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Investing in rural people

Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth Retreat of the IFAD Executive Board

Note to Executive Board representatives

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For: Information

Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth Retreat of the IFAD Executive Board

I. Introduction

1. The fourth annual retreat of the IFAD Executive Board took place on 18 and 19 April 2018, at Borgo di Tragliata, Rome. The retreat programme and the results of the questionnaire distributed at the event are included as annexes I and II. The list of participants and a selection of photographs from the retreat are contained in appendices I and II.
2. As is the practice, Convenors played a substantive role in the retreat arrangements by providing their input to the Secretariat on the facilitator, venue, format and agenda. The facilitator consulted individually with Convenors, and with the President of IFAD and the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) to brainstorm on ideas for the retreat.
3. It was agreed that the purpose of the retreat would be to further strengthen IFAD governance by building on past discussions between the IFAD Executive Board and Senior Management through informal dialogue. The retreat would also:
 - (a) Continue to build relationships across Lists, and cultivate trust among Board representatives;
 - (b) Pursue continuous improvement of IFAD governance;
 - (c) Focus the Board's input on strategic issues critical to IFAD; and
 - (d) Further strengthen the Executive Board-President-Senior Management relationship.
4. The retreat format and agenda were designed based on input received from the Convenors and agreed with the President. The first day began with a facilitated session exclusive to the Board representatives. This was followed by a presentation by and conversation with IOE. A second session, held the next morning, began with the exclusive participation of representatives, who were later joined by the President. An afternoon session brought together Board representatives with the President and Senior Management.

II. Day one

Opening

5. William Skinner, Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Secretary of IFAD (SEC), welcomed participants and introduced the retreat facilitator, Bob Wright, who had been retained as facilitator for the third time on the recommendation of the Convenors. He went on to note that the retreat was an opportunity to reflect in an informal setting on progress made since the third retreat in 2017, and hold conversations around processes and strategic issues of importance to the Board.
 6. The facilitator stated the purpose of the retreat and presented the agenda, highlighting that this was an opportunity to work in both "strategic" and "intimate" leadership modalities, by taking time to pause and reflect, deepen self-awareness and balance enquiry with advocacy.
- ### A. Morning session: deepening mutual understanding and knowledge
7. The session started with table discussion groups on the "prouds and sorries" of recent Board sessions. Participants reflected on the accomplishments of which they were especially proud and were at their best, and also on what worked less well. A lively discussion ensued as members shared their experiences.
 8. The Medicine Wheel: deepening mutual understanding. The medicine wheel is a thousand-year-old leadership framework developed by the indigenous tribes of the

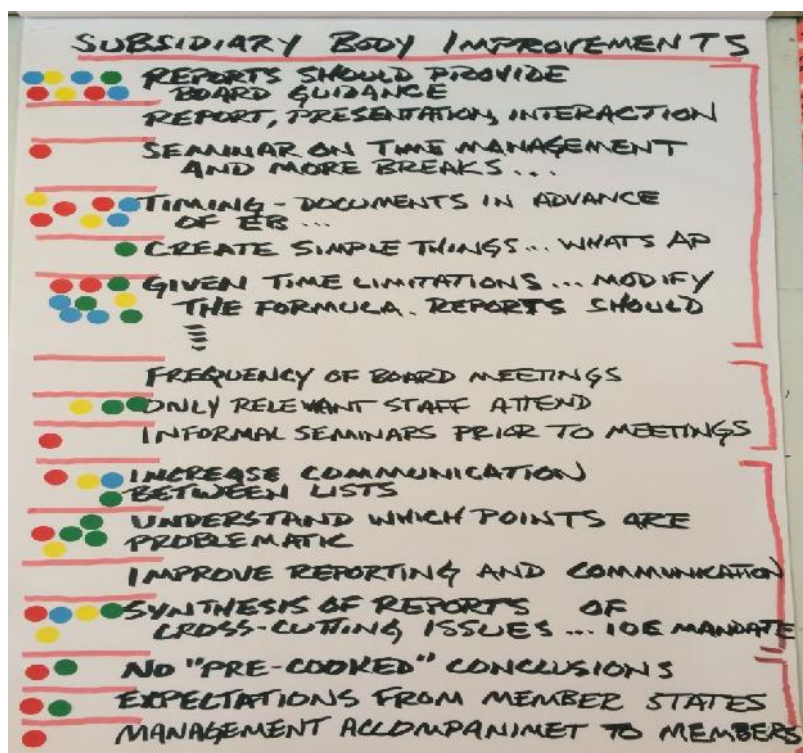
central plains of North America. Participants completed a brief written assessment that identified dominant tendencies across four different leadership styles: the warrior, the visionary, the nurturer-diplomat and the critical thinker. An interactive session with Board representatives followed, during which the facilitator explained the different styles and their impact on ways of leading, thinking and communicating.

9. The session concluded with a reflection on the importance of self-awareness and other types of awareness in Board interactions and communications and how this could deepen appreciation of the cultural diversity within the Board, and on ways to best use that awareness for more productive conversations and decisions.
- B. Afternoon session: improving Board governance – enhancing the strategic role of the subsidiary bodies**
10. The afternoon session focused on enhancing the strategic role of the Executive Board's subsidiary bodies, a topic that was discussed at the Audit and Evaluation Committees in 2017. The results of a benchmarking study with other international financial institutions (IFIs) and United Nations agencies, undertaken by SEC, had been shared as background. The Audit Committee had also prepared a position paper on enhancing its governance role.
 11. The Officer-in-Charge, SEC, presented the results of the benchmarking study. This was followed by brief presentations by the Audit and Evaluation Committees. The Audit Committee's presentation emphasized the importance of working with and not against Management. Audit Committee members had identified limitations in their strategic role, including: time constraints, availability of information and efficiency of work processes. They noted that more frequent informal meetings; direct contact with the external auditor, internal auditor and Management; and self-assessments would be important steps for improved efficiency. Specifically, the Audit Committee would seek to focus on the quality of information provided to the Board, to ensure risk governance reporting.
 12. Members participated in structured table reflections on the following questions:
 - (a) Where and how is the Committee structure working well and serving the Board's goals?
 - (b) Where and how is the Committee structure creating barriers?
 - (c) What subsidiary committee modifications would increase the efficiency of information-sharing and decision-making in the Board?
 13. Board representatives identified a number of issues that could be addressed in order to enhance their strategic role. These included the need to: ensure a better balance between oversight and micromanagement; ensure more useful reporting to the Board by improving the timing of presentation of documents; take into account the time constraints of Committee members in planning subsidiary body meetings; improve communication among subsidiary body members by setting up social media groups such as WhatsApp; ensure selection of members and Chairs with adequate expertise in the subject matter of the relevant subsidiary body; present outcomes of subsidiary body meetings differently to the Board; and ensure that the Chair competently summarizes the issues discussed and agreed at meetings.
 14. Given that several issues arose during the discussion, the facilitator worked with members to identify what should be prioritized. Members agreed on five priority areas, namely:
 - (i) Time management. Considering (i) the numerous meetings and the volume of associated documentation, a seminar could be organized on "time management in a complicated multilateral environment". Furthermore, representatives noted the importance of better time management during meetings, including allowing for breaks to hold informal consultations.

- (ii) Reporting to the Board. Whether in written or oral form, reports should:
 - Provide strategic guidance to the Board, and not simply an account of what members said and how Management responded;
 - Emphasize members' views on the issues discussed and not provide "pre-cooked" conclusions;
 - Be dynamic and interactive – maybe in the form of PowerPoint presentations.
 - (iii) Documentation. The timely delivery of documents is important. They should reach Board representatives in advance of the session to allow adequate time for review. The possibility of sharing a summary of issues by e-mail and not through the Member States Interactive Platform should be explored. Reports should be concise and:
 - Contain an accurate summary by the Chair and provide concrete key recommendations – this should be the responsibility of the respective Chairs;
 - Contain an executive summary highlighting key issues when applicable; and
 - Recommend some topics for discussion by the Board.
 - (iv) Communication. Tools such as WhatsApp groups could help ensure timely information-sharing within subsidiary bodies and among Lists, and allow Member States to seek clarification on various issues prior to formal meetings. This would be particularly helpful for Member States without a seat on a specific committee or working group. Improving reporting and communication would result in more efficient decision-making.
 - (v) Frequency of Board meetings and attendance. Some representatives raised the issue that staff attendance at meetings should be limited to key or relevant staff members. They also discussed the possibility of reducing the frequency of Board sessions, but lengthening them to cover as many items as possible.
15. Finally, representatives raised the possibility of having a synthesis report on cross-cutting issues of subsidiary bodies such as the Working Group on the Transition Framework and the Working Group of the Performance-based Allocation System. Such reports could feed into the deliberations of the Audit or Evaluation Committee.

Figure

Priority issues to enhance the role of subsidiary bodies as identified by representatives



- C. Presentation by, and conversation with the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD
16. In this session, the Board interacted with Fabrizio Felloni, Deputy Director, IOE, who delivered a presentation on the Annual Report on Results and Impact of IFAD Operations (ARRI). The 2017 ARRI showed improved trends in a number of evaluation criteria since 2009 but also signs that a plateau had been reached in performance over the period 2013-2015. It also showed limited progress on non-lending activities and pointed to the need to streamline partnerships and report better on policy dialogue. From a thematic point of view, the ARRI highlighted the need to enhance the integration of natural resource management into operations, and to mainstream gender, youth and nutrition.
 17. Highlights of the question-and-answer (Q&A) session that followed are provided below:
 - (a) Definition of partnerships and natural resources management. IOE noted that it was indeed important to define what these concepts meant in the IFAD context; however, beyond that, it was important to build robust knowledge management systems to catalogue good partnership practices and experiences from the field and from other organizations, and to ensure a collective understanding of why partnerships are important in order to make an informed decision on the type of partnership that should be pursued.
 - (b) Efficiency of IFAD operations. Efficiency issues are often related to late start-up of projects and slow implementation, and high project management costs as a proportion of the total project costs. To improve efficiency, there is a need to ensure implementation preparedness, plan for pre-implementation activities, and explore instruments to build the capacity of agencies in charge of project implementation to ensure that they can perform in challenging contexts.
 - (c) Interim review of OpEx. Representatives asked whether IOE planned to undertake an interim assessment of OpEx, noting that it would be ideal to

undertake such an assessment soon, and continue to do so regularly. IOE did not foresee such an assessment at present.

- (d) Sustainability of results. This was acknowledged as a challenge, particularly given the context of IFAD operations. One of the problems highlighted by evaluations is the absence of an ex ante sustainability plan to ensure an analysis at the beginning of a project to determine actions geared towards sustainability. Such plans would need to be reviewed and updated periodically. Over-complicated project designs and institutional set-ups could also negatively affect the sustainability of results. Consideration should be given to programmatic approaches to ensure simpler, more easily implementable project designs.
- (e) Improvement of the ARRI methodology. In 2015, IOE revamped the evaluation criteria and methodology, and updated the structure of the ARRI to reflect the changes in criteria, contemporary knowledge and trends in the international development evaluation community.
- (f) IOE's view on the cost and risks of decentralization. The findings of IOE's corporate-level evaluation (CLE) on decentralization showed that having an IFAD Country Office contributed to better quality projects and enhanced performance. The CLE also showed that hubs benefited from cost-efficiency advantages, helped cover subregional issues and established the basis for better knowledge management and policy dialogue. The CLE insisted on the importance of generating a "critical mass" in country offices and of IFAD not spreading itself too thinly by opening new country offices in countries with small portfolios. Regarding the risks posed by the decentralization process, IOE noted that key aspects included securing guidance from headquarters, governance and fiduciary aspects, systematic flow of information between country offices and headquarters, and cost-efficiency. Responding to whether decentralization contributed to increased cofinancing, IOE said that this was true for counterpart funding from the government. The effect on cofinancing varied by region (one successful case was cofinancing from the Asian Development Bank in the Asia and the Pacific region).
- (g) IFAD's IT capacity in decentralization. IOE confirmed that IT capacity had been assessed under the CLE on decentralization. The systems were in place but closer attention was needed to the delegation of authority to country directors to enable them to make decisions on issues such as budget and procurement. Responding to a query on the instruments used in the CLE, Mr Felloni explained that the evaluation had conducted a desk review of IFAD strategic documents (corporate and country level); an assessment of financial and human resources available in the country offices and at headquarters (for PMD); and regional workshops with IFAD staff and government counterparts, and had triangulated these with interviews with government partners, project management units and other IFIs, and an extensive electronic survey. Statistical analysis of evaluation ratings comparing countries with and without ICOs showed that project performance and results were significantly higher in countries with ICOs.
- (h) Independence of IOE. The assessment carried out by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) indicated that IOE and its independence were IFAD's strong point, enhancing the credibility of the Fund. IFAD also had a clear and transparent system for reporting follow-up on evaluation recommendations through the President's Report on the Implementation Status of Management Actions (PRISMA), which was prepared annually by IFAD Management and included comments from IOE.
- (i) Improving results of IFAD operations. The 2017 ARRI reported that a plateau had been reached in terms of results of IFAD operations; Members asked whether the decentralization could alter this trend. IOE noted that results on the ground depended on multiple factors, of which one of the most important was government performance – as governments implement IFAD-funded projects. The findings of the CLE on decentralization indicated that decentralization clearly

offered IFAD an opportunity to better assimilate the country context, improve interaction with partners and provide faster and timelier implementation support.

- (j) ARRI results. Mr Felloni emphasized that the ARRI looked at different thematic areas every year, thus generating a range of questions and learning points.
- 18. In thanking Mr Felloni for his presentation and responses during the Q&A session, representatives also pointed out that the IOE had a role to play in better advising Management on ongoing reforms, beyond the evaluation reports.
- 19. A dinner with representatives, the IFAD President, and the IOE Deputy Director marked the end of the first day of the retreat.

III. Day two

A. Morning session with Board representatives: improving Executive Board processes

Recap of day one

- 20. The morning session started with self-reflection by representatives on their strategies to achieve a calm state of mind and reflect on “the big picture”. Referring to the first day of the retreat, representatives expressed appreciation for the venue, and for the opportunity to get to know each other better.
- 21. They recapped the priority areas for enhancing the strategic role of subsidiary bodies. They highlighted the importance of: timely delivery of documents and reports/minutes to be reviewed by Committee members or Board representatives; enhanced cross-List communication on various issues; executive summaries of technical reports (especially of Audit Committee reports); and streamlining of Chairpersons’ reports to the Board and ensuring that they contained the Committee’s guidance and opinions on the issues discussed.
- 22. On the timely availability of documents, it was noted that, for the Audit Committee in particular, tight technical constraints allowed little room for improvement. However, the Secretariat would consult with the Audit Committee to explore options. An Evaluation Committee member emphasized the importance of Committee members and the Chair preparing their own report to the Board. Another member noted the importance of consulting with capitals on technical issues.

Improving Board processes

- 23. The Officer-in-Charge, SEC, shared a presentation on the results of the questionnaires that had been filled out by Board representatives over the past three sessions of the Executive Board (September and December 2017 and April 2018), showing the key issues raised, and trends and areas for improvement. Representatives thanked Mr Skinner for the presentation and noted that future questionnaires could be expanded to cover issues beyond the role of the Secretariat, for instance the need to allow ample time for Member States to discuss projects in detail.
- 24. Additionally, members stressed the importance of ensuring concise interventions at sessions and avoiding repetition, particularly in the case of cross-List statements. One member highlighted that some of the challenges faced related to the fact that IFAD had a non-resident Board.
- 25. Members then conferred in table discussions about their proposals for improvement and the questions they wished to ask the President. A summary of the questions and recommendations is provided below.

B. Morning session with the President: Chairperson-Board relationship and Executive Board processes

- 26. A Q&A session was held with the President and Chairperson of the Board on a range of issues. This segment was handled as a “fishbowl dialogue”, where one representative from each table formed a semicircle at the front of the room with the President. In an informal conversation, the President responded to questions from each representative.

Other members then joined the conversation with related questions. Key questions and answers included:

- (a) Q: What is your impression of how the Board works? As Chair, what is your vision of how we can improve as Board representatives?
A: I would like to emphasize that the Board works pretty well but also that the discussions at Board sessions should be of the same quality as that seen during the Replenishment Consultation sessions. Also, we should not shy away from discussing global issues such as aid and how it affects the work of IFAD.
- We could hold strategic discussions on issues of future significance – even when these may not be tagged to current decisions – on such items as projects, budgets and concessional partner loans.
- (b) Q: How can such strategic discussions be held within the current structure? Do you have proposals for a change in procedures to allow for such discussions?
A: A separate session on strategic and technical issues could be organized the day before the formal Board session.
- The following possible topics were agreed on: how to enhance the new IFAD business model and related aspects such as borrowing from capital markets, feasibility study, and policy issues.
- (c) Q: Would it be possible to share documents earlier and ensure timely submission without compromising the quality?
A: This would be useful in reaching a degree of consensus beforehand. However, there is always room for improvement and discussion in-session.
- (d) Q: What is your reflection on your dual role as Chair of the Board and IFAD President?
A: This is not problematic for me. There is a need for the Board to recognize the line between oversight and micromanagement. On IFAD's side, a change in the internal mind set is needed to fully appreciate that documents are prepared not only to meet Board obligations, but also because they are needed for the work of the institution.
- (e) Q: How can we be effective in approving projects? How can we ensure timely discussion of projects so that the Board is fully aware of the risks? How can the Board's inputs be accurately reflected in project documents?
A: There are lessons to learn from the recent approval of the National Oil Palm Project in Uganda. Some commodities are problematic, and this should be put into perspective in order to address key concerns and share key messages.
- (f) Q: IFAD is now more decentralized, younger, and leaner at headquarters. What kind of Executive Board do you need? Should the new IFAD structure shape the way Board representatives contribute?
A: Cross-List statements on issues where there is consensus would greatly improve our efficiency, and this is directly linked to the length of sessions. The focus should be on the quality of discussions.
- (g) Q: Can you comment on the content and quality of documents presented to the Board?
A: Perhaps ensure that an executive summary is included to present key highlights and improve readability.
- (h) Q: Have you considered the prospect of having a vice-chairperson?
A: I don't see any particular value added in having a vice-chair.
- (i) Q: What are your views on the scheduling of agenda items?
A: It is important to discuss controversial issues first. To avoid repetition of points in joint statements, it would be helpful if those statements raised any flags

beforehand, or if we were informed of any issues in advance so as to give that representative the floor first.

- (j) Q: We feel sometimes the tougher questions are avoided at Board sessions – maybe we should ask again?
A: Please always feel free to follow up with an e-mail or send your questions in writing or through the Convenors and Friends. Asking tough questions should not be taken personally. List B and C should also intervene more: at the moment, they seem to leave all the questions to List A.
- (k) Q: Can we change the mechanism of the Board and perhaps add an extra half day to the current timing? This extra time could be used to focus on thematic seminars on different issues in preparation for the Board, and help us become more effective.
A: If there is cross-List agreement on this, we can do it. However, we should be careful not to waste time on certain documents because we feel that we have more time.
- (l) Q: Should such a half day be implemented, should it be run differently, for example as a Q&A session?
A: Yes. We would also like to increase the dollar value of proposals approved through the lapse-of-time procedure as this could contribute to improved efficiency.
- (m) Q: Can we approve the projects by correspondence, and have two Board sessions instead of three to allow ample time for document preparation?
A: Increasing the frequency of informal consultations would be important for approving projects by correspondence. I would like not to rush the issue of reducing the Board sessions to two because there are certain issues we need the Board's approval on before December, which makes the September session crucial.
- (n) Q: What is your feeling after one year in IFAD?
A: I am still trying to adjust to the way IFAD operates, to managing a small institution which however at the same time is a multinational institution, with different sizes of challenges. I have had to make some structural adjustments.
- (o) Q: Is there a follow-up mechanism for projects? For instance, for the Uganda project, this was built into the design.
A: Yes, as Management we owe the Board such a mechanism to report back on ongoing projects.

27. Some representatives highlighted the need for more flexibility in the way the Board and the Governing Council sessions are scripted. They also commented that it would be important to keep the strategic focus on key overarching issues and the framework of collaboration through which to agree on top priorities for the next year. So far this had not been done. The President shared some of the current priorities such as following up with countries that have not yet pledged; considering unrestricted complementary contributions (UCCs) for thematic areas such as gender, climate change and nutrition, the Transition Framework and United Nations reform; and ensuring timely results from the risk assessment. Also important was to plan for readiness to deliver on the IFAD11 commitments, and ensure that all impact assessments portrayed the comparative advantage of IFAD.
28. The Q&A session ended. Senior Management joined representatives for the lunch break.

- C. Afternoon session with the President and Senior Management: Leveraging United Nations reform and Rome-based agency (RBA) partnerships to advance IFAD's mission (including the Operational Excellence for Results exercise)
29. An interactive "world cafe" activity took place in the afternoon, in which small groups (comprising both Board representatives and Senior Management) rotated around five stations, each with a specific issue about IFAD in relation to United Nations reform as follows:
1. Personal experiences with system change
 2. Maximizing IFAD's contribution to reform goals (and the unique opportunities)
 3. Minimizing IFAD's risk in the reform
 4. Harmonization versus uniformization with reform
 5. Leveraging RBA partnerships while strengthening IFAD visibility in the system
30. At each station, the groups had a chance to discuss the issue, offer responses and formulate recommendations for IFAD. After 30 minutes, each group was asked to move to another station, where they reviewed and added to the responses of the previous group. Finally, individuals were able to visit one other station of their choice, and repeat the process.
31. The findings and recommendations of each station were reported back to the whole group. This gave rise to group conversation. Specific reflections and recommendations follow below:
32. Station 1: Personal experiences with system change
- When have you been a part of a successful reform system? What principles or practices can we apply to IFAD in the United Nations reform?
- (a) Be results-oriented
 - (b) Manage resistance to change
 - (c) Good leadership style and self-awareness to facilitate communication
 - (d) Communication strategy – both internal and external
 - (e) Clarity in institutional logic
 - (f) Transparency
 - (g) Direct relations with stakeholders
33. Station 2: Maximizing IFAD's contribution to reform goals (and the unique opportunities)
- What are the unique opportunities for IFAD in the reform goals? In what ways can IFAD maximize its contribution to the reform? What roles can the Board and Management play?
- (a) Strengthen link with IFIs
 - (b) Management for results
 - (c) Gain visibility through championship in the field
 - (d) Reform goals are about delivering on the 2030 Agenda. Take advantage of country-oriented United Nations reforms
 - (e) Roles for the Board and Management are to deliver on the IFAD11 commitments. The Board should provide oversight and strategic guidance and intervene more proactively to foster effective Board-Management networking.

- (f) Ensure alignment of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) where possible, given the uniqueness of IFAD.

34. Station 3: Minimizing IFAD's risk in the reform

What are the risks to IFAD and its mission in the reform agenda? In what ways can IFAD minimize its risks in the reform? What roles can the Board and Management play?

- (a) Scarcity of resources and capacity for a strengthened resident coordinator (RC) system
- (b) Proactive dialogue between IFAD and governments, and with the RC system
- (c) Complementary approach in the UNDAF context – while ensuring IFAD's independence in project implementation
- (d) Alignment of COSOPs with United Nations country planning (ensuring joint programme/project planning). Joint premises, but with understanding of flexibility should there be a comparative advantage for IFAD
- (e) Need to ensure linkage with a wider range of partners as part of the institutional architecture
- (f) Board support is essential

35. Station 4: Harmonization versus uniformization with reform

What are the unique opportunities for IFAD in the reform goals? How can IFAD maximize its contribution?

How can IFAD relate to the reform agenda through harmonization versus uniformization? What principles and practices should guide IFAD?

- (a) Focus on joint delivery, planning (UNDAF) and coordination – to the extent possible.
- (b) Ensure that the COSOPs do not become obsolete but rather exploit their uniqueness as representing a close discussion of what countries want and how IFAD supports them to deliver on their priorities. COSOPs are unique opportunities to feed into UNDAF.
- (c) IFAD should leverage the reform process to increase its prominence and visibility – especially of its comparative advantage: a track record of 40 years in rural development and agriculture, with a strong focus on innovation.
- (d) IFAD is uniquely placed to contribute to fulfilling the agricultural goals of the 2030 Agenda. It therefore has the opportunity to make rural development more prominent in the United Nations structure through the UNDAF, for example.
- (e) At the implementation level, strengthen cooperation with other United Nations agencies and RBAs, to influence the new generation of United Nations country teams.
- (f) The role of the Board is to encourage this engagement in the reform process, and the role of Management is to incentivize staff participation through individual performance assessments.

36. Station 5: Leveraging RBA partnerships while strengthening IFAD visibility in the United Nations system

How can IFAD leverage RBA partnership while strengthening its visibility in the United Nations system?

- (a) Fly low under the radar of United Nations reform, given the small size of IFAD.

- (b) Increase IFAD visibility in New York and Geneva, including strengthening the office of IFAD in New York.
 - (c) IFAD should be nimble enough to step in and fill the development gap right after a crisis.
 - (d) Use RBA collaboration on the ground to increase visibility; strengthen collaboration but not at the expense of IFAD visibility.
 - (e) While IFAD is too small to be a fully-fledged IFI, it can sell IFI products in the United Nations context.
 - (f) IFAD should also capitalize on its long-term development solutions, and the fact that it works in the most isolated rural areas.
 - (g) IFAD should highlight initial forays into RBA collaboration (e.g. the Committee on Food Security) as a learning experience to inform new collaboration attempts.
 - (h) Continue the new practice of periodic joint RBA meetings and increase linkages at the field level by organizing joint field visits at various levels.
 - (i) Spread success stories of collaboration and complementary work, also among RBA staff, to inspire more creativity and enhance collaboration (scaling up and innovating). For this purpose identifying essential elements for success would be key.
37. In addition, representatives noted that IFAD can maintain its specificity but at the same time position itself to take advantage of the United Nations reform. IFAD should therefore continue to listen to the voices of Member States that utilize its resources through the COSOP framework.
38. Management noted the point on using the COSOP to lead other partners in-country, but pointed out that other partners were planning to do the same with their own tools.
39. IFAD would continue to engage in the donor coordination mechanisms in order to position itself to influence reform processes where possible.

IV. Concluding remarks

40. The Officer-in-Charge, SEC, thanked participants for their ideas and their active engagement in the discussions. As next steps, a report would be prepared and shared with the Convenors, and on the basis of the report, the matrix of agreed actions would be updated.
41. Representatives expressed their appreciation for the extremely constructive retreat, and thanked William Skinner for his role as Officer-in-Charge, SEC; Bob Wright for the excellent facilitation; and the Secretariat for the well-organized event.



Fourth Executive Board retreat

18-19 April 2018

Borgo di Tragliata, Fiumicino, Rome

Provisional programme

Purpose

To further strengthen IFAD governance by bringing together the IFAD Executive Board and Senior Management to:

- Create a space for informal dialogue;
- Continue to build relationships across Lists and cultivate trust among Board representatives;
- Pursue continuous improvement of IFAD governance;
- Focus the Board's input on strategic issues critical to IFAD; and
- Further strengthen the relationship between the Executive Board and the President/Senior Management.

Day 1 of the Executive Board retreat

Wednesday, 18 April 2018

08.30	Departure from IFAD
10.00 – 10.15	Welcoming coffee
10.15 – 12.15	Morning session for Executive Board representatives (with facilitation) Focus: Deepening Mutual Understanding and Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Journey to Here: Table discussions on "Prouds and Sorries" of recent Board activity. • The "Medicine Wheel": A 1,000 year-old leadership framework to better understand our own and each other's thinking and behaviour. We will deepen our appreciation of the cultural diversity within the Board and how to best use that understanding for more productive conversations and decisions.
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.45	Afternoon session for Executive Board representatives (with facilitation) Focus: Improving Board Governance – Enhancing the Strategic Role of the Subsidiary Bodies

- Listen to Audit Committee and Evaluation Committee remarks ¹
- Conduct small group discussions, followed by dialogue among the whole group on the Executive Board's governance structure and practice, addressing:
 - Where and how is the subsidiary body structure working well and serving the Board's goals?
 - Where and how is the subsidiary body structure creating barriers?
 - What subsidiary body modifications would make information-sharing and decision-making more efficient –including possible changes to their respective terms of reference

15.45 – 16.15	Coffee break
16.15 – 18.00	Presentation and conversation with the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE)
18.00 – 19.00	Informal networking
19.00 – 21.30	Dinner with the President of IFAD and the Deputy Director of IOE

Day 2 of the Executive Board retreat

Thursday, 19 April 2018

08.00 – 09.00	Breakfast
09.00 – 10.30	<p>Morning session for Executive Board representatives (with facilitation)</p> <p>Focus: Improving Executive Board Processes</p> <p>Engage in a process reflection to generate key lessons and suggested actions, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the last two Executive Board feedback forms • Assess the results of the Framework of Collaboration between the President and the Board • Consider the pros and cons of alternative session arrangements (frequency, format, duration, etc.) • Reflect on the status of cross-List Member engagement
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee break
10.45 – 12.15	<p>Morning session with Gilbert F. Hougbo, Chairperson of IFAD Executive Board (with facilitation)</p> <p>Focus: Chairperson-Board Relationship and Executive Board Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a brief summary of retreat learning and commitments to the President

¹ Discussion paper on the benchmarking study undertaken by the Office of the Secretary; and position paper by the Audit Committee.

- The President reflects and responds in a “fishbowl” dialogue with one representative from each table
- 12.30 – 14.00 Luncheon with the President of IFAD and IFAD Senior Management
- 14.00 – 16.45 Afternoon session with the participation of the President of IFAD and IFAD Senior Management
- Focus: Leveraging United Nations Reform and Rome-based Agency (RBA) Partnerships to Advance the IFAD Mission (including the Operational Excellence for Results exercise)
- Designated Board representatives provide a brief overview of discussions and learning from the two-day session
 - High-level presentation by the President on "IFAD Issues and Opportunities in United Nations Reform"
 - Interactive small group conversations around leveraging United Nations reform and RBA partnerships to advance the IFAD mission, and deepening our collective understanding of and response to reform initiative, focusing on
 - Maximizing IFAD’s contribution to the United Nations Reform goals
 - Minimizing IFAD’s risk in the reform
 - Harmonization versus uniformization for reform
 - Leveraging RBA partnerships while strengthening IFAD’s visibility in the United Nations system
- 16.45 – 17.00 Wrap up and closure
- 17.00 – 17.45 Reception
- 17.45 Departure to IFAD

Venue

Borgo di Tragliata
 Via del Casale di Tragliata 23
 00050, Fiumicino
 Tel.: +39 06 6687 267/392
 Fax.: +39 06 6687 130

Other information

Transportation will be provided between IFAD headquarters and the retreat venue for Board representatives wishing to avail themselves of this service.

Interpretation will be provided in the Fund’s four official languages: Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

The suggested dress code is business casual.



Investing in rural people

**Office of the Secretary
Executive Board retreat
18-19 April 2018**

Your feedback is important!

(1) Overall, how would you rate the fourth Executive Board retreat?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- No opinion

Other (please specify):

(2) How relevant did you find the information presented at the retreat?

- Extremely relevant
- Very relevant
- Moderately relevant
- Slightly relevant
- Not at all relevant

If slightly relevant or not at all relevant, please specify why:

(3) How useful did you find the format of the retreat?

- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Moderately useful
- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

If slightly useful or not at all useful, please specify why:

(4) What did you like most about the Executive Board retreat?

(5) What would you like to see next time at the Executive Board retreat?

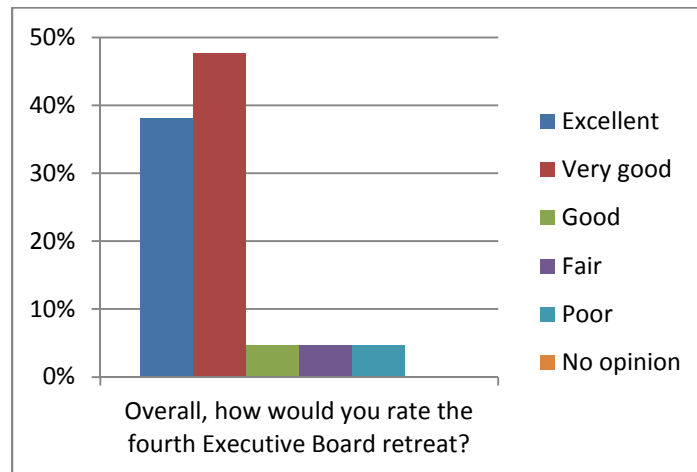
(6) Any additional comments or suggestions are welcome.

Thank you for your time and input.
Office of the Secretary

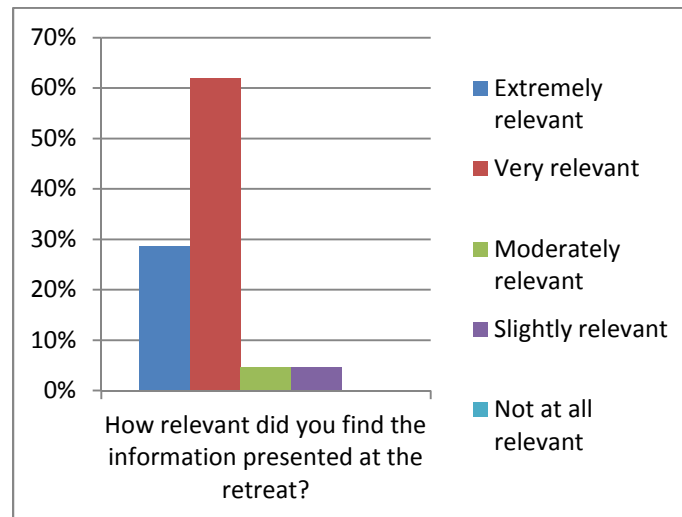
Feedback on the fourth Executive Board retreat 18-19 April 2018

Total number of responses: 21

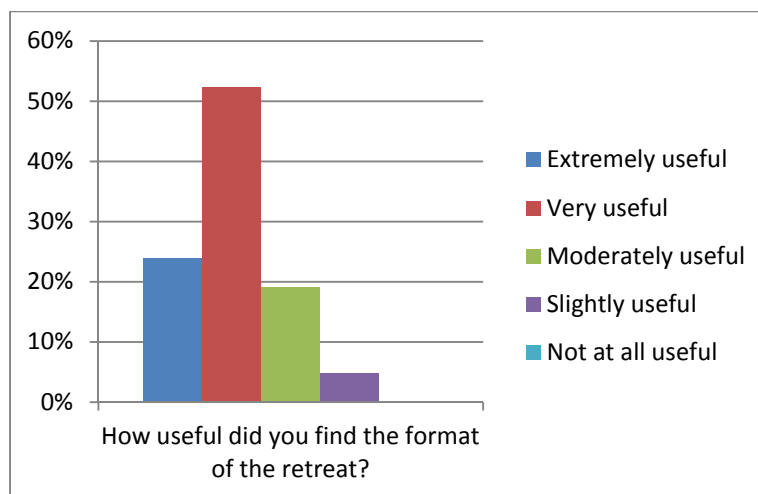
(1) Overall, how would you rate the fourth Executive Board retreat?					
Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	No opinion
8 (38%)	10 (47.6%)	1 (4.7%)	1 (4.7%)	1 (4.7%)	0



(2) How relevant did you find the information presented at the retreat?				
Extremely relevant	Very relevant	Moderately relevant	Slightly relevant	Not at all relevant
6 (28.5%)	13 (61.9%)	1 (4.7%)	1 (4.%)	0



(3) How useful did you find the format of the retreat?				
Extremely useful	Very useful	Moderately useful	Slightly useful	Not at all useful
5 (23.8%)	11 (52.3%)	4 (19.04%)	1 (4.7%)	0



NOTE: the following percentages do not add up to 100 per cent, as they rather reflect the frequency of the answers provided.

What representatives liked most about the retreat

- Informal exchange among participants (**52.3 per cent**)
- Leadership styles, self-awareness discussions, especially the Medicine Wheel exercise during the morning session for Executive Board representatives (**28.5 per cent**)
- Dialogue with IFAD Management in general and especially the morning session with Gilbert Hougbo (**23.8 per cent**)
- Organization and dynamic format, venue and relaxed atmosphere (**19.04 per cent**)
- Dialogue on Executive Board's governance structure and practice (**14.2 per cent**)
- The moderator's professionalism (**9.5 per cent**)
- IOE efforts to reflect on OpEx through reference to its previous evaluations and IOE presentation generally (**4.7 per cent**)

What Members would like to see and suggest for the next Executive Board retreat

- Focusing more on IFAD specific issues (**19.04 per cent**)
- More presence of Management (**19.04 per cent**)
- A document which reflects key findings and follows up from the previous retreat (**19.04 per cent**)
- More informal discussions among Members (**14.2 per cent**)
- Keep discussions on United Nations reforms (**14.2 per cent**)
- Keep the same moderator (**14.2 per cent**)
- More discussion on Framework of Collaboration between the President and the Board (**14.2 per cent**)

- More concrete outcomes and clearer conclusions **(9.5 per cent)**
- Member States engagement in preparing the programme **(9.5 per cent)**
- Discussion on new IFAD financial tools **(9.5 per cent)**
- Enhancement of IOE session without the presence of the Secretariat in order to create a more open discussion **(9.5 per cent)**
- More activities like the Medicine Wheel **(4.7 per cent)**
- Follow-up on strengthening the role of subsidiary bodies topic **(4.7 per cent)**
- Providing new Executive Board members with induction sessions also on committees **(4.7 per cent)**



Investing in rural people
 Investir dans les populations rurales
 Invertir en la población rural
 الاستثمار في السكان الريفيين

List of participants

Fourth Executive Board Retreat

Borgo di Tragliata, 18-19 April 2018

List of IFAD Senior Management

Gilbert F. Hougbo	President of IFAD and Chair of the Executive Board
Cornelia Richter	Vice-President of IFAD
Alvaro Lario	Associate Vice-President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Controller Financial Operations Department
Périn Saint-Ange	Associate Vice-President Programme Management Department
Paul Winters	Associate Vice-President a.i. Strategy and Knowledge Department
Charlotte Salford	Associate Vice-President External Relations and Governance Department
Guoqi Wu	(Appointed) Associate Vice-President Corporate Services Department
Katherine Meighan	General Counsel
William Skinner	Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Secretary

Photo gallery from the retreat







