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## Attendance of Observers at Executive Board Sessions

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For: Approval

## Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to consider the proposals contained in section III and approve the recommendations contained in section IV of this document.

## Attendance of Observers at Executive Board sessions

### I. Introduction

1. It was agreed that IFAD Management would follow up on queries raised by members about the participation of representatives of the Rome-based agencies in IFAD's Executive Board. The purpose of this document is for the Executive Board to consider broadening the opportunities for attendance by silent observers at its sessions and thereby increase stakeholder engagement. The content of this document was discussed with the Convenors and Friends at their meeting on 14 June 2018.

### II. Current framework for attendance of observers at Executive Board sessions

2. While under rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board,<sup>1</sup> the Executive Board can invite as many representatives or persons as it wishes to present views before the Board, the authority of the President is limited to determining those staff members who may attend the Board sessions. Since 1997, the President is also authorized to invite only one observer per Board session and the invitation is extended only once per person.<sup>2</sup> The Board is informed of the attendance of such an observer at the opening of the relevant session.
3. To promote transparency and broaden the opportunities for Member States that are not Board representatives to attend Board sessions, in 2010 the Executive Board agreed to allow a single representative from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations to attend as a silent observer for items under consideration pertaining to country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs), project and programme proposals, and grant proposals. The names of said representatives must be communicated to the President by the Convenors.<sup>3</sup> Such observers are introduced to the Board at the beginning of the agenda item in question and leave the meeting room upon conclusion of the item.
4. Additional observers are allowed to follow the Board proceedings by closed circuit television from the *salle d'écoute*, adjacent to the meeting room, and these include, representatives of Member States that are not Members of the Board,<sup>4</sup> and non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process.<sup>5</sup> The *salle d'écoute* is also accessible to IFAD staff: this enables staff to be prepared when

<sup>1</sup> "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 representatives of other Members of the Fund, to present views on any specific matter before the Board."

<sup>2</sup> Footnote 3 of rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board states as follows: "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 an organization/institution. Such invitations will be extended only once per person. [...]"

<sup>3</sup> EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1.

<sup>4</sup> EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1 further states: "2(b) Those Member States wishing to attend an Executive Board session shall be allowed to follow the proceedings via closed circuit television in the *salle d'écoute*, limited to one representative per Member State".

<sup>5</sup> EB 2013/108/R.28. At its 108<sup>th</sup> session, in April 2013, the Board authorized the President to invite non-Member States of IFAD at an advanced stage of their membership process to follow the Board's proceedings via closed circuit television in the *salle d'écoute*.

they are needed at the session. The salle d'écoute is also used to allow other members of a delegation of Board representatives to follow the session.<sup>6</sup>

### III. Proposals for consideration

5. In view of the existing framework, it is proposed that: (a) opportunities for attendance by silent observers at Executive Board sessions be broadened; and (b) the access rights to be accorded to silent observers be clarified.
- A. Invitation of silent observers
6. It is proposed that the Board expand the authority of the President to invite more than one observer, and remove the restriction that such invitation be extended only once per person. If approved, this decision would supersede the 1997 decision. More specifically, under the proposed arrangements, the President would be allowed to invite any entity/individual to attend an Executive Board session as a silent observer, subsequent to a prior informal no-objection process with Board members. The informal no-objection process would be similar to the one foreseen for the approval of projects under the lapse-of-time procedure<sup>7</sup> and would entail the following steps:
    - (i) The President would submit to the Board members a list of entities/individuals she/he intends to invite as silent observers to a session, in advance, prescribing a specific time frame within which Board members may, should they so wish, object to the invitation of any of the entities/individuals proposed.
    - (ii) If no objection is received from any member within the specified period of time, the proposed silent observers will be deemed accepted by the Board. The President would then issue invitations to the approved entities/individuals to attend the session as a silent observer.
    - (iii) Should a member object to the invitation of a particular entity/individual, said entity/individual would not be invited to attend the Board session.
  7. Invitations would be extended to observers by the President only on a per session basis, as deemed appropriate and without expectation of attendance on a permanent basis. In addition, such invitations would be extended only to those entities/individuals fulfilling either or both of the following requirements:
    - (i) They are regularly invited as observers to IFAD Governing Council<sup>8</sup> sessions; and
    - (ii) Their presence at Board sessions would contribute to the achievement of IFAD's objectives and mandate.
  8. This proposal would not affect:
    - (i) The current power of the Board to invite representatives or persons to present views before the Board, and the power of the President to determine which staff members may attend Board sessions;<sup>9</sup>
    - (ii) The 2010 decision to allow a single representative from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations to attend as a silent observer for items pertaining to COSOPs, project and programme proposals, and grant proposals under consideration;<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See EB 2010/100/R.38.

<sup>7</sup> Rule 24 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

<sup>8</sup> Observers are invited to sessions of the Governing Council in accordance with rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council and a number of decisions taken by the Governing Council and the Executive Board (see GC 77/7; GC 78/4; EB 87/31/R.57; EB/31; EB 88/34/R.52; EB/34).

<sup>9</sup> Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

<sup>10</sup> EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1.

- (iii) The observers who are currently allowed to follow the Board proceedings by closed circuit television from the salle d'écoute, adjacent to the meeting room, i.e. representatives of Member States that are not members of the Board, and non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process;<sup>11</sup>
- (iv) The access of additional members of a delegation of Board representatives to follow the session from the salle d'écoute.<sup>12</sup>

## B. Access rights of silent observers

9. It is proposed that the Executive Board consider the following access rights to be accorded to silent observers at its sessions:
  - (i) Items under discussion. Silent observers would attend the proceedings of the Executive Board session to which they are invited with the exception of closed sessions and any other item that the President (as Chair of the Board) or the Executive Board deems should be restricted.
  - (ii) Right to speak. Pursuant to rule 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, the President, as Chair of the Board, accords the right to speak at each session. Silent observers would not normally be allowed to speak at the Board sessions to which they are invited, unless their interventions were solicited with a view to contributing to the achievement of IFAD's objectives and mandate.
  - (iii) Access to documents. In accordance with the IFAD Policy on the Disclosure of Documents, all Executive Board documents (with certain exceptions) are posted on the public website. As such, silent observers already have access to the majority of Board documents.

## IV. Recommendations

10. It is recommended that the Executive Board consider the proposals contained in section III and authorize the President: (i) to invite any entity/individual that fulfills the requirements set out in paragraph 7 above, to attend an Executive Board session as a silent observer, subsequent to an informal no-objection process with Board members; and (ii) to accord the related access rights to silent observers, as set out in paragraph 9 above.
11. Should the Board approve the foregoing proposals, the current footnote 3 contained in the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board will be modified to read as follows (text to be deleted is shown in strikethrough, text to be added is underlined):

~~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. — 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.~~

At its 124<sup>th</sup> session in September 2018, the Executive Board approved the recommendations contained in document EB 2018/124/R.38 authorizing the

<sup>11</sup> See EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1 and EB 2013/108/R.28.

<sup>12</sup> EB 2010/100/R.38.

President: (i) to invite any entity/individual that fulfills the requirements set out in paragraph 7 of said document to attend an Executive Board session as a silent observer, subsequent to an informal no-objection process with Board members; (ii) to accord the related access rights to silent observers, as set out in paragraph 9 of the document. This decision does not affect: (a) the current power of the Executive Board to invite representatives or persons to present views before the Board and the power of the President to determine which staff members may attend Board sessions (rule 8); (b) the 2010 decision to allow a single representative from each of the five regions covered by IFAD's operations to attend as a silent observer for items pertaining to country strategic opportunities programmes, project and programme proposals, and grant proposals under consideration (EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1); (c) the observers that are currently allowed to follow the Board proceedings by closed circuit television from the salle d'écoute, adjacent to the meeting room, i.e. representatives of Member States that are not members of the Board (EB 2010/101/INF.4/Rev.1), and non-Member States at an advanced stage of their membership process (EB 2013/108/R.28); and (d) the access of additional members of a delegation of Board representatives to follow the session from the salle d'écoute (EB 2010/100/R.38).