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**IFAD**

**INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Consultation on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources – Third Session**

Rome, 5-7 July 2005

**GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF IFAD STAFF AND  
ENHANCED ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL OFFICER PROGRAMME**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. At the Second Session of the Consultation on the Seventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources, held on 21-22 April 2005, the members requested a brief report on IFAD's recruitment policy with regard to geographic distribution and the proposal for an enhanced Associate Professional Officer (APO) Programme.

**II. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**

2. The principle of geographic distribution is enshrined in Article 6, Section 8(e), of the Agreement Establishing IFAD (see relevant sections in the annex hereto).

3. IFAD's Human Resources Policy, approved by the Executive Board on 9 September 2004, gives consideration to the necessity of securing the highest levels of competence, technical ability and integrity available and does so by ensuring competition among candidates. The recruitment of professional staff results in the selection of the individual judged to be the best person for the position, taking into account criteria of geographic distribution and gender.

4. Geographic distribution promotes diversity in ideas, which is an asset for IFAD. The Fund strives to ensure representation of as many nations as possible in the interest of universality, and it is committed to working with gender and diversity in an explicit way to enhance innovation, creativity, problem-solving and more collaborative modes of working.

5. IFAD applies the criterion of geographic distribution during the selection process when candidates are considered to be at the same merit level. The combination of merit with geographic distribution provides the diversity that can contribute to fulfilling IFAD's mission.

6. IFAD's Human Resources Policy is in line with principles of human resource management at other international financial institutions having general statements of gender and diversity. Quota allocation is not part of IFAD's approach to geographic distribution.

7. Comparative information obtained from the United Nations High-Level Committee on Management indicates that: (a) the World Food Programme has no formal quotas for allocating geographic distribution but it pursues a policy of seeking geographic and diversity representativity in the professional staff category, with a target of 40% from economically developing countries; and (b) the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has a geographic distribution methodology based on the one used by the United Nations (65% of FAO professional staff come from member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD]).

8. The table below presents IFAD staff distribution by category and by origin from OECD or non-OECD member country on 31 December 2004. In implementing the criteria for geographic distribution, the number of posts at the professional level – 145, as compared with a total of 164 Member States – presents a challenge for IFAD management. The 171.5 posts at the General Services level are filled by sourcing from the local market.

Type	From an OECD member country (%)	From a non-OECD member country (%)	Total (%)	Number of IFAD Member States represented
Professional staff and higher categories under the regular budget	59	41	100	49
Consultants, extrabudgetary and Chapter X professional staff	49	51	100	99

9. IFAD is looking at new and complementary ways to ensure representativity, such as advertising in local newspapers in all regions or working with recruiting agencies or consulting firms. By way of reference, IFAD presently advertises in *The Economist*, faxes vacancy announcements to the members of IFAD's governing bodies, posts announcements on the official IFAD and United Nations websites and other Internet sites, and sends announcements to other international financial institutions, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), universities, business schools and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research database of professional women.

10. IFAD sees opportunities in the near future for wider geographic outreach, including recruitment against 20 expected retirements between 2005 and 2010 at the professional level. The Fund views this as an opportunity to engage in a proactive recruitment campaign.

### III. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

11. IFAD strongly believes that supporting the gender mainstreaming initiative will help it to fulfil its important mission and attain its goals in a constructive, innovative and respectful working context. As at 31 December 2004, 44% of IFAD professional staff were women.

12. The Office of Human Resources plays a proactive role in supporting actions that may foster continuous improvements in this area. A number of important achievements have already been posted:

- (a) The new Human Resources Procedures Manual now includes a policy for paternity leave, breastfeeding and work/life balance.
- (b) Mandatory harassment workshops have been organized for all IFAD staff.

- (c) Representatives of the Gender Team have been involved in the pay-for-performance ICSC pilot to provide specific input and recommendations with an eye to implementation of the new pay-for-performance system.
- (d) An on-site day-care centre has been opened for children of IFAD staff 0-3 years of age.

#### IV. ENHANCED APO PROGRAMME

13. The Associate Professional Officer (APO) Programme was launched in 1978 and operates as stipulated in the Human Resources Procedures Manual (see Annex).

14. To date IFAD has engaged a total of 121 APOs, having subsequently retained 24 (20%) as staff, 13 (10.7%) as consultants and 14 (11.5%) as temporary professional staff. Other APOs have gone on to work at other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and elsewhere.

15. The salaries and benefits of these APOs have been funded by List A Member States for their nationals.<sup>1</sup>

16. In 2004, 13 of the 21 APOs were women (62%). This ratio is a direct consequence of a careful selection process intended to ensure gender balance.

17. With regard to the internal management of this programme, IFAD plans to further strengthen the professional development of APOs. The Office of Human Resources has been assigned a leading role in monitoring the development of each APO, collecting feedback, and promptly liaising with direct supervisors in order to foster, at all times, consistency with the objectives of the APO Programme. This is done by means of an “open door” policy, regular APO group and individual meetings to collect feedback on progress, and timely follow-up.

18. IFAD’s commitment to, and careful management of, the APO Programme are witnessed by the fact that several former APOs presently hold key management and director positions.

19. As a significant new initiative, IFAD management is proposing a programme for APOs from non-OECD member countries at a level comparable to the 2004 level of APOs (21). This proposed new programme would run for a trial period of three years.

20. To finance this programme, it is proposed that the Executive Board set up a multi-donor trust fund that would receive – it is hoped – contributions from OECD and non-OECD member countries.

21. APOs from both the existing and the enhanced programmes would be able to apply for vacant positions and could be retained subject to the availability of positions and in competition with external candidates.

22. IFAD management is fully committed to ensuring geographic distribution and gender balance among the organization’s staff. The Office of Human Resources will work proactively through the Fund’s recruitment policy to achieve this end.

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<sup>1</sup> In the past, a few candidates from developing countries were included in the APO Programme but this practice has since been discontinued.



**EXTRACTS FROM THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING IFAD AND THE FUND'S  
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**I. RECRUITMENT**

**A. Mandate**

1. In accordance with Article 6, Section 8(d), of the Agreement Establishing IFAD, “the President shall head the staff and, under the control and direction of the Governing Council and the Executive Board, shall be responsible for conducting the business of the Fund. The President shall organize the staff and shall appoint and dismiss members of the staff in accordance with regulations adopted by the Executive Board.”

2. Article 6, Section 8(e), of the Agreement states: “In the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service, consideration shall be given to the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity as well as to the importance of observing the criterion of equitable geographic distribution.”

**B. Legal Considerations**

3. The expression “equitable geographical distribution” found in the basic documents of IFAD is not univocal, neither by reference to available documentation relating to the establishment of the Fund, the Fund’s internal law, the jurisprudence of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) and general principles of law nor by reference to the policy of most organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. Its meaning lies somewhere along the axis between widespread geographic distribution in the sense of a fair mix of nationalities and a strict representational system linked to funding. IFAD practice has been to interpret the expression as a balance of national representation in its regular professional staff within and between OECD and non-OECD member countries. In any event, equitable geographical distribution is legally subsidiary in nature for recruitment (and certainly promotion) purposes to competence, in accordance with the Fund’s internal law, ILOAT jurisprudence and the policy of most organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. Over the years, IFAD practice has evolved to reconcile the two imperatives, namely the legal requirement of recruiting staff by giving primary importance to merit and the need to recruit staff on the basis of Member State representation.

**C. Policy**

4. On 9 September 2004, the Executive Board approved the Human Resources Policy. Section 8 of that policy reads:

“8.1 Paramount in the appointment of staff, consideration shall be given to the necessity of securing the highest levels of competence, technical ability and integrity<sup>1</sup> available, and to do so by ensuring competition among candidates. The recruitment of professional staff will result in the selection of the individual judged to be the best person for the position, taking into account the criteria of equitable geographic distribution and gender balance. IFAD believes that such diversity contributes to its intellectual strength and effectiveness. The President’s appointment decisions shall be final.

8.2 IFAD recruits staff and consultants only from Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 6, Section 8(e), of the Agreement Establishing IFAD.

- 8.3 Recruitment and appointment procedures shall be developed that are transparent and consistent so as to ensure that applicants have an equal opportunity to fill job openings.
- 8.4 Recruitment and appointment at IFAD shall be conducted in accordance with the Agreement and procedures based upon open competition, merit, and respect for the following elements:
- (a) **adequate publicity** – vacancies publicized to provide potential candidates with every reasonable opportunity to apply;
  - (b) **absence of discrimination** – selections for interview made impartially through a process that neither discriminates nor unduly favours candidates on the basis of ethnic, social or political background, colour, nationality, religion, age, sex, disability, marital status, family size or sexual orientation; and
  - (c) **highest standards** – candidates assessed on the basis of the highest standards of competence, integrity, and appropriate experience to carry out IFAD's objectives."

## II. ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS (APOS)

5. The APO Programme is built around Member State sponsorship of certain of their young, university-trained nationals, to work for two to three years at IFAD at the professional grade (P-1/P-2) level.
6. IFAD has entered into sponsorship agreements or memoranda of understanding with various Member States.
7. The APO Programme provides on-the-job training and experience for young professionals wishing to pursue a career in international development assistance. After successful assignments as APOs, these young, trained professionals are prepared to lend development assistance within the United Nations system and to engage in bilateral development activities.
8. IFAD identifies areas for APO assignments and drafts related job descriptions for transmittal to sponsoring Member States. The process of APO recruitment and selection is conducted by the respective Member State on a highly competitive basis. Short-listed candidates are submitted for consideration and ultimate selection by IFAD.
9. The selection criteria include:
- (i) the candidate must be under 32 years of age;
  - (ii) the candidate must possess a first university degree in a relevant discipline;
  - (iii) relevant experience is desirable; and
  - (iv) working knowledge of English is essential; knowledge of another official IFAD language – Arabic, French or Spanish – is desirable and may be necessary, depending on the region of assignment.
10. Immediately upon recruitment, APOs receive internal orientation training coordinated by the Office of Human Resources, tailored to the APO's functional area.
11. During the course of their assignment at IFAD, APOs are considered staff members, and those who have completed their APO assignment are eligible to apply for longer-term employment with IFAD, subject to a competitive recruitment and selection process.

