

## **Notes on the Third Meeting of Convenors and Friends in 2025 9 June 2025**

1. The third meeting of 2025 for the Convenors and Friends with the President of IFAD took place on Monday, 9 June, at IFAD Headquarters. All Convenors were present. China was represented by Ms Zeng Shiyang on behalf of Ms Sui Li. Four Friends were in attendance: for List B, Mr Oussama Achouri and Mr Naim Khiat (Algeria) and Dr Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria); and for List C, Mr Gerson Mateus Dos Santos Francisco (Angola).

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

2. The President announced the recent appointment of the new LAC Director Ms Rocío Medina Bolivar, who will take up her role on 1 September 2025. He informed that the new AVP FOD Ms Diane Melville took up her role on 1 June 2025 and also informed that the vacancy announcement for the AVP/CSD position had been issued and welcomed members' outreach in the search for suitable candidates.
3. The President emphasized the importance of the UN80 initiative, reaffirming IFAD's alignment with the multilateral system and its full adherence to IFAD13 commitments. While acknowledging the significant challenges facing the UN, including financial pressures flagged by the Secretary-General, the President highlighted this moment as a key opportunity for meaningful reform. IFAD is actively engaged in the UN80 process through leadership-level participation and weekly contributions to the Specialized Agencies Cluster, advocating for transparent, evidence-based reforms that build on institutional diversity and comparative advantages. IFAD had already undertaken internal reforms—such as streamlined leadership, expanded field presence, and shared services—and welcomed the opportunity to share its experience in support of greater operational efficiency within the UN system. As both a UN agency and an IFI, IFAD remains committed to supporting UN80's goals, reviewing mandates to streamline and avoid duplication and stressed the critical role of Member States in advancing effective system-wide reform.
4. The President provided updates on his participation in recent and upcoming high-level engagements, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Annual Meetings that took place in Milan, the UN System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) in Copenhagen, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Annual Meetings in Algiers, Rome Nutrition Week (May); the Hamburg Sustainability Conference 2025 where he met with members of the new Government, and the dinner hosted by President Macron for the UN Ocean Conference in Nice. Upcoming global engagements included the Financing for Development meeting in Spain (Seville, July), a mission to Mexico including a potential field visit, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York, G20 Development Ministers' meeting in South Africa, and the UN Food Systems Summit +4 in Addis Ababa.

### **Agenda item 2: Governance matters**

#### **a. Annual informal meeting of the Executive Board – next steps**

5. The Secretary reported back on the Annual Informal Meeting (AIM) of the Executive Board, thanking members for their active and meaningful engagement over the two-days. Feedback from Convenors and survey results showed

satisfaction with the event, in particular for the informal setting, strategic discussions, and direct engagement with IFAD Management and the President. Key highlights included the networking opportunities, private sector presentation, and the open dialogue. Delegates emphasized the need for enhanced inter- and intra-List communication, more accessible language in technical discussions, receipt of materials in advance to allow for sufficient time to review complex topics. Looking ahead to AIM 2026, the Secretary confirmed a commitment to preserving the informal, interactive format while enriching content, incorporating outdoor or off-site elements, and focusing on strategic themes such as risk, private sector engagement, and operational efficiency.

**b. Follow up to the 144<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board**

6. The President invited Convenors to provide feedback on the next steps towards finalizing IFAD's Strategic Framework 2025–2031 and the Climate, Environment and Biodiversity Strategy (CEBS) 2025–2031. Convenors stressed the importance of transparent and inclusive processes and broad-based consultations. Several emphasized that informal, inclusive discussions—open to all Member States—are critical to build consensus, particularly on sensitive strategic documents.
7. Regarding the Strategic Framework and noting the potential difficulty in achieving consensus in the past few months, List A Convenors suggested that there are several possibilities, included considering IFAD13 Replenishment report as a *de facto* strategic guide, while others expressed caution that dropping or delaying the Strategic Framework could send negative signals about IFAD's governance and long-term direction. The President acknowledged the complexity of reaching consensus on the Strategic Framework and suggested that, if needed, extending the current one for an appropriate period might be a pragmatic interim solution. Multiple Convenors reaffirmed that the Strategic Framework is a critical governance instrument and called for further collective dialogue before deciding whether to proceed, extend, or postpone. There was general convergence around the need for clarity, inclusivity, and a well-sequenced process to avoid undermining the institution's strategic coherence, credibility and strong governance.
8. It was agreed that both documents would undergo a 10-day online review, followed by an optional informal seminar in July (either 8 or 22 July) to enable further engagement. This approach would allow for a revised version to be presented for either review or approval at the September Executive Board, particularly prioritizing CEBS due to its link to IFAD13 commitments. Also, in line with IFAD13 commitments, the President clarified that Gender, Nutrition, and Youth Action Plans would be shared with the Executive Board in December.

**c. Preparations for GC49**

9. The Secretary informed Convenors that preparations for the forty-ninth session of the Governing Council (GC49), scheduled for 10–11 February 2026 at IFAD Headquarters, were well underway. Building on the success of GC48, GC49 would scale up key innovations such as the Leaders' Dialogues and an expanded Governors' Roundtable, with a strong focus on enhancing interaction, visibility, and political dialogue among Governors. The event would also mark the launch of IFAD14, offering a strategic platform to engage Member States on priorities under the new replenishment cycle. The proposed theme around youth, entrepreneurship, and jobs and building on the International Year of the Woman Farmer, would

highlight the role of rural youth and women in sustainable economic transformation. Efforts are ongoing to ensure high-level participation, and the Secretary welcomed early feedback and ideas from Convenors to help shape the agenda and high-level segments of GC49.

**d. Forthcoming governing body meetings and *related events* for 2025**

10. The Secretary provided an overview of forthcoming governing body meetings and related events for 2025, noting that the full calendar is available on the Members' Platform. The Secretary also noted that a postponed event on IFAD's adherence to OECD DAC HDP Nexus recommendations was likely to take place in December in conjunction the Executive Board. Convenors raised the issue of exploring schedule adjustments for the planned September commitments to further support document review ahead of EB145. In this regard, the Secretary outlined that 2025 dates are set against the wider RBA calendar.

**Agenda item 4: Other Business**

**a. Selection of the IFAD14 External Chair**

11. The Secretary provided an update on the selection process for the IFAD14 External Chair, noting that following the Executive Board's approval in May, a call for nominations had been launched. Member States were invited to submit proposals by 15 June 2025, as the External Chair would be instrumental in guiding the IFAD14 consultations with neutrality and structure. Submissions should be sent to [IFAD14chair@ifad.org](mailto:IFAD14chair@ifad.org). A consolidated list of candidates will be shared with Convenors, with a view to jointly shortlisting three appointable candidates for the President's final selection by mid/end-July.
12. In closing, the President thanked participants for attending.