

Chair's Aide-Mémoire

Joint meeting of Working Groups I, II and III of the Conference Committee for IEE Follow-up (CoC-IEE)

Wednesday 16 September 2009

Chaired by Vic Heard, Chair WG I

Consideration of the Strategic Framework

1. The Working Groups welcomed the revised version of the Strategic Framework (www.fao.org/uploads/media/C2009K5864EnglishStrategicFr_1.pdf) recalling that an earlier draft of this document had been reviewed in July 2009 by Working Group I and by the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee and their Joint Meeting.
2. The Working Groups noted the revised formulation of the challenges facing food, agriculture and rural development in Section I, and were satisfied that the inputs made by Members had been adequately reflected in the amended text. Members recognized that the document was a significant milestone in setting the foundations of results-based management in FAO, which had been accomplished through an effective and productive partnership between the Membership and Management. It was also pointed out that the Strategic Framework should remain a living document which, as called for in the IPA, will be subject to revision every four years in order to adapt it to emerging issues and challenges.
3. In reviewing the document, Members observed that the wording of paragraph 48 on Official Development Assistance should be made consistent with recent developments in this area, such as the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security. It was agreed that, since the Strategic Framework had already been circulated as a Conference document, paragraph 48 should be revised and distributed as an addendum to the document.

Consideration of the Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget

1. The Working Groups reviewed the revised version of the Medium Term Plan 2010-13 (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget 2010-11 (PWB) (www.fao.org/uploads/media/K5831MTPPWBEnglishK5831.pdf) noting that the guidance provided by the Working Groups and by the Finance Committee, the Programme Committee and their Joint Meeting in July 2009 had been taken into consideration by Management in revising the MTP/PWB document. Specifically, changes made to the earlier version included the following:
 - the Core Function strategies were moved from the Strategic Framework to a new Section D of the MTP;
 - a new MTP Section E on resource mobilization, including IFAs, was added;
 - the complete Results Frameworks were moved from the MTP to Section IV of the PWB;
 - while keeping the proposed Net Appropriation at USD 995.9 million: (i) cost increases were updated based on the latest information, which resulted in a reduction of USD 5 million to USD 49.9 million; and (ii) the Immediate Plan of Action (IPA) costs were reviewed and decreased by USD 21.2 million; 51% of the adjusted IPA cost (USD 19.5 million) was brought under the Net Appropriation, with the remaining 49% (USD 19.1 million) treated under Core Voluntary contributions;
 - a new PWB section was added on Areas of Programmatic Emphasis;

- additional information was provided on the level of assurance of voluntary contributions and the role of Core Voluntary Contributions in the programme of work;
- baselines and targets were updated and a few Organizational Results were adjusted as per guidance from the Programme Committee and the Working Groups.

2. The Working Groups welcomed the MTP/PWB as a significant step towards results-based budgeting, noting that the new way of presenting the budget and the modalities for its implementation represented in themselves an important reform. It was recognized that the process of prioritization was only beginning and that improvements were anticipated during the next biennium, including with the inputs expected to be contributed by the Technical Committees and the Regional Conferences.

3. Recognizing the importance of rural development as a cross-cutting area of FAO's work, as exemplified by Strategic Objectives G (*Enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development*) and L (*Increased and more effective public and private investment in agriculture and rural development*), it was noted, however, that rural development lacked visibility in the Headquarters structure. It was recalled that the IPA foresaw the prospect of refinements to the organizational structure through 2012, and this matter could be further reviewed in the next biennium in examining ways to deal with cross-cutting issues and in completing the restructuring process.

4. While noting that the IPA funding would be considered by the upcoming session of the Finance Committee, some doubts were expressed on whether the solution foreseen in the PWB – IPA cost split of 51% from the Net Appropriation and 49% under Core Voluntary contributions – would go far enough in guaranteeing the availability of the resources needed to deliver the activities planned under the IPA.

5. Regarding the proposed consolidation of the Bangkok and Santiago Shared Services Centres hubs into the Budapest hub, Management clarified that the PWB put forward preliminary considerations in fulfilment of its commitment to continuously search for efficiency savings and illustrated the lead time required for fully analysing, agreeing and implementing such measures. Management was urged to take into account any resulting effectiveness loss as well as the other ongoing efforts to decentralize the administrative work of the Organization. The concerns of Members were noted and it was agreed that further details would be brought to the attention of the Finance Committee in due course.

Annex

Agenda for the meeting

1. Chair's introduction
2. Final review and recommendation of the Strategic Framework, Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget