

Notes on the Third Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2023
12 June 2023

1. The third meeting of 2023 for the Convenors and Friends with the President of IFAD took place as a breakfast meeting on Monday, 12 June, at IFAD headquarters.
2. The President welcomed participants. There were three Friends in attendance for List B: Ms Lamia Ben Redouane (Algeria), Ms Rini Indiyati (Indonesia), and Dr Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria).

Feedback from the Eighth Retreat of the Executive Board and EB 138

3. Convenors shared positive feedback from their Lists with respect to the utility of the retreat; it had allowed space to become acquainted with other representatives and Management on a more personal level, to better understand positions and to discuss both specific and broad themes relating to IFAD's mandate and future direction. The moderator, themes discussed, venue, and format of the retreat were much appreciated.
4. Looking to the future, a number of suggestions were made, including:
 - Organizing short follow-up sessions in order not to lose momentum and build on the positive outcomes of the retreat;
 - Expanding participation, particularly for those members with more than one representative following IFAD activities;
 - Timing of the retreat and the formal Board session so as to facilitate representatives' preparations, including with colleagues in capitals.
5. Positive feedback was also shared with respect to the May Executive Board (EB138). Every effort should be made to ensure that the Board continues to be dynamic, avoiding national statements and focusing on strategic matters pertaining to the future of IFAD. The relationship between the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies should be cultivated to ensure that key issues and outcomes from the subsidiary body meetings are escalated to the Board.
6. Regarding the item on the statement of the IFAD staff association (ISA), there was recognition that it had been a good opportunity to hear from staff. That said, it was important to ensure clarity of roles, where the Board had a different role than that of management with regard to staff. It was also noted that it is important to manage expectations. The Board ought to be in listening mode and also have the ability to express its appreciation to staff. If a need arises to go into greater detail, a closed session could be held.
7. Representatives welcomed the regular interaction opportunity between Management and ISA on corporate matters and the progress made towards HR-related targets, including with respect to the percentage of staff outposted, the increase in female staff at P5 level and above, and the improved geographic distribution in IFAD staff. Consideration would be given to arranging opportunities for more detailed follow-up to apprise the Executive Board of developments in this regard.

Upcoming events, including the second session of the Consultation on the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13)

8. The Secretary of IFAD shared information on upcoming events at IFAD. While it would not be possible to hold an informal meeting with all Convenors prior to the next hybrid meeting with the President on 1 September, the Secretariat would be available, should Convenors wish to reach out during July and August.
9. Management clarified that the informal seminar on fragility would focus on IFAD's operational approach to engaging in fragile situations. An informal seminar to share the preliminary findings of the MOPAN would be organized in the third quarter of the year and additional information would be shared in due course. Management reassured Convenors that they were engaging with the MOPAN team to ensure that the findings reflected the reality of the current situation.
10. Turning to consideration of IFAD13 and in answer to queries from Convenors, Management advised that a final decision as to the location of the third session would be made shortly, while the fourth session would be hosted by the French Ministry of Finance in Paris. Additional details would be shared at the upcoming IFAD13 session.
11. Management welcomed the feedback from List A Member States, which included a call for a sharpening of the IFAD13 core messages, highlighting what it is that makes IFAD different and a partner of choice. Short briefs would help to strengthen the narrative and make the case for investment in IFAD. While an update on IFAD's graduation policy had been included in the budget document and the mid-term review of IFAD 12, further updates on the state of play would be provided.

Update on the status of recruitment process of the Vice-President

12. The President provided an update on the recruitment of the Vice-President. An independent panel would submit a report on the five short-listed candidates, after which these candidates would undergo an interview with an external firm to assess behavioural/leadership skills. Based on the final report, the President would make a decision, and announce the successful candidate, first to the Convenors and then publicly on the Members' platform.
13. IFAD had undergone several reforms and the President reiterated his decision to maintain stability until after the IFAD13 replenishment consultation process had concluded. Changes to streamline and tailor to IFAD's specific context, would be undertaken thereafter.
14. The President bade farewell to the representative of Japan and co-Convenor of List A, Mr Kuraya Yoshihiro, expressing appreciation for his thoughtful contributions to the work of the Executive Board. In closing, the President thanked participants for attending and looked forward to their participation in the upcoming IFAD13 second session.