



Members' Update

FAO renewal



Members and staff to work at measuring impact of renewal

FAO Permanent Representatives and staff could work together to develop “tangible indicators” that measure the impact of renewal.

This was among the points raised during a recent briefing for Permanent Representatives on progress in implementing the Immediate Plan of Action. Director-General Jacques Diouf meanwhile said FAO was breaking new ground through a Member-driven renewal process.

The session in Rome saw Members discussing progress in four areas of renewal – “managing for results,” “human resources,” “functioning as one” and “administrative reform.”

David Benfield, vice-chair of the secretariat’s reform support group, said there had been good progress on the Plan of Action, with FAO on course to implement half the recommendations by the end of 2009.

He believed the next two years would be critical: “2010-11 will be an extremely important time in terms of the success of the IPA process. At the end of 2011, how will we know if FAO has achieved reform?”

“We will need to develop tangible indicators that represent whether or not we have been successful in terms of reform. We will look to develop this in conjunction with you, the Members – how success can be developed in a real form that is meaningful to you.”

Diouf said FAO renewal must be guided by the objective of ensuring the Organization’s ability to deliver on its mandate. “The number of hungry people has increased and gone beyond one billion. Reform is not just about internal management, reform should make it easier for us to mobilize our resources and implement our programmes.”

Diouf also highlighted the unique nature of FAO’s renewal process: “We are the first institution in the whole of the UN to undertake this type of reform – one spearheaded by the Members” he said. The difference is that this is a Member-led process, with a special budget financed by Member Nations, and an independent external group of evaluators selected by the Members

who themselves oversaw the entire process, discussing and approving – after amendments – the conclusions of the evaluators' report. There have been other reforms initiated by management, one in 1996 and a second in 2004/2005, in addition to other changes following various evaluations.

Boyd Haight, director of programme, budget and evaluation, said the planning phase for results-based management now needed to move into implementation.

A big challenge lay in creating an effective monitoring system, and in ensuring the smooth running of multidisciplinary teams who would work together on different objectives.

In the area of functioning as one, Members heard there was a need to move beyond the concept of decentralization and to think more in terms of FAO being one network, exchanging ideas and information across all locations.

Professor Noori Naeini, chair of the Conference Committee for the Follow-up to the Independent External Evaluation, said he was optimistic on the prospects for a changing FAO.

“Two years ago the membership was insisting on reform. Now we see real enthusiasm among staff and Member Nations for the process. It has created a momentum that can continue well into 2010 and 2011, and beyond.”

IPA Trust Fund update

Total contributions received by the Trust Fund for implementation of the Immediate Plan of Action stood at US\$ 4,942, 474 as of 8 August.

Twenty-eight pledges have been made, totaling US\$ 7,594,703.

The FAO Conference established the Trust Fund to receive Members' extrabudgetary contributions. The funding target is US\$15.25 million for 2009.

Comments? Suggestions? Write to Members-Update@fao.org.