

Draft Strategy Note –Communication and Advocacy

1. Analysis of needs and FAO's comparative advantage

Communication and advocacy lie at the heart of FAO's functions as a knowledge organization, as is made clear in FAO's Constitution and recognized in the IEE Report.

A Corporate Communication Strategy is required to enable the Organization:

- to contribute towards achievement of the World Food Summit target and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly MDGs 1 and 7, by advocating effectively for investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure;
- to advocate on behalf of the world's chronically hungry and malnourished with arguments based on world-class technical studies;
- to establish FAO as a point of reference in the global debate on issues related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock and rural development;
- to raise awareness of FAO's unique contribution to the development process, as well as its work in post-emergency relief and rehabilitation and the transition to development, and thereby increase support for the Organization;
- to provide visibility for Member countries who provide extra-budgetary funding and showcase FAO's effectiveness in implementing projects and programmes;
- to communicate effectively with staff at headquarters and in decentralized offices in order to engage them in the process of culture change.

FAO's comparative advantages in meeting these communication needs are:

- the global recognition of FAO as a centre of technical excellence in the areas of its mandate;
- FAO's reputation for balanced, science-based contributions to complex and sensitive debates;
- its respected function as a neutral forum for the negotiation of international agreements;
- the quality and calibre of its technical staff who can become trusted sources of information for the media, NGOs and civil society in general.

2. Overall vision and major objectives

The vision of FAO strategic communication is:

To achieve due global recognition of FAO's contribution to the development process, its comparative advantages and its role as knowledge organization and centre of excellence delivering tangible benefits to its Members.

The major objectives of strategic communication are:

- increased understanding by policy-makers of the need for development policies that favour agriculture and the rural sector, leading to the mobilisation of more resources for the sector;
- enhanced status and recognition of the role and contribution of FAO, especially in the priority thematic areas of activity, among policy-makers and those who influence them, including the general public;
- assistance to the Organization in meeting the challenge of renewal.

Achieving these objectives will involve:

- raising awareness of the wealth of technical information and knowledge produced by FAO accessible to stakeholders at country level;
- communication of public information and advice on policy matters related to FAO's mandate to member countries and civil society stakeholders;
- advocacy in support of policies that favour investment in agriculture and rural infrastructure to tackle problems of chronic hunger and malnutrition;
- building awareness among all stakeholders, mostly through the media, of FAO's comparative advantages thereby increasing support for the Organization among the Membership and the public at large
- internal communication, aimed at engaging staff in the process of reform.

3. Expected main outcomes

Main outcomes include:

- demonstrating how the work of FAO adds considerable value to the development process, provides post-emergency relief and rehabilitation and assists Members in their efforts to achieve the MDGs;
- improving the confidence of Members in the overall performance of the Organization in carrying out its mandate;
- demonstrating to Member countries that their voluntary contributions are being well spent and thus encouraging a continuing flow of extra-budgetary resources;
- raising the visibility of FAO and increasing awareness and appreciation of the Organization's work, which may assist in securing greater support for FAO;
- contributing to the firm embedding of a communication culture across the Organization, and to the general culture change advocated by the IEE.

4. Implementation issues

The implementation process will include:

- identifying priority target audiences for FAO communication and ensuring that communication priorities are aligned with priority technical themes;
- articulating overarching messages aligned with the strategic goals of member countries, recognizing that specific messages related to the priority themes will be developed on a yearly basis in the annual Corporate Communication Plan;
- identifying the appropriate traditional and multi-media tools and channels for FAO communication and advocacy to reach identified target audiences;
- working closely with the Rome-based Agencies on the basis of a common Advocacy Communication Strategy, and with other civil society partners through the International Alliance Against Hunger and other arrangements;
- developing the World Food Day, TeleFood and Goodwill Ambassadors programmes in support of broadly targeted advocacy;
- supporting the culture change process in the Organization through development of strong, interactive internal communication channels;
- guiding FAO's approach to communication and advocacy at country level in the context of the Delivering as One UN reform process.