

Notes on the Fifth meeting of Convenors and Friends

26 October 2018

1. The fifth 2018 meeting between Convenors and Friends and the IFAD President was held on Friday, 26 October in room C-600, starting at 4.00 p.m.

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

2. The President welcomed Convenors, and Mr Médi MOUNGUI (Cameroon), participating in the meeting as a Friend for sub-List C1. He also welcomed Ms Atsuko Hirose, the newly appointed Secretary of IFAD.
3. Referring to the arrangements for the meeting, the President expressed his wish to keep the meetings with Convenors as informal as possible.
4. The agenda was adopted with no amendments.

Item 2: Executive Board-related matters

5. Regarding the IFAD11 Results Measurement Framework (RMF), the President noted that Management would soon conduct a multi-departmental mission to the various IFAD decentralised hubs to assess the setup and to obtain relevant indicators for inclusion in the RMF. Consequently, Management would update the Board on the setting of indicators for institutional efficiency and decentralization in 2019.
6. On risk management issues, the President recalled the informal seminar held on 9 October to present the External Independent Assessment of IFAD's Financial Risk Management by Alvarez and Marsal (A&M). At EB125 in December, Management would present its appraisal and action plan relative to both this review and the Corporate Level Evaluation on IFAD's Financial Architecture. Should the independent assessment of strategic and operational risks be ready, an oral report from an Enterprise Risk Management perspective may be also provided. In any case, the Enterprise Risk Management item, including the risk dashboard, would be handled subsequently.
7. In response to List A request to organize informal briefings aimed to enhance members' understanding of the A&M report, the Associate Vice President (AVP), Financial Operations Department, informed the meeting that a crash course on financial issues could be organized for small groups of Member States. The President welcomed the "small-group approach", and asked that an invitation be sent out to ensure that all those interested could participate in the briefings.

- a) 125th Executive Board session, arrangements and related events
8. Based on the positive feedback received after the September Board session, the Secretary of IFAD, Ms Atsuko Hirose, informed Convenors of the plan to maintain the Italian Conference Room as the venue for the December session.
 9. Regarding the call for approval through vote by correspondence issued further to the September session, the Secretary advised participants that the Board's approval had been obtained for three out of the four proposed items, namely: the draft provisional agenda of the forty-second session of the Governing Council, the invitation of Observers to sessions of the Governing Council, thereby authorising the President to invite the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) to attend the forty-second session and future sessions of the Governing Council as observer; and the attendance of Observers at Executive Board sessions. A communication from the President on the results of the vote by correspondence would soon be posted for the Board representatives.
 10. With respect to the item on possible dates for the 126th session of the Executive Board and the fifth Board retreat, the majority required to validate any of the two options submitted to the Board's consideration had not been reached. In fact, while welcoming the objective of providing ample time for the session and the retreat, Convenors expressed the shared concern that members were not comfortable with meetings scheduled over weekends. Consequently, it was agreed that the Secretariat would explore other options, and present them to Convenors as soon as possible. The President called upon Convenors to build consensus within their respective Lists around the new proposal prior to the December Board session, to ensure smooth approval.¹
 11. Responding to a query, it was noted that the procedure on invitations to observers to attend Executive Board sessions would be intended for organisations and other entities such as the RBAs, and not Member States or individuals.
 12. Convenors discussed the proposed addition of an item on the UN reform to the provisional agenda of GC42. They highlighted the importance of contextualising any discussions on this topic to specific aspects of relevance to IFAD. It was agreed that this topic would best be addressed in a side event around the Governing Council. An

¹ Further to the meeting, the Secretariat shared the following option with Convenors, who provided positive feedback: EB126: 2 full days, on Thursday, 2 and Friday, 3 May 2019; EB Retreat: 2.5 days, from Monday, 6 to Wednesday, 8 (lunch-time) May 2019.

update on the preparations for the event would be provided at the next meeting of Convenors and Friends.

13. In a bid to further improve efficiency, Management informed Convenors that an electronic system for requesting the floor would be introduced at the 125th Board session in December. Management would also keep the introductory statements and responses as concise as possible. The proposal to implement a time limit for interventions was floated, but Convenors noted that this measure would not be necessary as it could negatively impact the organization of List statements and the debates on important matters. As regards statements, the Secretary of IFAD encouraged Convenors to deliver List and cross-List statements at the session, and to share them in advance with the Secretariat when feasible.
14. Finally, the Secretary, in seeking Convenors' comments on the EB125 provisional agenda and draft schedule of work, noted that there would be an opportunity to discuss the budget item in greater detail at the next meeting on 23 November.

b) Enhanced engagement with the private sector

15. IFAD General Counsel, Ms Katie Meighan, explained the amendments to the basic texts that would be proposed in order to facilitate IFAD's enhanced engagement with the private sector, in line with the IFAD11 commitment. She highlighted that all proposed uses of the new financing methods would follow existing approval procedures, including required approvals by the Executive Board. Convenors' initial feedback would be welcome, in view of the discussion of the related paper at the upcoming meeting of the Audit Committee in November, and at EB125 in December.
16. Convenors stressed the need to define how to involve the private sector during project design and implementation of IFAD projects, while maintaining IFAD's core mandate.
17. The President underlined the need for IFAD to invest financially in joint initiatives with the private sector to better serve IFAD's target group of poor smallholder farmers and rural producers. He also assured Convenors that the envisaged changes in the basic texts would not alter Members' prerogative regarding the management of the institution.

Agenda item 3: Selection of the External Chair of the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12)

18. The Associate Vice-President (AVP), External Relations and Governance (ERG), Ms Charlotte Salford, shared a proposal to maintain an external chair for IFAD12, as done for IFAD9 and IFAD10. She recalled the process held in the past, and the request by members during IFAD11 to ensure that the selection of the Chair be done duly in advance of the consultation.
19. Following an extensive discussion, it was agreed that Management would prepare a proposal to streamline the procedure for the selection and appointment of the Chairperson of the replenishment consultation and present it to Convenors for their feedback, prior to submission to the Board for approval.

Agenda item 4: Feedback on the joint informal meeting of the RBAs

20. Responding to Convenors desire to be fully involved in the preparation for the next joint RBA meeting, the AVP, ERG advised that a very inclusive process would be followed to ensure early involvement of the Convenors and similar bodies of the other RBAs. In addition, the President informed them that a meeting with the three secretariats was planned, to discuss lessons learned and the way forward.
21. It was agreed to consider this item more in depth at the next meeting of Convenors and Friends.

Agenda item 5: Preparations for the 42nd session of the Governing Council

22. The AVP, ERG shared progress made since the previous meeting with Convenors in preparation for the Governing Council session in 2019, highlighting the theme on "Rural Innovation and Entrepreneurship", the proposed interactive sessions, and the RBA Award of Excellence. She also confirmed Management's decision to hold the session at FAO headquarters, mainly for cost-efficiency reasons.
23. While welcoming the cost-saving derived from holding the session at FAO, Convenors questioned the possible impact on IFAD visibility. The President emphasised the need to explore new options such as holding the GC at a different venue, noting that Management was already working on effective ways to address IFAD visibility at the event.
24. In addition, the Office of the Secretary would organize a meeting with the Governing Council Bureau to discuss the preparation of the session.

Agenda item 6: Other Business

a) Date of the next Convenors and Friends meeting in November 2018

25. Convenors welcomed the proposal to hold one extended meeting on 23 November (13.30 – 17.30 hours) to discuss the budget and other items. Accordingly, the meeting on 21 November was cancelled.

b) Dates of the next Convenors and Friends meetings in November 2019

26. The Secretariat would share alternative dates for the first meeting with Convenors in 2019 (originally scheduled on 31 January), given a potential clash for some.
27. The detailed list of proposed dates in 2019 would be presented at the next meeting, for final approval.