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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 22 and 23 September 2025: Main outcomes of 44 th Session of the FAO Conference (Rome, 28 June – 4 July 2025) <i>- Information from the Presidency</i>

The 44th session of the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) took place from 28 June to 4 July 2025 in Rome, Italy. The theme of the 44th session was ‘Fostering innovation for food security’.

Overall the EU’s key strategic goals were achieved, in particular as regards the election of FAO Council members, the FAO review process, and FAO’s Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2026-2027.

In the election of FAO Council members, the established rotation system within the European Regional Group was fully maintained, which can be considered a success for the EU and its Member States. Despite increasingly strong counter-efforts, the Conference showed that with the unified ‘Team Europe’ approach taken by the Polish and Danish Council Presidencies, the EU Delegation in Rome and Member States, together with like-minded countries, and with adequate mobilisation and outreach efforts, it was possible to win critical votes in FAO in line with the agreed line to take on the war in Ukraine and the decision in 2023 to suspend Russia from the FAO Council.

Significant achievements of the Conference included the consensus-based conclusions and decisions by the FAO membership on substantive matters such as the review process and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), which is fundamental for FAO's functioning and possible discussions on a future FAO reform process. Another achievement was the adoption of a resolution on 'Addressing Antimicrobial Resistance in Agrifood Systems', where efforts at finding common ground on language ultimately succeeded, while preserving the EU's principles and standards.

The FAO Conference adopted, by consensus, a roadmap for the upcoming FAO review process and possible discussions on a future FAO reform process. The Conference assigned the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) to the initial 'diagnostic' task of reviewing FAO's overall fitness, including keep in contact with UN headquarters in New York to ensure alignment with the UN80 initiative. The Council Working Party on FAO, the EU delegation in Rome and member states' delegations in Rome will monitor the diagnostic exercise and possible future FAO reform process.

The Conference also reached an initial compromise on the FAO's Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2026-2027. Despite a 24 million USD budget reduction, the EU and its Member States managed to ensure that funding would be maintained at an adequate level (and in some cases even increased) in the 2026-2027 PWB for areas such as transboundary animal diseases, the International Plant Protection Convention, data and statistics, and normative work including the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The individual budget lines and priority areas of work will be discussed and decided upon during the FAO Council session from 1 to 5 December 2025.

Going forward, the discussions on FAO review and on the budget show the need for the EU and its Member States to engage with other FAO members and regional groups. Such outreach will also be important if the EU and its Member States have aspirations regarding the election of FAO's next Director-General in 2027. In light of the increasing uncertainty, the EU and its Member States can help set the direction and play a leading role on FAO governance issues.
