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## **Invitation to non-Member States of IFAD to follow proceedings of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies as silent observers**

### **Note to Executive Board representatives**

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Executive Board — 108<sup>th</sup> Session  
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**For: Approval**

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in section IV of this document.

## Invitation to non-Member States of IFAD to follow proceedings of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies as silent observers

### I. Background

1. In December 2012, IFAD received a request from Australia to follow the proceedings of the 107<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board from the *salle d'écoute*. Australia further requested to be a silent observer at the upcoming sessions of the Evaluation Committee and the Audit Committee as, in their view, this would benefit their understanding of the operations of IFAD's governing bodies and facilitate their re-engagement process.
2. Accordingly, the Board agreed to allow on an interim basis the representative of Australia to follow the proceedings of the Executive Board from the *salle d'écoute* and to attend upcoming sessions of the Evaluation and Audit Committees as a silent observer. Given the possibility that similar requests might be received from other countries, and as a longer-term measure, the Board also agreed to refer this matter to Convenors and Friends, in order for them to consider an overall approach of exposing countries at an advanced stage in the membership process to the proceedings of IFAD's governing bodies as silent observers and within a limited time frame.
3. Following discussions held in March 2013 with Convenors and Friends, representing the three Lists, this paper contains a proposal for the approval of the Executive Board on this issue.

### II. Current rules

#### A. Executive Board

4. Attendance at Board sessions is governed by rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board which stipulates as follows:

"In addition to the representatives of members and alternates and the President, the meetings of the Board shall be open only to such staff members of the Fund as the President may, from time to time, designate for that purpose. The Board may also 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."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> At its Sixty-Second Session on 3 December 1997, the Executive Board elaborated on Rule 8 to include, at the President's discretion, one observer to attend any particular session of the Board. These observers will be admitted upon the request of either a Member State represented on the Board or of an organization/institution. Such invitations will be extended only once per person."

5. According to such provision the Executive Board has the authority to invite as many persons and cooperating international organizations and institutions as it wishes to attend a Board session, including non-Member States of IFAD.
6. Unlike the Board, the President has limited authority with respect to invitations to Executive Board sessions. Indeed, at its sixty-second session in December 1997, the Executive Board, authorized the President, at his discretion, to invite one observer to attend any particular session of the Board. Such observer is to be admitted upon the request of either a Member State represented on the Board or a cooperating international organization or institution. Such invitations are to be extended only once per person.

## **B. Subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board: Audit Committee and Evaluation Committee**

7. When the Board approved the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Audit Committee and Evaluation Committee, it specifically allowed Executive Board members who are not members of the Committees to participate in meetings, with the exception of certain meetings or matters.
8. In this respect, paragraph 2.7 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committee stipulates respectively that "Executive Board members who are not members of the Evaluation Committee may also, as observers, attend meetings except when matters foreseen in paragraph 3.1(k) below are discussed."<sup>1</sup>
9. Likewise, paragraph 2.8 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Audit Committee states that "Executive Board members who are not members of the Committee may also attend the meetings as observers, except for the meetings foreseen by paragraph 2.6.(i), (ii) and (iii)."<sup>2</sup>
10. As the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Committees only address attendance of members of the Executive Board who are not members of the Committees, the decision as to whether participation of non-IFAD Members should be allowed to meetings of its subsidiary bodies necessarily resides with the Executive Board.
11. With respect to the publicity of the proceedings rule 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board further states that "[t]he proceedings of the Board and of committees and other subsidiary bodies shall be confidential and shall not be published except to the extent that the Board authorizes the President to arrange for suitable publicity on any item concerned."

## **III. Invitation of non-Member States of IFAD: proposed way forward**

12. With regard to the invitation of non-IFAD Member States as observers to IFAD's governing body meetings, it is to be recalled that in September 1987 the Executive Board authorized the President to invite, as observers to a session of the Governing Council, any non-Member State that has expressed an interest in making an application for membership of IFAD. Accordingly, non-Member States that are in conformity with the above criterion can be invited by the President as observers to a session of the Governing Council.
13. The proposal now presented to the Executive Board is to allow those non-IFAD Member-States at an advanced stage of their membership process to follow proceedings of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies as silent observers.

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 3.1(k): "the selection, appointment, performance review and termination of the Director of the Office."

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 2.6(i): "When the Audit Committee requests the President to limit such designation to the Director of the Office of Audit and Oversight to attend a particular Audit Committee meeting for the purpose of providing information and views on matters concerning internal control and audit systems; (ii) When the Audit Committee wishes to meet with the external auditor without the presence of staff members; and (iii) When the Audit Committee wishes to have a closed session."

14. In particular, the Board's approval is being requested to:
  - (i) Authorize the President to invite non-Member States of IFAD to follow the Board's proceedings via closed circuit television in the *salle d'écoute*; and
  - (ii) Authorize the President to invite non-Member States of IFAD to attend the meetings of the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board as silent observers.
15. The invitation would be extended only to non-Member States of IFAD at an advanced stage of their membership process. For this purpose, it will be considered as such only those that: (a) have made a formal visit by high-level officials of the embassies and/or governments to IFAD; (b) have been formally briefed by the Fund's officials on membership processes and procedures, and IFAD operations; and (c) have communicated to the Fund their formal intention to seek membership of IFAD and have taken additional steps to this end.
16. The invitation would be limited to a maximum period of one year from the first invitation and would be extended to one representative per country.

#### **IV. Recommendation**

17. In accordance with the key commitment for the Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD9) period to "Engage non-Member States and groupings of States to contribute to and/or join the Fund"<sup>3</sup> and taking into consideration the benefit that could be derived through early exposure of countries at an advance stage of the membership process to the proceedings of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies, the Executive Board is requested to approve the proposal contained in section III above.
18. In addition, clarification will also be included (as a footnote) in the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and in the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Board, as follows:

**"Bearing in mind rules 8 and 13 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, at its 108<sup>th</sup> session in April 2013, the Executive Board approved the recommendation contained in document EB 2013/108/R.28 authorizing the President to invite, and make suitable arrangements for, non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process to follow the proceedings of the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies as silent observers."**

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<sup>3</sup> Annex I, Report of the Consultation on the Ninth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (<https://webapps.ifad.org/members/gc/35/docs/GC-35-L-4.pdf>).