

Chair's Aide-Mémoire

Joint meeting of Working Groups I, II and III of the Conference Committee for IEE Follow-up (CoC-IEE)

Thursday 21 May 2009

Chaired by Vic Heard, Chair WG I

Progress Report on IPA implementation and Trust Fund budget situation

1. The Working Groups welcomed the progress report on implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) and Trust Fund budget situation (www.fao.org/uploads/media/progress%20report.pdf) providing a description of the achievements, issues and risks associated with each IPA project, and the changes in status since the last progress report of 17 April 2009. In particular, Members appreciated the dashboard indicating progress with each IPA project, which they found very clear.

2. It was pointed out that the sequencing of IPA projects presented in the report did not include the actions related to the Root and Branch Review (RBR) recommendations, and that Management would provide to the Working Groups, at their next meeting on 5 June 2009, a revised IPA sequencing and associated costing for 2009 taking account of the RBR items, the costs of which would be updated following further discussion with Ernst & Young.

2. As at 13 May 2009, the IPA Trust Fund had received confirmed pledges for a total of USD 6.93 million, while total cash available amounted to USD 3.4 million. Given the continued significant shortfall in IPA funding, Management stressed that progress on IPA implementation was becoming critically dependent upon availability of adequate resources, and recalled that the Financial Regulations did not allow Trust Fund moneys to be spent until the amounts pledged are actually received.

3. In this context, Management identified possible reductions in funding requirements for 2009, particularly through the recosting of backfilling costs for staff substantially allocated to Management Follow-up to IPA and to the Culture Change Team activities, by funding only actually incurred external costs instead of applying the standard rate for staff costs. Following requests for clarification on the implementation of the planned programme of work, Management confirmed it was following the clear guidance already provided by the Governing Bodies, and had taken due note of the advice given by the Finance Committee at its session of 11-15 May 2009.

4. While appreciative of the efforts of Management and the pledges already made by several Members, the Working Groups expressed serious concern at the financial situation of the Trust Fund and urged Members to follow through on their pledges and make further voluntary contributions. It was also noted that contributions from developing countries were highly valuable in sending a signal of the consensual importance accorded to the IPA and its implementation.

5. The Working Groups agreed with the proposed sequenced IPA actions in 2009. In this regard, Members:

- appreciated Management's decision to absorb some of the staff costs related to the implementation of IPA activities, and again stressed that there should be no negative repercussions on the delivery of the planned programme of work;
- noted the progress made with regard to the Culture Change project and emphasized the need to extend such progress to the Decentralized Offices;

- acknowledged staff dedication and commitment to the reform process, recognizing that there were signals such as the payment of arrears and the level of extra-budgetary contributions indicating rising confidence in FAO at the international level.

Annex 1

Agenda for the meeting

1. Chair's introduction
2. Progress Report on IPA implementation and Trust Fund budget situation