



Members' Update

FAO renewal



Budget paves way for FAO renewal

FAO Members' unanimous agreement on a new budget helps pave the way for renewal across the Organization.

Members meeting in Rome for the 37th session of Conference approved a regular programme budget of US\$1,005.6 million for the 2012-13 biennium, equivalent to a 1.4 percent increase over the current biennium. This allows for full implementation of measures under the five-year Immediate Plan of Action for FAO Renewal (IPA), which is now at the halfway stage.

Members said they recognized the efforts of Director-General Jacques Diouf "to identify savings and efficiency gains" for the biennium. Some US\$10.6 million of the US\$26.5 million saved will be rechannelled into the IPA, within the programme of work and budget.

Members also asked the Director-General to put in place measures aimed at saving a further US\$34.5 million in the biennium, while ensuring full programme delivery. These include reducing the amount of travel, better planning of publications and improving the recovery from partners of administrative costs incurred by FAO for extra-budgetary activities.

Diouf, addressing Conference for the last time before he steps down at the end of 2011, said reform had left FAO "leaner, more focused and fitter for the 21st century".

Conference reiterated the importance of setting priorities as part of the new results-based management approach, requesting that further improvements be made in the 2014-15 planning cycle as requested by Council at its 141st session in April.

Among other decisions taken by the Conference, additional funding will be allocated for FAO's work on gender equity and in evaluation, while the net increase in posts is to be kept to a minimum. Members decided to maintain the shared services centre hubs in Bangkok and Santiago rather than

combining them with the centre in Budapest.

Meanwhile Director-General elect Jose Graziano da Silva reaffirmed his support for the renewal process, following his election during Conference: “I reaffirm my commitment to implement our reform and bring it to a rapid conclusion,” he said.

Employees give views on renewal

FAO’s first all-employee survey saw staff noting progress with renewal in areas including human resources, results-based management and decentralization.

However employees also felt the pace of change was too slow, with room for improvement in areas including renewal communication and FAO’s corporate culture.

Member countries asked for a survey as part of the renewal process, and it saw a strong turnout with 77 percent of the workforce taking part.

Employees reported FAO’s goals and challenging work as their main motivation.

The survey showed that FAO matched or even outscored other international organizations in terms of employees’ motivation, having the tools to do their jobs and sense of involvement in the workplace. The results also highlighted progress since the Independent External Evaluation report of 2007, in terms of employees’ views on the speed of decision making and the visibility of FAO leadership – though there is still room for improvement.

Manoj Juneja, deputy director-general (operations), said: “It’s good to note that staff see progress on renewal and to see their high levels of commitment to delivering FAOs work. At the same time we must improve on those areas that are holding us back from reaching our full potential, through both our individual and collective efforts.”

The large response rate comprised employees from headquarters and across FAO’s worldwide offices, from people holding all types of contract.

The survey was designed with the help of Hay Group, a specialized consulting firm, which collected and compiled the results independently of FAO. All replies were confidential. Hay Group representatives have met with senior managers, staff representative bodies and culture change team members to discuss the results and follow-up process in more detail.

A team of FAO staff, representing a cross-section of the workforce, is now working with senior managers to identify two or three initial corporate actions for follow-up that will have the greatest impact.

In addition, a “manager’s report” has been given to each assistant director-general including regional representatives. Each report contains the survey results for the concerned department or regional office. Leaders and managers will work with their employees to identify a further one or two specific action points for their unit or office.

Comments? Suggestions? Write to Members-Update@fao.org.