

Chair's Aide-Mémoire

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

Wednesday 23 June 2010

Luc Guyau, Chair

Update on the process for prioritization of the technical work of the Organization

1. In considering the update prepared by Management, as of early June 2010, on the process for prioritization (http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/Prioritization_CoCIEE_23June_E.pdf), Members noted that improving prioritization is a long term process and that the priority-setting cycle in 2010-11 for the 2012-13 biennium was one of transition. They also underlined the importance of learning from experience so that a systematic and synchronized approach to prioritization would be in place for the subsequent biennium. The focus of the Programme Committee on improving the prioritization process was stressed and the progress made implementing measures to obtain structured advice on priorities from the Regional Conferences and Technical Committees during 2010 was noted.

2. Members noted that it had not been possible to schedule some of the Regional Conference and Technical Committee meetings in 2010 in keeping with the approved cycle of Governing Body sessions under the reformed programming, budgeting and results-based monitoring system. Thus some inputs on priorities would be provided very late in the process this biennium. In this regard, Members were informed that inputs from the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, the Committee on Forestry and the Committee on World Food Security would be provided to the Programme Committee as a supplement to the synthesis document to be prepared by the Secretariat. Moreover, the Programme Committee would hold an additional session in February 2011 to consider the inputs from the Regional Conference for the Near East and the Committee on Fisheries (COFI). In the case of COFI, it was noted that timing concerns would be discussed at its forthcoming session in January-February 2011.

3. The Independent Chairperson of Council undertook to work with the Chairpersons of the Regional Conferences and the Council Committees, as well as the Secretariat, to prepare a suitable schedule of meetings for the next biennium, with a view to ensuring synergy among the Governing Bodies in priority setting.

4. Members provided specific suggestions to help improve the process of prioritization, including the following measures:

- develop a common format and clear framework for consideration of priorities by the Technical Committees, better identifying areas of emphasis and de-emphasis of technical work;
- proactively improve communications with Members on the prioritization process, for example by organizing informal meetings among Members and with Management, providing clear and concise information so as to gain a better understanding of this new and complex process;
- take into consideration implementation performance against indicators and targets, which will be available in the new biennium.

5. Members noted that the Joint Meeting of the Finance and programme Committees in October 2010 would consider a proposal on the timing and format of the informal meeting, to take place in the first quarter of 2011, bringing together interested Members, partners and other potential sources of voluntary contributions, to exchange information on extra-budgetary voluntary funding requirements.

Vision for the structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices

6. Members examined the document prepared by Management on the vision for the structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices (http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/Decentralized_Offices__CoC_IEE_23June_MainRep_E.pdf), which provided extracts from the reports of the three Regional Conferences that had taken place in April and May 2010 – in Panama for Latin America and the Caribbean; in Luanda for Africa, and in Yerevan for Europe –, both on the medium to long-term vision for Decentralized Offices, as well as the proposed global Shared Services Centre (SSC). Members appreciated the useful inputs provided so far by the three Regional Conferences, recognizing that further contributions from the two other Regional Conferences – for Asia and the Pacific, and for the Near East – would allow them to have a more complete understanding of the various aspects of the of the decentralized structure.

7. In the meantime, Members reiterated the critical importance of enhancing FAO's decentralized structure to improve the coherence, performance and integration of the Decentralized Offices network, while ensuring that the Organization functions as one. In this context, the following issues were underlined:

- With regard to the proposed global SSC, questions were raised, and clarifications were provided on the ongoing internal review of the SSC hubs, the results of which should be available for review by the Finance Committee in October 2010. In this respect, Members indicated that the review should aim at striking an adequate balance between effectiveness and savings, also taking into account the increased responsibilities of the Regional Offices resulting from the implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA).
- Members underscored the need for Decentralized Offices to be equipped with an adequate number of staff, who should be provided with the necessary training to carry out their functions properly.
- In considering the rationalisation of the Organization's network of Decentralized Offices, it was pointed out that FAO needs to provide good services to its Members, and cost reduction should not be the only objective. Moreover, Africa's specific needs have to be kept in mind, and challenges in terms of infrastructure and travel limitations should be duly taken into account – for example making multiple accreditations difficult.
- Members felt that a better integration of headquarters and field accounts was needed, and it was noted that this was being addressed through the replacement of FAO's Field Accounting System.

Multi-year Programmes of Work for the Governing Bodies

8. Members appreciated the information provided on the Multi-year Programmes of Work (MYPOWs) for the Governing Bodies (http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/MYPOWs_CoCIEE_23June_E.pdf), noting that their formulation was mandated by IPA actions 2.70, 2.71 and 2.72, as re-confirmed by the Conference in November 2009 and by the Council in May 2010.

9. Members were pleased to note that the Programme Committee had already adopted its MYPOW in April 2010, which was then approved by Council in May 2010. Members were also satisfied at the good progress made in developing the Finance Committee draft MYPOW, which was expected to be adopted by the Committee at its next session in October, and endorsed by Council in November-December 2010.

10. Furthermore, Members were informed that a draft MYPOW for Council, which was being prepared under the guidance of the Independent Chairperson, would be discussed at two informal

seminars in July and September, with a view to its review and adoption at the Council session in November-December 2010. Similarly, it was noted that the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters should consider and approve its MYPOW at its forthcoming session in September 2010, with subsequent endorsement by Council in November-December.

11. Finally it was noted that, because of their unprecedented nature, MYPOWs had not been foreseen in the meeting agendas of the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees in 2010. Since these Governing Bodies hold only one session every two years, their MYPOWs would be finalised when they meet next in 2012, following preparatory work that could begin during the current biennium.

Human Resources (PEMS, Staff rotation, etc)

12. Members expressed appreciation for the progress made and achievements accomplished in the area of Human Resources (HR), as illustrated in the documentation prepared by Management (http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/HR_CoCIEE_23June_E.pdf), particularly with regards to the implementation of: (i) the new Management Information Reporting System; (ii) the Performance Management System (PEMS); and (iii) three important HR policies related to Staff Mobility, Gender Representation, and the Junior Professional Programme (JPP).

13. Members welcomed the ambitious programme of work in these areas, which had given a new strategic direction to the HR function, thus capturing the spirit of the reform where the Staff of the Organization represents its main asset. In this regard, discussion centred on following points:

- the importance of an effective career development scheme to attract and retain young talent was recalled, as well as the need for a recognition system to reward high performing staff;
- Management's efforts to appoint internal candidates as FAO Representatives pending implementation of the Mobility Policy foreseen for September 2010 were noted;
- Members were informed that the first cohort of 15 Junior Professionals covering the 2010-11 biennium should join FAO in September 2010 and enquired about the possibility to expand the JPP in order to increase the number of Junior Professionals recruited by the Organization in future biennia;
- Members were satisfied with the proactive approach adopted by Management to ensure that vacancies were widely published to reach potential professional candidates in under-represented countries;
- Members reiterated their support to the Organization's Gender Representation policy of endeavouring to reach the UN target of 50% female representation at professional and higher levels.

Progress in IPA Implementation

14. Members welcomed the progress report on IPA implementation presented by Management (http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/IEE/IPA_Progress_Rep_CoC23June_E.pdf), noting that major achievements were accomplished in the areas of results-based work planning, performance evaluation, Human Resources policy, HR management information, greater empowerment of Decentralized Offices, the Technical Cooperation Programme, IT infrastructure to Decentralized Offices, Governing Body reforms, and culture change.

15. Management reiterated its commitment to implementing the reforms entailed in the FAO Renewal without losing focus on delivering the Organization's programme of work. At the same time, it was pointed out that organizational transformation was complex and carried significant risks as it

placed additional demands on Management and Staff. In this connection, the “J curve” effect was illustrated, showing that performance usually drops at the beginning of a change process before increasing again at a later stage. In order to try to maximise the benefits and minimize the disruption in the transitional period, Management should direct its efforts towards effective communication, increased education and training, and reliable risk assessments. In this regard, Members were informed that the full results of the ongoing assessment of the risks to the successful completion of the IPA programme will be reported to the next meeting of the CoC-IEE in October 2010, together with initial results of the Organization-wide staff survey, which will be undertaken between July and September 2010.

16. Furthermore, the following comments were made in the course of the discussion:

- the need to achieve a more adequate balance between the level of detail provided in progress reports, which ties into the accountability aspect of reporting to the Governing Bodies, and the desire to obtain more qualitative analysis, in simpler formats, was underlined. In terms of communication, the importance of the timely and easy availability of documentation to Members was stressed;
- Members looked forward to seeing a total estimate of the financial requirements for the implementation of the IPA in 2012-13, to be prepared for the next meeting of the CoC-IEE in October.

Any other matters

17. ***Competency profile for the post Director-General.*** A draft job description for the post of Director-General was circulated for information by one Member, who indicated that, although the proposed competency profile would not be used in the present biennium, it could be used for an informal exchange of views amongst Members.

Annex

Agenda

1. Update on the process for prioritization of the technical work of the Organization
2. Vision for the structure and functioning of the Decentralized Offices
3. Multi-year Programmes of Work for the Governing Bodies
4. Human Resources (PEMS, Staff rotation, etc)
5. Progress in IPA implementation
6. Any other matters