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Investing in rural people

## **Building on good practice: Procedures around the election of IFAD's President**

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**For: Information**

## Building on good practice: procedures around the election of IFAD's President

1. The next election for IFAD's President will take place at the Governing Council in February 2017.
2. According to the timing set out in the By-Laws for the Conduct of the Business of IFAD (see Section 6.2)<sup>1</sup>, the period for Member States to make nominations next year will run from September to December 2016, with precise dates to be determined in relation to the Governing Council.
3. IFAD has made progress in enhancing the transparency of the election process, introducing membership hearings with all candidates for the first time in 2009 and embedding the procedure in 2013. This is in line with good practice and recommendations in the 2009 Joint Inspection Unit report on the Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations:

"The Inspectors are of the opinion that the practice of holding hearings/meetings during the selection process between candidates and members of the organizations' legislative bodies is considered useful and best practice. It allows member States to get to know better the candidates and their future vision for the organization. It also provides the opportunity for interaction between the member countries and candidates through questions and answers. Hence, through this interaction, it increases the transparency and credibility of the selection."<sup>2</sup>

4. Other Organisations have also introduced guidance on the kind of experience and general qualities that Members may look for in candidates. For example, at WHO, Members have resolved that the candidate nominated for the post of Director-General "should fulfil the following criteria; he or she should have:

- (1) a strong technical public health background and extensive experience in international health;
- (2) competency in organizational management;
- (3) proven historical evidence for public health leadership;
- (4) sensitiveness to cultural, social and political differences;
- (5) a strong commitment to the work of WHO;
- (6) the good physical condition required of all staff members of the Organization; and
- (7) sufficient skill in at least two of the official and working languages of the Executive Board and World Health Assembly.<sup>3</sup>

5. Similar provisions exist at ICAO and, since 2008, at UNESCO:<sup>4</sup>

"In facing the challenges of the new millennium, it is important to highlight the personal qualities required for the UNESCO Director-General. The point of departure

<sup>1</sup> Section 6 of the By-Laws for the Conduct of the Business of IFAD reads: "Nominations for the office of President may be submitted to the Secretary of the Fund by Members, along with a curriculum vitae. Except as the Bureau of the Governing Council may decide otherwise, all nominations shall be submitted no less than 60 days before the opening of the session at which the appointment of the President is to be decided. The President shall communicate timely nominations to all Members and the Bureau no less than 40 days prior to the session of the Council."

<sup>2</sup> See Selection and Conditions of Service of Executive Heads in the United Nations System Organizations, JIU/REP/2009/8, paragraph 34

<sup>3</sup> WHO Executive Board, EB97/Conf. Paper No.10, Ninety-seventh Session, 23 January 1996

<sup>4</sup> See for UNESCO, document 180 EX/28, October 2008; for ICAO, Doc 7559/8–Rules of Procedure for the Council, Appendix C.

is that the General Conference, in the interests of all Member States, should appoint the best person for the post who should have the following qualities:

- leadership and proven administrative and management skills;
- a strong commitment to all the objectives of the Organization;
- a visionary and active approach to the role of UNESCO in the community of nations;
- good knowledge of the United Nations system;
- commitment to the highest moral and ethical standards;
- strong communication skills so as to develop effective internal and external communication strategies, vision and objectives for the Organization;
- empathy and sensitivity to civil society as an important UNESCO constituency by utilizing, as appropriate, the existing structures and in particular the National Commissions for UNESCO.”

6. Clearly, there is a precedent within the United Nations system organizations of establishing criteria for candidates running for the post of executive head. The JIU reports that the “majority of Member States welcomed the introduction of these new procedures, as it led to increased transparency of the selection process. In particular, it was mentioned that the establishment of criteria, such as required competencies, qualifications and experience, expected to be possessed by all candidates, was an important step forward to assert more credibility to the selection process.”<sup>5</sup>
7. Indeed, fifteen years ago in the year 2000, IFAD Member States developed terms of reference for the office of the President of IFAD (see Annex A as set out in EB 2000/70/R.9, Appointment of the President). However, these have never been formally adopted.
8. In 2009, the JIU reported that “the Inspectors believe that the adoption of such criteria by the legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations could enhance accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the selection process and the search for the best qualified candidates.”<sup>6</sup>
9. Having successfully introduced membership hearings, Member States should ensure that IFAD continues to be recognised for establishing and following good practice. Clearly, Member States will always nominate candidates as they see fit and, while such general criteria may provide guidance in helping to identify the best person for the important job of leading IFAD, the election process and rules will remain unchanged.

## **Announcements**

10. The JIU report also recommends issuing announcements as a way of raising awareness and increasing transparency. Of course, all candidates must be nominated by a Member State but such an international announcement could help to share information about the election, facilitating Member States’ search for the best qualified candidates, as well as enhancing accountability.

## **Equal opportunities for all candidates**

11. The JIU report also calls for equal opportunities for all candidates running for the post of executive head, and integrity during the election process. The document notes that:

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<sup>5</sup> JIU/REP/2009/8, paragraph 39

<sup>6</sup> JIU/REP/2009/8, paragraph 53

“Internal candidates running for the post of executive head may misuse their functions and resources (e.g. contacts, travel, office facilities, staff, etc.) to serve their own campaigns. This situation would not only be unethical but would also result in unequal opportunities between internal and external candidates and may lead to staff division.

While the United Nations system organizations’ staff regulations and rules, code of conduct, and other administrative issuances cover conflict-of-interest situations pertaining to internal candidates deciding to campaign for executive head positions, none of the United Nations system organizations, except for ITU, have formal procedures for internal candidates running for the post of executive head, including any mandatory or discretionary requirement for internal candidates to suspend their duties during their campaigns with a view to avoiding any potential conflict of interest or the misuse of their functions, staff and office facilities for their campaigns.”<sup>7</sup>

12. Nevertheless, despite the absence of formal procedures for internal candidates, there have been cases (including UNESCO, WHO, and indeed IFAD), where, on an ad hoc basis, internal candidates running for the post of executive head have taken a voluntary leave of absence and/or discontinued their involvement in the activities of the organizations.

### **Next Steps**

13. The Board could review the proposed job description and competency profile from 2000 (at Annex A), and finalise at the next Board in December, submitting to the Governing Council in February 2016.
14. The Board could support IFAD’s placing of an announcement in the international press prior to the start of the nomination period in September 2016.
15. The Board may also wish to consider the possibility of establishing procedures for internal candidates, ensuring transparency and avoiding any difficulties for the organisation over the next eighteen months.

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<sup>7</sup> JIU/REP/2009/8, paragraphs 77 - 78

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OF IFAD<sup>8</sup>**

### **Job Description**

1. In accordance with Article 6, Section 8, of the Agreement Establishing IFAD, the President is responsible for conducting the business of the Fund under the control and direction of the Governing Council and the Executive Board.
2. The President's primary task is to sustain and develop IFAD's role as the premier international development agency providing concessional resources for the benefit of the rural poor.
3. The President shall:
  - shape a vision and develop a strategy for applying the Fund's financial and intellectual assets to the problems of rural poverty in the twenty-first century;
  - ensure that the Fund has an international profile appropriate to its achievements and potential and which enables it to mobilize funds successfully;
  - maintain effective relationships with the Fund's constituency including, in particular, its resource providers and borrowers, and other multilateral and bilateral and development agencies;
  - deliver the Fund's programme effectively and efficiently;
  - sustain and develop the Fund's knowledge assets, in particular by ensuring that the impact of the Fund's projects is objectively evaluated and that the lessons of experience are used by the Fund and disseminated within the development community;
  - manage the Fund's financial resources prudently and efficiently;
  - manage the Fund's human resources so as to ensure that IFAD can recruit, retain and motivate staff of the highest quality; and
  - report and provide advice to the Fund's governing bodies.

### **Competency Profile**

4. The President shall have:
  - intellectual leadership, based on knowledge and experience on development issues, preferably including rural poverty;
  - communication and advocacy skills effective with decision-makers at the highest level, including ministers and heads of other development agencies;
  - experience in managing programmes and projects in development assistance

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<sup>8</sup> EB 2000/70/R.9

- experience in managing substantial financial resources at a senior level, preferably in a development banking context;
- skills in staff management, including the ability to build and maintain a cohesive and effective top management team and to create a working environment which values and inspires IFAD's staff;
- sensitivity to political and cultural factors; and
- fluency in English; knowledge of another IFAD official language desirable.