

**Notes on the Second Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2024**  
**12 April 2024**

1. The second meeting of 2024 for the Convenors and Friends with the President of IFAD took place as a breakfast meeting on Friday, 12 April, at IFAD Headquarters. All Convenors were present, with the exception of the List B Convenor, as that role was vacant at the time. Four Friends were in attendance: for List B, Ms Rini Indiyati (Indonesia); for sub-List C1, Gerson Mateus Dos Santos Francisco and Carla Barata (Angola); and for sub-List C3, Paulo José Chiarelli Vicente De Azevedo (Brazil).
2. Members approved the agenda.

**Agenda item 1: Opening remarks by the President**

3. The President provided an update on the establishment of the Regional Office of the Asia and the Pacific Region (APR) in Bangkok, Thailand, informing representatives that negotiations with the Thai authorities were ongoing and the Host Country Agreement (HCA) was yet to be finalized. Options for temporary office spaces and the possibility of deciding on office space independently of the completion of the HCA were being explored. Management had therefore adjusted the timeline for the APR Regional Office to be operational to early 2025.
4. With respect to the location of the Regional Office of the Latin America and the Caribbean Region (LAC), the President indicated that Panama City had been selected given its position as a strategic hub for international financial institutions and United Nations agencies. The country is an important financial hub and provides opportunities for attracting private sector financing and partnerships. The LAC Regional Office was expected to open in early 2025 and would host five Country Directors overseeing operations in thirteen countries.
5. For both Regional Offices, necessary arrangements would be made to ensure the smooth transition and movement of staff to the new locations.
6. The President also provided an update on the planned institutional recalibration. Overall, the plan had been well received by IFAD staff, and an internal consultation process was ongoing to involve the workforce in identifying potential improvements and refinements. The President highlighted the strengthened focus on operations – with the enhanced role of the Vice-President – quality, impact and knowledge, and a reduction in the number of the Associate Vice-Presidents from seven to four. Representatives were reassured that the recalibration process would not result in job losses, but rather position adjustments.
7. The President indicated the institutional recalibration would be discussed in more depth at the upcoming 2024 Annual Informal Meeting (AIM) of the Executive Board, where more information on Senior Management positions would be provided. This would allow all Board members to be adequately informed and to consult with their capitals and endorse the overall process.

**Agenda item 2: Feedback on recent governing body meetings**

8. The Secretary of IFAD presented the findings of the feedback survey on the recently concluded 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council. More than 90 per cent of participants had rated the overall organization and format of the event as either very satisfactory or satisfactory. The interactive sessions and side events also

obtained satisfactory ratings, in particular the IFAD Talk, the Gender Awards Ceremony and IFAD13 session.

9. The dialogues and thematic activities were engaging and Members' confidence and trust in IFAD had been evident in the large number of pledges to IFAD13.

**Agenda item 3: 141<sup>st</sup> Executive Board matters**

10. The Secretary shared information on the preparations for the upcoming 2024 AIM and presented an overview of the agenda. The meeting would be styled around conversations on selected topics based on the feedback received from Convenors and Senior Management. The 2024 AIM represented an important occasion to reflect, discuss and identify the way forward for the year ahead, also considering the new composition of the Executive Board.
11. The Secretary provided an overview of the main agenda items of the upcoming 141<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Board, namely the items under the batch procedure, the strategic discussion with the President on innovation to maximize development impact, the appointment of members to the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board, the statement by the IFAD Staff Association (ISA) and the operational spotlight, which would allow Board members to dive deeper into IFAD's operations and work on the ground. In this specific case, the spotlight would be on Colombia with the consideration of its 2024-2027 Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) and Country Strategy and Programme Evaluation (CSPE). Convenors were invited to communicate the remaining nominations for the appointment of members to the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board to the Office of the Secretary as soon as possible.
12. With regard to the ISA statement, the importance of ensuring clarity of roles between the Board and Management and to manage expectations was reiterated. It was agreed that after the ISA representative read the statement, Board representatives would have the opportunity to express their appreciation to staff, after which, the ISA representative would leave the room and, should there be questions or comments for Management, the floor would be open to such interventions. Upon request and if needed, a closed session could be held. Participants requested information on the issues that Management expected ISA to raise. Although there had been improvements in the results of this year's staff survey, Management expected the major issues to be linked to the high workload and delivery.
13. At the request of a participant, Management clarified that the item on the Report on the status of the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, would serve to provide an update on the contributions – both pledges and payments - received so far.
14. Management provided an update on the IFAD12 delivery, outlining that a high number of project and programme proposals would be submitted for the Board's approval between now and September in order to avoid bunching and delays at the end of the year. Management also informed about potential setbacks in the negotiations of some projects that may need to be postponed to IFAD13 and would require the re-allocation of resources to other projects under IFAD12. The situation was being monitored closely, and Convenors would be kept informed. Management also underlined the importance of the increased ceiling of the Lapse of Time

procedure that would allow for smoother approval of several proposed additional financings.

**Agenda item 4: Forthcoming governing body meetings and events**

15. The Secretary briefed on the upcoming governing body meetings. A date for the FAO-hosted Informal Joint Meeting of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) governing bodies had not yet been identified. Potential topics for discussion being considered related to operations, especially in complex contexts such as Gaza, Haiti and the Sahel, and the preparations for the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29). Given the delay in holding this meeting, the Secretary informed participants that IFAD would host the 2025 edition. Representatives took note of the information and proposed additional items for consideration, namely the August 2023 RBA Heads' visit to South Sudan and the IFAD – WFP action plan on joint work in fragile situations. Management provided some additional information on the planned collaboration between the two agencies envisaged in the action plan. It was also proposed that an informal seminar on the findings of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment of IFAD and Management's response be organized, following the launch event that had been held at the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council.

**Agenda item 5: Other business**

16. The List A Convenor requested an update on the security situation in fragile contexts such as Sudan, and on IFAD's engagement with the G7/G20. On the latter, the President informed that discussions were ongoing with the coordinating Governments and other involved actors, and both topics could be addressed at the upcoming AIM.
17. In closing, the President thanked participants for attending and looked forward to their participation in the 2024 AIM and the 141<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Board.