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Item 3(a) of the provisional agenda

Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the ESCAP regional institutions: Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development**Report of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

CAPSA made progress in 2010, particularly with regard to strengthening its human resource base. The Centre filled the key posts of Regional Adviser for Poverty Reduction and Food Security, and that of Head and Senior Economic Affairs Officer in September and October, respectively, and subsequently developed a strategic plan for 2011–2020 for approval by the Governing Council. In order to fully reap the benefits of its comparative advantage, the Centre will strive to reposition itself in relation to its strategic research and capacity development agenda, its networking and partnership activities, its knowledge-sharing and outreach programmes, its policy advisory services and resource mobilization. CAPSA, together with its partners, will contribute to poverty reduction in the Asian and Pacific region by building awareness about the nature of poverty and food insecurity in the region, identifying options for sustainable agriculture for the poor and marginalized, and determining the best market options for the poor and vulnerable. In view of its position as a small player within the larger landscape of agricultural research and policy-focused organizations in Asia and the Pacific, the Centre needs to make the best use of its partnerships and networking arrangements. CAPSA staff has thus participated in a number of meetings to network with the goal of collaborating and coordinating with other organizations. In order to contribute more effectively to knowledge sharing, CAPSA has developed new products and is applying more user-friendly formats. In addition, the posting of the Regional Adviser for Poverty Reduction and Food Security at CAPSA has enabled the Centre to place more emphasis on policy-related advice.

During 2011, CAPSA will rely predominantly on voluntary financial and in-kind contributions from the Government of Indonesia and other member States to operate. The Centre is in the process of identifying extrabudgetary resources. However, such resources are likely to become available only in 2012.

* The late submission of the present document is due to the need to await the seventh session of the Governing Council of CAPSA, which was held on 18 March 2011.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	2
II. Major developments in 2010	3
III. Progress on the programme of work for 2010-2011	5
IV. Outlook on the capacity development project 2011-2013	6
V. Administrative and financial issues	7
A. Strengthening human resources	7
B. Mobilization of financial resources	8
VI. Issues for consideration by the Commission	8
Annexes	
I. Contributions in 2010	9
II. Statement of accounts	10
III. Report of the Governing Council on its seventh session	11

I. Introduction

1. The Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA) is undergoing a period of profound change owing to a transformation of the agriculture sector as well as the funding landscape in the region. Established in 1981 as a subsidiary body of ESCAP pursuant to Commission resolution 174 (XXXIII) of 29 April 1977 and its statute adopted by the Commission in its resolution 220 (XXXVIII) of 1 April 1982, the Regional Co-ordination Centre for Research and Development of Coarse Grains, Pulses, Roots and Tuber Crops in the Humid Tropics of Asia and the Pacific (CGPRT Centre) was highly successful for many years in conducting socio-economic research on the crops that fell within its mandate. Following a period of decline in funding, and the suggestions emanating from an external evaluation, the statute of the Centre was revised in 2004 and CGPRT was renamed the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific to emphasize poverty alleviation in the context of secondary crops.¹ To further increase the Centre's visibility and relevance in the Asia-Pacific region, the Commission at its sixty-sixth session, in 2010, supported the change of name to the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture while retaining the acronym "CAPSA".²

2. The purpose of the present report is to inform the Commission of the progress made in respect of the following key elements of Commission resolution 65/4 on the strengthening of the Centre:

(a) Turning CAPSA, within the then-existing statute³ of the Centre, into a coordinating research institute and a regional member-driven centre of

¹ See Commission resolution 65/4, annex.

² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 19 (E/2010/39-E/ESCAP/66/27)*, para 56.

³ Commission resolution 60/5 of 28 April 2004, annex.

excellence that focuses on poverty alleviation through secondary crops development with special attention to addressing food security, hunger and malnutrition;

(b) Making the Centre's primary focus on networking with national agricultural research centres in the region and beyond, promoting and coordinating research, highlighting and disseminating their research findings, and converting the results of primary research into relevant policy options for the region;

(c) Focusing the research of the Centre on sustainable secondary crop farming systems and agribusiness development in the context of inclusive agricultural and rural development for food security and poverty alleviation.

II. Major developments in 2010

3. During 2010, CAPSA strengthened its human resources base of professional staff by filling the positions of (a) Regional Adviser for Poverty Reduction and Food Security and (b) Senior Economic Affairs Officer, serving as Head of the Centre, in September and October, respectively.

4. The Centre developed a strategic plan that reflects the plan reviewed and adopted by the Governing Council in March 2009⁴ and endorsed by the Commission in resolution 65/4. The plan is based on the consideration that CAPSA has a comparative advantage derived from: (a) its regional mandate and network of national agricultural research systems in the region; (b) being a subsidiary body of ESCAP, which enables it to easily gain access to policymakers and participate in policy platforms in the region; and (c) its mandate to contribute to the reduction of hunger and food insecurity through research and development activities on sustainable agriculture. In order to fully reap the benefits of this comparative advantage, CAPSA will strive to reposition itself with regard to its strategic research and capacity-development agenda, networking and partnership activities, knowledge-sharing and outreach programmes, policy advisory services and resource mobilization.

5. *Strategic research and capacity-development agenda.* CAPSA proposes to concentrate on issues that could clearly affect hunger and food insecurity and sustainable agriculture. These issues will be addressed in large research projects implemented upon the request of a number of countries in the region, where CAPSA facilitates and manages cross-cutting issues on joint research by national agricultural research systems. CAPSA will also serve as a centre that channels successfully tested research outcomes of more advanced regions into less developed areas of Asia. In addition, the Centre, together with its partners, will contribute to poverty reduction in the Asia and the Pacific region by: (a) building awareness about poverty and food insecurity in the region; (b) identifying options for sustainable agriculture for the poor and marginalized; and (c) determining the best market options for the poor and vulnerable. Meanwhile, in support of the effort of CAPSA to transform itself into a centre of excellence, five peer-reviewed articles written by staff members were published in 2010.

6. *Partnerships and networks.* To carry out its work within the larger landscape of agricultural research and policy-focused organizations in Asia and the Pacific, CAPSA is striving to make best use of its partnerships and networking arrangements. With this objective in mind, the Centre undertook the following activities:

⁴ See E/ESCAP/65/25, annex IV.

(a) Participation in an intergovernmental consultation organized by the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia and held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, on 22 and 23 November 2010. During the meeting, stakeholders of the region discussed the needs and priorities of research related to poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture, and identified opportunities for collaboration with the Subregional Office for East and North East Asia;

(b) Participation in the third South Asia Economic Summit, held in Kathmandu from 17 to 19 December 2010. At the Summit, the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment organized, in partnership with ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme, the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Oxfam Novib, a presentation on intraregional trade of agriculture and food products under the theme "Food security agenda for South Asia". The Summit also provided an opportunity for CAPSA staff members to interact with a large number of senior policymakers, academics and civil society representatives for possible future collaboration on issues related to food security;

(c) Regular participation in United Nations Country Team meetings, membership in the United Nations Partnership for Development Framework, participation in working groups on livelihoods and climate change and meeting with representatives of the World Food Programme on opportunities for collaborating on activities in Indonesia;

(d) Meetings with senior representatives of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)/Jakarta to explore ways to use ASEAN implementation mechanisms for the delivery of CAPSA activities;

(e) Meetings and discussions with the Centre's focal points in the Ministry of Agriculture of Indonesia and senior researchers from Indonesian research institutes, the Bogor Agricultural Institute, the Indonesian Centre for Food Crops Research and Development, and the Indonesian Center for Agriculture Socio-Economic and Policy Studies (ICASEPS), to explore areas for increased collaboration.

7. *Effective knowledge sharing.* In its effort to provide science-based policy advice on sustainable agriculture, poverty reduction and food security to policymakers and practitioners, through CAPSA Information Services, which comprises library services, publications, a database and a web page, the Centre initiated the following activities:

(a) Developed a new more user-friendly format for the Centre's web page, which was put into effect in early 2011;

(b) Created new formats for in-house publications *Palawija News* and *CAPSA Flash*;

(c) Developed a compendium of scientific articles related to the Centre's thematic priorities and introduced it as E-Digest;

(d) Developed a survey on needs for information services by partner institutes in the region.

8. *Policy advice.* Existing policy regulations often are a major constraint to technology transfer and adoption, and experiences across the world show that senior policymakers need to be involved early on in the research for development process. The placement of the Regional Adviser for Poverty

Reduction and Food Security at CAPSA in September 2010 has enabled the Centre to place more emphasis on policy advice. CAPSA undertook the following activities in this area:

(a) Discussions were held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives in Nepal on 16 December 2010 with the secretary of the ministry and divisional heads on current agricultural development activities in Nepal with an objective to identify areas of mutual interest on issues related to agriculture, poverty reduction and food security. The meeting also focused on priority training and the capacity-building requirements of the Ministry. The terms of reference for advisory services in consultation with the Ministry is now being prepared;

(b) Discussions were held with the chairman of the Poverty Alleviation Fund-Nepal on possible collaboration. Training the Fund's staff on targeting the most vulnerable communities was mentioned as a priority area in need of assistance;

(c) CAPSA provided the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, a list of commodities that are classified at the HS 06 digit level. The Council had requested the information for a study to identify critical food commodities for ensuring food security in South Asia in future negotiations under the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade (A/58/716-S/2004/122, annex III).

9. *Resource mobilization.* To carry out its objectives set in the strategic plan, CAPSA needs to augment its financial resources and add personnel. Major efforts were made during the reporting year to increase the Centre's budget through extrabudgetary resources, and to diversify its donor base by attracting new donors through the following activities:

(a) The Centre submitted a concept note entitled "Network for knowledge transfer on sustainable agricultural technologies and improved market linkages in South and Southeast Asia" to the European Union. The associated project would require funding of 2.5 million euros;

(b) CAPSA partnered in a concept note on adopting better vegetable production, post-harvest and marketing practices to enhance smallholder food and nutritional security in Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines. The note was submitted to the European Union;

(c) Held discussions with donor agencies, including the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, the Australian Agency for International Development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank on opportunities for funding.

III. Progress on the programme of work for 2010-2011

10. *Information services and database development on sustainable agriculture for poverty reduction.* The current and back-issues of CAPSA publications, including the Centre's periodicals, *CAPSA Flash* and *Palawija News*, continue to be uploaded to the CAPSA website and the AgEcon Search website, an online library managed by the University of Minnesota in the United States of America, and can be downloaded for free. In 2010, a total of 72,712 publications were downloaded from the CAPSA website and 8,700 from the AgEcon website. In addition to making CAPSA publications available online, the Centre undertook the following activities in its quest to provide

targets groups with better and wider access to information on measures to alleviate rural poverty:

(a) Preparation of three issues of *Palawija News*, three issues of *CAPSA Flash* and three occasional papers;

(b) Continued expansion of the Centre's database, which provides statistical data on secondary crops in Asia and the Pacific at the national, provincial and district levels. The data currently covers 17 countries in the region and is widely used by policy formulators, decision makers, researchers and university students worldwide through online media.

11. *Group training (seminars, workshops, and symposium)*. Due to financial and human resources constraints, CAPSA conducted no trainings in 2010. However, it carried out the following activities:

(a) Development of a survey to identify the training needs of the Centre's focal and partner institutes in the region with a view to build capacity in undertaking research and advocacy work;

(b) Carried out preparatory arrangements for a workshop on investing in sustainable agriculture for food security and alleviation of poverty. This included: (i) preparing and circulating a concept note among relevant institutes; and (ii) meeting with the Director-General of Food Security in Indonesia and Director of ICASEPS to identify the priorities of Indonesia to be addressed in the workshop. In addition, following discussions with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on undertaking studies on investment in agriculture and organizing a workshop, an FAO consultant visited Indonesia in December 2010, to meet with potential partners. FAO, has since prepared an aide-mémoire which expressed its willingness to collaborate with CAPSA on this initiative and to fund it.

12. *Field projects*. The final workshop of the El Niño project entitled "Food security assessment under climate change" was conducted in Hanoi on 14 and 15 July with the objective of developing an integrated system for policy planning to minimize the adverse effects of climate change on agriculture and food production. The workshop had 30 participants from 11 countries in the region. A working paper on forecasting food security under El Niño in Asia and the Pacific has been prepared as a result of the project and is to be published in 2011.

IV. Outlook on the capacity development project 2011-2013

13. As CAPSA is a regional institute largely dependent on extrabudgetary resources, the implementation of the activities described below depend on the Centre's ability to attract contributions from donors. During 2011, the Centre plans to concentrate on securing sufficient financial and human resources through extrabudgetary funding, with the goal of attaining sufficient funding by the end of the year to carry out the work programme in full. To achieve this, CAPSA will network with partners in member countries, especially the national agricultural research systems, with the aim of developing collaborative project ideas by liaising with potential donors, and by submitting proposals for funding. For the period 2011 to 2013, CAPSA has devised a capacity development project on achieving poverty reduction and food security through sustainable agriculture in Asia and the Pacific. The aim of the project is to enhance the capacity of scientists and policymakers and to foster regional collaboration through the following activities:

(a) Contributing to the building of national capacity for socio-economic and policy research on sustainable agriculture for poverty reduction and food security by: (i) assisting member States to prioritize research needs in relation to poverty, food insecurity and sustainable agriculture; (ii) facilitating access to relevant data; (iii) enhancing the capacity of scientists to apply relevant methods; and (iv) preparing and developing synthesis reports on relevant and applicable research findings;

(b) Assisting in efforts to enhance regional coordination and build networks in order to scale up and scale out research findings that have implications for both policy design and the implementation of activities related to sustainable agriculture and rural development by: (i) establishing and facilitating South-South dialogue and intraregional learning; and (ii) creating networks of agents of change to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of information. Within these networks, agricultural technologies that are environmentally sustainable and have the potential, if implemented, to raise productivity will be identified, and research and adaptation needs will be prioritized;

(c) Helping to build the capacity of policymakers and senior government officials to design and implement policies aimed at achieving sustainable agriculture, rural development, poverty reduction and food security in Asia and the Pacific by providing policy-related advice on issues pertaining to food security, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture through such means as workshops, round tables and consultations, regional dialogues and collaboration with member States and regional and subregional institutions.

V. Administrative and financial issues

A. Strengthening human resources

14. In response to paragraph 7 of Commission resolution 65/4, ESCAP funded, through its regular budget, the recruitment of the Senior Economic Affairs Officer (P-5), who serves as the Head of CAPSA. The secretariat also funded the recruitment of a Regional Adviser for Poverty Reduction and Food Security (P-4), a short-term Associate Programme Officer (P-2) and a Team Assistant (GS-4).

15. To further strengthen its human resources capacity, CAPSA recruited one Indonesian researcher on a part-time basis from ICASEPS. In addition to providing technical advice related to socio-economic and policy matters, the researcher served as programme leader for research and development within CAPSA.

16. In addition, the Centre attempted to strengthen its human resources through the following activities:

(a) Prepared four sets of terms of reference for associate expert positions (impact assessment, gender mainstreaming, agricultural policy and geographic information systems), funding possibilities for which are currently being pursued through the Governments of France, Germany and Japan;

(b) Held discussions with Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement about the secondment of a scientist to CAPSA.

B. Mobilization of financial resources

17. As at 31 December 2009, the institutional support account of CAPSA was \$322,875.32 (see annex II⁵) and as at 31 December 2010, the account of CAPSA comprising contributions from ESCAP members and associate members had a balance of \$272,942.10. This amount was carried over into 2011.

18. During its sixty-sixth session, in May 2010, the Commission encouraged member countries to contribute funding to the Centre.⁶ As a result, contributions received from seven members and associate members during 2010 amounted to \$149,761.04, including a financial contribution from the host country, Indonesia, totalling \$85,364.50 (see annex I). In addition, the Government of Indonesia contributed in-kind support of approximately 336.4 million Indonesian rupiah (Rp) (equivalent to \$37,881). Total voluntary contributions received during 2010 were insufficient to cover all institutional costs, which amounted to \$207,110.07. Of the seven members and associate members that made voluntary contributions in 2010, five are Governing Council members. Voluntary contributions from member countries during 2010 declined 11 per cent compared with 2009.

19. CAPSA was able to keep its institutional expenditures low during 2010, at \$207,110.07. However, low expenditures are an indication of the low volume of activity of the Centre during 2010. As activities pick up in 2011 and beyond, expenditure levels are expected to increase proportionately. Without a sufficient level of voluntary contributions from members and associate members, however, CAPSA would face a shortfall in funds to cover operational expenses in 2011 and 2012. To date, it has only been possible to extend General Service staff contracts for six months because of the financial insecurity faced by the Centre.

20. The Centre's premises have suffered from some decay over the years, but through generous support provided by the Government of Indonesia, the ground floor has been renovated. It is hoped that additional support will pay for fixtures, fittings, equipment and some renovation work.

VI. Issues for consideration by the Commission

21. The issues identified by the Governing Council at its seventh session for consideration by the Commission are set out in the report of the Council (see annex III, paras. 1-10).

⁵ The figure listed in annex II is slightly higher because it takes into account interest earned.

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2010, Supplement No. 19* (E/2010/39-E/ESCAP/66/27), para 56.

Annex III

Report of the Governing Council on its seventh session

I. Recommendations

1. The Governing Council endorses the new strategic plan for 2011-2020 presented by the Centre. The Council recommends that the Centre focus its programme on sharing best practices, knowledge management and policy advice.
2. The Governing Council expresses its appreciation of the results that CAPSA has been able to accomplish within a short period of time, especially in view of the limited resources available.

A. Financial issues

3. The Governing Council urges member States to explore the possibilities for regularizing and increasing financial contributions to CAPSA. The Council notes the willingness of some member States to increase their financial and/or in-kind contributions to the Centre. The Council also recommends that CAPSA reach out to a wider group of ESCAP members for new contributions.
4. The Governing Council urges CAPSA to explore opportunities to identify technical cooperation projects that involve a larger number of countries, in particular among countries that have not previously been involved in CAPSA projects.

B. Activities

5. The Governing Council urges CAPSA to strengthen training and capacity-building activities. In this context, two representatives indicate the willingness of their countries to work closely with the Centre to develop capacity-building programmes.
6. The Governing Council recommends that the Centre organize a regional conference focusing on food and nutritional security and sustainable agriculture.
7. The Governing Council recommends that the Centre build on existing partnerships and work more closely with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Association for Southeast Asian Nations and other regional and international organizations.
8. The Governing Council commends the new publications and outreach materials developed by the Centre and invites focal institutes to consider CAPSA publications as tools for knowledge sharing and the exchange of information on best practices in the area of food security, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture.
9. The Governing Council expresses satisfaction over the recent completion of a regional research project on the impact of climate change on food security, and recommends that CAPSA disseminate the publication widely and as soon as possible.

C. Representation on the Council

10. The Governing Council expresses its concern about a lack of continuity and consistency in the representation of member countries on the Council, and urges the secretariat to consider developing procedures that would allow member countries to be represented through national institutes or ministries on a three-year term.

II. Proceedings

A. Opening of the session

11. The Chair of the sixth session of the Governing Council expressed gratitude to the Executive Secretary for opening the seventh session of the Council and to the representatives of the members of the Council as well as representatives of other member countries and international organizations for their presence. The Chair also expressed gratitude to the Executive Secretary for her support to CAPSA and urged members to expand and deepen their engagement with the Centre by, among other things, increasing their financial contributions.

12. The Executive Secretary opened the seventh session of the Governing Council and delivered a statement. Welcoming the member States, the Executive Secretary expressed her satisfaction with the work of the Centre in renewing the engagement between the member States and the secretariat aimed at finding innovative solutions regarding food security, poverty reduction and sustainable agriculture. In line with her commitment to CAPSA, the Executive Secretary had strengthened the Centre's human and financial resources during the year. She requested that the member States offer stronger support to the Centre through increased and more stable financial and in-kind contributions.

13. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Head of the Centre on agenda item 4. Following an introduction by the Head of the Centre, the Council reviewed the results achieved and outcomes during the reporting period.

14. The Governing Council had before it the report of the Head of the Centre on agenda item 6. The report was introduced by the Head of the Centre and the Regional Advisor for Poverty Reduction and Food Security.

15. The Governing Council also considered the summary of the programme of work for the next reporting period.

B. Matters calling for action by the Governing Council or brought to its attention

16. The Governing Council was informed that, during 2011, CAPSA would rely predominantly on voluntary financial and in-kind contributions for all operations as contributions from members and associate members had been small and had, in fact, decreased in the preceding year. While the Centre's staff was concentrating on identifying extrabudgetary resources, such resources were likely to become available only in 2012. In addition, the Centre's operations were affected by the inconsistency in the payment flows of the contributions and failure of some members to honour their pledges.

17. With regard to the above-mentioned issues, the Centre made the following requests to the Council:

(a) To ask member States to provide their financial contributions on a more reliable basis;

(b) To call upon all member States not only to make their contributions on time but also to take action to increase their contributions;

(c) To require financial contributions from member States in the amount of \$250,000 in 2011 to cover all operational expenses;

(d) To suggest to member States that they might wish to review opportunities to support CAPSA in-kind through, for example, the funding of trainings and workshops.

18. The Council had before it the draft strategic plan 2011-2020 on item 7 of the agenda. The Head of CAPSA provided an overview of the salient points of the plan, which the Centre hoped to use as a marketing tool for donors. Following a discussion about the key points, the Council endorsed the plan.

C. Date and venue for the next Governing Council session

19. Some Council members proposed that the eighth session of the Council be held in Indonesia in February 2012. The secretariat suggested that the eighth session be held back-to-back with the second session of the Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development, which would be held in Bangkok. The Council decided to postpone making a decision on the dates and venue of its eighth session.

D. Adoption of the report

20. The Governing Council had before it a set of draft recommendations. The recommendations were adopted.

21. The Chair made a closing statement, expressing gratitude to all for their participation, and then declared the session closed.

III. Organization

A. Attendance

22. The seventh session of the Governing Council was held in Bangkok on 18 March 2011.

23. The session was attended by representatives of the following members of the Council: Bangladesh; Cambodia; France; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; and Thailand.

24. Representatives of the following members of the Commission attended as observers: China; Japan; Myanmar; Philippines; and Sri Lanka.

25. Representatives of the following United Nations body attended: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).

26. Representatives of the following governmental and non-governmental organizations attended: Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions; Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement; and Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences.

B. Election of officers

27. The Governing Council elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Hasil Sembiring (Indonesia)
Vice-Chair:	Ms. Rangsit Poosiripinyo (Thailand)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Abdullah Al-Masud Chowdhury (Bangladesh)

C. Adoption of the agenda

28. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the session.
 2. Election of officers.
 3. Adoption of the agenda.
 4. Report on the activities and accomplishments of CAPSA during 2010.
 5. Presentation and discussion of the proposed capacity-development project 2011-2013 and the programme of work for 2010-2011.
 6. Report on the administrative and financial status of CAPSA.
 7. Presentation and discussion on the revised strategic plan of CAPSA.
 8. Discussion on the draft report of CAPSA to the Commission.
 9. Date and venue for the next Governing Council session.
 10. Other matters.
 11. Adoption of the report.
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