

Notes on the meeting of Convenors and Friends

28 March 2018

1. The second meeting of 2018 between Convenors and Friends and the President was held on Wednesday, 28 March, in room C600.

Item 1: Opening remarks by the President and adoption of the agenda

2. The President greeted all participants, and welcomed Mr Carlos Amaral (Angola) as Convenor for sub-List C1, replacing Ms Teresa Tumwet (Kenya). The President thanked Ms Tumwet for her active role as Convenor since September 2017. In addition, the List A Convenor confirmed that Finland would serve as List A co-Convenor with immediate effect.
3. The President shared the following updates:
 - Ñ Decentralization process. The first wave of staff reassignment in the Programme Management Department (PMD) had been completed, with 73 per cent of staff obtaining one of their three preferred choices. The overall process would be finalized in April.
 - Ñ New organization chart. The operational realignment had been formalized and reflected in a new organization chart, to enter into effect as of 1 April 2018. The sub-List C3 Convenor was assured that the chart would be made available to members in IFAD's four official languages.
 - Ñ Delegation of authority. A process to revise and enhance the delegation of authority framework to lower levels of Management and to IFAD Country Offices was ongoing. Convenors would be briefed on progress at the next meeting.
 - Ñ Operational matters. For reasons beyond IFAD's control, there was a possibility that three projects totalling US\$215 million and scheduled for approval at the April session of the Board, and a fourth investment of US\$13 million, would be postponed. This might imply a reallocation of the resources through the performance-based allocation system to ensure that the programme of loans and grants for the Tenth Replenishment of IFAD's

Resources (IFAD10) was attained. However, it would be preferable not to reallocate these resources, and the Associate Vice-President, PMD, noted that every effort was being made to ensure that at least two of the proposals were submitted to the April session for approval.¹

Ñ National Oil Palm Project. The President noted that PMD would continue to provide clear and concise answers to the legitimate questions raised by Member States and that the President's report to be submitted to the Board would contain measures to address the issues discussed so far. Furthermore, agreement had been reached with the Government of Uganda to ensure that the Board's approval of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessments for each hub would be secured before the project started. The Convenor for List A expressed appreciation for Management's high level of responsiveness to members' concerns, noting that the volume of questions had decreased significantly and that while he could not confirm that the List was fully satisfied, he was hopeful that positive progress would be made in the coming days. Management reiterated its commitment to go beyond minimum requirements for the project, and the willingness to continue engaging with members.

4. The agenda was adopted without changes.

Item 2: Executive Board (EB 123)

(a) Draft agenda

5. Mr William Skinner, Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Office of the Secretary (SEC), thanked Convenors for the great work within their respective lists as evidenced by the high attendance at the informal technical meeting and seminars on 13 and 26 March. He also thanked Convenors for their cooperation in holding paperless meetings as a contribution to efficiency measures.
6. He confirmed that the Board session would start at 2.00 p.m. on Monday, 16 April, and would continue until the evening of Tuesday, 17 April. This would be followed

¹ Further to the meeting, Management advised that only one proposal, the Innovative Poverty Reduction Programme: Specialized Agribusiness Development in Sichuan and Ningxia, in China, would be postponed.

- by the Board retreat of two full days on 18 and 19 April. He then briefed members on the EB 123 provisional agenda, highlighting the items for approval, review, confirmation and information.
7. As requested by List A, the item on sexual exploitation and abuse originally scheduled for information at the April session had been included for discussion in the recently posted revised agenda. Further to this, and responding to additional requests from List A, two other items would be discussed at the session: (i) Update on the Operational Excellence for Results (OpEx) Exercise; and (ii) Implementation of the United Nations Resolution on the Mandatory Age of Separation. A revised agenda and the schedule of work would reflect these additions.
 8. On the agenda item "Appointment of Members to the Subsidiary Bodies of the Executive Board", it was noted that nominations had been received from List A and from sub-Lists C1 and C3. The OiC, SEC, called upon the Convenors for Lists B and C2 to share their respective nominations as soon as possible, to enable the preparation of the document addendum for tabling at the session. The List B Convenor shared nominations for the Working Group on the Transition Framework (Indonesia and Nigeria) and promised to advise on the pending nominations soon.
 9. The List A Convenor expressed appreciation to Management for accommodating the List's request for inclusion of these items for discussion, and asked that updates on the steps being taken to address sexual exploitation and abuse be shared regularly in the future. He also thanked Management for the fruitful informal seminar on the country strategic opportunities programmes and the written responses provided to members' questions.
 10. Regarding the timing of the discussion of the items requested by List A, the sub-List C3 Convenor was informed that the current version of the schedule or work foresaw the discussion of OpEx on the first day and the mandatory age of separation on the second, under other business.

(b) Executive Board retreat and matrix of issues and actions to strengthen IFAD's governance

11. Provisional programme. Convenors confirmed the programme as discussed with the retreat facilitator and summarized by the OiC, SEC. They noted that the programme would be posted in the four official languages shortly.
12. Convenors were also informed that some other documents would be posted, such as the Audit Committee position paper, the discussion paper on benchmarking drafted by SEC and, as background, the matrix of issues and actions and the terms of reference of the subsidiary bodies. Responding to the Convenors' request that the documentation be made available as far in advance of the retreat as possible, both the President and SEC assured them that this would be done on an ongoing basis and by 9 April at the latest.
13. SEC also confirmed that a questionnaire for participants to provide feedback on the retreat would be distributed at the retreat in response to the request of the sub-List C3 Convenor.
14. Convenors noted that the Director, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE), would not attend the retreat because of duty travel. They approved the participation of the Deputy Director as his replacement.
15. The sub-List C1 Convenor emphasized that the retreats should remain an informal space where members could share their views freely on various topics. The President noted that the inclusion of United Nations reform in the programme of the retreat would allow members more time for open discussion.²

Item 3: Updates on the Timeline for the Review, Update and Strengthening of IFAD's Enterprise Risk Management Covering Strategic, Operational and Financial Risks

16. The Director and Chief of Staff, Office of the President, updated Convenors on the non-financial aspects of the Enterprise Risk Management Framework. Convenors noted that IFAD planned to analyse the emerging risk scenario and strengthen the enterprise risk management function covering strategic, operational and financial risks, to address the risks arising from the new business model. The timeline

²Further to the meeting, and as agreed to by Convenors, the OiC, SEC invited the Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee to participate in the retreat for the item on enhancing the strategic role of subsidiary bodies. Given that the Chairperson will not be able to attend, the representative for Nigeria has volunteered to present the views of the Committee on this matter.

document shared with the Convenors presented all risk-related processes and milestones and details of how the Board would be updated.

17. Convenors took note of Management's decision to postpone the informal seminar originally scheduled for 8 May as indicated in the timeline, to later in the year.

Item 4: Other business

(a) Feedback on GC 41

18. As shared earlier at an informal meeting of the Convenors with SEC, the OiC highlighted the feedback received from participants on GC 41 regarding the organization of the meeting, logistics, the schedule of work and overall assessment. The results showed that 74 of the 138 delegates had completed the questionnaire (54 per cent); 41 per cent were very satisfied, 50 per cent were satisfied and only 1 per cent were not satisfied.
19. In the comments section, Convenors expressed their appreciation for a very impressive Governing Council session, and provided the following suggestions for consideration:
 - Ñ The badges for heads of delegation should be distinctive (a different colour or similar).
 - Ñ The content of the discussions in the interactive sessions (which were found to be very useful) should be geared more towards IFAD business, such that the takeaways could benefit IFAD's work.
 - Ñ Some topics for further discussion at the next session could be multilateralism, how to engage youth more in policy, and a round-table on financial matters.
 - Ñ Future sessions should be even more interactive than GC 41, which had already taken a step in the right direction.
 - Ñ There should be more communication about the events (e.g. the Heads of Delegation lunch) to avoid confusion. Also, clearer explanation of certain procedures would enable delegates to understand their underlying rationale. An example of this was the scanning of badges at the entrance to the plenary

that was undertaken to establish a quorum and to allow other delegates to access plenary, should another one leave the room.

(b) Terms of Reference of the Working Group on the Transition Framework

20. The OiC, SEC, reminded participants that the draft terms of reference (ToRs) for the Working Group on the Transition Framework had been added to the agenda of the meeting, as requested at the informal seminar on the topic held on 13 March. Since then, a revised version of the ToRs had been posted for Convenors and some queries had been received from List A.
21. The OiC, SEC, confirmed that, as stated by the General Counsel at the seminar, the Working Group would elect its Chairperson at its first meeting, as per the practice for the other subsidiary bodies. The Chief, Operational Programming and Effectiveness Unit (OPE), provided answers to the List A queries. These would be reflected in the final paper to be submitted to EB 123 for approval.
22. Convenors noted that, as this was a working group of the Executive Board, the rules of procedure of the Board as applicable to other subsidiary bodies would apply. Specifically, the Working Group would endeavour to gain consensus on various issues, and Board representatives who are not members of the Working Group could attend meetings as observers with the right to speak. The group would also, to the extent possible, reach out to non-Board members as agreed at the IFAD11 Consultation.
23. Responding to a query about an evaluation on cofinancing, Management indicated that this was already included within the corporate-level evaluation on IFAD's financial architecture being finalized by IOE.
24. With the few suggested revisions from List A, Convenors approved the ToRs for posting.

Item 7: Closure

25. The President thanked guests for their participation, and requested some extra time with Convenors and Senior Management only.
26. The notes on the Convenors and Friends meetings are currently posted as a public document unless otherwise requested, in line with the transparency action plan approved by the Executive Board at its 122nd session.
27. The next Convenors and Friends meeting is scheduled for 14 June.