August 2006

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منظمة الأغذية والزراعة للأمم المتحدة | 联合国粮食及农业组织 | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture | Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Fifteenth Session

Rome, 25 - 29 September 2006

Report on Human Resource Management Issues

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Committee on recent developments in the field of human resources management in FAO.

Draft Decision

2. The Committee took note of the information provided in document FC 115/13 regarding progress on human resources management issues.

I. Background

1. At its 97th Session, in September 2000, the Finance Committee considered a Report on Human Resources Management that outlined the key human resources (HR) issues and strategies to be addressed by FAO in line with the Organization's Medium Term Plan. Since then there have been regular progress reports on an overall Human Resources Action Plan. The last such report was presented to the 110th Session of the Finance Committee in September 2005.

2. This report has been prepared against the background of the initiatives being pursued in the context of FAO reform, including the initiatives on decentralization, the implementation of a Shared Services Centre and the implementation of the Human Resources Management Model (HRMM) supported by the Human Resources Management System (HRMS).

II. Implementation of the Human Resource Management Model (HRMM) and the Human Resource Management System (HRMS)

HRMM

3. The HRMM is an integrated model for organising and delivering the full range of human resource management services. This model sets out the roles, processes, relationships and technology required to support the provision of HR services in FAO.

4. The HRMM will move to consolidate and rationalize what is currently a fragmented system of HR service delivery. This will include over time the provision of a single point of contact for clients to initiate HR actions or to make HR enquiries.

5. A key aspect of the HRMM is the extension of coverage of the HR system to include the full range of HR services including, HR planning, performance management and internet-enabled recruitment systems.

6. As efficiencies are realized in the delivery of HR transactional services, the opportunity will arise for the shift of resources from low value-added transaction processing functions to higher value-added advisory, consultancy and policy functions.

7. The new HR Management Model will implement an integrated human resource management system in which the bulk of HR transactions will be handled electronically. It will recognize the ability to take decisions on HR matters at a different physical location than that of the processing of those decisions. It will also reorganize the HR function to rationalize and consolidate service delivery and free up resources for both savings and improvement in the quality of HR planning.

8. The new HR management model will also deliver a management information system to facilitate trend analysis and exception reports in real time on a range of HR matters. The system will permit greater delegation of authority by providing better management information reporting and enhancing the capacity of senior management to monitor delegations and thus improve accountability.

Deployment of the HRMS and HRMM

9. The Organization is currently engaged in preparations to launch the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) based on Oracle applications by the end of 2006. This will lead to significant improvements in the processes for managing staff-related actions throughout the Organization. The introduction of a new Human Resources Management Model (HRMM) will go hand-in-hand with the implementation of the HRMS.

10. The bulk of the HRMS system functionality will be implemented and available from December 2006. At the outset, it is foreseen that most HR transaction processing will continue to be performed in the Shared Services Centre, as at present. Gradually, over the following months, staff members and managers, first in Headquarters and then in decentralized offices, will be trained in their new roles and responsibilities in the context of the HRMM and in the new HR processes supported by the HRMS. This phased deployment of the HRMM/HRMS is expected to be completed during 2008.

III. Strengthened Capacity for Human Resource Planning

11. The objectives of HR Planning are two-fold:

a) to develop a clear understanding on the *demand* side of the Organization's needs in terms of the functions to be carried out and the competencies necessary to do so; and,

b) to determine on the *supply* side the availability of the skills and competencies required and how they are to be provided, e.g. through the internal deployment and/or development of staff, from the local or international labour market and/or on a long-term/short-term staff/non-staff basis.

12. Essentially, the HR planning process identifies FAO's programme and project human resource demand and determines how this demand is to be met.

13. In doing this, a key component of HR planning is the production of analytical reports that allow planning decisions to be made based on an understanding of the historical record, current situation and projected trends. These reports serve to identify emerging competency, skill, resource and institutional gaps on a timely basis. They can then be used to identify the reasons for the gaps and as a basis to implement corrective measures. In this way HR planning assists managers in making informed decisions about the recruitment, deployment and development of their human resources to best meet their programme and project objectives, while at the same time helping to ensure that these decisions are aligned with the Organization's overall strategic and institutional goals.

IV. Improvement of Recruitment Processes through iRecruitment

14. With the implementation of the PWB 2006-2007 with its reduction in posts and new structures emanating from the reform proposals, there has been an overall reduction in the level of vacancies and hence a significant curtailment of external recruitment activity. Despite this, FAO is still pursuing the pro-active recruitment strategies set out in the Human Resources Action Plan (ref. FC 107/16).

a) Geographical Distribution

15. The new geographical distribution methodology adopted by the 32nd Session of the FAO Conference (29 November – 10 December 2003) was introduced on 1 January 2004. As reported to the Finance Committee at its 110th session, the revised methodology aims to reinforce universal representation. Indeed, a substantial majority of member states continue to be equitably represented under the revised methodology, while the proportion of under-, non- and over-represented countries continues to be significantly lower by comparison to the previous methodology. As of the date of issuance of this report, 119 countries are equitably represented, 16 countries are over-represented, 20 countries are under-represented and 34 countries are non-represented.

b) Improving Gender Balance

16. Substantive efforts have been undertaken by the Organization to achieve its target for gender balance among the professional and higher categories of staff (established at 35%). While this target has been achieved overall at Headquarters, efforts are now being made to achieve the same goal in the decentralized offices. As at 31 May 2006, the total number of women in both the professional and higher categories was 405 or 29.9% of the staff in these categories. The breakdown by grade of female versus male staff is provided in the table below:

	P-1	P-2	P-3	P-4	P-5	D-1	D-2	ADG
Female	9	93	119	96	65	16	6	1
Male	8	86	147	310	253	100	37	8

17. As noted above, the Organization's ability to make significant progress in meeting its targets for geographic distribution and gender balance have been constrained by the lower level of recruitment activity over the past year pending decisions on the PWB and the reform proposals.

18. The concentration of effort within AFH at present in this area is on the implementation of the new recruitment module within the HRMS. This internet-enabled system (known as iRecruitment) will enable applicants to apply on-line and will considerably reduce the time spent in handling of paper-based applications. In addition, the functionality the system offers in terms of suitability matching will allow a reduction in time spent on the initial screening of applications. iRecruitment will provide a common tool to the Organization to harmonize the recruitment process for all positions. The Organization has opted for a phased implementation to develop and test fully the automatic screening functionality, which if implemented successfully, will contribute to reducing recruitment times.

V. Competency Development

a) Management Development

19. The Management Development Centre (MDC) is a key programme of the UN-Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD WFP). Since the inception of the Centre in October 2004, several successful programmes have been held. An interagency strategic working group was established to ensure quality control, provide input on design issues and collaborate with other UN and like agencies to maintain best practices in this area. Emphasis has been placed on Senior Management Network competencies established by the UN Staff College. To expand and develop this programme further, the three agencies have agreed to increase the number of managers who will benefit from this strategic development exercise in order to build managerial capacity and build strong alliance with internal and external partners.

20. Beyond the MDC, a series of follow-up competency development opportunities have been implemented which comprise the learning and development continuum of the Management Development Leadership Programme (MDLP). Coaching is one of the key successful components for participants to assist in implementing managers' development needs, as are programmes in communication, negotiation and conflict management. Additional programme support is planned in the areas of managing resources and teamwork. The strong interagency collaboration has contributed to the overall success of this endeavour.

b) Integrated Competency Framework

21. The work on the integrated FAO competency framework is almost completed with significant progress in implementation:

- the managerial competency profile completed in September 2005 has been introduced in Vacancy Announcements for managerial-level staff as well as in management development programmes (see MDC);
- the FAOR competency profile completed in October, 2005 is a key component for the performance management system now in place for FAORs;
- a profile has been completed for professionals and will inform the development of staff development opportunities; and
- the core competency and values project (for all staff) is expected to be completed by November 2006.

22. The integrated use of competencies in HR functions such as recruitment, performance management and career development will be phased in with the implementation of HRMS/HRMM during this biennium.

VI. Performance Management

23. With the availability of the HRMS performance management module in 2007, a new performance management system will be implemented in the third quarter of 2007. This will be supported by the competency development framework that will be completed in 2006.

VII. Working Life Issues

a) Flexible Working Arrangements

24. A policy framework document embodying several policies aimed at promoting a supportive working environment (compressed work schedule, flexible working hours, expanded part-time, phased retirement, teleworking and job sharing) has been developed in consultation with the staff representative bodies and with departments/offices of the Organization. It is foreseen to be submitted for endorsement to the Human Resources Committee during the third quarter of 2006.

b) Paternity Leave

25. Since the last report to the Finance Committee in September 2005 and subsequent to approval by the Human Resources Committee and the Director-General, the Human Resources Management Division introduced the paternity leave entitlement for male staff members for the birth of a child. This entitlement is granted with full pay and for a period of up to four weeks, or in the case of internationally recruited staff serving at non-family duty stations up to eight weeks. Such leave may be taken in a single continuous period or in separate periods during the year following the birth of the child.