

Document: EB 2017/121/R.33/Rev.1
Agenda: 13(d)
Date: 14 September 2017
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Investing in rural people

Framework for Collaboration between the President and the Executive Board of IFAD

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Executive Board — 121st Session
Rome, 13-14 September 2017

For: Approval

Framework for Collaboration between the President and the Executive Board of IFAD

1. For several years, IFAD's governing bodies have focused their attention on best practices for the appointment of the President of IFAD.¹ Looking beyond the appointment process, the Convenors and Friends of IFAD's Executive Board recently proposed a set of recommendations that would lay the foundation for a constructive and productive relationship with the newly appointed President in his dual role as Chairperson of the Board² and chief executive officer of the Fund.³ At the meeting of Convenors and Friends on 8 May 2017, the President and Convenors agreed to form a working group comprising three List representatives and three representatives of IFAD Management. The group was tasked with drafting a proposal for a framework to be reviewed at the September Board session and approved at the December session.
2. Candour and transparency, open communication and inclusive participation are among the factors that contribute to building the trust and respect that form the basis for a constructive relationship between an executive board and its chair and chief executive officer. A clear articulation of mutual expectations can contribute to the establishment of agreed norms for collaboration and accountability.⁴
3. IFAD has a well-established culture of accountability that has been developed over more than a decade. The various measures and mechanisms that have been put in place to foster this culture and to measure results and impact have been compiled and rationalized in an accountability framework, which was presented to the 110th session of the Executive Board in December 2013.⁵
4. IFAD's Accountability Framework builds on the guidance provided by the 2011 report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), "Accountability Frameworks in the United Nations System".⁶ While the JIU report highlights the political covenant with Member States as one of the three key components of a robust accountability framework, it does not provide any guidance on how the board of directors and the chief executive officer of an institution should interact with each other to make the framework even more robust; nor does IFAD's Accountability Framework of 2011.
5. However, anticipating the appointment of a new President of IFAD in February 2017, Convenors and Friends conceived and proposed a set of recommendations that would convey their expectations of the new President. Additional expectations were generated during the April 2017 Executive Board retreat. On that occasion, the new President also articulated some of his own expectations of the Executive Board as a governing body. Further discussion led to the idea of a Framework for Collaboration between the IFAD President and the Executive Board. Such a framework would provide an opportunity to clearly articulate mutual expectations for accountability – and for the President and Board representatives to model accountability in their own collaboration and interaction. The proposed framework would spell out:

¹ Governing Council resolutions 176/XXXVI of February 2013 and 197/XL of February 2017.

² Article 6, section 7 of the Agreement Establishing IFAD.

³ Article 6, section 8 of the Agreement Establishing IFAD.

⁴ "Accountability is the obligation of the Organization and its staff members to be answerable for delivering specific results that have been determined through a clear and transparent assignment of responsibility, subject to the availability of resources and the constraints posed by external factors. Accountability includes achieving objectives and results in response to mandates, fair and accurate reporting on performance results, stewardship of funds, and all aspects of performance in accordance with regulations, rules and standards, including a clearly defined system of rewards and sanctions." Towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat Report of the Secretary-General, SG (A/64/640).

⁵ Update on IFAD's Accountability Framework, EB 2013/110/INF.5.

⁶ JIU, *Accountability Frameworks in the United Nations System*, JIU/REP/2011/5 (Geneva: United Nations, 2011).

- An agreed set of principles that would govern the relationship between the Executive Board and the President;
 - Mutual expectations for their respective roles; and
 - A process for monitoring progress and updating the framework on a regular basis.
6. Once approved, the framework will serve as a key reference for the relationship and collaboration between the current President and the Executive Board.

Framework for Collaboration between the President and the Executive Board of IFAD

I. Principles

1. While the Executive Board and the President derive their respective legitimacy and authority from being appointed by the Governing Council, their roles, as set out in the Agreement Establishing IFAD, are distinct:
 - The role of the Executive Board is to conduct the general operations of the Fund and is carried out principally through: provision of strategic orientations; adoption and review of suitable policies and regulations; approbation of the Fund's projects and other initiatives; making of key institutional decisions, other than those reserved for the Governing Council; and exercise of control over the actions of the President and Management.
 - The President has a dual role, one of which is to conduct the business of IFAD as the Fund's chief executive officer. It is carried out principally by: preparing and proposing decisions for approval by the Executive Board; heading and organizing the Fund's staff in day-to-day operations; and being the Fund's sole legal representative.
 - The President's other role is as Chairperson of the Executive Board. The main duties and powers in this role are to "direct the discussions, ensure observance of the rules of procedure, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions"⁷ and to "attempt to secure a consensus on proposals in lieu of taking a vote thereon."⁸ In the exercise of these functions, the President has "complete control of the proceedings of the Board and over the maintenance of order at its meetings"⁹ but "remains under the authority of the Board."¹⁰
2. The Executive Board and the President recognize that, while distinct, both their roles must be discharged in the best interests of the Fund, which require them to work together to achieve the institution's goals and ensure the desired outcomes. For that reason, they both consider it indispensable to forge a healthy and professional partnership, based on respect for their separate responsibilities and the highest principles of teamwork, namely: a joint understanding of their common purpose; a recognition of each other's contributions; an awareness of their respective constraints; and a commitment to an open dialogue based on trust and goodwill.

II. Mutual expectations

Executive Board expectations of the President as Chairperson of the Board and chief executive officer of IFAD

3. Roles. The Executive Board expects the President, while being impartial as Chairperson of the Board, to provide leadership by:
 - (a) Impartially chairing meetings and promoting consensus-building, while reflecting a diversity of perspectives;
 - (b) Building consensus among Member States and/or Lists;
 - (c) Being a realistic facilitator, who helps manage the expectations of diverse groups;

⁷ Rule 15.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁸ Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

⁹ Rule 15.1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

¹⁰ Rule 15.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

- (d) Working with the Executive Board to adapt and improve the IFAD business model with due regard for present circumstances and future challenges; and
 - (e) Engaging in and promoting/fostering strategic and open dialogue.
4. Conduct. In his role as chief executive officer of IFAD and as Chairperson of the Executive Board, the President is expected by the Board to:
- (a) Support the values of the United Nations and consistency with its orientations;
 - (b) Cooperate with the United Nations specialized agencies and international financial institutions;
 - (c) Collaborate with the Rome-based agencies; and
 - (d) Promote IFAD's mandate and seek to raise its profile globally.
5. In fulfilment of his role as chief executive officer of IFAD, the President is expected by the Board to:
- (a) Be a model of honest, cohesive management;
 - (b) Ensure effective, transparent and accountable management that focuses on the delivery of results;
 - (c) Promote accountability in accordance with IFAD's mandate, and ensure that an independent complaint and feedback mechanism is easily available;
 - (d) Ensure effective operation of the ethics and internal audit functions in accordance with international best practices; and
 - (e) Promote an environment in which the independent evaluation function can fulfil its role in accordance with internationally agreed evaluation standards.
6. Relationships. To build a productive and effective collaboration, the Board expects that the President will:
- (a) Foster cooperation and partnership with IFAD's Member States;
 - (b) Establish a relationship that is strategic, focused and based on results;
 - (c) Provide Executive Board representatives with access to consultation with Senior Management and staff experts of IFAD in a way that both recognizes that such staff owe their duty exclusively to the Fund and respects the international character of such duty; and
 - (d) Work with the Board to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the Board/Management relationship.
7. Institutional environment. To create a positive environment for effective governance and operational results, the Board expects the President to:
- (a) Ensure a work atmosphere conducive to the exchange of ideas and debate;
 - (b) Work closely with the Board to foster the exchange of ideas and define modalities for more frequent and informal interaction;
 - (c) Engage staff inclusively and build commitment and ownership in developing and implementing change and reform processes; and
 - (d) Promote a culture of integrity and the principle of zero tolerance for corruption and fraud across the institution.

The President's expectations of the Executive Board

8. Roles. In the spirit of effective collaboration, the President invites the Board to:
 - (a) Affirm and demonstrate ownership of and support for IFAD;
 - (b) Promote when possible, the cause of IFAD in representatives' own countries and constituencies and in the Member States they visit in their official capacity;
 - (c) Provide guidance in making the case for IFAD and in improving IFAD's visibility and profile, especially in country capitals; and
 - (d) Endeavour to visit IFAD projects and programmes.
9. Conduct. In fulfilment of their governance role, Board representatives are expected by the President to:
 - (a) Observe the Principles of Conduct for Representatives on the Executive Board of IFAD as reflected in rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board and its annex;
 - (b) Define expectations for themselves as Executive Board, Member State and List representatives;
 - (c) Regularly attend the Executive Board sessions, and engage freely, openly, frankly and strategically in their deliberations and consultations.
10. Relationships. To create a positive environment for effective governance and operational results, the President expects Board representatives to be open with the Chair and to provide feedback on specific concerns.
11. Institutional environment. To create a positive environment for effective governance, the President expects the Board to collaborate with him in defining modalities for more frequent and informal interaction.

III. Process for monitoring progress and updating the framework

12. The Executive Board and the President agree that they will, on a yearly basis:
 - (a) Jointly set top priorities for the following year, and monitor progress;
 - (b) Hold a structured dialogue to assess the relationship and performance against the framework and the Executive Board's Principles of Conduct, through an annual Executive Board retreat or similar event.
13. The Executive Board and the President may also amend this framework by mutual agreement as and when required.