

UPDATE ON CULTURE CHANGE

Introduction

1. The Independent External Evaluation identified culture change as a prerequisite for reforming the Organization. The Culture Change Team (CCT) was formed in August 2008, chaired by Deputy Director-General, Jim Butler. The current team's mandate was extended until end-March 2010 and a new team is currently being formed and will be tasked with culture change activities until the end of the current biennium.

Achievements of the Culture Change Team

2. The CCT helped to catalyse a process of culture change, identifying areas that needed improvement through an interactive process, relying on the views and perspectives of all FAO staff worldwide. It developed a communications and outreach strategy and face-to-face engagement with some 1,000 staff, including extensive field outreach. It developed, refined and shared a broad range of proposals based on consultations at headquarters and with decentralized offices, in the areas of career development and advancement, inclusive work environment, recognition and rewards. These proposals have been submitted for implementation by the relevant division and departments, although most of the actions fall within the ambit of the Human Resources Division (CSH). The culture change process has given rise to a new internal vision, which outlines the values, behaviours and actions expected of all staff working for FAO. The vision statement was launched by the Director-General on 5 November 2009, in an event that brought together staff from all parts of the world in a webcast event. Regional culture change teams have since been established in Accra and Cairo to carry the work forward at the regional level. A toolkit for organizational change has been developed and is currently being field tested and refined, which will guide staff through the different facets of the change process.

Establishment of the Culture Change Support Team

3. Culture change is entering a new phase with the implementation of the IPA, when many large and complex projects start impacting on the work lives and practices of FAO staff. A new Culture Change Support Team is being established whose role will be to monitor the implementation of the internal vision as an integral part of the reform process and in ways that build on and are consistent with IPA reforms. The team members will be required to have a more specific set of skills and more specific expertise in change management, communication, facilitation and negotiation.

Next steps

4. The new team, to be called Culture Change Support Team, will be chaired by Jim Butler and the duration of its mandate will be of two years. It will collaborate closely with:
- the Core Group, a small team which provides programme coordination, undertakes monitoring and provides support for all IPA projects;

- the Joint Advisory Committee on FAO reforms (JAC/FAR) comprising members of the Staff Representative Bodies and management; and
 - the Reform Support Group, comprising all project leaders and departmental focal points.
5. The Culture Change Support team will make proposals to the Senior Management Team. Its proposed tasks will be to:
- develop an action plan for implementing the new internal vision of FAO, with clear objectives, success factors, activities, ownership and measures to evaluate shifts in the culture, thereby acting as a catalyst for culture change;
 - continue to encourage and monitor the uptake of proposals made by the initial team in the areas of career development, recognition and rewards and inclusive working environment;
 - strengthen partnerships for alignment of HR policies with the desired culture;
 - continue to strengthen the outreach of culture change to decentralized offices;
 - provide support to existing local culture change teams at HQ and in the field, and encourage the creation of additional divisional/departmental culture change teams at HQ as well as regional/sub-regional and country teams in the field;
 - continue to provide support for the improvement of staff communication and engagement.

Conclusion

6. During this implementation biennium, as all the reform processes touch upon each other and directly relate to each other, a change in the Organization's culture will become apparent because it will ultimately change HOW we work here. FAO's renewal has been and continues to be an extraordinary and very complex change process. Culture change will continue to be the glue which holds all the parts together, helping them to integrate, build off each other and learn from each other.

7. Members have maintained the importance of culture change as an intrinsic thread on FAO's reform agenda and continue to play a pivotal catalytic role for culture change within the Organization. Cognizant of the activities that still lie ahead, we continue to seek support from FAO's Members for the challenges of embedding sustainable culture change in the implementation and integration of FAO's overall reform processes.