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## 2015 Executive Board retreat: Follow-up action plan

### Note to Executive Board representatives

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For: Approval

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the follow-up action plan as contained herein. The action plan is to be considered a living document which will be updated annually as required, based on the outcomes of each Executive Board retreat.

## 2015 Executive Board retreat: Follow-up action plan

### Introduction

1. The first retreat of the IFAD Executive Board was held on 24 April 2015. Representatives expressed appreciation for the event as a suitable forum for discussing issues of effectiveness, policy and strategic direction of the Fund both among themselves and with Senior Management in an informal setting. As such, it was since decided to hold the retreat annually, based on the same format.
2. The informal format of the retreat offers a platform for Board representatives to exchange views among themselves and with Senior Management, with the purpose of enhancing interaction. It is therefore not to be perceived as a formal decision-making forum.
3. To further support the Board in providing strategic direction to the Fund, at its 115<sup>th</sup> session in September 2015, the Board agreed that possible follow-up actions to the April 2015 retreat would be discussed in detail by Convenors and Friends, and later shared with Executive Board representatives.
4. The resulting follow-up document was submitted to the Board at its 116<sup>th</sup> session in December 2015 (EB 2015/116/R.34), and representatives requested that the Secretary of IFAD provide an informal action plan at the subsequent Board session.
5. The proposed action plan serves to provide guidance and inspiration for Board representatives and to ensure continuity and institutional memory in light of the changing Board composition. With this in mind, the action plan has been divided into two main sections, namely, one focused on measures taken or ongoing with respect to the recommendations made at the 2015 retreat, which may evolve as required; and one detailing the steps to be taken in organizing future retreats of the Executive Board.

### Ongoing follow-up actions to the April 2015 retreat

6. Since the April 2015 retreat, progress has been made in a range of areas as follows:
  - (a) Enhanced dialogue within and among the respective Lists through more frequent informal meetings with the Secretary of IFAD, as well as through more regular meetings among the Convenors and Friends themselves.
  - (b) Increased effectiveness of governing body meetings as a result of:
    - More proactive and participatory agenda-setting through preparatory meetings with Convenors ahead of Convenors and Friends meetings;
    - An increasing trend of joint List statements rather than individual statements prior to and during Executive Board sessions, which has translated into a more strategic use of time at meetings;
    - Sharing of the President's closing remarks soon after delivery;
    - Holding a mix of formal and informal meetings to share knowledge, such as regular informal seminars of the Board, informal consultations

within the Ad Hoc Working Group on Governance and informal Convenors and Friends meetings;

- The recently approved proposal to open up attendance at informal seminars of the Board to all Member States, which is expected to enhance discussions.
- (c) Strengthened Executive Board attendance at subsidiary body meetings; increased involvement and participation of IFAD Membership in the meetings of the Working Group on Governance, including through informal consultations with the Lists.
- (d) Promotion of Member States participation in induction sessions/briefing sessions for a more in-depth coverage of issues.
- (e) Further streamlining of reporting procedures to the Executive Board and its subsidiary bodies, as recently endorsed by the Evaluation Committee.
- (f) Progress on specific topics of interest identified by the Board at the April 2015 retreat. The following have been addressed at various governing body meetings, or are in the pipeline for discussion in the near future.
- The changing role of IFAD in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) and the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa. An oral update on the Financing for Development Conference was shared at the 115<sup>th</sup> session of the Board in September 2015; oral updates on the outcomes of the Paris Climate Change Conference and the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda were provided at the 116<sup>th</sup> session of the Board.
  - Rome-based agency (RBA) coordination. An IFAD perspective paper on RBA cooperation was shared at the 115<sup>th</sup> session of the Board and a baseline paper was presented at the 116<sup>th</sup> session, at which representatives committed to provide oversight in ensuring harmonization among RBAs to avoid duplication.
  - IFAD Strategic Framework 2016–2025. This is a key document guiding implementation of IFAD operations for the next 10 years. The Framework was actively discussed by the Board and recently approved through a vote by correspondence, in February 2016.
  - Focus on strategies to enhance resource mobilization. The Sovereign Borrowing Framework now under implementation is one of the innovative ways to raise resources that has been fruitfully pursued by IFAD. To date, papers related to an annual progress report on the KfW Development Bank facility, the signing of the second individual loan agreement under the KfW Framework Agreement, and an update on the identification of sources for sovereign borrowing and negotiations with potential lenders were presented at the 116<sup>th</sup> session of the Board. An update on the findings of the review of the Sovereign Borrowing Framework is scheduled for submission to the Board in September 2016.
  - Engagement with middle-income countries. This has been discussed in the context of the Strategic Framework and by the Audit Committee. An update on IFAD's engagement with middle-income countries will be shared with the Board for its review at the April 2016 session.
  - Public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps). This is one of the innovative approaches being pursued by IFAD to engage poor

smallholder farmers in "farming as a business", and will thus continue to be a key strategic aspect for discussion and input by the Board.

- South-South and Triangular Cooperation, including as a means of promoting family farming and the transfer of technology to improve productivity.
  - Climate change. Following COP21, and considering IFAD's current work in supporting climate-smart agriculture and the implementation of the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP), climate change is an increasingly important aspect of IFAD's operations.
  - Indigenous peoples. The Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) presented an evaluation synthesis report on IFAD's engagement with indigenous peoples for the consideration of the Evaluation Committee in October 2015; and Management is preparing a "how to" note on integrating indigenous-peoples-related issues into the design phase.
7. Through dedicated informal meetings with Convenors, and in close collaboration with Management, the Secretary of IFAD will ensure that mutually agreed topics for discussion are scheduled for each retreat. These could be based on the list below or on other issues that may arise and be considered relevant for IFAD's effectiveness at the time.
- Future retreats
8. The following steps will be taken by the Office of the Secretary to ensure that the Executive Board retreats are well planned and coordinated, and are adequately reported on.
- (a) Submission of proposed dates for the next retreat: a decision by the Board will be requested at every December session. The retreat would be normally held each year in April.
  - (b) Preparatory meeting with Convenors: these meetings will be held typically one month before the retreat to share information on the proposed venue and format, and to agree on issues for discussion and a final schedule, with input from IFAD regarding the session between representatives and Management during the retreat.
  - (c) Logistical aspects: invitation letters including relevant arrangements will be normally dispatched four weeks before the retreat, and representatives will be expected to confirm their participation.
  - (d) Post-retreat follow-up: the Office of the Secretary will prepare a report to be presented for the Board's approval at the session following the retreat. Any agreed next steps will be included in the informal action plan for future consideration by the Board. This procedure will ensure that the knowledge and experiences generated by the retreats are captured and shared, as per IFAD best practice.
9. As approved by the Board in December 2015, the next retreat is scheduled to take place on 14 and 15 April 2016, and, as requested by Board representatives, will be based on the format of the previous retreat.
10. In support of the retreat as an informal and engaging discussion forum for Executive Board representatives, this informal action plan is to be treated as a living document, which will be reviewed and amended as required following each Executive Board retreat to reflect further actions to be taken.