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Food and Agriculture  
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Продовольственная и  
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منظمة  
الأغذية والزراعة  
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# CONFERENCE

## Fortieth Session

Rome, 3-8 July 2017

## Review of FAO Awards Ceremony

### Executive Summary

In line with Resolution 14/2013 “The FAO Awards Ceremony”, previously a standing item on the Provisional Agenda of the FAO Conference, was established as a stand-alone event in order to:

- a) give greater public visibility of the Awards and Awardees;
- b) increase the time available during Conference sessions to focus on substantial agenda items;
- c) streamline selection processes and timelines; and
- d) take advantage of synergies with an existing FAO event to increase international media attention for the Awards.

As requested by the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference, this document provides an overall review of this new approach following the first edition of the event held in November 2015 and subsequently recommends that the Conference consider continuing with the new arrangement.

### Suggested action by the Conference

The Conference is invited to consider pursuing this new approach to the Awards Ceremony and that it be maintained as a recurring stand-alone event.

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## I. Introduction

1. Resolution 14/2013, adopted by the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the FAO Conference (June 2013), established “The FAO Awards” as a stand-alone recurring prestigious event, for the presentation of:
  - a) four awards in recognition of achievements in working towards a world free from hunger and malnutrition of former Directors-General of the Organization:
    - i. **B.R. Sen Award** (Resolution 33/67) for field officers who have made an outstanding contribution to their country(s) of assignment;
    - ii. **A.H. Boerma Award** (Resolution 1/75) for journalists who have brought food security and rural development issues to the attention of civil society;
    - iii. **Edouard Saouma Award** (Resolution 2/93) for institutions that have implemented with particular efficiency a project funded by FAO’s Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP); and
    - iv. **Jacques Diouf Award** for individuals or institutions that have made a significant contribution to the improvement of global food security (Resolution 1/2011);
  - b) and a Medal in tribute to the late Dr Margarita Saucedo Lizárraga, Senior Fishery Liaison Officer:
    - v. **Margarita Lizárraga Medal (Resolution 18/97) for people or organizations that have effectively applied the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.**
2. In line with Resolution 14/2013, “The FAO Awards” ceremony was established as a stand-alone event, with no incremental costs incurred compared to the Awards Ceremony previously held at sessions of Conference, in order to:
  - a) give greater public visibility of the Awards and Awardees;
  - b) increase the time available during Conference sessions to focus on substantial agenda items;
  - c) streamline selection processes and timelines; and
  - d) take advantage of synergies with an existing FAO event to attract more international media attention for the Awards.

## II. FAO Awards Ceremony (Rome, 30 November 2015)

3. The very first edition of the “The FAO Awards” ceremony was held on 30 November 2015 on the margins of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Session of the FAO Council. The Office of Corporate Communication (OCC) prepared and implemented a communication plan in advance of the ceremony.
4. The first step in this process was to develop a strong visual identity and appropriate messaging for the FAO Awards. The FAO Awards now has a dedicated website [www.fao.org/fao-awards/](http://www.fao.org/fao-awards/) and messaging links achievements and results to the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular #SDG2 for Zero Hunger.
5. Outreach and promotional activities related to the FAO Awards are organized in four stages with the aim of maximizing overall impact:
  - a) **Launch of the call for nominations** - The related bulletins from the Director-General are circulated widely throughout FAO offices by:
    - i. “FAO Latest” email announcements to all staff and reminder email bulletins;
    - ii. FAO Intranet/inFAO Noticeboard announcements and articles;
    - iii. The FAO Awards website;
    - iv. Regular Coordination with regional communications officers and the greater FAO communications network;
    - v. Regular contact with responsible Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) and technical focal points responsible for each award.

- b) Announcement of the winners – In order to maximize media interest, the 2015 FAO Awards winners were announced immediately following the launch of the State of Food Insecurity in the World Report, thereby maximizing on FAO’s garnered global media attention. This came as a positive example of how such outstanding contributions to global food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, as well as effective teamwork, can put us on the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and ending hunger by 2030.
- c) FAO Awards Ceremony, FAO Headquarters - The new visual identity for the “FAO Awards” was effectively communicated at the event through branding and the production of a limited number of information and promotional materials. A strong social media effort involved live Tweeting and other promotion through Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Interviews were coordinated with all nine awardees and promoted on the website, the FAO YouTube channel and locally by awardees. Holding the “FAO Awards” as a standalone event also increased opportunities for FAO to explore new partnerships, with the aim of creating a more dynamic event and increasing visibility.
- d) Local announcements/events in the awardees’ country of origin - Following the FAO Awards Ceremony at FAO headquarters in Rome, OCC responded to media queries and supported the coordination of local ceremonies held in the countries of origin of the awardees.

### III. Outcome

6. The aforementioned promotional activities have given greater visibility to the awards and awardees and resulted in an overall increase in the number of candidates.

7. The selection processes and time lines for the awards have been effectively streamlined. Efficiency has been significantly improved by centralizing the coordination of the four awards in recognition of achievements of former Directors-General of the Organization, under the responsibility of OCC, as well as the introduction of new procedures such as:

- a) email voting rather than obliging Screening Committee, mostly comprised of ADGs, to attend several meetings; and,
- b) allowing the members of the Screening Committee to rank candidates for all 4 awards at the same time, rather than receiving information from different technical units on specific awards throughout the year.

The selection process follows a detailed work plan for each edition and is completed in less time due to the above procedures, well in advance of the awards ceremony. The process now has a more global perspective since all regional ADGs are now involved in the Screening Committee.

8. Consequently, the time allocated for discussion on substantial agenda items during Conference sessions has increased, and the overall duration of the session, when there is no election for the post of Director-General, has decreased from seven days to six consecutive days. At the same time, “The FAO Awards” ceremony format has remained unaltered, with no substantial increase in costs, compared to when the event was included in the agenda of the Conference session.

### IV. Conclusion

9. The FAO Awards are an opportunity to bring concrete results of hunger fighting projects and individuals working towards the achievement of a world free from hunger and malnutrition to the attention of the general public. In order to achieve this objective, the FAO Awards have been incorporated in the Organization’s communication strategy through the allocation of existing funds for the production of basic communication tools including a website, a video for each edition and a limited number of promotional materials (flyer/event programme). All tools have been promoted through FAO social media channels. There has been no substantial increase in cost as the ceremony has been held on the margins of another FAO event.

10. For future editions of “The FAO Awards” ceremony, the Organization aims to take advantage of synergies with existing FAO events and to build on their media appeal and audience. By including the FAO Awards in the FAO communications strategy, the Organization can showcase achievements and results, thereby increasing visibility of the awards and awardees. In the future, the “FAO Awards” visual identity/brand will be further reinforced and more strategic partnerships will be developed, with the aim of further enhancing the event, its visibility and impact.

11. In light of the foregoing, the Conference may wish to consider continuing with the decision set out in Resolution 14/2013 to maintain “The FAO Awards” ceremony as a stand-alone event, not included as a standing item on the agenda of the Conference sessions.