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FINANCE COMMITTEE

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Human Resources Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with progress on implementation of human resources initiatives and plans for the current biennium.
- In particular, progress on projects and activities since consideration of the last report by the Committee at its 157th Session in March 2015 is detailed in the present report.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of progress on human resources initiatives.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **Noted the progress on human resources initiatives and of specific updates requested at its 157th Session in March 2015.**

1. Progress on initiatives to improve human resources management has continued since the last report presented to the Finance Committee at its 157th Session in March 2015 as also highlighted by the Long Form Report of the External Auditor for 2014 which states the “significant achievements by the OHR that, expectedly, would provide traction in the implementation of the FAO Human Resource Strategy”¹. A summary of achievements, as well as objectives and initiatives is presented below.

Overview of current human resources initiatives

Performance Management, Development and Learning

2. The development of the enhanced performance management policy and system (PEMS) has been finalized, and will be implemented from January 2016. The new PEMS provides for more transparent and effective evaluation of performance for managers and staff alike. It includes an improved assessment and rating system, and will address under-performance more robustly, including support to staff development needs

3. PEMS will be made available together with a comprehensive virtual training programme, available in English, French and Spanish, providing access to all staff to e-learning on the process, with particular emphasis on setting goals, as well as on the roles and responsibilities and the importance of giving continuous feedback. Divisional and office focal points providing support for the new system have been briefed.

4. Work to support the development of FAO values and competencies continues. During the last quarter of 2015, competency-based interview techniques will be introduced for recruitment in the General Service (GS) category to complement the revised recruitment process (further described below), together with e-learning support to candidates. The competencies of managers continue to be developed through executive coaching and virtual programmes which are now offered to staff at the P5 and above levels and to mid-level managers. The active participation of managers in these courses, which include interactive sessions online, is very encouraging for FAO’s shift towards virtual training.

5. The development of learning programmes for decentralized offices continues to strengthen the operational capacity of employees and addresses issues of internal controls and accountability. A programme is under development which will cover budget holder accountabilities and risk, the project cycle and certification courses for key roles.

6. The FAOR programme continues to expand with the forthcoming launch of new suites covering *inter alia* capacity development, communication and risk management, developed in close collaboration with subject matter experts.

7. A needs assessment was conducted to form the basis of the new Managing for Results (MfR) Learning Programme, aiming at building the capacity for results-orientation throughout the Organization. The needs assessment is being analysed and the learning programme outline will be shortly completed. In the meantime, early actions have been carried out focusing on the creation of a handbook for users on managing for results, as well as virtual sessions on the preparation of Country Programming Frameworks.

Appointment and Selection Procedures

8. Revised selection and appointment procedures for General Service staff have been introduced with the underlying aim of enhancing recruitment based on merit, and opening up the pool of qualified staff available to the Organization.

¹ C 2017/5 B, paragraph 50

9. Recruitment rosters have been established from which pre-screened candidates can be shortlisted for positions as they become vacant. Calls for expression of interest were issued globally for the first time in FAO's history in March 2015 and rosters of qualified candidates were established thereafter.

10. In addition to breaking down the "closed shop" paradigm for GS recruitment of the past, the new process will also reduce recruitment times by the establishment of rosters, and the concomitant use of the i-Recruitment system..

11. Another key feature of the new GS recruitment process are the new General Service Selection Committees at headquarters and regional offices, based on the successful model introduced previously for Professional staff . The composition and functional responsibilities of the new GSSCs will contribute to the better assessment of candidates while ensuring peer participation in the recruitment process through direct elections for staff representatives on the GSSCs undertaken in the summer of 2015.. The members of the new GSSCs have undergone extensive training on the processes and functions of the Committee, including competency-based interview techniques, with a view to improving consistency, objectivity and quality of the selection process.

12. An overall review of the recruitment workflow for project-funded professional positions is underway to ensure consistency of processes across all FAO hiring offices. New workflows are being developed in close consultation with headquarters and decentralized offices and planned for early implementation. i-Recruitment is being extended to cover project-funded professional positions and, effective July 2015, vacancies for FAO Representatives are advertised through i-Recruitment. A review of the recruitment workflow for interns has also been initiated.

13. Overall recruitment timeframe continues to fall thanks to continued improvements and streamlining of processes. In 2015, the average time to fill positions at headquarters is 116 days and in the Regional positions 120 days (compared to 206 days and 165 days respectively in 2014).

APO and JP Programmes

14. The Associate Professional Officer (APO) Programme offers a structured learning experience to nationals from more than 30 different countries through exposure to international cooperation activities, while enabling them to apply their technical specialization under the supervision of an experienced FAO staff member. Currently, fourteen donors participate in the programme providing funding for the nationals of their countries, while some donors (Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands) also fund candidates from other countries. In 2015 the Organization has recruited 14 Associate Professional Officers. In an effort to ensure promotion of a renewed workforce, FAO has extended the appointment of the 10 APOs who completed their assignments in 2014.

15. The Junior Professional (JP) Programme is a targeted programme for the recruitment at entry level of young professionals from mainly non- and under-represented developing countries. In March 2015, a recruitment campaign was launched for the fourth cohort that aimed at hiring six new Junior Professionals for the following duty stations: Cairo, Accra, Addis Ababa, Harare, Libreville and Bangkok. Contract extensions for a period of an additional year of service were secured for the six Junior Professionals that were hired in 2013, underling the Organization's commitment to the programme and the rejuvenation of the FAO workforce.

Use of non-staff human resources (NSHR)

16. The Organization continues to make use of non-staff human resources to successfully deliver its programme of work, and accordingly seeks to continually improve their efficient and effective management, from initial selection through to final evaluation at the end of the assignment, to ensure appropriate use of resources and value for money.

17. The 2013 Guidelines on the employment of Consultants and PSA Subscribers are being reviewed and updated based on an Organization-wide feedback survey. The main changes would relate to DSA and Living Allowances, and greater clarity in the definition of Terms of Reference, and determination of the appropriate category, as well as the nature of Consultant/PSA type assignments. The effects of currency fluctuations on daily rates and Category are also being addressed and the Guidelines now reflect recent system changes such as the payment of Living Allowance through the GRMS Payroll.

18. Within the framework of the automatic generation by GRMS of the terms of employment of non-staff employees, existing contractual templates have been thoroughly revised and updated so as to enhance consistency in hiring.

Progress on Geographic Representation and Gender Balance

19. The Organization is pursuing various outreach efforts to publish technically specialized posts in partnership with professional institutions and universities within selected countries. Efforts are pursued to improve the gender representation in the professional and above levels, such as increasing the number of professional women associations or institutes in the recruitment data base for circulation of vacancy announcements.

Corporate Mobility Policy

20. The Corporate Mobility Programme aimed at oxygenating the Organization was enhanced following lessons learned during the 2014 exercise.

21. As a result of greater participation by staff and managers in individual divisions and offices, 40 staff members have been identified in 2015 for geographic reassignments under the corporate mobility exercise. 63% of geographic reassignments are from headquarters to decentralized offices, 22% from decentralized offices to headquarters and 15% among decentralized offices. This is in addition to the staff members who were nominated as FAO Representatives, offering senior career opportunities in FAO Decentralized Offices to these staff members.

22. Work is proceeding on the finalisation of a Temporary Mobility Policy. This will complement the Corporate Mobility Policy and can open up the benefits of mobility assignments, though limited in duration, to categories of staff who are not eligible for mobility under the corporate policy given their non-international status.

Workforce Planning and Talent Management

23. In 2015, preparatory work has been undertaken to put in place tools aimed at supporting the development of effective workforce planning. A prototype workforce planning module has been developed to provide staffing expenses in real time and forecast compensation expenses at the global and departmental levels. The overall aim is to implement a workforce planning strategy that aligns workforce and organizational needs in order to meet corporate regulatory, service and production requirements.

Streamlining and Increased Efficiency

24. An HR Infrastructure Project was launched in early 2015. The main objectives of the Project are to (i) streamline HR procedures, (ii) standardize, simplify and automate HR processes, and (iii) provide reliable HR data, thereby increasing the transparency of information and procedures through newly-designed HR reports and dashboards for the use of HR staff and managers. This project will increase the efficiency of HR performance as well as the means to track and measure this performance. The outputs will promote a cohesive HR organization, strengthen the integrity of HR processes, enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of HR services, based on standardized

global processes and underpinned by a common IT platform. Significant progress has been made since the start of the project and some of the initiatives are reported in the following paragraphs.

HR Servicing - Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

25. The SOP project on HR areas continues as part of a broader initiative related to the HR Infrastructure project. By the end of 2015, about 140 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are expected to be published covering various HR procedures in the area of staff and non-staff servicing and recruitment. It is expected that, by the end of 2016, SOPs will be defined for all other key Headquarters-based HR processes (project and senior level recruitment, post management, social security, etc.).

Automation of HR processes

26. Work continues in the automation of more processes in the human resources area, in order to further simplify and streamline the work and also reduce the level of errors due to manual intervention in the systems. Below are examples of some of these initiatives.

27. As of August 2015, the payment of living allowances for the non-staff employees has been successfully implemented in the payroll system, removing the need for separate transactions to be raised and processed in the travel system, and allowing for more streamlined and accurate reporting on the full expenditure related to these employees. In addition, the automatic generation by GRMS of the terms of employment of non-staff contracts has begun to be rolled-out on a phased basis. This functionality is intended to be extended to cover all non-staff contract types in the coming months.

28. A total of 26 system-related improvements in the areas of recruitment and position management have been initiated since the beginning of 2015, out of which 20 were completed by August 2015.

29. Work is underway to build an on-line functionality to manage transactions related to the processing of positions. This change will not only reduce the manual work required for these processes but will also allow to track and measure performance. The second phase of this initiative envisages the integration of the Generic Job Profiles with i-Recruitment.

30. In the area of i-Recruitment, functionalities were enhanced to reduce some transactional steps, such as applicant pre-screening by the system based on responses provided by applicants and automated notifications sent to candidates at various stages of the selection process. The changes also increase the transparency of the process by allowing an on-line recording of steps that users can consult and provides OHR with a web-based recruitment archive with the possibility of uploading test and interview results.

31. Efforts to further streamline processes and make better use of systems will continue to be actively pursued in 2015/16, in particular the option of increasing self-service tools for staff and managers. Some automation efforts in the area of HR self-service tools have already been completed, e.g. a rental subsidy calculator in GRMS that was launched in May, as well as the automated generation of some employment certificates that HR is about to implement.

32. Phase 1 of the Medgate project has been successfully completed by fully automating the process of service-incurred accidents and related claims for HQ-based staff in FAO. The system will gradually be extended to staff in FAO and WFP Regional Offices and Country Offices.

33. In 2014, a total of 61 standardized HR Reports were released in key areas of focus for HR (gender and geographic distribution, succession planning etc.) and an additional 10 HR servicing operational reports were released in 2015. These reports are currently in the process of being rolled out to users, in Headquarters and the regions.

Medical Insurance Coverage

34. The new Single Master Policy has been finalized for three medical and one life insurance plan instead of the previous four individual contracts with different service providers. The effective date of the Master Policy is 1 January 2015.

35. The implementation of the new Master Policy is supported by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with comprehensive regulations for a broad variety of services which the Insurer and the Claims Processor should realise to ensure quality service to the plan members. This SLA was signed between the parties at the end of September 2015. As part of the SLA, a streamlined reporting system has been introduced to guarantee quality financial reporting and control over the plan's performance.

36. The Organization is reviewing the entire premium structure of the basic medical insurance. The current income-independent premium rates may be changed to an income-related premium based on a percentage of income. Additionally, the contribution of the Organization is being reviewed as, over the past years, it has reached an average of 63% of the total premium contribution instead of the theoretical 50%.

37. The FAO Social Security office services several other UN system organizations under the Master Policy. The organizations are charged for these services. The current administration fee is under review to ensure that the costs of all rendered services are fully reimbursed. The review is expected to be completed within 2015.

38. A single Master Policy for Non-Medical Insurances which combines the former 12 different non-medical insurance policies, managed by different insurers, was also concluded. The policy covers such risks as Fidelity Guarantee, Third Party Liability, Fire and Perils, etc. This new Contract became effective on 1 January 2015. This new Contract is also expected to enhance efficiency in dealing with insurance cases.