

Chair's Aide-Mémoire

Meeting of Working Group I of the Conference Committee for IEE Follow-up (CoC-IEE)

Wednesday 3 June 2009

Vic Heard, Chair WG I

Consideration of elements of the draft Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan

1. The meeting focussed on three specific elements of the draft Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan, namely: Impact Focus Areas, Strategic Objective G, and Functional Objectives.
2. **Impact Focus Areas (IFAs):** the Working Group welcomed the document prepared by Management (www.fao.org/uploads/media/WG1-3Jun-IPA.pdf), presenting the full draft formulations of the seven IFAs, indicating the focus with respect to the Organizational Results supported and the associated partnerships. It was noted that IFAs were “flagships” intended to support Organizational Results for mobilizing resources across or within the Strategic Objectives. It was also clarified that IFAs were designed in order to help improve the governance and oversight of extra-budgetary resources, which now comprised over half the resources at FAO’s disposal.
3. In the course of an extensive discussion of IFAs, Members recognized that they were a groundbreaking development in the United Nations system, which could set a model for other organizations in the future. Many questions were asked to better understand how IFAs would work in practice. Members were satisfied with the explanations and illustrations provided by Management, which should be used to further refine the presentation of IFAs in the Medium Term Plan. In this regard, the following points were made:
 - Members were reassured that extrabudgetary resources mobilized through IFAs would support the Organization’s approved programme of work through the direct relation of IFAs to the Organizational Results. Members underlined the need to maintain an adequate balance of assessed contributions and extra-budgetary resources mobilized to finance the programme of work of the Organization.
 - Members expressed concern at the share of the extra-budgetary resources devoted to emergencies, stressing the need for FAO’s work to include capacity building and transition from relief to development;
 - Members reiterated the need for adequate monitoring and oversight for both planning and reporting in relation to IFAs. It was suggested that the Programme Committee could, through the Office of Evaluation, review the IFAs to allow for mid-term corrections. The possibility of annual reporting to Council was also mentioned;
 - Members underscored the importance of an effective advocacy and consultation process with donors and recipients aimed at changing donor behaviour towards more flexibility on the extent of earmarking within the Results Framework and increased predictability of resource allocations. In this respect, Management explained that the informal meeting of interested members and other potential sources of extra-budgetary resources foreseen in the IPA would take place in the next biennium under the new cycle of preparation of the MTP and PWB;
 - Members noted the need for an elaboration of how the IFAs would work at country level, including through the partnerships envisaged.
4. **Strategic Objective G:** the Working Group welcomed the revised formulation of Strategic Objective G, *Enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development*

(www.fao.org/uploads/media/WG13JuneSOG-.pdf), prepared by Management as requested by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) at its last session in April. Members appreciated the efforts made in addressing COAG's observations and acknowledged that the revised formulation strengthens the treatment of issues related to small producers and rural development.

5. For the finalisation of Strategic Objective G, Members provided the following inputs:
- they agreed with the addition of “access to land” in the title, scope of work and indicators of Organizational Result G2;
 - they tasked Management with reviewing and including, if consistent with the write-up of Strategic Objective G, a few other proposed modifications to the wording of the indicators, targets and primary tools of Organizational Results G1 and G3;
 - they pointed out that Strategic Objectives F, G, H, I, and K deal with aspects of rural development, and that F, G, and K include aspects of access to land which could be further reviewed to avoid overlap and ensure complementarity;
 - they noted that the IFA-CFA will support aspects of the Comprehensive Framework of Action relating to smallholder farmer food production, including three of the Organizational Results of Strategic Objective G;
 - they suggested that a link be established between Strategic Objective G and Strategic Objective I dealing with Emergencies.

6. **Functional Objectives:** the Working Group reviewed the document prepared by Management (www.fao.org/uploads/media/WG1-3JuneFunctObj_2.pdf), presenting revised formulations for Functional Objectives X and Y, with fuller justifications of their rationale, building on comments made at both the 16 April meeting of Working Group I as well as the May sessions of the Programme and Finance Committees.

7. Members appreciated the presentations made by the lead Assistant Directors-General for Functional Objective X, stressing the fundamental importance of the areas of work encompassed under its four Organizational Results. While recognizing that the formulations of the Functional Objectives remained work-in-progress, Members welcomed the improved clarity in the formulation of Functional Objective X, considering that it provided a sound basis for the Secretariat's on-going refinement and finalization of the Results Frameworks.

8. In response to the request for clarification on indicators and targets for gender and country representation made at its previous meeting of 16 April 2009, Members appreciated the extrapolations provided in the documentation. They confirmed that the proposed two-year and four-year targets for indicators Y.3.4 on gender representation and Y. 3.5 on geographic representation were appropriate.

Annex

Agenda for the meeting

1. Chair's introduction
2. Consideration of elements of the draft Strategic Framework and Medium Term Plan.