

Notes on the second 2019 meeting of Convenors and Friends

2 April 2019

1. The second 2019 meeting between Convenors and Friends and the President of IFAD was held on Wednesday, 2 April in room C-600, at 3.00 p.m.

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

2. The President welcomed the Convenors and Friends to the meeting, especially Ms Satu Lassila (Convenor) and Ms Liz Nasskau (Co-Convenor) for List A, to their first formal meeting. He also welcomed the Friends - Norway for List A, and Nigeria for List B.
3. The agenda for the meeting was approved.

Item 2: Feedback from Convenors and Friends on the Consultation to review COSOPs/CSPEs (29 March 2019)

4. The Secretary of IFAD thanked Convenors for their active participation in the consultation on Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes (COSOPs) and Country Strategy and Programme Evaluations (CSPEs) and highlighted the following:
 - Ñ There was good participation – 16 Board countries and 5 Member States.
 - Ñ One member shared written feedback expressing appreciation for the rich and constructive discussion and the provision of interpretation services. It was noted that the consultation provided a much-needed opportunity for Member States to share views and comments.
 - Ñ The consultation was expected to contribute to more efficient time management during the upcoming Board session and the continuation for this practice was welcomed.
5. Recalling the discussion at the Evaluation Committee session held the day before, the List A Convenor conveyed the concern expressed by some members that the current sequencing and discussion of evaluation products in relation to IFAD's planning did not provide enough room for member's comments to inform new IFAD COSOPs and projects. Management noted that similar issues had been highlighted in the ongoing peer review and would also be discussed in the wider context of governance at the Board retreat. The President stressed that Management would work in closer coordination with IOE to ensure alignment of respective products, but care and some flexibility was needed to not delay interventions in beneficiary countries.

6. Convenors noted that Management would prepare an addendum to a COSOP for which substantive comments had been raised at the Consultation, and welcomed this demonstration that their feedback had been duly taken into account.

Agenda item 3: 126th session of the Board

7. Commenting on the EB126 provisional agenda, one member noted that while the Board would be ready to approve the item on Debt Sustainability Framework (DSF) for IFAD11, more time was needed to review the long term "Financially Sustainable Debt Sustainability Framework Mechanism". The President noted that the provisional agenda would be revised to reflect this as an item for review and not for approval.
8. Convenors thanked the President for planning to provide a general strategic direction of the Fund at the opening of the Board session, and asked whether other members of Senior Management could provide a strategic overview of their respective departments as well. The President welcomed the idea but noted the need to structure such submissions in such a way that there was a dialogue with the Board and not a series of statements by Management, also to take into consideration the time it will take to have Management make such statements. It was agreed that this practice could be implemented taking into consideration the detailed discussion on governance at the May Board retreat.
9. Responding to why there was a smaller number of projects for approval and yet there was an increase in the Programme of Loans and Grants for IFAD11, Management informed Convenors that some proposals had dropped from the agenda due to changes in the recipient countries and some projects cannot move forward without clarity on DSF matters. Efforts were being made to ensure that these were brought to the next session.
10. Convenors noted and welcomed the fact that the following two Memoranda of Understanding would be submitted to the Board for approval through a vote by correspondence, to free up time for discussion of other items at the Board session:
 - Ñ Proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korea Rural Economic Institute, and
 - Ñ Memorandum of Understanding between the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and IFAD (BADEA)
11. Furthermore, as requested by Convenors, the MoU on collaboration on matters to establish the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance that had been

signed on 25 March with various partners would be made available on the Member States Interactive Platform.

12. The President informed participants that he was considering seeking the Board's agreement at some point in the future to invite the FAO and WFP on a more regular basis without having to seek the Board's non-objection each time, in order to streamline the process in place.

a) IFAD's Appeals Process: Assessment and Recommendations

13. The General Counsel presented an overview of the proposal for IFAD's appeals process.

14. Convenors took note of the background and reasons for the proposal to move IFAD from the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization (ILOAT) to the United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT), which would be presented to the May Board session for approval. This proposal had been arrived at following a benchmarking exercise and a thorough review with IFAD Management, and after consultations with the IFAD Staff Association starting in late January. While the Staff Association recognises both ILOAT and UNAT as high-level, respected institutions, they indicated they do not see a compelling reason for the move.

b) Proposal on the venue for GC43

15. Convenors expressed appreciation for India's generosity in volunteering to host GC43 and the first session of IFAD12. However, List A expressed some concern about linking these two events, noting that this scenario could jeopardize the momentum of IFAD12 should the participation of some Governors in the first session be compromised by the change in the proposed venue.

16. The President requested Convenors to consider the proposal by India and the overall idea of holding a GC session outside of Rome as a matter of principle, as this possibility was stated in the Rules of the Procedures of the Governing Council. Convenors were also assured that IFAD had been working to ensure compliance with the guiding principle for organising GC sessions outside Rome that there would not be additional costs to IFAD, as set out in the Rules of the Procedures of the Governing Council.

17. It was agreed that an informal seminar would be organised on 16 April to allow for another round of discussions and obtain consensus on whether to hold the GC in India or not. The Board would need to make a decision on the venue for GC43 at the May session, to enable Management to start making the necessary arrangements as soon as possible.

18. Management would work with India prior to 16 April, to inform the discussion at the informal seminar.

Agenda item 4: IFAD12 Consultation (composition and next steps)

19. Management shared information regarding the process for the selection of the external chair, and the composition of the IFAD12 Consultation, highlighting the effect of the increased membership of List A.
20. The following was highlighted regarding the process for selection of the external chair:
 - Ñ Call for expressions of interest: it would be specified that candidates should be nominated either by Member States, or by Management. Both Management and individual Member States could nominate more than one candidate if they so wished. The Consultation Secretariat would set up a dedicated email address to receive the nominations.
 - Ñ The Committee would be composed of three Convenors, one from each List, and two representatives of Management plus one IFAD staff member to serve as Secretary of the Committee.
 - Ñ The following dates for the meetings the Committee were proposed: 5 June morning; back-to-back with the Convenors and Friends meeting of 18 June; and, if needed, on the first days of July.
21. Regarding the Consultation composition, Convenors noted that the one currently in place was the outcome of more than one year of discussion within the Working Group on Governance. However, this was not necessarily set in stone since the Working Group report adopted by the Governing Council also included the need to further discuss the Consultation composition prior to the beginning of IFAD12 in light of any List changes that may have taken place.
22. Convenors and Management agreed that while it was important to ensure composition as per agreed parameters, it was also necessary to ensure that members interested in supporting IFAD were not left out. The President noted that some members who had been included in the composition for IFAD11 had not actually participated, and these seats could have been granted to other interested members. Furthermore, a member emphasized the importance of having contributing members on the Consultation.
23. The Convenor for List A noted that the List would hold a discussion on the IFAD12 paper on April 12, and asked for some time to provide written comments on the paper in regard to the composition and the venue for the first session of the Consultation.
24. The Convenor for Sub-List C1 requested that Management include something about foreseen risks on the proposed composition and venue in the paper.

25. The IFAD12 item would be included on the agenda for the Convenors and Friends meeting in June.¹

Agenda item 5: Executive Board Retreat (6 – 8 May 2019)

26. Convenors reviewed the provisional retreat programme which had been tabled, and welcomed the new direction of having more time for interaction with Senior Management. They noted the focus on IFAD's strategic direction and the thematic items included in IFAD 2.0 during the retreat such as DSF, leverage, and grant window. As requested by the Convenors, another item for consideration would be on delivering quality and impact, on the operational programming side.
27. Given that the group would be bigger than usual and that most topics would be discussed in plenary, Convenors reiterated the need to ensure strict time management.
28. The programme would be revised based on the comments provided and posted in the official languages. The IFAD2.0 document would also be posted on the retreat site of the Members Platform by 8 April.
29. The Secretary of IFAD took the opportunity to seek Convenors' support in encouraging their respective List members to confirm attendance at the retreat, and also at the July Board country visit.

Agenda item 5: Other Business

30. No items were raised for consideration under other business.

¹ Further to the meeting the Secretary of IFAD sent a message to Convenors requesting feedback by specific dates on the IFAD12 paper (11 April), the identified Convenors for the Committee and the proposed dates for the Committee's meetings (18 April).