

Notes on the Third Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2024
7 June 2024

1. The third meeting of 2024 for the Convenors and Friends with the President of IFAD took place as a breakfast meeting on Friday, 7 June, at IFAD Headquarters. All Convenors were present. Two Friends were in attendance: for List A, Ms Anaïs Deffrennes (France) and for List B, Ms Lamia Ben Redouane (Algeria).
2. The Secretary welcomed the new List B Convenor, Ms Erma Rheindrayani (Indonesia) and the List C Convenor, Mr Médi MOUNGUI (Cameroon), and thanked the outgoing List C Convenor, Ambassador Miguel García Winder (Mexico) who would continue to represent sub-List C3.

Agenda item 1: Opening remarks by the President and adoption of the agenda

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 expected to be signed in October 2024 in Rome. The offices were planned to be operational in the first quarter of 2025.
4. With respect to the establishment of the Regional Office of the Latin America and the Caribbean Region (LAC) in Panama, the President informed that temporary offices were expected to be opened in early 2025, and staff would move in the first semester of that year.
5. Updates were also provided on IFAD's offices located in areas with security issues, namely Haiti and Sudan. Management reassured participants that the situation in both countries was being monitored closely, and timely adjustments would be made according to the evolution of the situation. The position of Country Director for Haiti was under recruitment and once a candidate was appointed, that person would be temporarily based in Panama.
6. The President provided an update on his recent travels to Chile and Bolivia as well as planned trips to Tajikistan for the Dushanbe Water Conference, and Uzbekistan for institutional meetings and field visits. The President also updated representatives on his recent high-level meetings with the President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and with the President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to discuss potential co-financing opportunities and partnerships.
7. The President informed Convenors on the current status of pledges to IFAD13 as well as discussions ongoing in regions where many countries had not yet pledged and pledges in core contributions and CPLs, which were expected to materialize soon. Updates would be provided in September and December. IFAD had also recently concluded its sixth private bond issuance, which amounted to 75 million Australian dollars. This latter was part of an effort to diversify the currencies through which the Fund could finance itself.

Agenda item 2: Update on the institutional recalibration

8. The Vice-President provided an update on the ongoing institutional recalibration, informing that the original timeline for the internal consultation with the staff association to identify key issues and solutions was extended to the end of June.

Nevertheless, the commitment to present the main outcomes of this process by September was confirmed.

9. The Vice-President also informed that the recruitment of several Senior Management positions was ongoing and clarified that current vacancies were either the direct result of the recalibration process or of regular turnover. On this issue, the President noted that as an international financial institution it was imperative for IFAD to avoid/mitigate any actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest. To this end, representatives or alternate representatives of Member States on the IFAD Executive Board, Governors or alternate governors to the IFAD Governing Council and Permanent Representatives and Alternate Permanent Representatives of Member States to IFAD who wished to apply for or take up any type of employment with IFAD, should do so only after a twelve-month period has elapsed, after cessation of such responsibilities. This does not apply to persons who do not hold such roles¹. This approach was commended and Management was encouraged to apply similar rules vis-à-vis hiring of consultants.
10. Responding to queries from Convenors, Management clarified that the average time to recruit and fill senior professional positions was around 105 days and about three months from the acceptance to the entry on duty. Application deadlines had been extended for some vacancies to ensure a wider and more diverse pool of candidates. Management also reiterated its commitment towards a stable and low vacancy rate, which would also result in fewer consultants.
11. Management reiterated the main objective of the recalibration was that of strengthening impact of operations, bringing functions closer to the field (e.g., South-South and Triangular Cooperation). Work was ongoing on ensuring such impact was duly supported and coordinated at the HQ-level and that knowledge was properly managed, while taking into consideration resource constraints. No significant additional costs were envisaged for the recalibration. Additional consultations were underway and an organigram would be shared with Convenors in July. Management also offered to hold an informal meeting to familiarize representatives with the recalibration rationale and process, should representatives find this useful.
12. Representatives expressed appreciation for the transparent approach pursued on the recalibration.

Agenda item 3: Governance matters

a. Review of streamlining modalities

13. The Secretary recalled the innovations introduced in 2023 with respect to the modalities of formal and informal session of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies, and in particular, the in-session batch consideration of items. The Board had approved a pilot period of three sessions for this new procedure, after which a decision would be made on whether to continue its use. At the 142nd session of the Executive Board, it was proposed that the batch procedure would be used once again, before the Board took a formal decision on its proposed continued use as a standard procedure for future sessions. In order to facilitate the discussion on this item, the Secretary shared a draft version of the document that would be

¹ The Principles of Conduct for Representatives on the Executive Board of IFAD contained in Annex I of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board will be updated to reflect this provision.

considered by the Board at the September session and invited representatives to provide feedback, if they so wished.

b. Annual Informal Meeting – next steps

14. The Secretary presented the findings of the feedback survey on the recently concluded Annual Informal Meeting (AIM) of the Executive Board. The majority of participants had rated the event and its format as either very satisfactory or satisfactory. Representatives particularly appreciated the relevance of the topics covered during the session, the segment with the President and Management and the opportunities for networking and collaboration.
15. The Secretary informed that a follow-up informal meeting was planned in conjunction with the Executive Board session in September, with an operational focus on the outcomes of the regional stocktakes. Convenors were invited to suggest additional topics for discussion.

Agenda item 4: Update on IFAD12 delivery

16. Management informed Convenors that significant progress had been made towards achieving the target of US\$3.35 billion for IFAD12 Programme of Loans and Grants (PoLG), and that financing representing US\$327 million had been approved since the last update. A total of US\$1.69 billion of IFAD12 resources had been approved thus far, accounting for over 50% of the overall target. In addition, it was expected that a total of US\$3.2 billion would be approved by the end of September, in order to avoid bunching and delays at the end of the year.
17. Management also ensured that the pipeline of operations was being monitored closely in order to ensure proactive responsiveness to challenges presented by, inter alia, political movements, elections and absorptive capacities. A number of contingency measures had been put into place, including the preparation of alternative projects that may substitute high-risk operations that could be reprogrammed for approval under IFAD13.
18. In responding to a query, Management clarified that efforts were underway to ensure that the full IFAD12 PoLG would be approved by year-end. That said, the Executive Board had the authority to approve a project or programme for which formal negotiations had not yet been finalised. There were precedents of the Board having approved proposals for which the technical discussions had been concluded but were pending formal conclusion of negotiations.
19. Further to a request from representatives, Management agreed to provide an update on the Borrowed Resources Allocation Mechanism (BRAM) at the 173rd Audit Committee meeting in June.
20. In order to facilitate forward planning by Executive Board members, subsequent to the meeting the Secretary issued a communication on the Member States Interactive Platform on operational items currently submitted or foreseen for submission to the Board's attention.

Agenda item 5: Forthcoming GB meetings and events

21. The Secretary provided an update on the Informal Joint meeting of the FAO Council, IFAD Executive Board and WFP Executive Board, which would take place on 21 June. Information on the provisional agenda, timing and location was

shared, and the Secretary would ensure that representatives would be kept abreast of developments.

22. The Secretary also shared an overview of the upcoming governing body meetings, including the Evaluation Committee session and the Audit Committee meeting in June, where the respective chairpersons would be appointed. Information on the informal seminars on Multiphase Adaptive Programmes (MAPs), scheduled on 20 June, and on IFAD's financial strategy options for 2030 and beyond, which would take place on 18 July, was also provided.

Agenda item 6: Other business

23. Management and representatives thanked and bid farewell to Ms Lamia Ben Redouane, Deputy Permanent Representative for Algeria, who would soon end her term of duty and attended her last C&F meeting.
24. Participants also congratulated Cameroon on its election as Chair of the 79th session of the United Nation General Assembly (UNGA 79).