

Chair's Aide Mémoire of the Fifth meeting of CoC-IEE WG I
Wednesday 27 February 2008, 14.30 – 17.30
Continuation of Discussion of
IEE Recommendations on Individual Programmes
Vic Heard, Chair

- 1) **General with respect to all Programmes:** The format of presenting an overall vision and goals statement and then stating the results FAO management wished to achieve was generally welcomed. However, in formulating their draft proposals for the Medium-Term Plan for further discussion in the Working Group, management was urged to respond directly to issues and recommendations raised by the IEE, and to ensure that proposals were related to available resources and FAO's comparative advantages.
- 2) **Environment and Natural Resources Management** (IEE Recommendation 3.20) – management presentation Annex I: Members agreed the priority given to this by the IEE and emphasised the importance of environmental and natural resource management to FAO's mandate. There was general agreement that FAO should focus on relations between natural resources, agriculture and food security and work in partnership with other organizations. There was wide support for the approach outlined by FAO management, including the recommendation that FAO has a role to play in the negotiation and implementation of relevant international agreements. Some Members stressed FAO's role in policy formulation, including support at the national and local levels in land tenure (in this context it was noted that the IEE had addressed tenure issues together with economic and social policy).
- 3) **Land and Soils** (IEE Recommendation 3.12) - management presentation Annex II: Members agreed that this area is basic to FAO's work, where it has long standing expertise and comparative advantage. Land and soils were fundamental to agriculture and food security. Members in general considered that FAO needed to rebuild its critical mass in this area. While some members considered that it was possible that this could be done with extra-budgetary resources, it would also require greater priority within the Regular Budget and the development of strong partnerships. All members agreed with the IEE that FAO had a core role to play in ensuring the continuation of the global data base and basic analysis from this to tackle issues such as climate change and that this could not be neglected. Balance with direct work in support of member countries was also emphasised by several members.
- 4) **Water and Irrigation** (IEE Recommendation 3.14) - management presentation Annex III: Members from several regions expressed concern that the IEE recommendation concluded water and irrigation are a "medium priority" for FAO. Members stressed water remained fundamental to agriculture and its development, especially in Africa, the Near East and parts of Asia. Other members noted that that IEE had agreed on the fundamental importance of effective water management for agriculture and food security but noted that the IEE had considered that, despite FAO's potentially strong positioning, its track record in addressing the key issues of support to countries in overall water and irrigation development policy and

management had been inadequate. In the view of this group of members FAO had no longer a clear comparative advantage.

- 5) There was general agreement that:
- a) Effective water management was fundamental to the future of human life on the planet. Agriculture was the greatest user of water and without adequate water the challenges of meeting future food needs could not be met;
 - b) AQUASTAT is a valuable and unique global facility. FAO had an important role to play in assembling and disseminating basic information and analysis for decision making and in working for global and local policies and programmes for sound management of water; and
 - c) Partnership and an integrated programme across disciplines within FAO itself would be essential. FAO could potentially also extend its coordinating role.

Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment (IEE Recommendation 3.19) - management presentation Annex IV: Members supported the IEE findings and recommendation and welcomed assurances from FAO's Management that there is renewed effort in this area in line with the proposals of the IEE, including a new Plan of Action and capacity building for staff in the decentralized offices as well as headquarters. Members emphasised that the Gender Plan of action should now be integrated into the Medium-Term Plan and become fully part of a strengthened Results Based Management System.