

## **Notes on the First Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2025**

### **29 January 2025**

1. The first meeting of 2025 for the Convenors and Friends with the President of IFAD took place as a breakfast meeting on Wednesday, 29 January, at IFAD Headquarters. All Convenors were present with the exception of the sub-List C2 Convenor, who conveyed his regrets due to the overlap of the meeting date with a national holiday. Seven Friends were in attendance: for List A, Ms Marlene Heeb (Switzerland); for List B, Mr Oussama Achouri and Ms Souad Hammou (Algeria) and Dr Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria); and for List C, Her Excellency Maria de Fátima Monteiro Jardim and Mr Gerson Mateus Dos Santos Francisco (Angola) and Mr Asmerom Kidane (Eritrea).

#### **Agenda item 1: Opening and Adoption of the Agenda**

2. The President welcomed new senior appointments, including Chief of Staff Ms Dina Saleh and ODE Managing Director Ms Carola Alvarez, attending their first Convenors and Friends' meeting. Additional new leadership includes OTD Managing Director Ms Pieternel Boogaard, PSD Director Ms Jenny Scharrer, and PFM Director Ms Janet Muir, with MSD Director Mr Yann Kervinio joining on 1 March. Three managerial positions—NEN Director, LAC Director, and AVP of Financial Operations & CFO—will soon be vacant.
3. The President also updated on participation to recent and upcoming high-level engagements, including:
  - a. UNCCD Conference (Riyadh, December) – IFAD-led events with FAO and the Global Environment Facility.
  - b. Visit to Spain – Preparing for the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (Seville, July).
  - c. World Economic Forum (Davos).
  - d. Upcoming Finance in Common Summit (South Africa) – Engaging Public Development Banks (PDBs) for collaboration opportunities.

#### **Agenda item 2: Update on IFAD13 progress and IFAD14 planning**

##### **a. Update on IFAD13 progress**

4. Management provided an update on the status of the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's resources (IFAD13) as of 31 December 2024. At the time of reporting, total pledges had reached US\$1.41 billion, representing 75 percent of the replenishment target of US\$1.875 billion set by Member States. These pledges included core contributions, the grant element of concessional partner loans (CPLs), and core Additional Climate Contributions (ACCs). Despite ongoing global financial and economic challenges, 99 countries had pledged towards IFAD13, reflecting strong confidence in IFAD's mandate and continued support from its membership.
5. Management also informed that, since the report's issuance, the CPL agreement with Finland had been formalized, bringing total Instruments of Contribution (IoCs) to US\$928 million, or 65 percent of total pledges. Payments towards IFAD13 stood at US\$179 million. With the replenishment cycle now officially underway, Management encouraged Member States that had yet to announce their pledges or deposit their IoCs to do so promptly. Regular updates on IFAD13 replenishment

status would continue, including at the upcoming Governing Council. In responding to queries, Management also noted optimism regarding CPL contributions, which were under negotiation and could help bring IFAD13 closer to 90% of the target.

**b. Update on IFAD14 planning**

6. Management provided an update on the preparations for IFAD14 consultations, scheduled for 2026, and shared preliminary plans for initial feedback. To streamline the process, three formal consultation sessions would be held, and the number of papers produced would be reduced. One aspect of the discussion was the selection of the External Chair. The selection process would be presented to the Executive Board (EB) in May, including specifics on the timeline for nominations and process to oversee nominations, including List engagement. The selected candidate would then be included in the draft Resolution on the Establishment of the IFAD14 Consultation submitted to the September EB for endorsement and subsequently to the Governing Council for adoption. Management would continue engaging with Members on content, governance, and logistical aspects, welcoming feedback and further discussions as planning progressed.
7. Convenors sought clarification on various aspects related to the selection process for the External Chair, particularly in the absence of established Rules of Procedure for this purpose. Some members inquired about past selection practices and requested further details on selection criteria.
8. Management confirmed that the decision had been made to proceed with an External Chair for IFAD14 based on conversations with Membership during the IFAD13 consultation<sup>1</sup>. Management confirmed that the draft ToRs would be shared with members aligned with past practice. Management recalled the External Chair's role to support the President and Senior Management by mobilizing engagement and serving as an broker in complex discussions and emphasized the importance of identifying strong champions for IFAD14.
9. Convenors expressed confidence in the process and reaffirmed their trust in Management to ensure a fair and transparent selection.

**Agenda item 3: Governance Matters**

**a. Update on the forty-eighth session of the Governing Council**

10. The Secretary updated on preparations for the forty-eighth Governing Council session (12–13 February 2025, IFAD HQ, Rome) under the theme “Catalysing Investment at the 1st Mile.” The agenda includes a high-level segment on the first day with keynote addresses, a Centre Stage Event on partnerships under Brazil's G20 presidency, and Leaders' Dialogues on financing for development and nutrition. With business items on the second day, discussions will also cover governance and partnerships. In the programme planning care was taken to allow time for bilateral meetings and networking as requested by Member States..
11. The Secretary noted vacancies for Vice-Chairs from Lists B and C, requesting timely nominations and delegation registrations.

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<sup>1</sup> As reflected in paragraph 146 of the final report for the IFAD13 replenishment.

12. Preceding the GC would be the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, an IFAD Corporate Induction, and a Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty interim Board of Champions meeting.

**b. Update on the 8th Joint RBA Governing Bodies Meeting**

13. The Secretary recalled that IFAD would host the 8<sup>th</sup> Informal Joint Meeting of the FAO Council, IFAD Executive Board, and WFP Executive Board on 14 February 2025 (9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.) at IFAD HQ. A Save-the-Date had been issued on 10 October 2024, with formal invitations and the draft agenda forthcoming. Such regular meetings aim to strengthen FAO-IFAD-WFP collaboration, and based on feedback from Member States for 2025, a discussion on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus had been suggested.
14. Convenors commented on potential discussion topics, as well as timing and format of the meeting. On duration, while there was support for a full-day session that could allow deeper engagement, there was also support expressed for a more focused half-day session. Members reflected on the need to clarify the broader purpose of the annual meetings, that is, whether the meeting is a showcase of RBA collaboration or to serve a strategic discussion on financing and partnership mechanisms.

**c. Forthcoming governing body meetings and events**

15. The 2025 governing body meetings calendar was shared with representatives. The Secretary highlighted key events, including EB informal seminars on IFAD's financial strategy for 2030+ and the Strategic Framework 2025–2031 (both on 29 January), as well as List meetings with the President on 5 February ahead of the Governing Council. Convenors were encouraged to provide input on priority topics for the Annual Informal Executive Board Meeting on 12–13 May 2025.

**Agenda item 4: Other Business**

16. In closing, the President thanked participants for attending and looked forward to their participation in 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council.