the world are becoming less important in determining the progress of their work together.
 24. The interaction between the three agencies' organizational cultures and business models is much more significant. The differences are important, but the RBAs do have common food security objectives. The multiple difficulties in achieving constructive interfaces between the three structures and cultures of the RBAs can be overcome through the often-displayed ability of technical colleagues to work together where they perceive clear mutual interest and benefit, and where the personalities in question align well.
 25. One key element of a joint way of working remains largely absent: a shared system of monitoring performance against planned results. It would be very challenging to develop such a system.
 26. Administrative and programming processes and procedures are a significant obstacle to RBAC. The more tightly structured and managed a collaborative activity needs to be, the more time-consuming, costly and sometimes insoluble the administrative challenges become.
 27. The biggest challenges normally arise in the programme/project format, when resources are budgeted for a specified implementation period and a team of personnel are employed to focus on project activities and results over that time. The detailed and intricate arrangements that must be made between RBAs' systems and procedures take time and resources, often at the cost of effectiveness (although some joint projects do achieve satisfactory results).

28. Although some administrative collaboration does occur and the Common Procurement Team has had some success, the transaction costs of achieving workable interfaces between administrative systems are typically high.
29. Insufficient resources are provided for RBAC.
 - At the global level, donor funding for RBAC does not match donor calls for it to be strengthened. Coordination capacity at headquarters is constrained by lack of resources.
 - At the country level, RBA offices note the lack of funding from their headquarters for planning or coordinating collaborative action, and the preference of some donor offices to continue working with single RBAs. But RBA country offices themselves occasionally compete for funding from the same donors.
 - IFAD's loan portfolio is well resourced, but the funds it directly controls at the country level are limited.
30. The resourcing context for RBAC is evolving as countries achieve middle-income status, and as IFAD's profile and business model evolve.

D. The added value of RBAC

31. The use of the knowledge created through RBAC has, in some cases (such as aspects of the work of the Committee on World Food Security), led to an increase in the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. But challenges remain to increase utilization, especially at the country level where it can make the most difference.
32. Although RBAC may have made a positive contribution to effectiveness and may add value compared to single-agency interventions, there is little quantitative evidence of this.
33. RBAC can lead to cost savings in corporate services as well as additional funds from some donors, but overall the costs of collaboration can be significant. Expectations for reducing cost burdens are high, but in practice RBAs often find that joint work requires additional effort. The data for cost-benefit analysis are limited. Estimates of the value added of RBAC are therefore often subjective.

III. Conclusions

34. Collaboration between the RBAs is a daily reality, reflecting the shared strengths and commitment of these distinctly different organizations. RBA staff routinely act on the advantages of collaboration where they see it makes sense. Although competition for resources continues in some contexts, there is widespread recognition of complementarity. Part of the widely adopted pragmatic approach also involves collaboration with other United Nations entities.
35. Despite the daily reality of RBAC, there is widespread ambivalence about the concept. Beneath the strong official commitments to collaboration lie complex layers of doubt and reluctance, and diverse mixtures of motives for urging for RBAC or appearing to believe in the official version of RBAC that is formally agreed between the agencies and their Governing Bodies. Not all donors fund RBAC as strongly as they advocate it.
36. The formal systems and procedures to promote, coordinate and report on RBAC add little value, are often not followed through usefully, and frustrate staff more often than they inspire them. The RBAs do not consider these collaborative management and reporting processes to be the best way to stimulate joint work or achieve their shared objectives more effectively. Their planning of their collaboration gives insufficient direction to country offices. The fundamentally half-hearted way in which these formal arrangements are pursued is unlikely to enhance their contribution to SDG 2. It would be more constructive to

recognize and flexibly support the many pragmatic ways in which the RBAs do collaborate, whenever they see feasible and effective ways to do so.

37. Sometimes there are better ways for the RBAs to achieve their shared objectives than to focus on collaboration with each other. The situation outlined above results from confusion and misunderstandings about what RBAC can and cannot achieve – and, above all, from the misapprehension that RBAC is always appropriate. In fact, any idea for collaboration must be tested against its practicability, its likely effectiveness and the level of transaction costs that it will impose. In many cases, these tests yield a negative result. Alternative arrangements, such as separate but complementary activities or collaboration with other partners, may prove more advantageous. Realism and pragmatism are the keys to meaningful and effective RBAC.
38. Collaboration and the achievement of the RBAs' shared objectives are still impaired by misunderstandings about the mandates of FAO and WFP. At all levels, many stakeholders still perceive WFP as primarily a humanitarian organization. Confusion and sometimes resentment remain common among host governments and RBA personnel about WFP's supposed mandate creep into development work. The prospects of efficient and effective RBAC are still clouded at the country level – and sometimes in the Governing Bodies – by these uncertainties.
39. Some types of collaboration usually impose higher transaction costs. At all levels, "upstream" and technical work may be an easier area for effective RBAC than formal project formats.
40. The operating context for the RBAs is dynamic. The way they work is changing too. RBAC is just one of the ways for them to contribute to their shared objectives. None of these changes need diminish the importance of IFAD in working alongside the other RBAs at the country level. They may strengthen its collaborative role. Middle-income governments still value IFAD's presence as a leading and expert player in development finance, linked as it is to the technical competence of FAO and WFP.
41. Current United Nations reform restructures modalities for RBAC at the country and regional levels, but does not diminish the value of this collaborative effort. The RBAs can promote the achievement of SDG 2 by engaging jointly and proactively in CCAs and related preparatory procedures for UNSDCF's and by striving together (and with other partners in the United Nations Country Team) to achieve effective implementation of UNSDCF priorities that further their shared objectives. However, other United Nations reforms aimed at enhancing operational efficiency make the RBAs' work on joint corporate services largely irrelevant, particularly at the country level.
42. Collaboration between the RBAs has significant potential, but the rationale for it is not stated in an appropriately realistic way. At present, efforts to promote RBAC are not fully grounded in an accurate understanding of the conditions in which it is most effectively pursued. The formal statements of corporate commitment to collaboration reflect this. But there is real potential for the RBAs jointly to enhance the world's progress towards SDG 2, if the genuine commitment of these agencies' staff to work together in the right circumstances is allowed to take the collaboration forward in productive directions.

IV. Recommendations

43. Recommendations 1-5 are of equal high priority and are the equal responsibility of the three RBAs.
44. Bullets below a recommendation show elements of the recommendation. Letters (a), (b) etc. show points for consideration in implementing the recommendation.

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
Recommendations to the Rome-Based Agencies	
<p>Recommendation 1. Update the MOU between the RBAs. Although the current five-year MOU was only signed three years ago, significant changes since then make an update necessary. The updated MOU should include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategies set out by FAO in its Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and Medium-Term Plan, 2022-2025; in the IFAD12 Results Management Framework 2022-2024; and by WFP in its Strategic Plan, 2022-2026. • Through updating the MOU, the RBAs should reset their strategy for collaboration in a proactive manner – based on the reflections that this evaluation may stimulate – and to move beyond simple reaction to calls for stronger collaboration. • Emphasize the potential benefits of RBAC, including through strong performance in various areas of thematic collaboration, and joint promotion of the food systems approach – including follow-up to the Food Systems Summit. The MOU should also emphasize that RBAC is not a universally applicable principle: collaboration will only be pursued where it makes clear practical sense to do so, and may often include work with other United Nations entities. While the ‘Rome’ label might be retained for reasons of familiarity, the emphasis should be on the three agencies’ shared commitment to common food security objectives. • A revised statement on ‘mutual engagement’ to explain how RBAC complements and is structured by the United Nations development system reform process and, specifically, the UNSDCF at country level, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator. • United Nations reforms at regional level, building on the Regional Collaborative Platforms and the implications for regional RBA collaboration, and recognizing the potential contribution of the RBAs to the emerging regional knowledge management hubs. • In the light of administrative elements of the United Nations reform, the updated MOU should remove its commitments to collaboration on joint corporate services that are covered by the United Nations Business Operations Strategy and other Business Innovation Group initiatives at country level. The MOU should acknowledge that these commitments are largely subsumed by the system-wide enhancements to business operations – to which it should commit the RBAs’ support. • Emphasizing the RBAs’ commitments across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, the updated MOU should clearly state FAO’s commitment and roles in humanitarian response, as well as those of WFP in sustainable development. It should commit all RBAs to work at all levels to clarify and explain the relationships between their mandates; ensure that they do not conflict over roles or compete over resources; and convert competition into collaboration. 	<p>Deadline:</p> <p>October 2022</p> <p>(draft updated MOU to be ready for the informal meeting of the RBA Governing Bodies)</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the Senior Consultative Group (SCG).</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<p>Recommendation 2. Restructure and reinforce the co-ordination architecture for RBA collaboration within the framework of UNDS reform to ensure that at all levels, the co-ordination and evaluation of RBAC includes more proactive efforts to develop and disseminate lessons and knowledge about how to optimize collaboration among and beyond the RBAs, about the costs and benefits of RBAC, and about technical experience that can be usefully shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The RBAs should retain and strengthen capacity for co-ordinating RBAC at their headquarters, with financial support from Member States. The co-ordination function should in future focus on optimizing the RBAs' engagement in and contribution to the UNDS reform process. b) In each country where it has adequate capacity, each RBA should appoint a focal point whose primary task should be support for and facilitation of RBAs' engagement in the UNSDCF. c) RBA regional offices and hubs should play a stronger role in supporting country offices' redefined collaborative engagement in UNSDCFs through capacity strengthening. d) The RBAs should not continue with a global action plan for their collaboration. Instead, they should jointly monitor and report on their contributions to the overall efforts of the United Nations to achieve SDG 2 through the reformed United Nations development system, through UN INFO. e) The RBAs should monitor the finalization and implementation of their three pilot joint country strategies, assess their value in the context of the UNSDCF, and formally review whether it warrants the preparation of more such strategies. 	<p>Deadline:</p> <p>(a) – (d): June 2022 (e): June 2023</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, External Relations and Governance Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Partnerships and Advocacy Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3. Further embrace the new joint programming mechanisms at the country level and ensure constructive, collaborative RBA engagement with these mechanisms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The RBAs should develop and deliver consistent guidance to their country offices on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. jointly preparing to engage in UNSDCF planning processes; ii. jointly contributing to Common Country Analyses and UNSDCF preparation; iii. harmonizing their respective country multiannual plans with each other and with the UNSDCF; iv. jointly participating in UNSDCF implementation under the leadership of the UNRC. b) Where appropriate and feasible, RBAs should harmonize their resource mobilization efforts with those of the UNRC for the UNSDCF. c) Particularly in countries where they do not all have offices, the RBAs should be more proactive in supporting the UNRC to reinforce collaboration within the United Nations Country Team, and in collaborating with each other to promote effective action to strengthen food systems and achieve SDG 2. d) The RBAs should engage wherever appropriate and feasible in joint strategic advocacy to country governments about issues related to SDG 2 with the UNRC and other members of the United Nations Country Team. e) The RBAs should encourage more of their senior staff to apply for UNRC positions. 	<p>Deadline:</p> <p>December 2022</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream; Director, Office of Strategy, Programme and Budget</p> <p>IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department</p> <p>WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department</p> <p>With the support of the SCG.</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
<p>Recommendation 4. Focus administrative collaboration efforts on further embracing the United Nations efficiency agenda.</p> <p>a) Except for those limited areas of administrative collaboration between their three headquarters in Rome that clearly have practical value and cut costs for all the agencies, the RBAs should integrate their efforts at administrative collaboration with the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, specifically the workstreams of the Business Innovation Group, to which they should make a joint, proactive commitment at global, regional and country levels.</p>	<p>Deadline: December 2022</p> <p>Responsibility: FAO - Deputy Director-General, Corporate Logistics and Operational Support stream IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Resource Management Department</p>
<p>Recommendation 5. In considering the development of joint projects and programmes, assess the costs and benefits of the proposed collaboration and only proceed if the benefits outweigh the costs.</p> <p>a) The RBAs should jointly prepare simple guidance for assessing the benefits and costs of proposed joint projects and programmes that captures the likely higher transaction costs and potential reputational risks of this type of collaboration, alongside the benefits of joint RBA action.</p> <p>b) The RBAs should streamline inter-agency administrative arrangements and charges, as well as procedures for the delegation of authority to country level where feasible and appropriate, in order to reduce some of the transaction costs of joint projects and programmes.</p>	<p>Deadline: December 2022</p> <p>Responsibility: FAO - Deputy Director-General, Partnerships and Outreach Stream IFAD - Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department WFP - Assistant Executive Director, Programme and Policy Development Department With the support of the SCG.</p>

Recommendation	Deadline, responsibility
Recommendation to the Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies	
<p>Recommendation 6. The Member States of the RBA Governing Bodies should reappraise and adequately resource their position on RBA collaboration.</p> <p>Through their various representative RBA governance structures, the Member States should confirm to the RBAs that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognize that RBA collaboration is an important objective in some circumstances but not all; • recognize that RBA collaboration should be pursued within the framework of reformed United Nations co-ordination at country level; • recognize that RBA collaboration on joint corporate services should largely comprise proactive commitment to the overall United Nations efficiency agenda, rather than administrative harmonization and efficiency initiatives focused on the RBAs only; • will give priority to resourcing collaborative RBA action on the principles set out above, to be reflected in the updated MOU that they should endorse. 	<p>Deadline: End 2021, in response to this report.</p> <p>Responsibility: Member States.</p>

Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MOU	memorandum of understanding
RBA	Rome-Based Agency
RBAC	Rome-Based Agencies collaboration
SCG	Senior Consultative Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNDS	United Nations development system
UNRC	United Nations Resident Co-ordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Co-operation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme