
**Informal Note for the Record of the Joint Informal Meeting of the
FAO Council, IFAD Executive Board and WFP Executive Board**

14 September 2018

Morning session

Chaired by the President of IFAD

1. The **Chair** welcomed the heads of the Rome-based agencies (RBAs), the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council, the President of the WFP Executive Board and all participants to this second joint informal meeting of the governing bodies of the RBAs. He thanked FAO for granting the use of the plenary hall to hold the meeting, which enabled to accommodate as many of the Member States' representatives as possible. He indicated that a revised agenda had recently been issued, reflecting the latest changes suggested by members, and recalled the informal nature of the meeting.
2. The meeting participants then viewed a short video on the joint field visit of the three RBA principals to the Niger.
3. The **Executive Director of WFP** stated that the field visit of the three RBA heads had been extremely useful and was an excellent way of strengthening collaboration, while doing a first-hand review of how that collaboration is actually functioning on the ground. He stressed the huge increase of projects on which the three agencies have recently worked together, moving from 29 projects in 22 countries in 2015 to 50 projects in 33 countries in 2017.
4. While they had travelled in several places of the country, the visit had a particular focus on the Maradi region, where close to 176,000 people received support from joint RBA projects over the last two years, with a strong commitment and involvement of the Government. As a result, 70 percent of the population in these areas had now been lifted out of poverty, which shows that effective collaborative programmes can have a great impact. Such programmes, he said, should be scaled up and replicated in other areas; they should also be showcased to the international community as they demonstrate an efficient use of the contributions made to address the root causes of issues and provide durable solutions, going much beyond the food security issues and helping reduce conflicts or contain migrations. He added that more cost analysis is being made to demonstrate the long-term positive impact of these actions.
5. In his presentation of the food security situation in the Sahel region, the **Director-General of FAO** said that, according to recent trends, the region was overall experiencing an increase in the number of people suffering from hunger. Given the high demographic growth, the proportion of the entire population suffering from hunger was however decreasing. As about 80 percent of the poorest people in the region depend on pastoralism, the situation of the populations was becoming more instable as a result of conflicts, climate variability and migrations.
6. He explained that the RBAs are working together to build resilience in pastoral, agro-pastoral and sedentary communities of rural areas by addressing the issues of access to and use of land, pastoral management, and control of livestock disease and plant pests. The initial focus is placed on pastoralists, by providing them with training on animal health and production, supporting the integration of pastoral field schools and pastoral education approaches and sustaining pastoral and livestock management, with special efforts being dedicated to the vaccination of livestock against the

Peste des Petits Ruminants. He then indicated that combatting desertification, through the implementation of water harvesting and soil conservation techniques, was also a key action in the support that was provided, in order to restore degraded land. With a view to address water access issues, he said, projects of cisterns have been designed to collect and store properly rainfall water and provide drinking water to families throughout the year. He added that efforts were made towards youth employment, through the promotion of training, capacity building, education and vocational training, in cooperation with IOM, ILO and UNESCO. Finally, he indicated that programmes, jointly implemented with UN Women, were aimed at improving rural women empowerment, which would contribute to enhance food security, increase the household incomes and expand the participation of women in local institutions.

7. In concluding, he highlighted that, when building joint activities, the RBAs were facing the following three main challenges: i) each agency has its own operational mode and it was necessary to find common ways of working on projects; ii) each agency had a different geographic coverage for its existing operations; iii) there was a competition for funding across the RBAs. To resolve this, he quoted the example of the Canadian Multiyear Finance Programme which provided funding to the RBAs to work on joint programmes in several countries.
8. On behalf of the representatives from the Member States that participated in the field visit, the **Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** stated that they were able to clearly see in Niger that the RBAs were working and delivering towards the achievement of their objectives. He particularly highlighted the strong involvement of the Government of Niger, at national and local levels, through the implementation of the “Nigeriens nourish the Nigeriens” (3N) initiative. The field visit provided a clear example that the RBA collaboration was highly relevant and had to be trickled down from the heads of the agencies to the staff working on the ground. He underlined that the focus of the RBAs on diversification of agricultural and pastoral production, improved water management, product promotion and transformation and improved resilience of vulnerable people had generated a very positive impact on the populations.
9. He added that they had had the opportunity to meet with the President of Niger and his Cabinet who the major concerns encountered by his country, a key one being the early marriage of girls. The work of FAO for water management, of IFAD on productivity development and of WFP on supporting the rehabilitation of land and the education of girls, was providing the adequate support towards achieving the SDGs and contributing to closing the gap between humanitarian and development assistance.
10. He called upon the RBAs to showcase their collaboration experience with other United Nations agencies. He also encouraged the organizers of future field trips to ensure a better organization in advance through a pre-briefing with background information, as well as access of accompanying permanent representatives to briefings, meetings and conversations happening during the visit. He stressed that it had been an excellent experience and invited representatives to participate in future visits.
11. In opening the question and answer session, the **Independent Chair of the FAO Council** recalled the importance of the RBA collaboration in the field, as it provides an opportunity to build on the comparative advantages and strengths of each agency with a view to achieve the zero hunger objective.

12. The representative of the **Dominican Republic** stated that the cooperation between the three RBAs was reaching its highest level ever. As Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), he recalled that the functioning of this Committee was one of the best examples of RBA collaboration and appealed to include the CFS on the agenda of the RBA meetings, in particular for those issues related to nutrition and food systems. He also called for the RBAs to develop joint programmes for the adoption and implementation of the CFS policy recommendations.
13. The representative of **France** thanked the RBA principals for choosing the Niger and the Sahel region for their joint visit and as main item for the joint RBA meeting, as this area was presenting many challenges in terms of development and security. She asked whether a full plan of action of the RBAs for the Sahel could be designed and articulated with the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. She called for a stronger cooperation through jointly funded projects and asked how the RBAs could help catalyse this joint funding.
14. The representative of **Italy** expressed his satisfaction to hear that the number of RBA joint projects was increasing and underlined that his country was financing a project aiming at collecting data on the innovative RBA partnerships. Recognizing the complexity of the situation in the Sahel, he supported the idea that a comprehensive joint action plan for the work of the RBAs in the Sahel be drafted, as had already been suggested in the 2017 progress report on RBA collaboration. He highlighted that the Sahel region was facing challenges related to climate change, protracted crisis and migration, which could impede the achievement of the SDGs related to food security and nutrition. He called for the preparation of a joint RBA strategy and action plan on food security and migration, on the basis of the experience acquired in the Sahel.
15. Commending the RBAs for the joint work implemented in the Sahel, the representative of **India** indicated that, in her country, the RBAs were also implementing projects under an integrated approach and contributed to the development of the national framework towards the achievement of SDG 2. The three RBAs were also collaborating at local level to address multiple and interrelated causes of hunger and malnutrition, in close cooperation with the state government and UNICEF. Finally, she invited the three RBA principals to organize a joint visit to India and asked how they intended to enhance the coordination with the Resident Coordinators.
16. In responding to the questions raised, the **President of IFAD** concurred that the joint work undertaken for the CFS was a good example of RBA collaboration and agreed that more regular direct exchanges should take place with the Committee, with a view to ensure that its policy recommendations are owned by the countries and embedded in their national policies. He also agreed that an RBA action plan for the Sahel should be designed in coordination with the countries from the region and articulated as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.
17. Reflecting on the issues raised in relation to the early marriage of girls in Niger, the **Director-General of FAO** recalled that the population growth in the region is a key parameter to be considered and that all stakeholders agreed that education was the way forward and that it was necessary to work with UNESCO and UNICEF in this area. He indicated that work on a joint plan of action in the Sahel had already been initiated and he suggested that this could be presented at a future CFS session. On the migration issue, he agreed that it was important to target the root causes of the problem and to address rural development in the Sahel region, particularly through youth employment; he also supported the idea of designing a joint work plan on migration and food security, which could be framed in a conference on rural development and migration from Africa to Europe to be organized in 2019.

18. The **Executive Director of WFP** recalled that the main issue behind building joint projects was actually the lack of funding and it was key to keep on raising awareness of national parliaments and decision makers of donor countries, in close collaboration with the missions in Rome. He underlined that it was necessary to show the effective solutions that are being put in place in order to address the issues of hunger and food security in the long term and to encourage members of the parliaments to visit operations on the ground.
19. The representative of **China** expressed his appreciation to the RBA principals for showing a very positive and optimistic example on how the three agencies are collaborating in the field. Such collaboration should occur not only at the headquarters level but across all teams on the ground. He called for a further promotion of South-South cooperation, as a tool to help achieving the SDGs. In that regard, he asked how IFAD would contribute to the joint RBA work related to South-South cooperation.
20. The representative of **Kuwait** asked how the RBA collaboration could be reinforced in emergency contexts, such as the ones occurring in his region, and to what extent such collaboration would help to provide an immediate response and help the people in need. He also inquired if a dedicated training on RBA collaboration was provided to staff, particularly at field level. Finally, he asked the President of IFAD, the Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council and the President of the WFP Executive Board what they would envisage for the governing bodies of the RBAs to better guide this collaboration work.
21. Expressing appreciation for the efforts being deployed to address the difficult situation faced by the countries from the Sahel region, the representative of **Sudan** highlighted that mobilization and constant monitoring were required in order to find long term solutions and avoid that the situation further deteriorates, possibly beyond the region. He thanked the Executive Director for his recent visit to Sudan, which provided an opportunity to assess the operations carried out by the RBAs. He asked the principals of the RBAs to what extent their joint visit had enabled to strengthen collaboration on the ground. He also asked if a recording of the statements delivered during this meeting would be made available.
22. The representative of **Jordan** highlighted that countries from the Near East region were continuing to suffer from the adverse effect of armed conflicts and called for more coordination and development projects in the region, in particular from the RBAs. Jordan needs the cooperation of the three agencies to implement projects that will help develop the economy, improve the agricultural situation, mitigate the impact of climate change and provide support to refugee populations.
23. In responding to the questions raised, the **Executive Director of WFP** concurred that South-South cooperation was key, with China playing a fundamental role in that regard, particularly in Africa. On the training, he indicated that the three agencies were spending lots of resources in ensuring that their teams were working more effectively in the field and in fostering a culture of sharing expertise and ideas to achieve common goals. With regard to his visit to Sudan, he highlighted that the country had made a turn towards the right direction and that it was also an opportunity for him to discuss about how the “zakat” contributions could be used in Muslim communities.
24. With regard to South-South and triangular cooperation, the **President of IFAD** indicated that the organization had initiated a programme a year ago and that this programme was aiming to go beyond classic South-South cooperation, by replicating and scaling up existing initiatives, with the particular

support received from China. On the issue of guiding RBA collaboration from the governing bodies, he explained that, while remaining informal and non-legally binding in nature, this annual joint meeting should provide some input for the separate discussions taking place in each governing body of the RBAs. He also recalled that, in the context of the current United Nations reform proposals, it was also fundamental to maintain a strong dialogue with the other United Nations agencies, particularly those located in New York.

25. The **Director-General of FAO** recalled that the three agencies had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, in which the roles of each of the RBAs were set, both in humanitarian and development contexts.
26. The **Executive Director of WFP** also highlighted that the collaboration of the RBAs is particularly important in conflict-affected contexts where the situation is progressively evolving towards a peaceful resolution. This is where the agencies have to collaborate to contribute towards the reconstruction of the country, in which food security plays a key role. He also praised Jordan for the support it provides to refugees from neighbouring countries.
27. The **Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council** concurred with the President of IFAD that this annual joint meeting should remain an informal setting for exchanging views, but that it should provide input for the individual governing bodies to consider separately. He underlined that the collaboration was already at a very high level, not only in the field, but also in some administrative areas, bringing not only efficiencies but also savings.
28. The **President of the WFP Executive Board** agreed on the distinct informal role of this meeting, compared to the formal sessions held by the individual governing bodies. On the question on how to improve the collaboration, he highlighted three elements: i) the need for coherence in the requests that are made to the RBAs, through a better coordination across the members and with missions in New York; ii) the need to review the example of the joint meetings of the Boards of Fund and Programmes and learn from their experience; iii) an enhanced coordination of the bureaux of IFAD and WFP boards and Chairs of the FAO regional groups in order to discuss and agree on the agenda and on the format of this annual joint meeting.
29. The representative of **Belgium** welcomed the spirit of partnership that has been demonstrated, not only among the three RBAs, but also with local governments, and underlined the importance of maintaining discussions not only with missions in Rome, but also with those in the field. She highlighted another concrete and successful example of an RBA cooperation in the Sahel, that is the implementation of the so-called DIMITRA clubs which aim at supporting the empowerment of rural women. Finally, she asked whether a lessons-learned mechanism had been put in place in order to learn from experience.
30. The representative of **Japan** stated that the RBA collaboration was key to address the root causes of the current crisis and to increase the resilience of populations in the Sahel. Japan had recently decided to contribute USD 5 million in food aid for Niger. He asked that the RBAs continue to report on their collaboration.
31. The representative of **Sweden** recalled the importance of the joint programme aiming at promoting women's economic empowerment in rural areas, on which the RBAs and UN Women were collaborating. Funded by Sweden and Norway, the programme was being instrumental in contributing to the achievement of several SDGs, including the eradication of poverty, improved

health and education and gender equality. In Niger, the successful results obtained were achieved thanks to the strong leadership of the Government. Finally, the representative called for a reinforced mechanism for the joint funding of RBA projects.

32. The representative of **the Netherlands** indicated that this joint meeting had the right focus on what the RBAs are jointly delivering on the ground, but that it should also cover the lessons learned from these experiences. He added that it was also important to include the role of the private sector in the discussions, as there was a need to find innovative ways to engage and partner with companies.
33. The representative of **Thailand** underlined the need to motivate staff of the RBAs to build collaboration and coordination, at the local, national and regional levels. It is to be expected that the sharing of expertise and resources will enable to leverage the investments made and to scale up and replicate successful projects in other areas. He asked about the progress and actions taken as a result of the implementation of the Memorandum of understanding.
34. The representative of **Afghanistan** expressed satisfaction about the fact that a long-term regional plan for the Sahel was being designed. He asked about the envisaged financial commitment required for such plan, how the human resource strategy has been planned, if a potential South-South cooperation had been considered, and which role would ECOWAS have in the plan.
35. While expressing strong support for the RBA collaboration work, the representative of the **European Union** indicated that such collaboration did not stand on its own and that there was a need to extend it to the agencies within the United Nations system. Se asked which incentives to staff at headquarters and in the field were being implemented to foster this RBA collaboration. The representative also enquired about the extent of cooperation at headquarters level, through for example the merging of some support services and whether there were already some examples of offices in the field where some staff from one of the agencies were placed under the supervision of colleagues from another RBA.
36. The representative of **Germany** supported the idea that members should be more involved in the setting of the agenda of this joint meeting and that the CFS should be involved. The example of cooperation in Niger was a very good and positive one and showed the excellent collaboration implemented with the Government. He indicated that Germany was providing strong support to the region for the stabilization and prevention of civilian crisis.
37. The representative of the **United Kingdom** indicated that her country was strongly scaling up its contributions to humanitarian aid in the Sahel. She supported the design and implementation of a joint action plan for the region, with a clear accountability setup. She encouraged the RBAs to submit this action plan for the consideration of their respective governing bodies.
38. The representative of **Angola** asked how the RBA principals intended to convey to their staff the determination and the need to collaborate at field level.
39. The representative of **Canada** supported the proposals made for a more participatory process in the preparation of the joint meeting. She also agreed to the design and implementation of a concrete joint action plan for the region. Finally, she called for the scaling up of transformative approaches which yielded a positive impact and for the RBA governing bodies to consider how they could embed these in their programming tools.

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40. The representative of **Switzerland** appreciated the format of the joint meeting and the possibility to discuss different topics. For the coming annual joint meeting, he suggested that the topic of the involvement of the private sector be considered. He welcomed the progress made and the results achieved through the RBA collaboration in the Sahel region and highlighted that the existence of such collaboration was now becoming a criterion for funding projects. He also took note of the fact that the RBAs were working on an analysis to demonstrate the value added of the RBA collaboration in the field. Finally, he supported the involvement of the CFS in this joint meeting.
 41. The representative of **Brazil** agreed with the implementation of a more inclusive process for the preparation of the agenda of this joint meeting and would also welcome the participation of the CFS. While strongly supporting the regional approaches as the one implemented for the Sahel and the focus on South-South cooperation, the representative also recalled that other regions in the world were suffering equally from hunger, poverty, climate change, forgotten conflicts and should not be disregarded.
 42. The representative of **Kenya** supported the efforts made by the RBAs in the Sahel region and commended the involvement of the national governments. He encouraged the three RBAs to continue strengthening resilience among the rural populations.
 43. In response to the comments made and the questions raised, the **Director-General of FAO** reiterated that the Sahel was a priority for the RBAs and that there was a need for the three organizations to integrate their approach into a joint action plan.
 44. The **Executive Director of WFP** highlighted the importance of implementing early warning systems, which made a huge difference in terms of prepositioning of assistance. He supported the approach of involving local communities, with a clear ownership from the local governments of the programmes being implemented. He also underlined the critical inclusion of gender and school meals initiatives in programmes with a view to ensure the empowerment of women and girls. In that regard, he recalled that it was also fundamental to foster adequate human resources policies in order to reach gender parity for staff as quickly as possible.
 45. The **President of IFAD** concurred with the need to implement sound monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with a view to benefit for the lessons learned. He also agreed with the idea that collaboration should go beyond the RBAs, as was the case in the Sahel with the cooperation with ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel.
 46. In concluding, he highlighted the need to increase the participation of members in the preparation of the next joint field visit and of the next joint RBA meeting.
 47. The meeting was adjourned at 12:59.

Afternoon session (started at 14:12)**Chaired by the President of IFAD**

48. The **President of IFAD** opened the afternoon session which would focus on the United Nations reform.
49. The **Director of the Global Engagement and Multilateral Relations Division of IFAD** gave an introductory presentation on the item, on behalf of the three RBAs. He indicated that the entire development community recognized the need and timeliness to reform the United Nations Development System to enhance its efficiencies, to achieve value for money but also to strive for greater effectiveness in delivering better results on the ground, at the country level in order to achieve the SDGs. He highlighted that one of the main aspects of the reform proposals related to the Resident Coordinator (RC) System, for which a specific implementation plan had been designed for the coming 18 to 24 months. It had been indicated that the new RC System would require a funding of some USD 290 million.
50. Moving on to the specific challenges of the RBAs in their implementation of the reform, he highlighted that some difficulties might be encountered in aligning their own country strategies or plans with the timelines of the adjusted United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) approach. He indicated that the doubling of the RC System funding will have an impact on the RBA budgets and that additional information was still to be provided on how the one percent levy on earmarked non-core contributions to development would be operationalized. In that regard, he also mentioned that the dual reporting of the new RC system would have to be further defined and that the resident coordinators to be appointed as part of the new system would have a more enhanced and wider role.
51. He underlined that the RBAs had developed very good examples of collaboration at the operational level, involving in some cases other United Nations entities, and at headquarters level, and that such existing approaches should be borne in mind when implementing the reform. He concluded by recalling that: i) the RBAs were now working on a monitorable action plan for the implementation of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding; ii) the three agencies undertook to strengthen their coordination of action and collaboration in United Nations processes; iii) the RBAs were in the process of developing common indicators linked to the SDGs which would enable to report on their joint efforts; iv) the RBAs were identifying countries to pilot joint country strategies aligned to the UNDAFs; v) the RBAs were constantly looking for opportunities to build joint activities related to programming, knowledge sharing, policy dialogues or South-South and triangular cooperation, at the country, regional and global levels.
52. In opening the question and answer session, the **President of the WFP Executive Board** thanked the RBA principals for agreeing to include on the agenda of this meeting an item on the United Nations reform proposals. While he recalled that the substantive discussions on the reform were taking place in New York, he highlighted that it was very important to discuss and review the implications of such reform at the RBA level.
53. Welcoming the resolution on the United Nations reform and noting the implementation of a renewed RC System, the representative of **Guatemala** asked clarification as of when this new RC system would be operational. She also enquired about how the one percent levy would be implemented and whether this would impact the development programmes implemented in low and middle-income countries. The representative asked whether the RBAs had already identified any part of the reform

proposals which may have an adverse impact on their work. Finally, with reference to the discussions held during the morning, she suggested that a rotation across the regions be established for the joint field visit of the RBA principals.

54. The representative of **Germany** recalled that a sustainably funded RC System was vital for the proper implementation of the United Nations reform and he therefore called upon the RBAs to contribute to the discussions on the funding mechanism and to review how to reallocate resources where applicable. He enquired about the extent to which the RBAs would be able to make efficiency gains as a result of the reform and asked that the governing be kept abreast of developments in that regard.
55. The representative of **Italy** stated that it was urgent for the RBAs to take steps towards the implementation of the United Nations reform. He underlined that the outcome of this joint meeting should feed the progress report on RBA collaboration that is submitted to the governing bodies on a yearly basis. Such report should also capture the progress made on the implementation of the MOU. He also called for a more participatory approach in setting up the agenda of this joint meeting and asked that some consideration be given to producing some informal outcome statements for such joint meetings. He highlighted that the RBA collaboration was an excellent example to be followed as part of the United Nations reform implementation and a great opportunity to bring food security and nutrition at the forefront of the global agenda.
56. Speaking on behalf of the **Nordic countries**, the representative of **Finland** expressed strong support for the implementation of the United Nations reform proposals and called on the RBAs for their active engagement in the process. She underlined that several aspects of the reform such as the renewed RC System, the revised UNDAF or the fragmentation of funding, were of major relevance to the RBAs and required them to reflect on their implementation, particularly at country level and in close coordination with all United Nations actors and local governments.
57. The representative of **France** welcomed the engagement of the RBAs on the implementation of the United Nations reform and appreciated the efforts made by the three agencies to coordinate their work in that regard. She called upon the RBAs to keep on reporting to their governing bodies on the progress made, particularly in relation to the common collaboration framework.
58. The representative of **Japan** thanked the RBAs for their joint efforts made in contributing to the implementation of the United Nations reform and expressed the hope that the reform would not carry out a further financial burden on the Member States. He asked about the anticipated financial impact of the reform on the budget of individual organizations.
59. The representative of **Afghanistan** asked how many fragile States would be integrated in the work programme of the RBAs, as part of the new RC System and what the cost implications for each RBA would be.
60. In responding to the questions raised, the **Director-General of FAO** indicated that it was difficult to provide answers as many aspects of the reform implementation were still being discussed. He expressed FAO's full support to the process but highlighted that some further analysis was still needed in order to refine the proposals, in particular with regard to the renewed RC System, for which FAO stood ready to provide its contributions.
61. The **Executive Director of WFP** stated that it was important that the reform would not negatively affect those programmes and activities that were being delivered effectively. He said that there was no doubt that the United Nations Development System had to be reformed, but that this should be

done in a realistic and effective manner, possibly following a phased approach and building on lessons learned in pilot countries. Such approach, he said, would be particularly important for the implementation of the renewed RC System, for which the right balance has to be found so that the newly appointed resident coordinators have the appropriate role, profiles and reporting lines. He highlighted that WFP had already earmarked the relevant funding in order to support the implementation of the reform.

62. The **President of IFAD** highlighted that the perspective of his organization was slightly different, mainly because its business model was different, and that the reform was in line with IFAD's decentralization initiatives. For IFAD, the reform is an opportunity to expand its presence in the field and to increase its participation in policy dialogues at local level. He underlined that, in many areas, the RBA collaboration could serve as a model for United Nations system. He concurred that many aspects of the implementation of the reform were still being refined and would be soon further discussed at the Chief Executive Board level. Reflecting on the financial contributions to be made to the UNDS, he highlighted that many factors were being taken into account, which did not necessarily create the right incentives for the organizations. He was convinced, he said, that the reform would provide efficiency gains, but that it may require some funding reallocation in order to respond to the new requirements being put in place.
63. On the RC System, he concurred that the implementation of the new approach presented some challenges and underlined that it was important for the so-called "small agencies" to have their voices heard. He highlighted several aspects of country presence which could in the future benefit from a common United Nations approach, such as accreditation, tax regimes, etc.
64. The representative of the **Netherlands** expressed some surprise about the somehow negative remarks he had heard on the implementation of the United Nations reform, as he believed that these reform proposals were very valid and had a strong focus on delivery on the ground. These proposals, he said, had now been adopted by the members and the challenge was how these could be implemented by the RBAs, with a constructive approach. He added that food security was now at the top of the United Nations agenda and that the RBAs should take advantage of the reform to further raise the attention to their activities. He also expressed satisfaction about the joint programming that is implemented by the RBAs, as this was remain the main focus for the RBA collaboration. Reflecting on new ways of doing partnerships, he underlined the need to enhance the cooperation with the private sector.
65. The representative of **Switzerland** indicated that it was important to receive regular updates on the United Nations reform, both in this joint meeting format and at meetings of individual governing bodies. He suggested that for the next joint meeting it might be good to hear about the vision of the "food security hub" and how it should develop in the coming years.
66. The representative of **Canada** concurred on the importance to receive regular updates from the RBAs on how the United Nations reform is implemented. She applauded the level of collaboration that had been reached by the RBAs and hoped this would serve as a leading example within the reform process. She asked whether it had been possible for the RBAs to input the lessons learned from their collaboration into the discussions taking place in New York on the reform. She also enquired if the approach of the reform encouraging each agency to focus on its comparative advantage was enabling a better division of labour among the organizations.

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67. Reacting to previous interventions, the representative of **Mexico** recalled that this reform was not the first one being proposed for the United Nations Development System and that she did not perceive any negative feedback on the implementation of the reform proposals, but rather a pragmatic and transparent approach followed by the RBAs on the impact that this reform will have on their activities. It is fundamental, she said, that the missions in New York be made aware of the challenges faced during the implementation of the reform decisions. She called for a continuation of the dialogue around the reform in this informal setting and at future sessions of the governing bodies.
68. The representative of **Egypt** stressed that the implementation of the resolution on the reform of the United Nations Development System would be yet another opportunity for the RBAs to deepen their collaboration and he invited them to keep on sharing regular updates on the challenges encountered during this process.
69. The representative of **Belgium** expressed strong satisfaction with the reform proposals that had been made in order to build a more effective and coherent United Nations Development System. While there was recognition of the challenges ahead for some aspects of the reform, such as the RC System or the logistical issues, she was hopeful that there would be a broadening of the donor base in order to finance and provide additional support to this reform.
70. Expressing the strong support of her country towards the reform proposal, the representative of the **United Kingdom** also encouraged the RBAs to continue to look for efficiency savings and to keep on working with UNDP for a further implementation of common premises and services, wherever possible. She highlighted three key messages out of the discussions: i) a joint action plan for the Sahel should be designed, in collaboration with the local governments; ii) the discussions on the United Nations reform should be continued and should take place on a regular basis at the formal sessions of the governing bodies. It would also be important to consider progress reports on the results of the RBA collaboration; iii) while the collaboration of RBAs is key, it should be extended to other actors across the United Nations system. Finally, she also concurred with the need to have a more participatory approach on the setting of the agenda of future joint meetings.
71. The representative of **Chad** welcomed the synergy of the actions being undertaken by the RBAs and expressed satisfaction of the positive impact of the RBA collaboration in the Sahel region. He however called for some follow-up to be made on the outcomes of the discussions held in this joint meeting format.
72. In response to the comments and questions raised, the **Director-General of FAO** stated that there no questioning on whether the approved reform should be implemented, but rather a need for a strong analysis of the impact that its implementation would have on the work and activities of the agencies. On the RC System, he had insisted during CEB meetings on the need to make it independent from a particular agency and to “delink” it from UNDP. He expressed some doubts that the renewed system would generate savings in the short term, as there was a call to increase the resources of the RC offices, which would hamper the efficiency gains obtained under other areas; thus, any changes would have to be done in consultation with the host governments as the reform of the RC System is not subject solely within the purview of the United Nations, but requires agreement with the relevant ministries of the host governments. He added that there was a need to further consider the regional dimension, with the integration of the regional economic commissions, and this may generate additional difficulties as the regional coverage differed from one organization to the other.

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73. He then underlined that another area of concern was to have the right level of financing to implement the reform. He recalled that this was in the hands of the Member States to decide within each governing body. He reiterated his suggestion to proceed in a phased approach, starting with the countries where a "One UN" representation already exists and from which lessons could be drawn, in coordination with local governments.
 74. The Executive **Director of WFP** stated that this meeting had been the opportunity to have a frank dialogue on the United Nations reform and that the RBA teams were working full speed to support its implementation.
 75. On the question around the private sector, the **President of IFAD** concurred that this was an area where the RBA collaboration should be reinforced. He said that there were clear signs of an increased presence of the private sector on the United Nations agenda and that there were many areas where cooperation had to be fostered.
 76. The **President of the Executive Board** concluded the session by appreciating the positive and constructive spirit of the discussions. He concurred that, despite its challenges, the implementation of the United Nations reform was an excellent opportunity to bring the food security issues at the very top of the agenda in New York. He called for the discussions on the reform to be continued at the sessions of the RBA governing bodies and in other informal settings. He also thanked the secretaries of the governing of the three RBAs for their collaborative spirit in supporting the organization of this joint meeting.
 77. The **Independent Chairperson of the FAO Council** appreciated the constructive dialogue of this joint meeting and underlined that the United Nations reform was an opportunity, particularly to reinforce the accountability of the organizations.
 78. In concluding, the **President of IFAD** highlighted the following points: i) that the joint meeting of the governing of the RBAs should now become an annual event; ii) that the members should be more involved in the preparation of the agenda of the meeting; iii) that it was now fundamental to build a common regional approach and programming for the Sahel region, going beyond the RBA collaboration and involving other actors from the United Nations System, the regional organizations and the private sector; iv) that regular updates on the implementation of the United Nations reform be shared with the Member States; that it has to be borne in mind that discussions on the reform were also taking place within the United Nations System, particularly at the CEB level, and that it was important for the RBA principals to wait until these discussions have taken place internally before having further engagements with the members.
 79. The meeting was adjourned at 16:38.