IFAD
Investing in rural people

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**Information note on demonstrating an in-person electronic voting system
to the Governing Council in February 2026**

Following the first special session of the Governing Council for the appointment of the President of IFAD, held on Thursday, 7 July 2022, at IFAD headquarters, the Governing Council adopted resolution 228/XLVI in February 2023, whereby the Governing Council Bureau was requested to review the process leading to the appointment of the President of IFAD.

Among the areas identified for improvement were the voting modality and the counting process. Given the use of paper ballots at the first special session, the entire process had taken almost nine and a half hours, leading many delegates to call for reconsideration of the use of an electronic voting system to expedite both the voting and the counting processes.

In line with resolution 234/XLVII, adopted by the Governing Council in February 2024, the Governing Council decided "that the current established practice for the process leading to the appointment of the President of IFAD be continued subject to the improvements recommended by the Bureau, which Management is hereby tasked with implementing".

Among the improvements identified and contained in the Report of the Governing Council Bureau on the review of the process leading to the appointment of the President of IFAD (GC 47/L.3), the Bureau recommended, in paragraph 37, that:

"(ii) The Secretariat be tasked with exploring upgrades to the current electronic voting system so that it may be used for the appointment of the President. To that end, such system should be in-person and closed (not connected to Wi-Fi/internet/external environment(s)), with the appropriate technical safeguards to ensure the secrecy and integrity of the vote."

Building on the online electronic voting system, which had been customized for the appointment of the President in 2021 and endorsed by the Governing Council in adopting resolution 217/XLIV,[1] the Secretariat explored possible upgrades to the system that would ensure secrecy, integrity and security of the vote for an in-person election and discussed these with the voting system vendor. The findings show that an in-person system, compared to an online voting system, is easier to secure and more user friendly. It does not need to be integrated into other systems and is easily deployable. The in-person system identified would not be connected to a Wi-Fi network, to the internet or to any external environment. The casting of votes would be simple, and the secrecy, security, integrity and verifiability of the vote would be ensured, as follows:

- Secrecy of the votes cast ensured through the use of an advanced encrypted scheme.

- Security of the voting process ensured through the implementation of a closed system not connected to a Wi-Fi network, to the internet or to any other system.

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[1] "Decides that the selected automated (online) voting system may be used in conjunction with the appointment of the President of IFAD in February 2021 and that such a system may be used on future occasions when voting by secret ballot is deemed necessary."

- Integrity of the votes cast ensured through the use of advanced internal digital signatures, cryptographic zero-knowledge proofs and blockchain technology.

- Verifiability ensured through an immutable logging system based on private blockchain technology that also allows for the printing of a receipt to confirm the votes cast.

Based on the above, the Secretariat will submit a proposal to the Executive Board in December 2025 for endorsement of the use of an in-person electronic voting system for the appointment of the President of IFAD in 2027.

With the Board's endorsement, a resolution proposing the use of the identified in-person electronic voting system for the appointment of the President in 2027 would be submitted to the Governing Council session in February 2026. To facilitate the adoption of the resolution a demonstration would be conducted with both Executive Board and Governing Council representatives on the margins of the Council session.