

Document: EB 2010/100/R.38
Agenda: 22(c)
Date: 8 September 2010
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

Silent observers at Executive Board proceedings

Note to Executive Board representatives

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Executive Board — 100th Session
Rome, 15-17 September 2010

For: Review

Recommendation

The Executive Board is invited to consider the proposals contained in paragraph 8 to facilitate its decision on the issue addressed in the present document.

Silent observers at Executive Board proceedings

I. Background

1. The issue of participation of observers in sessions of the Executive Board has been raised on various occasions. The Consultation on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources recommended in its report,¹ that the Executive Board establish an ad hoc committee to review, inter alia, the membership, the role and the effectiveness of the Executive Board. The Board acted on this recommendation by establishing such a committee in April 2006. As part of its final report, presented at the eighty-ninth and ninetieth sessions of the Executive Board,² the ad hoc committee noted that it was difficult for Member States that were not members of the Executive Board to participate in Board-related activities and that the Board should expand the possibilities for participation by observers, inter alia, by allowing "observers to attend Board meetings (although space limitations may still be a problem)".
2. This issue has been discussed at several Convenors and Friends meetings. Following discussions with Convenors and Friends in October 2007, additional space was allocated to delegates of Member States represented on the Board to follow the proceeding of the session. Most recently, this issue was taken up during the Convenors and Friends meeting on 14 July 2010, where it was noted that in the interest of transparency, it would be appropriate to facilitate attendance at Board proceedings, while ensuring that the business of the Board itself was not jeopardized. To this end, various options were put forward by Convenors and Friends with respect to the attendance of silent observers at proceedings of the Executive Board. It was agreed that a paper would be prepared with a view to suggesting a way forward and highlighting possible amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, for consideration at the September 2010 session of the Board.

II. Current rules and practice

3. In accordance with rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, each member and alternate member of the Executive Board attending a session of the Board shall be represented by the representative whose name shall be communicated to the President through the official channel established by the State concerned. Only one representative per member or alternate member shall attend a Board session.
4. In addition, rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board allows for the Board to invite "representatives of cooperating international organizations and institutions or any person, including the representatives of other Members of the Fund, to present views on any specific matter before the Board." Therefore, as the rule states, it is foreseen that these observers may be granted the right to speak at sessions of the Executive Board.
5. At its sixty-second session on 3 December 1997, the Executive Board elaborated on this rule to include, at the President's discretion, one observer for a given session. The Board further specified that these observers would be admitted upon the

¹ GC 29/L.4

² EB 2006/89/R.46 and EB 2007/90/R.36

request either of a Member State represented on the Board or of an organization/institution, and limited the extension of such invitations to only once per person. Such observers are accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis and the Board is informed of their attendance at the opening of the relevant session.

6. In accordance with the document Procedure for the review of country strategic opportunities papers (COSOPs) adopted by the Executive Board at its seventy-seventh session in December 2002,³ a Member State that is not a member of the Executive Board will be allowed to take part in the Board's discussion of the COSOP for the country in question, at no cost to IFAD. Representatives allowed access to the Board proceedings under this procedure are introduced to the Board at the beginning of the agenda item in question and may take the floor at the end of presentations, questions and comments by Board members and alternates. Upon conclusion of the agenda item, such representatives will leave the Executive Board Room.

III. Current practice

7. In addition to the cases foreseen above, practices related to the rules have evolved somewhat so that:
 - (a) Additional delegates of members and alternate members of the Executive Board may follow proceedings by closed circuit television in the *salle d'écoute*;
 - (b) At times, an outgoing representative may accompany an incoming representative of a particular member or alternate member of the Board inside the Executive Board Room itself. This also occurs when one representative is nominated to attend a Board session, while another is acting as chair of a committee of the Executive Board;
 - (c) Based on his authority to determine whether staff members may attend the Board sessions (rule 8), the President has made arrangements for closed circuit broadcasting for IFAD staff. This enables staff to be prepared when they are needed at the session. Such broadcasting is also used to allow other members of a delegation of Board representatives to follow the session in an overflow room (*salle d'écoute*). On occasion, representatives of Member States that are not members of the Executive Board have been allowed to follow discussions pertaining to project and/or programme proposals in their respective countries by means of closed circuit television in the *salle d'écoute*; and
 - (d) Others have been allowed to attend Board sessions in their institutional capacity, e.g. as representatives of Rome-based agencies.

IV. Conclusions

8. Bearing in mind rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board⁴ and the wish to promote transparency and broaden the possibilities for attendance by Member States that are not members of the Executive Board at Board sessions, the suggestions received at the Convenors and Friends meeting on 14 July 2010 are presented below for the Board's consideration:
 - (a) Invite a single representative from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations (West and Central Africa; East and Southern Africa; Near East and North Africa; Asia and the Pacific; and Latin America and the Caribbean) to attend the Executive Board session as silent observers for items pertaining to

³ EB 2002/77/R.12

⁴ Rule 13 states that "the proceedings of the Board and of committees and other subsidiary bodies shall be confidential and shall not be published except to the extent the Board authorizes the President to arrange for suitable publicity on any item concerned".

country strategic opportunities programmes, project and programme proposals, and grant proposals for the consideration of the Executive Board. The names of said representatives shall be communicated to the President by the Convenors;

- (b) Invite a single representative of a non-Executive Board country to follow discussions on a project/programme proposal for their country in the *salle d'écoute*; and
 - (c) Invite those Member States wishing to attend Executive Board sessions and expressing this wish through their respective List Convenors to follow the Board's proceedings in the *salle d'écoute*. Such invitations should be limited to one representative per Member State.
9. Following discussion and a directive by the Executive Board, a paper will be submitted to a forthcoming session spelling out the amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, if necessary, or interpretations of the rules that the Board would have to approve in order for its decision(s) on this issue to be fully implemented.